OF THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION,

Two Books.

The former of which is

A Short SYSTEM of the Mahometan Theology, Translated from an Arabick Manuscript, and Illustrated with Notes.

The latter examines into some Things falsely charg'd upon the Mahometans.

Done into English from the Latin of

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TO

PETER REELAND,
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Dear Brother,

The Mahometan Religion, and its spreading over so great a part of this World, in which respect scarce any other can be compared with it, have often been the Subject of our Conversation. And it did with good reason seem strange to us, that so great a part of Mankind should give credit to such insipid stuff as the Mahometan Religion was commonly describ'd to be. For they tell you there arose a certain Fanarick, who, having no Sense, boasted of Divine Revelations without Witnesses, while he was really under Epileptic Fits: That he had accustomed a Pigeon to eat its Meat out of his Ear, and pretended it was the Holy Ghost: That he taught, God was corporeal, and did not regard human Affairs, and was the Author of all Evil: That he com-
manded to worship Venus, deny'd Hell, and a great many such things, which are fallly told of him. Now how could we conceive that so many Men could embrace so absurd a Religion, unless we reckon'd them all Starks or Stoners? But the Monuments of the Mahometan Writers will not let us believe this; which shew that they have equal'd, if not surpass'd, other Nations in Bravery and Learning, in the tenth and some following Centuries, in which Arts and Sciences lay almost bury'd among Christians. It remain'd therefore to be enquir'd, whether the Mahometans really believe'd and deliver'd such things as the Christians charg'd them with. And when I had examin'd into some things only for a Specimen, I found the Mahometan Religion had quite another face; and therefore I thought it worth while to explain it out of the Arabian Authors themselves. Wherefore persuading my self that the reading of this little Book will not be ungrateful to you, who practise Justice (which giveth every one his own, nor charges others falliy with what they do not own) and don't neglect Learning amidst the Noise of the Barr, I thought you had a Right to have this Book inscrib'd to you.

Utrecht, 1705.

Adrian Reeland.
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Cold Sabbaths, and said their Hearts were colder than their Religion; for this reason, that many of the Jews (as the Eastern Sarraiss at this day) did not kindle Fire upon the Sabbath-days, which they thought they were commanded to observe, Exod. 35:3. But a little after, how foolishly does he judge and pervert the Opinion of the Jews about celebrating the Sabbath, on which God had finished the Creation of the Universe.

Septima queque dies turpi damnata veterno,
Tanquam laetati mollis imago Del.

II. But when the Christians left the Jews, and set up a distinct Worship, with what Reproaches were they not laden, and what an ugly Representation was there made of our Religion by the Heathens? Many things, which were formerly ascribed to the Jews, were charged on the Christians as a Sport of the Jews, for the Heathens made no Distinction. Whenever the Gnosticks and other Men of the first Ages taught, were said to be taught by all Christians. The Writings of the Fathers shew, that the Heathens charged it on the Christians, That their God was bow'd like an Ass, that they worship'd the Genitals of a Priest, that they feasted those who were to be initiated, on a young Child cover'd over with Flowers; that, after having ended their solemn Feasts, and put out the Lights, the Men and Women embrac'd one another at Chance guided them, that they threatened the Destruction of the Whole World by Fire; and many such like things: All which took their Rise, in great part, from the mistaken Reasons of the Rites of Penitence, the Holy Supper, and some other Ceremonies. But that nothing might be left unsaid by pious Tongues, the very Doctrine of worshipping one God laid them under the Imputation of Atheism: To this relates that common Saying of theirs,

theiris, Destroy the Atheists. And to sum up all in the words of Tertullian, in his Apology, They were counted Murderers, Incestuous, Sacrilegious, publick Enemies of Mankind, guilty of all Wickedness, and therefore Enemies of the Gods, of Emperors, of Morality, and of Universal Nature: So that it was a sufficient Crime to be reckon'd a Christian, and the very Name made them guilty. 'Tis true, Pliny, after having enquir'd into the Christian Religion more accurately, gave a very different Account of it in a Letter to the Emperor Trajan. There were others, who, not driven by such a vehement Fury against the Christians, did not so foully misrepresent them; but those were very inconsiderable, and few in number compar'd with those who expos'd the Christian Faith to the World, as it was defac'd by their Calumnies, and not as it was in itself.

III. But if we carry our Thoughts down to our own Times, we shall find Mankind is not a whit more just in this respect: And 'tis very true, what Flaccus says,

Ætas parentum, peior avis, tuit
Nos requiore, mox daturos
Progeniæ vitiofores.

Which the Persians would have express'd thus: The Men in the Chiefs, the further they are drawn out upon the Chief-Board, are so much the better, and more worth, but Mankind never. May God preserve us from this Error! What did not the Church of Rome charge us with, when we departed from her, after she had departed from the Doctrine and Example of Christ and his Apostles? They affirme in their Books, that we held good Works in detestation; that we affirme God to be the Author of Evil; that we despise Mary the Mother of Christ, Angels, and the Mem-
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that so we may be able to attack it with due Blows; and if we are not able to show the vanity of it to the Turks, we may at least be convinced of its vanity of itself. Nor would the Champion, which it were easy to turn upon our Adversaries, have been the less, tho' I had been silent. The Doctrines of the Romish Church concerning Purgatory, Intercession of Saints, Visiting of Sepulchres, religious Pilgrimages to this and that Temple, Definition of Means, stated Fasts, and Merits of Works, bear a far greater Refinishment to the Opinions of the Mahometans, than ours do; and are they therefore bad, because they are Mahometan Doctrines? By the same way of Reasoning, what they write agreeable to Truth concerning the Attributes of God, should be deny'd by us. But who in his Wits would affirm that?

V. I cannot forbear inserting in this place a pleasant Parallel, which Don Martinus Alphonfus Vitalius draws between the Lutherans (he likewise comprehends us under the same name) and the Mahometans, in Notios ad Petri de la Cevalleria Zelum Christi contra Judaeos & Saracenos; in which we know many things to be false. For 1. Mahomet affirm'd, That he only had the Pestle, and knew what things were to be rejected, and what to be receiv'd, out of both the Testaments: So the impious Luther said, That the Pestle was never in Germany before him. 2. Mahomet had twenty two Seets; So the Evangelicks have as many. 3. Mahomet said, That Mens Opinions were to be judged only according to his Writings: So by the Hereticks. 4. He chang'd the course of Lents, which he thought might be observ'd at any time of the Year indifferently: But the Lutherans not only change, but abhor all Fasts. 5. He chang'd the Feast of the Lord's Day into Friday: The Lutherans don't regard Feasts at all. 6. He taught at worshipping of Saints, which the Lutherans likewise follow.
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They also believe that Jesus, whom they call Neich, knew, and both know all the Secrets of Hearts, and all Books, and all the Wisdom of Moses, and Preaching, and whatsoever Men were a doing in their Houses, and what they put into their Coffers; and that Jesus did contain Riches, and was free from all carnal Conceivemence, and had none of those Deletations which are the Cause of Sinning. Likewise they have from Mahomet himself, what the Angel Gabriel told him concerning Mary: O Mary, God hath chosen thee, and beautified thee with Grace, and adorned thee, and chosen thee above all Women the Mothers of the Children of Men, and hath put thee as it were in the middle, between Men and the Angels of God, in the Paradise of Delights. They believe also, that there is no Person whom Satan hath not touch'd, except Neich; i.e. Jesus and Mary. (O wonderful Testimony of the Conception of the most pure Virgin!) The Mahometans also sing the Psalms of David, as we Christians do. Moreover, when they visit Mahomet's Sepulchre, they don't think themselves altogether pure, unless they likewise visit the Sepulchre of the most immaculate Virgin Mary. And if any Man is willing to become Mahometan, he must first believe Christ: And this Question is ask'd him: Doth thou not believe that Christ was born of a Virgin by the Blatt of God, and that he was the Lamb of the Jewish Prophets? If he answers in the Affirmative, he is made a Mahometan.

VII. Things being in this state, and History, both ancient and modern, teaching us, that most Religions have been either not well understood by Adversaries', or loaded with unjust Calumnies: we need not wonder if this has also been the Fortune of the Mahometan Religion: Especially if we consider the necessity of the Skill of the Arabian Tongue; in which every one, who

He put away Holy Images; the Lutherans overturn'd and brake them down. 8. He does not receive Baptism: Calvin affirms it is not necessary. 9. They circumcise only those who are come to the use of their Reason: Adrian Nannsted was baptiz'd in the 17th and 18th Year of his Age. 10. He allows Divorce: Orellanus, leaving his first Wife, takes another. 11. They take many Wives, so many as they are able to maintain: Bucer and Olearius say the same. 12. The Mahometans say, that good Works are useless; the Lutherans affirm that ours are Sins. 13. Mahomet denies Free-Will; the Lutherans do the same.

VI. And now, good Sir! to be sure you thought you had done Wonders, when you had collected so many Heads, in which you fancy'd we agreed with the Mahometans. But you betray your Art, when immediately you show the Agreement of the Mahometans with your Romish Church after the same manner: And so, according to your self, you may be reckon'd to agree with the Mahometans as well as we. I will offer your own words, that I may not be thought to add any thing of my own and the rather, because your Book is rarely to be met with: And in my opinion, it would be no great loss to the Commonwealth of Letters, if it should never be met with. There are, you say, many other things in which they agree with us Christians. First, That the Mahometans are not Idolaters, but worship God; and tho' they do not believe Jesus to be the Son of God, yet they believe him to have been a great Prophet, and the last of the Jewish Prophets; and that he was conceived by the Blatt of God, and born of a Virgin, without the Seed of a Man. They believe likewise that Jesus had a Power from God of working Miracles, of curing all Diseas and Infirmities, of calling out Devils, of raising the Dead, and on other things recorded of him by the Evangelists.
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It is beastly. But really the Mahometans are not so mad as we think them. Sense and Reason are equally distributed among Men: And I have always been of the mind, that that Religion, which hath largely spread itself over Asia, Africa, and even Europe, commends itself to Men by a great Appearance of Truth, which is ready to allure them; nor is it so foolish as many Christians esteem it. No doubt this is a very safe Religion, and a dangerous Mischiefe to Christianity; and which every one, who loves Christ, and believes the Bible, ought to hate. But tho this be true, must we therefore not inquire into it? Must we not esteem the Deceit and Guile of Satan? On the contrary, we should the more Labour in understanding it, that we may with the greater Certainty and Vigour fight against it.

VIII. But some will say, we have too little Relation with the Mahometans, and they don't dispute about their own Religion themselves; and supposing it proper to dispute, we have Books written in Latin against the Turks: and therefore to what purpose should we learn Arabic, and spend much time about their Language? I own the Mahometans don't lie so near us as Pagans and others; nor am I for teaching the Method of defending the Mahometans before other Adversaries, who are daily amongst us. He that understands me so, is in a great Mistake. But have we not also a great deal of Business with the Mahometans as Constantiople, upon the Conquest of Hungary and the Turkish Empire, upon the Coasts of Africa, in Syria, Petlia and the East-Indies, where our Colonies, and the Place we frequent to get Reics, contain abundance of Mahometans? But they will not dispute about their Religion. I grant it, they are not forward to dispute, because they keep close to the Alcoran; and most a Christian disputes against them, they cannot answer anything, but that they believe or do this, because God hath commanded...