

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA OP

# **THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS**

**THE UTTER IRRATIONALITY  
OF THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION**



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BOOK IV

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CHAPTER VII

## THE UTTER IRRATIONALITY OF THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION

MAHOMETANS, who observe the Jewish rite of circumcision and maintain almost every heretical doctrine, stand midway between Jews and heretics. It shall be our last, and not very difficult, task to refute them. I say that the task should not be a difficult one, for any one who knows the religion and reads the Koran of Mahomet, must be at once convinced of the folly of his system. All religion, to be true, must be either supernatural, or must proceed from the light of natural religion. Now, the Mahometan superstition can be inspired by no wisdom, either human or Divine, seeing that any one, however moderately versed in philosophy, can easily confute it.

The book of the Koran, or collection of precepts, bears ample testimony to the ignorance of its author, Mahomet. Its contents are so confusedly brought together, that no one in the world could, I believe, arrange them. This want of method is a clear sign of ignorance, or of falseness of judgment. But the Koran is also full of fables and immorality, that it deserves ridicule rather than serious analysis. It is evident that such a law could not proceed from natural reason, and still less from supernatural inspiration, since, as we have before shown, what is opposed to natural light, is necessarily opposed also to supernatural wisdom.

Again, a bad beginning rarely, if ever, brings a good ending. Now, Mahometanism began with Mahomet, who, as history tells us, was a most unreasonable and unprincipled man, an adulterer, and a robber. He was subject to epileptic fits, which often caused him to fall prostrate, and these falls he attributed to colloquies with an angel. Gradually, and by means, not of argument, but of violence and bribery, he gathered around him a number of uneducated and depraved men; and with their assistance conquered vast

multitudes of people. A sect, begun in this fashion, was not likely to have a good end.

Mahomet, in his Koran, approves both the New and the Old Testament. He commends Christ as a true Prophet, born of the Virgin Mary. But, in spite of this, he accuses Christians of having falsified both the Old and the New Testament. Such an accusation will, easily, be rejected by any one who considers the uniformity existing between the versions of the Old and New Testament, whether written in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or any other language, either ancient or modern. Had Christians tampered with the Scriptures, how could the versions of the Bible be uniform? This would be wonderful, existing, as they do, in so many languages, and written in such numbers of books, both Jewish and Christian, ancient and modern. This very uniformity of all the versions of the Scriptures is a clear proof that the fables of Mahomet, and the Koran itself, are but a tissue of lies.

Again, every true religion is established for the purpose of teaching a virtuous mode of life. Its end is the practice of purity of heart. It is intended to facilitate the contemplation of the Divine mysteries. Now, the religion of Mahomet is absolutely material. Completely ignoring true beatitude, it promises to its followers, after this life, nothing but the enjoyment of sensual gratification. There is no ground for saying that Mahomet spoke allegorically. The Koran contains no explanation of any parable, such as are to be found in our Scriptures.

Among the Mahometans, again, we do not, as in the Christian religion, meet with any miracles, or manifestation of Divine phenomena. Mahomet, while acknowledging Christ as the messenger of God, commissioned to convert the world by miracles, said that he himself had been sent by Heaven to convert it by the sword. This pretension was obviously ridiculous ; since God takes no pleasure in tyranny, nor in compulsory service. There is nothing striking in the doctrine contained in the Koran; yet the Mahometans think that they are uttering a wonderful saying, when they pronounce the words, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is His prophet"; "God is great and powerful". This, and similar phrases, are often repeated, and to them are added fables, which our very children would ridicule.

Again, the Mahometans, unlike Christians, own no prophets, no holy men, no workers of heavenly wonders. They venerate as saints, certain madmen, who mutilate their bodies, perform strange antics, and know nothing of Divine things. Mahomet. also, constantly contradicts himself in his Koran. He says that he

knows not, whether he and his followers are in the way of salvation ; and that he believes, that none can understand his law. It is a matter of surprise to me, that he was not stoned by his own people for giving them an unintelligible code, and leaving them in doubt about their salvation. His law indeed, being supported neither by natural reason, by miracles, nor by sanctity of life, is, fittingly, an object of derision. If Mahomet had attempted to establish his religion by preaching, his errors would have been very easily demonstrated. But, knowing that his doctrine was indefensible on any logical grounds, he had the astuteness to command, that it should be propagated by the sword. It may surprise some persons that Mahomet should have been successful in perverting so many nations, and in seducing them from Christ. For, it may be thought that Mahomet had greater influence than our Lord, the more so as his kingdom has constantly been on the increase. Our answer is, that there is nothing in this fact, which ought to impair our belief in the Christian religion. It does not, in the least, diminish the strength of the arguments which we have already adduced to prove the Divinity of its Founder. For neither in the law of Mahomet, nor in any other religious system, can anything be discovered, more holy, or more wonderful, than the Christian dogmas.

As for the fact of Mahomet's having withdrawn many from Christianity, as much may be asserted of the devil. So, this is no proof of Mahomet's superiority to Christ. For Satan has conquered a far greater multitude of souls than either our Lord or Mahomet have gained. If numbers are to be considered as a testimony to truth, we ought to follow in the wake of impious men, rather than to imitate the piety of the just. Bad men will always outnumber the good. It is indeed a surprising mode of arguing in favour of Mahomet, to say, that he must be superior to Christ, because, by means of the sword, he has subjected many to his irrational and degrading law. Such are not our arguments; nor was the Mahometan system that on which Christianity was founded. Small wonder is it, that Jesus has so few followers, since He commands us to live virtuously, to suffer until death, and yet, promises us none but invisible rewards. If the reasoning of those who uphold Mahometanism were correct, it would gainsay, not only supernatural doctrine, but also philosophy. For the conclusion, logically arising from it, is, that good is evil; truth, falsehood; and light, darkness. For, if the fact that a system is followed by a multitude renders it true and good and luminous; and if, as is the case, the number of men living virtuously and reasonably is extremely small, all our notions of religion and morality must be reversed.

Again, we must remember that, as God allows those who will not walk in the truth to be blinded, He suffered certain nations, as a punishment for their sins, to be seduced by Mahomet. Surely, had such not been His will, and had these races not deserved such a chastisement, Mahomet would have been powerless. For, if Christ was able, whilst His Name was still unknown, and the world was full of idolatry, to convert, by peaceful means, so many nations to Himself, how much more glorious would be His triumph, now that His Name is magnified throughout the whole earth? But, as we have just said, God allowed certain nations to be infected by Mahometanism, to punish them for their sins. Such a judgment is consistent with the words of our Lord, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (St. Matt. XX. 16).

We must, likewise, remember that the Church has frequently increased numerically, and frequently diminished, because man possesses free-will, and because God does not force him to virtue, but draws him by love. He either promises him eternal happiness, or threatens him, if he persist in sin, with divers penalties, of which one of the chief is the darkening of his understanding. Thus, David, speaking in the person of Christ, and of the just against the wicked, says, "Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and their back bend thou down always" (Ps. LXVIII. 24). Again, we find in Isaias, "Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them" (Isa. VI. 10). This blindness of heart and stubbornness of mind, foretold by the Prophets, was the first punishment that overtook the Jews.

We know, also, that it has been predicted, that many are to fall away from the faith. Our Lord, speaking of the end of the world, says, "Because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many hath grown cold" (St. Matt. XXIV. 12). He says again, "The Son of Man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth"? (St. Luke XVIII. 8). St. Paul, likewise, writes thus to Timothy, "Now the Spirit manifestly saith, that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. IV. 1). And, if we study the teaching of the Gospel, we shall find that this blindness of heart, the severest of all punishments, because it leads to hell, has been foretold by Christ, and by Him has been permitted to overtake men for their ingratitude and malice.

Some one may, however, reply, that it does not seem just that children should be punished for the sins of their fathers; and that if the Jews and Mahometans offended God, them indeed He ought to have punished with

blindness, but not to have involved in the same fate their descendants. To this argument we would reply, that, as the faith of Christ is known to the entire world, no one can be excused for disbelieving it. Of course, children would not be punished with their fathers, if they did not commit their fathers' sins. Men are all the less excusable, since, if they lived according to natural reason, and prayed to God for their eternal salvation, they would most undoubtedly be enlightened by faith. For, although we know that the judgments of God are unsearchable, we know likewise that He will never be wanting to any creature in its necessity. The Apostle says, "For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all". Then, contemplating the unfathomable abyss of the Divine Majesty, he immediately continues, "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things : to Him be glory for ever, Amen" (Rom. XI. 32-36).

We must, nevertheless, bear in mind that Christ our Lord, who foretold these evils to come, has likewise assured us that His Church shall never fail. For "behold," He says, "I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (St. Matt. XXVIII. 20). Now, as the calamities which He prophesied have come to pass, we have every reason to trust that the blessing which He has promised will also be vouchsafed to us. We may say this with confidence, as the Church is so solidly established, that it is folly to think that She can fail. We trust, therefore, that, as Christ has punished unfaithful Christians, He will likewise make new His Church, opening to her the whole world, that, so, there may be "one fold and one Shepherd". This, we know, will quickly come to pass. And, thus, the ship of Peter will plough her way forward, sometimes borne on by favouring winds, and sometimes buffeted by storms. But the law of Mahomet, based not on reason, Divine or human, but on physical force, cannot endure; for nothing established by violence can continue.

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*The Triumph of the Cross* by Fra Girolamo Savonarola. Translated from the Italian, edited, with introduction by the Very Rev. Father John Procter, S.T.L. Provincial of the Dominicans in England. London, SANDS & CO. Dublin, M. H. Gill & SON. 1901, pp. 195-202. (1)

## Notae:

- (1) Cf. 1) a) P. Hieronymus Savonarola OP, 1. [Regulae quaedam brevissimae.](#) 2. [Il Trionfo della Croce. IV. 7. Che la setta de' Maomettani è tutta irrazionabile.](#) 3. [Triumphus Crucis, sive De veritate Fidei. IV. 7. Mahumetanorum sectam omni ratione carere.](#) 4. [Le Triomphe de la Croix. IV. 7. Que la secte des mahométans est toute déraisonnable.](#) 5. [Tryumf Krzyża, czyli O prawdzie Wiary. IV. 7. Kompletna irracjonalność mahometańskiej sekty.](#) b) *Il "Trionfo della Croce"* di Fra Girolamo Savonarola. Editio per la prima volta nei due testi originali latino e volgare per cura del P. Lodovico Feretti de' Predicatori. Siena. PRESSO LA DIREZIONE DELLA BIBLIOTECA DEL CLERO. 1899. c) Hieronymi Savonarolae Ferrariensis, Ordinis Praedicatorum, *Triumphus Crucis sive De veritate fidei libri IV.* Editio nova. Cum praefatione, in qua Hieronymi Savonarolae spiritu prophetico, excommunicatione, morte, et a nonnullis ei tributa sanctitate, praesertim agitur. Curante G. G. Presbytero, Regiae Universitatis Bibliothecario adjuncto. Paris, Loisel Libraire, Rue Saint-Jacques, 125. 1845. d) *Le Triomphe de la Croix* de Jérôme Savonarole, traduit du latin par M. L'abbé Céleste Alix, Chapelain de Sainte-Geneviève, Prêtre séculier du tiers-ordre de Saint-Dominique. Dédié au R. P. Lacordaire. Paris, Charles Douniol, Libraire-éditeur, 1855.
- 2) Sac. Andreas Pohl, [De religione mahumedana.](#)
- 3) S. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Ecclesiae Doctor, [Opera dogmatica.](#)
- 4) [La Dottrina Cristiana composta per ordine della santa memoria di Papa Clemente VIII](#) dal ven. Cardinale Roberto Bellarmino.
- 5) S. Pius Papa V, S. Pius Papa V, [Catechismus Romanus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini \(Katechizm rzymski według uchwały świętego Soboru Trydenckiego\).](#)
- 6) P. Ferdinandus Cavallera SI, [Thesaurus doctrinae catholicae ex documentis Magisterii ecclesiastici.](#)
- 7) P. Christianus Pesch SI, [Compendium Theologiae dogmaticae.](#)
- 8) P. Albertus a Bulsano OFM Cap, [De Tolerantismo religioso.](#)
- 9) P. Parthenius Minges OFM, a) [Compendium theologiae dogmaticae generalis.](#) b) [Compendium theologiae dogmaticae specialis.](#) c) [Ecclesia est infallibilis.](#) d) [De religione judaica postchristiana.](#) e) [Modernismus.](#) f) [De excellentia religionis christianae.](#)
- 10) Dr. Franciscus Egger, Episcopus Brixinensis et Princeps, a) [De proprietatibus religionis.](#) b) [De necessitate Ecclesiae.](#) c) [De indefectibilitate Ecclesiae.](#)
- 11) P. D. Mézard OP, [Medulla S. Thomae Aquinatis per omnes anni liturgici dies distributa seu meditationes ex operibus S. Thomae depromptae.](#)

(Notae ab ed. *Ultra montes*).



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