

“Not want of opportunity, but want of sympathy and compatibility, kept him aloof from the religion of Christ. His first wife introduced him to her Christian cousin; one of his later wives had embraced Christianity in Abyssinia, and the most favored of his concubines was a Christian damsel from the Copts of Egypt. He was acquainted with ascetic monks, and had dealings with learned Bishops of the Orthodox Church.”

Again, Mohammed was not ignorant of the supreme importance of the doctrine of the atonement. According to a well-known tradition, he said:

“I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form, and He said unto me, ‘O Mohammed, knowest thou on what subject the highest angels contend?’ I answered, ‘Yes, O my Lord, on the subject of atonement, that is to say, on the services and degrees which are the cause of the atonement of sins.’ Thereupon the word was addressed to me, ‘What is atonement?’ I answered, ‘Atonement is the remaining in the house of prayer after the service has been performed; the going to the meetings on foot; and the taking an ablution when trials and troubles befall: whoever does these things will live and die well, and be as pure from sin as if he had just been born of his mother.’”

Other traditions relate how Mohammed explained some of the pagan sacrifices, such as *Al 'Aqqa* and the sacrifices at Mecca, as in a certain sense atoning for sin, so the doctrine of substitution could not, in itself, have been repugnant to him (*Mishkat* 18: 3).

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact remains that Islam from its origin until our own day has been an enemy of the Cross of Christ, and has ever made the crucifixion a cause of stumbling. This position, once taken by orthodox