

**NON-CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS.
ISLAM & ITS FOUNDER**

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Non-Christian Religious Systems. Islam & Its Founder by J. W. H. Stobart

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J. W. H. STOBART

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RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS.
ISLAM & ITS FOUNDER**

MAY 23 1896
Trinity School.

DEDICATED
TO
A BELOVED MOTHER
BY HER SON.

161
St. Louis

BONCHURCH,
13th Octob. 1876.

PREFACE.

I AM so much indebted to the researches of others for the contents of this little Manual, that I scarcely know where to begin my acknowledgments. My especial thanks are due to Sir W. Muir, for the valuable aid of his work¹—confessedly the best on the subject,—which I have taken as my guide in these pages. Sale's translation is used in the quotations from the Koran, and from his "Preliminary Discourse" and "Notes" I have freely quoted. I have also found valuable aid in the writings of Freeman (*The Saracens*), Forster (*Geography of Arabia*), Kasimirski (*Koran*), Irving (*Life of Mahomet*), Monier Williams (*Indian Wisdom*), Lane (*Modern Egyptians, &c.*), Burton (*El Mecca and El Medinel*), Kennedy, the Rev. J. (*Christianity and the Religions of India*), Hughes, the Rev. T. P. (*Notes on Muhammadanism*), Lamartine, Prideaux, Deutsch, Bosworth Smith, Gibbon, and others who have written on the subject.

¹ "Life of Mahomet," 4 vols. 4to. London.

I have thought best to retain the spelling "Mahomet," "Koran," "Caliph," "Wahabee," &c., as being naturalized in our language, and as likely to hold their place till some uniform system of transliteration is generally adopted.¹

With regard to the contents of this book, I am not conscious that any important matter connected with Islam, or regarding its founder, has been omitted. In treating of the leading features of the Mahometan system I have sought to state facts and results, rather than to attribute motives; and, whilst compromising nothing of the truth, have endeavoured to avoid everything which would appear like partisanship or prejudice.

Sincerely trusting that I may not, in any particular, have neglected the golden rule of Christian Charity in speaking of "the great antagonistic Creed," and fully conscious of the imperfections of my work, whose aim is to be a popular exposition of the subject, I now submit it to the indulgent criticism of the reader.

J. W. H. S.

CLIFTON, 5th July, 1876.

¹ We meet with "Muhammad," "Mohammed," "Mohammad"; Quran, Coran, Al-coran, C-kooran, &c. The verse-numbers are those of Kasiminski.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I.—GEOGRAPHY, EARLY HISTORY, AND PROPLING OF ARABIA.....	5
II.—ANCIENT RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OF THE ARABS, AND ANCESTRY OF MAHOMET	29
III.—BIRTH OF MAHOMET, AND LIFE TO HIS FORTIETH YEAR.—[A.D. 570-610.].....	45
IV.—MAHOMET'S LEGATION, AND THE FIRST ESTA- BLISHMENT OF ISLAM.—[A.D. 610-617.]	69
V.—EARLY TEACHING AT MECCA	86
VI.—LAST YEARS OF MAHOMET AT MECCA.— [A. D. 617-622.]	123
VII.—THE LATEST TEACHING AT MECCA	135
VIII.—MAHOMET'S CAREER AT MEDINA.—[A.D. 622- 632.]	148
IX.—MAHOMET'S TEACHING AT MEDINA	185
X.—ISLAM	196
XI.—SPREAD OF ISLAM	208
XII.—CONCLUSION	227

ISLAM AND ITS FOUNDER.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHY, EARLY HISTORY, AND PEOPLES OF ARABIA.

"JEZERET-UL-ARAB," or the Chersonese of Arabia, is the name given by its inhabitants to the great peninsula which, bordered by the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the deserts which extend to the Euphrates, stretches, in round numbers, from the 12th to the 34th degree of north latitude. Its length, from the Mediterranean to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, is about 1,400 miles, its breadth across the neck of the peninsula is 800 miles, whilst its coast-line on the Indian Ocean approaches 1,200 miles. "Although Arabia is not greatly inferior in extent to India, it does not possess a single navigable river."¹ Few of its streams reach the ocean. Most of them exist only when swelled by the periodic rains, and, as a rule, lose themselves in the sandy plains. Arabia forms a part of that barren and nearly rainless region, of which the Sahara, in Africa, and the deserts of Shamo, in Thibet, form the western

¹ Muir, t. cxlvi.

and eastern boundaries. It embraces, within its extent, strange varieties of scenery and soil,—barren hills, vast sandy deserts uninhabited and uninhabitable, a rock-bound coast, stretches of excellent pasturage and fertile wadies, which, contrasted with the bleak wilderness around, charm the traveller with an unspeakable freshness and verdure.

The name Arabia was often used by old writers in a wide sense. Thus it is applied by Pliny to part of Mesopotamia; by Herodotus (ii. 12) to Syria, and to the coast of the Red Sea between it and the Nile valley. The general division of Arabia, by Greek and Roman writers, is into Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix. This latter epithet is probably only a mistaken translation of "El Yemen,"—the land on the right hand, that is, of the south, for the Orientals faced east; as contrasted with Syria, which in Arabic is called "El Sham," or the country to the left of Mecca. The third division, Arabia Petraea, that is, Arabia of Petra, first appears in Ptolemy, applied to the Sinai district. Arabia Deserta was inhabited entirely by nomad tribes—Scenitæ—tent-men, and Saraceni. Arabia Felix was occupied by more settled tribes, as the Sabæi, &c. Their principal port was Aden, the Arabiæ Emporium of Ptolemy. The Arabians were never subdued, properly speaking, as a nation. Indeed, their innumerable tribal and political divisions, and the nature of the country, rendered their subjugation to a foreign power next to impossible. They gave to the Great King, as allies, not as subjects, a gift of one thousand talents of frankincense (Herodotus, iii. 97)