

fore the appearance of Mohammed. It was in southwestern Arabia, however, that the Christian faith exerted its greatest power and made largest conquest. In the reign of Constantius, Theophilus prevailed on the Arabian king to accept Christianity. He built three churches in south Arabia, and no less than four bishoprics were established.

**Islam's
Beginning**

Whatever may have been the condition or the teaching of Christianity in Arabia, Mohammed came in contact with it all through his life. One of the chief stories he heard in his boyhood was of the Christian invasion from the south, and the defeat of Abraha; later he went to Syria, met monks, and passed through the territory of the Christian tribes of northern Arabia; after he became a prophet he had as wife a Christian Coptic woman, Miriam, the mother of his darling son, Ibrahim. For good or for ill, Mohammed could not remain wholly ignorant of Christianity, and therefore it is not surprising to find the evidence of this in Islam. The religion of Mohammed and Mohammed himself grew up in a land where these three systems of belief, Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, were struggling for the ascendancy. And we must add to this four other factors which stand out clearly in the life of Mohammed.

**Political
Factor**

There was, first of all, the political factor.