

2. Canon Taylor considers Mahommedanism a faith much more easy of comprehension to the Negro mind, and, moreover, a faith which contains in a simple form the essentials of Christian truth. He finds in the Koran undeveloped seeds of Christian truth; Mahommedanism is an imperfect Christianity; the Moslem and the Christian alike worship the One God, and regard the Lord Jesus Christ as the one sinless and perfect pattern of humanity; and there is nothing in Mahommedanism antagonistic to Christianity. It is astounding to hear a dignitary of the Church of England seriously telling us that for the Negro in the heart of Africa Mahommedanism and Christianity are convertible terms; that to deal with him effectively we must go, not to the simple verities of the Christian faith, but to a faith whose highest principles are a corruption of an imperfect Judaism. And the ground on which he offers us this advice is the rapid spread of Mahommedanism among these degraded African tribes. We do not want and do not expect to see Christianity spread in such a fashion. It is easy to teach even a Negro to articulate the words Allah or Bismillah; when this is done he is a Mahommedan. There is a simplicity in this sort of conversion which cannot be denied. But we do not expect conversion to Christianity with the same rapidity and simplicity. We believe, in spite of Canon Taylor, that the Negro mind can take in Christianity—not such undeveloped germs as are found in the Koran, but such clear and distinct statements of truth as we find in the gospels. In the conversion of the Northern nations, it is true, whole tribes were indiscriminately baptized and called Christians. That is a mode of propagating Christianity which is not in favor now. Christianity does not gain tribes and nations in masses. It is one by one that it lays its hold upon the souls of men. Its power to convert and renew one Negro is sufficient to show its suitability for the race. And we have happily abundant illustrations of this power. We have heard the Rev. David Clement Scott again and again declare—we thought he went a little too far—that there was no truth which the African as he knew him was unable to grasp and thoroughly understand, and no spiritual attainment of which he was not capable. We have heard Dr. Laws, of the Free Church Mission on Lake Nyassa, speak in similar, if more measured terms. Although the number of converts in connection with African Missions is small, and although many converts are not successes, there are African Christians with as firm a grasp of the doctrines of grace as is to be found among communicants at home, and with characters which, for consistency and devotion to Christ, would put many professing Christians in Britain to shame.

When Canon Taylor quotes the earnestness and devoutness and humility of the Mahommedan missionaries, who go about without purse or scrip disseminating their religion by quietly teaching the Koran, he identifies himself with a picture which is only an ideal, and with a de-