

The success which has attended these two meetings renders it highly desirable that similar efforts should be made in every town in Ontario, where there are any graduates of Trinity. We hope that those who are already members of Convocation will endeavour to arrange meetings. We are authorized to state that a députation from Trinity may be obtained on due notice being given. In getting up such meetings, it is important to invite *all* graduates, *Medical* as well as others, and *all* friends of the College.

We are pleased to state that signatures of Associate Members are coming in, and trust that all Graduate Members will do their best to swell the list of such.

There are a few members who have not yet paid their subscription for 1887. The Clerk will be glad to hear from them.

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Ever since the painful surprise caused by Canon Isaac Taylor's paper at the Church Congress, on the Progress of Islam, there has been a great degree of uncertainty and dissatisfaction among those who have at heart the interests of Christianity. It is doubtless, therefore, with great interest that the article in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, from the pen of Prof. R. Bosworth Smith, dealing with this question, is received. It cannot be said, however, that there is any great amount of relief to be obtained from this article, for although the bold and perhaps exaggerated statements of Canon Taylor are explained and somewhat modified, still they are not by any means got rid of. Canon Taylor's fault was, putting Islam in a glow of rosy light, and looking at it in its best aspects, forgetting all the wickedness that goes along with Mohammedan faith; while he dealt only with the dark side of Christianity—the shortcomings and failures of its professors—and ignored the divine excellence of its teaching.

The geographical extent of Islam is but imperfectly realized. The whole of the Barbary States, from the Nile to the Atlantic; all the desert region of Sahara; South of this again, the enormous stretch of country called Negroland, or the Soudan, stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean; beyond this again, even along the coast line, mingling with Christianity and civilization, Islam holds its sway. Its missionaries, generally also traders, are constantly pushing their encroachments, making converts alike from Pagan and semi-Christianized natives. In short, as Mr. Smith sums it up: "It is hardly too much to say that one-half of the whole of Africa is already dominated by Islam, while, of the remaining half, one quarter is leavened, and another threatened by it."

As to the belief: "Allahu Akbar," 'God is most great, and there is nothing else great,' this is the Mussulman creed; 'Islam,' that is, man must submit to God, and find his greatest happiness in so doing,' this is the Mussulman life."

There can be no doubt as to the effect of this faith upon the Negro tribes that embrace it. Cannibalism, human

sacrifice, and the burial of live infants, disappear at once; habits of personal cleanliness appear, and those who before were naked, or almost so, begin to clothe themselves. There is an increase in energy, in self-reliance; the native has a dignity and self-respect, before unknown to him. War is better organized, and also restrained, property is more secure, and elementary schools are established.

There are two other evils which Islam, in a wonderful manner, tends to overcome; drunkenness—a result of the contact with European civilization—and the belief in witchcraft and fetishes. Space forbids to enlarge on these matters.

The drawbacks enumerated as belonging to Islam are mainly four, which may be barely mentioned. They are the slave-trade; the pride that despises and spurns all not of the faith of Islam; religious wars; and finally polygamy. The evils herein are self-evident.

Mr. Smith then goes on to ask, Why has Christianity failed?—and he mentions several causes of this failure.

First, Christianity has come to the Negro in a 'foreign garb.' There has always been between the missionary and the Negro the instinctive feeling of race repulsion. Mohammedanism, on the other hand, took root in the soil, and its teachers fraternized with the Negroes, and the faith was handed on not exclusively to Arabs, but also to men of the Negro's own race.

Secondly, Christianity came to the Negro as a system from without—as part of the white man's civilization. So the Negro did not develop naturally in Christian experience, but was continually associating Christianity with the white man—it was the white man's religion.

Thirdly, Christianity came to the Negro weighted with the shortcomings and crimes of its professors. Rum, gunpowder, and the selfishness and cruelty of the traders on the West Coast do not predispose the Negro to receive the message of the missionaries. And in addition to these, Christianity has not been offered to the nobler tribes of Negroes, but mainly to the more demoralized tribes along the coast, and even then, not in its simple, acceptable form, but confused and rendered hard of acceptance by all the questions and controversies that have accumulated in the centuries around it.

Notwithstanding, a reason for hope is suggested in the Christian Republic of Liberia, and the millions of Christian Negroes in America and the West Indies, who may perhaps be moved to think of their brethren in the Dark Continent. Conversion to Islam does not mean what conversion to Christianity does; as Mr. Smith says:

"The conversion of a whole Pagan community to Islam need not imply more effort, more sincerity, or more vital change than the conversion of a single individual to Christianity."

Islam sits but lightly on the Negro. And although the present looks dark enough, we may believe the future will dawn in brightness when Christianity will be received, and when the truth will reign even in Africa.