

Wolverhampton on the subject of Mahommedanism has given rise to more discussion than any other subject brought under the notice of the Congress. The Church papers have had their pages filled with correspondence, mostly adverse to the learned essayist. The columns of *The Times* have been opened to the discussion, and *The Times* has passed its judgment upon the points in dispute—a judgment also unfavorable to the view set before the Congress by Canon Taylor.

The contention of the learned Canon may be regarded as threefold : That Mahommedanism is spreading in Africa and India at a rate far surpassing the Christian rate of progress in these countries ; that its teachings and methods, so far as suitability to native races is concerned, might well be adopted by the promoters of Christianity; and that as a temporary and preparatory scheme of religious belief it may be let alone to do the work it is doing. We may conveniently follow this contention in the order here laid down.

1. It is only in a vague and general fashion that we can estimate the progress of Mahommedanism in Africa. It is the dominant faith in Egypt, and from thence westward to Morocco, whilst it is widely prevalent from the Mediterranean to the Equator. It is essentially a missionary religion, and from time to time there are outbursts of missionary zeal which undoubtedly subdue whole tribes to the faith of Islam. In the great Al-Azhar University at Cairo it is said that there are in attendance every year some ten thousand students who go forth as Mollahs, Moulvies, and teachers of religion into all parts of the Mahommedan world, and some of whom are sent for the propagation of Islam into the regions beyond. This, however, is only a popular estimate, and it is, we believe, considerably exaggerated. If the number of Moslem students ever reaches eight thousand, that large figure is made up of persons who become students to escape conscription. The great majority learn little and pass no examination. When we turn from the propaganda to the results we do meet with evidences of missionary success.

In his interesting paper in the *Contemporary Review*, December, last year, our countryman Mr. Joseph Thomson set Mahommedanism in a comparatively new and favorable light as a missionary agency. This is what he found up the Niger : “ The sights and scenes I witnessed burst upon me like a revelation. I found myself in the heart of Africa among undoubted Negroes ; but how different from the unwashed, unclad barbarians it had hitherto been my lot to meet in my travels in Africa! No longer did the naked savage throw himself before stocks and stones, or lay offerings before snakes or lizards, but as a well-clothed and reverent worshiper he bent before that One God whose greatness and compassionateness he continually acknowledged.” This is testimony which there is no need to disparage. For those regions of West Africa to which it refers it may be accepted as the true state of the case. It is sad to think that Mr. Thomson should have to be accepted as a true