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6. The words, "He descended into Hell," originally imported only our Lord's burial, and were blunderingly slipped into the Apostles' Creed about the seventh century, without any authority—the words "ad inferos" being in the Creed, as we have it, improperly translated "into hell."

7. As in the Creed at present they are tautological.

I cannot more suitably conclude than with the prayer in our Burial Service, already partially quoted, "that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THEOPHILUS CAMPBELL.



ART. III.—THE PRESENT PHASES OF THE MOHAMMEDAN QUESTION (SECOND ARTICLE).

THE growing numbers of its sectaries "point to Mohammedanism becoming one day dominant over a very large part of the continent of Africa. At present large numbers of negroes are Mohammedans only in name, and have not an intelligent acquaintance with the distinctive tenets of their own creed. In another generation or two they will probably be as fanatical and bigoted, and as difficult to deal with, as the Mohammedans of the Turkish Empire." These are the words not of yesterday, nor of one who criticised missionary enterprise, but they were spoken on October 20th, 1875, in the Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, at a conference on missions to the Mohammedans, and they were spoken by General Lake, then one of the honorary secretaries of the Society. He also said, "In Africa for Mohammedans but little has been done, because little has been attempted," a statement of the case which unhappily is as true of to-day as it was then.

Of this progress in Africa, Bosworth Smith writes, "One half of the whole of Africa is already dominated by Islam, while of the remaining half a quarter is leavened and another threatened by it."¹ This is to claim the ground wherever a

¹ *Nineteenth Century* for last December, p. 796. As my references to this article, as also to his book, "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" (edition 1876), will be critical, I should like to acknowledge here the great amount of invaluable matter and suggestion there is in both. It strikes me that the author in his book did not quite do justice either to

Moslem foot has trodden, whilst the highest estimate of African Mohammedans which I have met with does not rank them at more than a third of the population. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, just now notorious for his Home Rule pranks in Ireland, and who is equally enamoured of Mohammedans, does not rate the total higher than thirty-four and a half millions, of whom ten millions are calculated for Central Africa. But he puts a query to his own calculation, as everyone must do in dealing with figures about that continent, our knowledge is as yet so very scanty.¹ A huge impulse, however, has been imparted to the propaganda of Islam in West Central Africa. With the beginning of this century, Danfodio, an able leader and preacher of the Wahhabi type, excited a great commotion there, and "established a mighty empire, the capital of which is Sockatoo."² He has not been the only important personage of the kind in the last hundred years.³ Three features, not new to the progress of Islam, have characterized these movements. There have been *Jihads*, or religious wars, there have been the conquests of trade, and there have been men who went forth with genuine belief in and devotion to Islam, and with marvellous persuasiveness of manner. Dr. Blyden, whose encyclopedic learning, literary ability, and attachment to his African brethren entitle him to our respect, and make us grieve for the prejudices he has imbibed, says, "The Arab missionaries whom we have met in the interior go about without 'purse or scrip,' and disseminate their religion by quietly teaching the Koran. The native missionaries—Mandingoes and Foulahs—unite with the propagation of their faith active trading."⁴ This general description is in the

himself or to his cause when he relegated such important points as polygamy and slavery to a few lines (pp. xiv, xv), in a preface. People do not read prefaces. I feel that the earnestness of tone and equity of temper in the *Nineteenth Century* article are an example to all who approach the subject, although I, for one, cannot altogether accept his verdict.

¹ "Future of Islam," p. 10. Written in 1881 and published in 1882.

² Winwood Reade's "African Sketch-book," i. 316, 317. See also Barth's fourth volume of "Travels in Central Africa."

³ See Blyden's "Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race," p. 141 and pp. 357-60.

⁴ P. 13. I will quote in this note a passage from a letter dated November 13th, which I have from Rev. J. T. F. Halligey, for six years a Wesleyan missionary at Sierra Leone and Lagos: "In its advances among these pagan tribes its work has not been one of regeneration, but compromise. It has traded on heathen credulity." It "is now percolating through the regions which lie immediately within the West Coast line," but "is of an exceedingly emasculated type. Probably its compromises with paganism have diluted its virulence against Christianity. I am bound to say I have never encountered any rampant bigotry. Of Sierra Leone one of my most pleasing reminiscences is of a Mohammedan priest,

main accurate, though with the serious qualification, that nine-tenths of the progress of Islam in Nigritia has been by the sword.

At the present moment the most important missionary body is that of the Snousi, about which I should like to learn very much more than I have been able to do, for they may prove themselves formidable. It is not impossible, indeed, that those dervishes who are occasioning trouble in the Soudan are connected or in intimate relations with them. Their headquarters are in an oasis of some 7,000 people in the corner of the Libyan desert verging on Tripoli and Egypt. They have been in existence a little over fifty years, and they number thousands of devotees. They are ascetic in their habits, monkish in the regulations of their order, and pledged equally against infidels and modernizing Mohammedans. They are ready to preach, or to trade, or to fight, but always with the one central object of propagating Islam. The ramifications of their work extend for thousands of miles, and in every direction from the northern seaboard to the Equator. There is a power in them that must be reckoned with in all judgments about Islam's future.

But when this advance of Islam is contrasted with the supposed slowness of Christian progress, a wider outlook must be had. Bosworth Smith, in his own captivating style, writes: "Leaping from oasis to oasis of the Great Desert [*i.e.* the Sahara] with almost the speed of its nomad horsemen, and subduing to its message, as it passed, even some of the wild and wandering Touariks, we know that before the year 1000 it had reached Timbuctoo."¹ That was within three hundred years of Akbar's springing his horse into the Atlantic in sorrow that his triumphant course was stopped by the sea. Yet at the end of another seven hundred years Mungo Park enters Timbuctoo, and up to this time there were pagan kingdoms not far away, whilst the country between the Senegal and Niger was in a transition state, and the advance of Mohammedanism there had all the signs of being recent.² In the

who frequently visited me for friendly conversation on the Koran and the Bible, and who when we said farewell assured me that he believed in Jesus, and gladly accepted an Arabic copy of the Scriptures. In Lagos also I have had intercourse with Mohammedans, have exchanged visits, have been welcomed at some of their schools, and on one occasion took a photograph of the pupils. Moreover, one of the principal Mohammedan merchants in Lagos is an annual subscriber to our funds."

¹ "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," p. 37. Barth, however, dates the founding of Timbuctoo at 1087 A.D. (vol. iv., p. 584).

² Park's first journey was, 1795-97, and his second in 1805. I shall quote as vol. i. the edition of 1800, in which his first travels were described, and as vol. ii. the edition of 1816, which has the journal of his second journey as far as Sansanding.

Countries he traversed "the religion of Mohammed has made, and continues to make, considerable progress; but in most of them, the body of the people, both free and enslaved, persevere in maintaining the blind but harmless superstitions of their ancestors, and are called by the Mohammedans *Kafirs*, or infidel."¹ In Sansanding, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, on the Niger, there was a regular beer-market where were "often exposed for sale from 80 to 100 calabashes of beer, each containing about two gallons."² If, therefore, it took seven hundred years for Islam to travel about as many miles, we are forced to infer, either that during those periods it was somewhat apathetic, or else that Africa is a hard nut to crack.

We are assured, however, that Christianity has "failed," because in three hundred years "no single African tribe as a tribe, and no leading African chief as a chief," has been converted on the West Coast.³ I reply that this ought to be regarded as a cause for gladness and thankfulness. In all Church history the faith of Jesus has prospered most where it has won its adherents by units and not by masses. In the light of this recollection there are many who view even more hopefully the few distinguished converts from Islam in the Punjab, than the multitudes of Tamils in Tinnevely. We rejoice greatly over both, but as earnest for the future Church of India it is possible there is more of real promise in the North-West. Other and less kindly writers declare that the Christianity of Sierra Leone is threatened. But is not the Christianity there of the second and third generation? And will it not be liable to such trials as assail us in England? We are not startled, nor do we shriek out that English Christianity is threatened when Mormon missionaries carry off, from London or Liverpool their converts to Utah. Besides, there is a condition of trial in Sierra Leone to which we are not exposed, owing to the great influx there of heathens as well as Mohammedans. The population of the colony has increased from about 41,000 in 1861 to over 60,000 in 1881. This is about twice the rate of increase of population in England and Wales, and indicates an immigration of at least 10,000 from outside. Now in 1861 there were 1,774 Mohammedans and 27,000 Christians. In 1881 there were 5,178 Mohammedans and 39,417 Christians.⁴ If, therefore, we exclude the immigrants, and gauge by normal growth of population, it will be seen that Christianity had made a gain by conversion of heathens of not far from twenty per cent. in the twenty

¹ Vol. i., p. 21, cap. ii.

² Vol. ii., p. 215.

³ *Nineteenth Century*, p. 808. Blyden, p. 25.

⁴ The figures for 1881 I have extracted from the Census Report; those for 1861 are from Livingstone, as copied by Bosworth Smith, p. 351.

years. The increase in the number of Mohammedans is due slightly to conversions from the heathen, but mainly to newcomers from without, whilst the conversions of nominal Christians to Islam have been few and seldom. An inspection of the race-table accompanying the census leads me to suspect that the Moslem gains, such as they may be, have been chiefly amongst the Timmanees. The state of affairs since 1881 up to the end of 1886 may be conjectured from the fact that the Church of England and Wesleyans unitedly were, a year ago, over 42,000, and if we add to these some 3,500 for the other denominations, assuming that they have remained stationary, we have some 46,000 Christians, or an increase of more than twelve per cent. in the five years.

These results must be considered as a complete reply to alarmist guesses, provided the quality of the results is as good as the number. But Vice-Consul Johnston steps out, and in the *Nineteenth Century* for November challenges the good repute of these West Coast native Christians. "Their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues, and unclean livers of the colony. In the oldest of our West African possessions, all the unrepentant Magdalenes of the chief city are professing Christians, and the most notorious one in the place would boast that she never missed going to church on a Communion Sunday." Such assertions as these are discredited by their wholesale nature, and tainted at the source. What are they but the gossip of steamer-decks, hotels, and factors' dinner-parties? Surely *all* the drunkards and *all* the sinners are not nominally Christians; the heathen must contribute their quota. One is driven, although most reluctantly, to speak a word about the general character of the white residents along the West Coast, since it is their common conversation which is thus retailed for the public at home. Captain Ellis, a man who is no believer in Missions or native Christians, writes,¹ "Ladies there are none," except very occasionally. "Society at Sierra Leone is in a very bad way; in fact, from an English point of view one may say that there is no society at all. The only Europeans in the place are the officers of the garrison, the colonial officials, and a few shopkeepers." "Most of the so-called merchants appear to have sprung from the lower strata of English life; many of them have black wives." "The retailing of scandal seems to be the principal occupation of the town society; and if we were to place implicit credence on the tales and gossip which abound, one could inevitably arrive at the conclusion that there was not an honourable man or a virtuous woman in the place."

¹ "The Land of the Fetish," pp. 152, 153; published in 1883.

Much in the same tenor is Winwood Reade's "Pastor's Daughter," a supposed sketch of Sierra Leone life.¹ I should not myself receive, without ominous discount, either the testimony of Captain Ellis or of Mr. Reade. The latter mingles fact with fiction, novelettes with narrative, in such a manner that a plain man may be excused for not always distinguishing which is fact and which is fiction. I have quoted them to show the ease with which classes of society, white or black, may be robbed of reputation, and the amount of scepticism with which such censure should be met. Small coteries are frequently scandal-mongers. I must, however, express my wish that we had in West Africa more of that noble element which has purified and honoured Anglo-Indian society.

If then Christianity has not "failed," we scarcely need seek for new methods of missionary endeavour. But when persons of Bosworth Smith's and Blyden's position and information, place their ideas distinctly and sincerely before us, we ought to be grateful, and are bound to canvas them. I will, therefore, go seriatim over the five obstacles to missionary success which they have enumerated.² First, "Christianity has come to the negro in a foreign garb." Blunt has the same sentiment in a passage which is worth introducing here:³ "The Christian missionary makes his way slowly in Africa. He has no true brotherhood to offer the negro except in another life. He makes no appeal to a present sense of dignity in the man he would convert. What Christian missionary takes a negress to wife, or sits with the negro wholly as an equal at meat? Their relations remain at best those of teacher with taught, master with servant, grown man with child. The Mohammedan missionary from Morocco, meanwhile, stands on a different footing. He says to the negro, 'Come up and sit beside me. Give me your daughter, and take mine. All who pronounce the formula of Islam are equal in this world and in the next.'" That is a caricature, but may contain useful lessons. If a missionary is ever tempted to lord it over the Negro, let him reflect on this. But is the Moor such a cosmopolitan individual? He would no doubt take the Negress to wife, but would he not hesitate about offering his daughter? The universal testimony about the Moors is, that they are unsurpassed for haughty contemptuous insolence. This complete mingling and fusion of classes has not taken place everywhere.⁴ There is none of it for instance at Sokoto, accord-

¹ "African Sketches," vol. ii., pp. 327-48.

² *Nineteenth Century*, pp. 808-12.

³ "Future of Islam," p. 26.

⁴ I observe that Blunt uses the small "n" for Negro, a common usage, of which Blyden (p. 11, note 12) complains as an indignity to the race.

ing to Joseph Thomson's evidence. Mungo Park came across no traces of it. In Andalusia, Syria, Bagdad, and Turkey, the aristocracy were feudal in their severity, and traced their descent to the first conquerors. If Negro missionaries are now propagating Islam, so are Negro missionaries proclaiming the Gospel. Give them time and the issues will be glorious. Blunt himself, on another page (*i.e.*, p. 128), has this, "The negro races will not only be Mohammedanized; they will also be Arabized." Is that not a "foreign garb"? Again, what Africa needs socially is to be elevated. This must be by a lever which has at first an external fulcrum. One of the Rev. James Johnson's touching pleas was for English ladies to go out and exhibit to his African sisters something of English domestic life, and habits, and home-thoughts. The process of Christianization may be the slower one, for the deeper the well and the longer the chain, or the higher the mountain and the further to climb, but it is best in the end. Besides, are we not making altogether too much of these secondary considerations? The power resides not in the agent or the agency, but in the Spirit of God. It is the Gospel itself which must soften the heart, and both at home and abroad we are constantly being taught, by what men account as surprises, that the battle is sometimes to the weak, and that the victory is not always to the strong.¹

"Secondly, Christianity came to the Negro, not as a development from within, but as a system from without. The white man's religion was a part of the white man's civilization." "From the lessons he every day receives, the Negro unconsciously imbibes the conviction that to be a good man he must be like the white man." Is not Dr. Blyden here drawing upon his American and West Indian experiences rather than upon his African? The story of "the lily-white hands," and of the "white man with blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and flaxen hair," whom the Negro wishes to be like in the future life, are stories not racy of the African soil; they possess a decidedly Yankee flavour. Although of negro blood, Dr. Blyden is American born, and his first associations were not African, nor does he write as would a man of his ability born and brought up in the country. It is highly honourable in him to have sympathized so profoundly and to have identified himself so thoroughly with his African kindred; and yet his

¹ I have a notion of my own that when there are more Moslem converts in India they might some of them be sent to Africa as missionaries. The other day two Arabic-speaking students from the American College at Beyrout offered themselves to the C.M.S. for mission work in East Africa. I hope they may be fit and able for that work. It is a happy omen.

sentiments are not African—at least that is my conviction, and I have, as best I might, studied and tried to understand African life and character. Nor do I believe that our having formerly participated in the slave-trade has during the present century been an impediment to our missions. It has left with us an hereditary arrogance, it may be, in our treatment of Negroes which has had to be got rid of. But slavery was so entirely built up in African custom that it did not seem to them the sin it is, and therefore they have not shared in the deserved indignation against us. That Sierra Leone has become as much Anglicized as it has, is I think a pity; and I fear it somewhat affects the mission on the Niger, but not to the extent nor in the way supposed. All missionary societies are agreed in this—Africans for Africa, and by patient waiting we shall obtain them.

“Thirdly, Christianity has hitherto come to the Negro weighted with the shortcomings and crimes of its professors.” This is mournfully true, and we abundantly deplore it; but it scarcely bends the balance in favour of the Mohammedans, as though he had been free from crimes and shortcomings. The bad white has been the curse of the heathen, and the aggrandisement of stronger governments has obliterated weaker races. This is not due either to missionaries or to Christianity. They have alleviated what has been the age-long struggle of the weak against the strong. The Mohammedan merchant is certainly not less exacting and unscrupulous than the Christian; the Mohammedan conqueror not less ferocious. This, however, rather belongs to the question of relative civilization, which I shall have to discuss presently under another head.

Fourthly, Christianity has hitherto “been offered chiefly to the least promising of the races,” and under “the least promising physical conditions,” and what we ought to do is to travel away from the malarious coast-line to the interior. With this I entirely agree; and believe that the blessing on the Uganda Mission attests it. Yet about this there are differing opinions. The late Bishop Fraser hardly ever presided at a missionary meeting without objecting to what he considered the way in which societies straggled away from their base of operations. I should myself like to see James Johnson consecrated Bishop, and sent to the heart of the land.

Lastly, “Christianity has with very few exceptions hitherto been offered to the Negro by the European missionary, not in its native simplicity.” I venture to think that the “very few exceptions” are just the other way.¹ All instructions to

¹ I dealt with this objection in the *C.M.S. Intelligencer* for last February, p. 80.

missionaries, to which I have listened, have insisted upon presenting the Gospel in its simplicity. Evangelicals have even been reproached for this. Nor do I perceive how missionaries could possibly do otherwise. Narrative must precede doctrine. The language in which teaching has to be conveyed has not at first abstract terms; these have to be formed in it. The missionary cannot at first do more than tell the story, whatever might be his personal predilections. If occasionally missionaries have made their instruction too abstruse, it has been through human infirmity and against the regulations of the Society which commissioned them.

Amid the ocean of rhetoric about Islam with which the press has lately been flooded, four points have emerged. Our opponents contend that: (1) Islam has been spreading; (2) with greater rapidity than Christianity; (3) Christian methods of missionary enterprise require remodelling; (4) this spread of Islam ought to be hailed as a boon. I have, I trust, frankly and straightforwardly examined all of these but the last. About this last, as I must be brief, I will, for Africa, quote the Rev. James Johnson, and for a general survey go to Palgrave's last book. The former writes¹:

If it is incorrect to say, as some have done, that Africa owes whatever civilization may be found in any part of it wholly to Mohammedanism—since very many large towns and cities and important tribes, wholly heathen, may be found amongst whom constitutional governments, laws regulating marriages, divorce, succession, etc., various native manufactures, large regular and active markets, etc., exist; *e.g.*, Dahomé, Ashantee, and Jebu, and the Okiti country in Yoruba, etc.—it is also wholly incorrect to say Mohammedanism has done no good whatever to Africa.

Mr. Palgrave says²:

That the adoption of Islam may be, and in fact is, a real benefit and an uplifting to savage tribes, amongst whom the lowest and most brutalizing forms of fetishism would else predominate, does not admit of a doubt. . . . But not less does experience show that, sooner or later, the tribe or the nation that casts in its lot with Islam is stricken as by a blight; its freshness, its plasticity disappear first, then its vigour, then its reparative and reproductive power, and it petrifies or perishes.

Of course all these valuations of Islam and its advantages are limited to the material and mental, and we may not forget that "man does not live by bread alone." I am sometimes inclined to doubt whether in anywise the condition of a people is raised higher by Mohammedanism than it would have been by Greek or Roman dominion. I have an intense appreciation of the worthy lives of many Moslem; I bow before the

¹ Letter to the *Record* newspaper, dated Sierra Leone, November 25th, and appearing on December 30th.

² "Ulysses," p. 153.

sublimity of many a sentence in the Koran; I know that were there no truth in the system, it would have fallen to pieces long ago: but it is a serious reflection, and a riddle I confess myself incapable of determining, as to whether it had not been better for some tribes to have remained in their savagery till Christianity had reached them. It is just one of these inscrutable problems about which we may vainly speculate. Of this at least I am certain, that Mohammedanism has never so far been a preparation for Christianity; and I have no confidence that unreformed Islam ever will be. Yet I have utmost faith that the pride of Islam will one day lie prostrate before the cross of Christ.

There is one race, the Mandingo, whose fate I can never contemplate without a sense of pain. They have been no gainers by being absorbed into Mohammedanism, unless we count the slight knowledge of letters they have acquired, and some increased trade. They were so near to European communications, and so soon would have been in contact with the better European influences, that had they been left alone, I believe long ere this they would have become Christian, and then what splendid missionaries they would have made! To establish my opinion I go to Mungo Park. He was present at the transition, and he is an eminently impartial narrator of facts; so much so that in his own day slave-traders and abolitionists each claimed him as on their side. And yet he was only thirty-four when he passed away along that then mysterious river Niger in his oddly joined canoe, with four surviving companions out of forty-four, and one of them a maniac from the hardships he had undergone.

Now even so candid and careful an author as Bosworth Smith speaks of these Mandingoes as already "a Mohammedan tribe,"¹ and proceeds to name as a specimen of their character the case of a lad murdered by the Moors. But not half the Mandingoes were Moslem, and this particular lad and his mother were heathen. The story is so touching and withal so characteristic that I reproduce it. The Moors had swept down upon Funingkey in a cattle-lifting raid. A young herdman threw his spear, and had in turn a shot which fractured both bones of his leg below the knee. Park, who was a surgeon, told them the only chance for him, even that a precarious one, was amputation of the limb. They were horrified at this novel surgery, and went off to some old Bushreens, *i.e.* Mussulmans. These endeavoured to secure the lad a passage into Paradise by whispering in his ear some Arabic sentences, and

¹ P. 45.

desiring him to repeat them. "After many unsuccessful attempts the poor heathen at last pronounced, *La illah el allah, Mahamet rasowl allahi*, and the disciples of the Prophet assured his mother that her son had given sufficient evidence of his faith, and would be happy in a future state. He died the same evening."¹ Now it was when this lad was carried home mortally wounded that the poor mother, wailing and frantically clapping her hands, kept crying out, "He never told a lie—no, never," and I observe that in the Sierra Leone Census the Mandingoes are still credited with veracity and with affection for their old people as distinguishing traits. According to Park they do not appear to have had much idolatry, except a worship of the new moon, and they believed in an invisible God, and in a future state. They were kindly hearted, and laudably inquisitive. They were very eager about any written thing; a man who persuaded Park to write a charm for him on a board, washed off the penmanship and drank the water.² When Islam brought them a certain kind of learning they were delighted with it. Yet they were, with rare and peculiarly brilliant exceptions, like the schoolmaster at Kamalia, in the wondering stage. Park's great friend Karfa Taura was as much pleased with an English Book of Common Prayer that had fallen into his hands as with the Arabic MSS. The Slatee, or slave merchant, on the Gambia, who offered Park an ass and sixteen bars of gold for Richardson's Arabic Grammar, must have entertained a superstitious regard for the Arabic characters, as he could not have comprehended the English text. About their women Park makes a striking remark:³ "They permit their wives to partake of all public diversions, and this indulgence is seldom abused; for though the negro women are cheerful and frank in their behaviour, they are by no means given to intrigue. I believe that instances of conjugal infidelity are not common." Now these

¹ Vol. i., p. 154, cap. viii.

² Vol. i., p. 351, cap. xviii.

³ Vol. i., p. 400, cap. xx. I cannot refrain from reproducing in a note another paragraph, at p. 469: "To me it was not so much the subject of wonder as matter of regret to observe that while the superstition of Mahomet has scattered a few faint beams of learning among these poor people, the precious light of Christianity is altogether excluded. I could not but lament that although the coast of Africa has now been known and frequented by the Europeans for more than two hundred years, yet the negroes still remain entire strangers to the doctrines of our holy religion." He speaks of our libraries being full of Arabic and Asiatic literature, and our parsimony in distributing to them religious truth. "The natives of Asia derive but little advantage in this respect from an intercourse with us; and even the poor Africans, whom we affect to consider as barbarians, look upon us, I fear, as little better than a race of formidable but ignorant heathen." This was written in the very year the C.M.S. was founded.

people smelted and wrought iron, washed gold, wove and dyed a pretty blue cloth, cultivating the cotton and indigo for it, made butter from the Shea-tree, grew Indian-corn, rice, and other plants, caught fish in cotton nets, and placed them in wicker-baskets, and dressed themselves much as the Moors did, save for the turban. Were they then much benefited by their change of religion ?

Having thus, in this and the former article, sketched the progress of Islam, and marked its quality, it remains for me to say that I believe we are witnessing the last expiring effort of that religion ; and I am led to this belief by the following amongst many considerations. First, its comparative inactivity from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and the changed political condition of the world to-day, since England and Russia hem in Persia, the neighbouring European nations close in Turkey, and neither empire is likely to burst these barriers ; France holds Algiers, Egypt and Morocco will be under the tutelage of European powers, whilst colonists and traders from England, Germany, France, Italy, and Belgium are attaching various other parts of Africa. Secondly, the vitality of Mohammedanism has always consisted in its faculty of absorbing and utilizing strenuous pagan races. It consecrates the Crescentade, and thus sets free and sanctions that lust for conquest which is essential to robuster paganism. But this material is pretty well used up. Berbers, Turks, Mongols, Mandingoes have successively been adopted. Where is there a like race left ? The blank places upon our maps are very few. By a process of natural exhaustion Mohammedanism must soon be spent. It must then either enact the astounding reform of ceasing to be a political religion, or else it will commit suicide. If it commences a career of intellectual and moral reform, which it may do, and which some of its ardent well-wishers prophesy that it will do, what must be the final goal ? It must in that event be Christianity, for nothing else, nothing short of that, will satisfy the spiritual needs of humanity. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Are we to stand idly by and lend no helping hand towards this glorious consummation ?

WILLIAM JOSEPH SMITH.

January 5, 1888.

