

which took possession of the Asiatic Archipelago, Australia, New Guinea, and Western Polynesia. Thus we may reasonably connect the decaying Polynesian and New Guinea tribes with the oldest civilization of the world.

It is no use talking, as some people do, about leaving the heathen to the "natural progress of the race," and supposing that all the advanced races of mankind began at the level of the savage state, and have reached their present state of culture, civilization, wealth, and liberty by laws of development in mere nature. That there is such a thing as development, we all admit. All the human faculties are capable of development by exercise or training, and every human being will of necessity be developed to a certain degree, both in mind and body, by the growth of years and the necessary struggles of life. But that human society was ever carried forward a single step in the matter of morality under mere laws of natural development we utterly deny. The Greek civilization displayed a high state of culture, but their literature from Hesiod downward is sprinkled with traces of sentiment derived from the Jewish and Egyptian religions. The Roman civilization was but a propagation of the Greek; and the Teutonic race, often named as an example of natural development, is known to have been set forward by the civilizations it conquered and its early conversion to Christianity. What does it mean that so many races, empires, and languages of the world have become extinct? Whatever may be said of a law of natural progress, there can be no doubt that a law of natural deterioration is at work, and has been going on for ages among the people under consideration. It signifies nothing to ask for such races more time; time has nothing for them better than extermination. It requires a Gospel and a faith above nature to lay hold of them and raise them. It is possible for the living and advanced races to go downward, but never for these dead ones to rise, unassisted. We have proofs enough that peoples advanced in culture may become savages, but no example of a race of savages that have risen to a civilized state by mere development. How many great and powerful races have become extinct! We look for the Ninevites with as little hope as for Ninus himself. The Assyrians, Babylonians, and Medes are all vanished. The Egyptians, Phœnicians, Etruscans, Romans, once the great powers of history and civilization, are extinct. We may rest assured that there can be no hope of a restoration of society, or of a religious uprising of men, except by a supernatural and Divine operation. Progress, under sin, by laws of development is a fiction. There is no hope of progress apart from the regenerative and quickening power of a grace that transcends mere natural conditions, and we must thoroughly realize this before we can be hearty workers in the greatest of all reforms—that imposed upon us by our Divine Master—the evangelization of the world.

Although these Polynesian races had sunk so low, and were still sinking when Christianity reached them, we missionaries found a good basis on which to build. They had lost the true ideas of God as revealed to