

chances of becoming a prey to famine, disease or death. And an interested priesthood are not slow to take advantage of these fears and prejudices, for promoting and serving their own selfish ends.

In this way Christianity comes into collision with both the interested priesthood and the popular belief; and its teachers and missionaries are exposed to that cruelty, which arises from both selfishness and superstition. If the seasons are fruitful and the public health good, they may be allowed to live unmolested; but let mortality, sickness, or famine prevail to any extent, and they will be at once accused or suspected of bringing about these calamities, either directly or indirectly; either directly, by their prayers and incantations; or indirectly, by their own gods becoming angry, because their own worship is being neglected, and the people are patronizing a foreign religion. The missionaries will then be deserted by their timid and time-serving friends, while their enemies will begin by annoying them, then stealing from them, then bouncing and threatening them, then laying plots for their lives, and finally, if they can succeed, by actually killing them. The storms, sickness, and awful mortality of last year, led the few straggling heathen on Aneityum to burn a school-house and a church; on Tanna they attempted the lives of all the missionaries; and on Erromanga they succeeded in massacring and mangling both Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. Verily the dark places of the earth are the habitations of dark cruelty!

Time was, when the actual condition of the heathen world was almost unknown, when would-be sages who sat in the high places of literature, represented these Indians, as all savage tribes were called, as leading a life of Arcadian innocence and simplicity; living on the almost spontaneous productions of the earth, leading peaceful and happy lives, lives of blissful ignorance; ignorant of wealth, ignorant of ambition, ignorant of all the arts and all the evils of civilized life; happy if only let alone. Alas, that the stern facts of history should deal so rudely with the pleasing picture of fiction! No dream was ever more baseless: avarice, ambition, and selfishness are relatively as fully developed in these little and remote islands, as in the greatest empire upon earth.

I might have enlarged, but I trust that I have said enough to prove to you that the dark places of the earth are still the habitations of cruelty; that cruelty based on selfishness, but greatly aggravated by superstition, is the staple of heathen character; runs through every relation of life; sinks them down, and keeps them down in hopeless degradation.

Time was, when among our most popular philosophers a kind of development theory explained, or was held to explain, all civilization, ancient and modern: men, it was

said, were first savages, sons of Nimrod, who followed the chase and lived by hunting. From this state they rose to the pastoral, lived in tents, and tended herds and flocks, and hunted only for amusement. In the third stage of progress, they became husbandmen, tilled the ground, and gathered in its fruits. In the fourth stage they became manufacturers, and retained to themselves the advantages of all the three previous stages of progress. Here, again, no dream was ever farther from the truth. Nothing is susceptible of clearer proof than this, that the natural tendency of the world is not to rise from savage to civilized, but to sink from civilized to savage; and when once a nation or tribe fall below a certain point, they will never rise by their own unaided efforts; there must be some elevating influences brought to bear upon them from without. The Bechuana in Africa, when they had cut trenches, after Mosiat's example, to irrigate their fields, but felt disappointed when the water would not run up hill, reasoned just as wisely as those sages, who expected that degraded savages would, in a series of generations, by their own unaided energies, rise up to be civilized and educated men. If you would raise water to a higher level, you must apply an external force greater than the *vis inertiae*, the power of a downward resistance, in his dark degraded nature. There is only one force capable of overcoming this resistance: the darkness, and cruelty, and degradation of heathenism, will yield to only one force; and that power is involved in God's covenant.

III. The *Remedy* or *antidote* for heathenism is God's *covenant*. Human power cannot prevail; the remedy is divine; but it is made available by prayer. The text is a prayer, and indicates the paramount duty of the Church to seek success by prayer. This covenant here, we need not wait to show, is essentially God's covenant with His Son, by which the heathen were given to him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. A covenant revealed to Adam in Eden, renewed to Abraham by the promise in his seed, renewed again to David by the promise in his son: a covenant which was "evolved in full accomplishment by the Saviour and his sacrifice." The Gospel is the true remedy for heathenism. It brings light, and is accompanied with power to render this light effective. The gospel is perfectly adapted to all its agencies and remedial appliances to meet and remove the evil. It brings light to remove the darkness, truth to be the substitute of error; it replaces superstition, fear and terror, by well-grounded hopes of the favor and friendship of God. It provides a true atonement; it effects a true reconciliation between God and man. It puts men right in their relation to God, both as to their views and their feelings. It brings