

Missionary World.

A CENTURY'S CONQUESTS IN THE PACIFIC.

In this ocean in the latter part of last century, Captain Cook made his most numerous discoveries; and the story of his travels excited the greatest interest throughout the British Isles. His terrible death, at the hands of the savages of Hawaii, in 1775, intensified the interest; and Christian men, awakening to the full force of the Master's last command to evangelise the world, began to inquire if this was not a sphere for gospel effort.

But the Christian conscience of Britain was now stirring towards the inhabitants of the South Seas. As soon as the London Missionary Society was launched, in 1795, its first effort was directed towards the Pacific. The ship *Duff* was secured, and thirty missionaries set sail on 9th August, 1796.

Many scouted the proposal, and deemed it a mad venture. The natives of Tahiti, among whom they landed, seemed of a mild and cheerful disposition. A closer acquaintance revealed a people sunk in the lowest depths of vice. They were indolent and licentious, vindictive and malevolent, with social habits repulsive and obscene, and religious rites that mingled human sacrifices with abominable debaucheries. There was no settled government, although there was a king and numerous chiefs. Lawlessness prevailed. Wars were incessant and bloody and the slaughter spared neither sex nor age. Infanticide was practised. Drunkenness, learned from the scum of civilisation that settled in their midst, numbered its victims. And it seemed as if the island would be speedily swept of its population. The Tahitians themselves confessed they were "the remnant of men and the end of the people." Step from one island to another in these twenty-four groups, and a similar condition of things is presented. The frightful descent of man was humiliating in the extreme, and the hopelessness of any effort to raise him seemed written across the task as with a pen of adamant.

But what appears after a century of the Cross in the Pacific? It is well our vision ranges over ten decades instead of one. For the first ten years scarcely a break appears on the horizon of all this heathen darkness. Amid twelve years of labour, anxiety and peril these messengers of peace toiled in Tahiti. Everything they possessed they lost, except their faith in God. Even with some that faltered; and all once quitted the island except two, who bravely stuck to their post. In three years more their faith was rewarded. The king embraced Christianity; his chief priest publicly burned his idols and sought instruction from the missionaries. Natives were found to be praying to the living God. In 1817 the mission was reinforced by the arrival of John Williams and others of like devotion. It was well; a fierce struggle was about to begin. The heathen party were in the majority, and tenaciously clung to their idols. They raised the standard of revolt, and proclaimed extermination of all Christians, missionaries included. They were defeated, and the clemency of their conquerors melted them more than their enraging. They expected to be slaughtered, but were spared and treated with kindness. The religion that begat such unheard-of mercy appealed to them. But it was not till 1819—two-and-twenty years after the missionaries landed—the first Christian baptism was celebrated. The year following, 1,600 was added to the Church. The idols disappeared, churches and schools were erected, and the natives now yearned to carry the message of "peace and good will" to other islands of the Pacific.

Cross to Tongatabu, in the Friendly Islands, and there is even a fiercer struggle in those early days. The battle is not won till three missionaries have laid down their

lives, and the others are stripped of all they possessed and left to perish. They sought shelter in a cavern by the seashore, and were rescued by the timely arrival of a ship. But, undaunted, they returned and remained. At last they saw the hard heathenism yield, and the cross wave its banner over the land.

If north we pass to the Sandwich Islands, where dwell the murderers of Britain's fearless navigator, Captain Cook, it is to like scenes of jealousy, bloodshed, and obscenity we are at first introduced. But here is an instance where God causes "the wrath of man to praise Him." The people of Hawaii had struggled and fought and groaned under the oppression of their idolatrous and superstitious system. And when an all-powerful king—Kamehameha—died, they rose in revolt, destroyed their idols, razed their temples, abolished the priesthood, and condemned human sacrifices. A Hawaiian youth had gone to America in 1795. His appearance and his story awakened the sympathy of the Presbyterian Church, and, in 1820, missionaries were despatched to labor in these dreaded Sandwich Islands. When they landed, they found the people actually waiting to be led in the way of truth. With hope and vigour was the work undertaken, and ere long the whole group was Christianised.

In the Hervey Group John Williams is found laboring, combating, with two fellow-laborers, a most formidable savageism. The licentiousness of the natives was so brutal that the wives of the first teachers were afraid to live among them. Yet here, in Aitutahi and Rarotonga, which he discovered, he achieves his greatest victories. But not one reef of the Pacific satisfies him. The New Hebrides, reported to be blood-thirsty and cruel, attracts him. At two of the islands he meets a warm welcome, but the Erromangans lure him and his companions ashore, and then butcher them with their clubs, and pierce them with their arrows, little more than fifty years ago. Five-and-twenty years later, these same savages reddened their soil with the blood of the three Gordons. But to day this cannibal race are reckoned among the most gentle, kind-hearted, and willing of Christian people. Two sons and a nephew of the man who murdered John Williams, and an old man who killed a teacher the day James Gordon fell a martyr, are amongst the most earnest and devoted members of the Christian Church.

In Samoa, where Mr. R. Louis Stevenson has taken up his abode, a friendly reception was accorded by the chief, Malietoa, to the gospel heralds when first they landed. But an insight into the character of the people they came to regenerate, they received the first weeks of their stay. An intertribal war was in process; the district of Aana was in flames. A long sanguinary conflict ensued, and Malietoa triumphed. Then the missionaries were the helpless and unwilling witnesses of one of the most horrible scenes of native warfare. Furnaces were prepared, four hundred of the vanquished were seized, cast into them, and consumed. Such was the pristine purity and innocence of a people without Christianity.

But instances multiply. Dr. John G. Paton has made us familiar with the scenes in Tanna, Rev. James Chalmers with those in New Guinea. Elsewhere there has been, and there is, the same conflict, with greater or lesser intensity. The heroism of the men and women who have nobly borne it must ever stand in the highest rank. To front the savage club and hold on through years of peril and gloom, oftentimes alone—and yet not alone—reveals a fortitude, a daring, and a faith of a truly heroic mould. The roll of martyrs is by no means small. Few are the islands that have not their monuments. But to-day the testimony is borne, at the close of nearly a century's labor, that in all the groups, from Tahiti to New Guinea, Christianity is established, with the exception of a few islands in the west and north-west.—*Rev. Robert MacKenzie, M.A., in U. P. Missionary Record.*

(To be continued.)

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Donner: The truth is not so much that man has conscience, as that conscience has man.

Ram's Horn: The prayer that does not bring us closer to God takes us farther from Him.

The Interior: That is no gospel preaching which leaves out righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come.

Lutheran Observer: Church membership is one thing, but saving faith and personal godliness is quite another thing.

Young Men's Era: The courage which we need to cultivate is not the sort that faces giant enemies but the sort that walks undisturbed among the little difficulties of a day.

Theo. L. Cuyler, D.D.: God never has built a Christian strong enough to stand the strain of present duties and all the tons of to-morrow's duties and sufferings piled up on top of them.

Bible Reader: It is a good thing to hold the tongue when it is about to run away, but it is folly to spend one's whole life holding it when it might be trained to a proper and safe gait.

Jeremy Taylor: No man can hinder our private addresses to God; every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on the altar.

R. S. Storrs, D.D.: A debt which the church does not rise to pay is a rope about its neck with an anchor at the other end, and will drown it. But if it rises to pay it, the debt becomes a necklace of pearls, a tiara of diamonds.

Dr. A. McLaren: To pursue joy is to lose it. The way to get it is to follow steadily the path of duty, without thinking of joy, and then, like sleep, it comes most surely unsought, and we "being in the way," the angel of God, bright-haired joy, is sure to meet us.

Dr. A. T. Pierson: In 1866, when I was first in Europe, I could not carry a copy of the Bible inside the walls of Rome. Last year there were twenty-nine Protestant chapels in the city of Rome, and preaching openly carried on in them with impunity, the Pope and cardinals finding it impossible to interfere.

Presbyterian Witness: Successive generations ought to be improving. Our opportunities are ampler, our advantages greater. Schools and colleges more numerous and far better equipped; better houses to live in; better roads to travel on; more time for reading and thinking, more books, more periodicals and papers,—such are some of our advantages and privileges.

S. S. Times. Work for others is the best work for ourselves. If we exert ourselves unselfishly for others, we may be of service to them; but, whether we are or not, we ourselves are sure to be benefited in the effort. The man who lives wholly for himself is of no use to anybody. Only the man who includes others in his plans and efforts is of service to others or to himself.

The Congregationalist: There is something in the reply of a minister who was asked why he stayed on in an uncongenial field when he might easily have found an opportunity for change. "I wish to raise the average duration of the pastorate," he replied. It is not to be gainsaid that many ministers spend their energy in seeking a better place, and that many pastorates are too short for the good of either church or minister.

Teacher and Scholar.

Feb. 3rd, 1895. } **THE TRANSFIGURATION.** { Luke ix. 28-36.
Read also Matthew xvii. 1-13; Mark ix. 2-13.
GOLDEN TEXT.—Mark xvii. 5.
CATECHISM.—Q. 7.

Scriptural Readings: *M.* Matthew xvi. 24-28; Luke ix. 23-27—Losses and Gains Compared. *T.* Deuteronomy xxxiv. 1-12—Death of Moses. *W.* 11. Kings ii. 1-15—Translation of Elijah. *Th.* Luke ix. 28-36—The Transfiguration. *F.* Matthew xvii. 1-8—The Voice from the Cloud. *S.* John i. 1-14.—We Beheld His Glory. *Su.* II. Peter i. 1-21—Eye-witnesses of His Majesty. *Time.*—Sun set of A. D. 29, a week after last lesson. *Place.*—Uncertain; some say Mt. Tabor in Galilee; some Mt. Hermon.

I. The Mountain Prayer-meeting. *V. 28.*—In last lesson Jesus told His disciples of His coming sufferings and death. Its full significance they could not understand, but it must have filled them with anxious fears and questionings. To sustain their faith and hope, and cheer them, Jesus asks Peter, James and John to a high mountain, apart to pray. This is how God's children are to be supported in darkness and fear, by prayer. Four only were at this meeting, but now honored and privileged the three disciples were. Jesus still meets with two or three. It does not take numbers to procure the blessing, but the way to get it is to be where Jesus invites us. This special season of prayer prepares for some new and special divine manifestation.

II. The Transfiguration of Jesus. *V. 29.*—1. "His face (Mt. xvi. 2.) did shine as the sun." 2. "His raiment was white as the light." The sun and the light for glory and beauty could alone express the radiant glories of Jesus' face, when His heavenly nature shone through the veil of His flesh, giving us a hint, perhaps, of the resurrection body. Moses' face shone with reflected glory when he came down from Sinai, but the face of Jesus did so with innate, inherent light. Christ's people often in prayer have had sorrow turned into joy, darkness into light, have had all things transfigured as it were.

III. The Attendants at the Transfiguration. *V. 30-33.*—Two from heaven, Moses and Elias, three from earth, Peter, James and John. Elijah did not die, but was translated, Moses died in circumstances of special solemnity and honour. Now both appear in glory, as regards their bodies, like that of Jesus, but less radiant. This was calculated to cheer the disciples. If Moses and Elias were so glorious, what would Jesus be after His death. Moses was the representative and giver of the law, through whom had been instituted the sacrifices which Christ fulfilled, and which explained His sacrifice upon the cross, which so greatly troubled the disciples. Elijah represented the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ. Now the appearance of both with Him strongly attests that He was the promised Messiah to whom all the law and the prophets bear witness. Peter, James and John were the earthly attendants whose vision of the future life and glory had to be cleared, and their faith confirmed that they might be His witnesses (2 Peter i. 16-18). Only something exceedingly important could be a sufficient reason for the appearance on earth of Moses and Elias with Jesus. It testified to the deep interest all heaven, and especially the church of the redeemed, took in Jesus and His mission. They spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The very thing that Peter could not bear to think or hear of was that which brought back Moses and Elias to earth. Many things would never be the same to the disciples as before. Jesus would not, the question of the resurrection of the dead would not, the impossibility of suffering and at the same time of glory would not, the reward of God's suffering saints would be a certainty, and that heaven though unseen may be lying about us. Peter said unto Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here." The company of God's people is good for us. They saw His glory; the whole thing was a reality, it was not a dream or vision.

IV. The Voice from Heaven. *V. 34-36.*—In the midst of their conversation a bright cloud (Mt. ii.) overshadowed them; and they feared etc. The strangeness and glory of all over-awed them. It recalls the Shekinah of the wilderness wanderings, an incarnation of the ineffable light of God, veiling its glory, yet making it visible to man, as the clouds that veil the sun enable us who cannot see into his face, yet to see his beauty and glory (v. 35). "And there came a voice out of the cloud," etc.; the same voice which had once before been heard at His baptism, and again now as He stood on the threshold of His passion. Hear Him. God speaks to us now by His spirit in the word (2 Pet. i. 19, 20). Let us hear and heed Him speaking there. "They kept it close," etc. If it was hard for the twelve to understand His death, others were still less prepared for it yet. A fit time would come and did to tell all that men might believe and be saved by this death. (Mark.) They questioned one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean. The tidings of His coming sufferings and death and this glorious light gave them much food for thought. It gave them a new and wider outlook in all things. So still the scriptures open up ever new and widening themes for thought which lifts the soul and give glimpses of and longings for higher, fuller, more glorious life.