

The Success of Modern Missions - I.

THE LOWEST CLASSES HAVE
BEEN REACHED.

My word shall not return unto me void.—Isa. 55:11.

By F. M. RAINS.

A HEATHEN NEGLECTED.



A HEATHEN SAVED.



An address delivered at Chattanooga, Tenn.

MANY did not regard the conversion of the heathen practicable a century ago. When William Carey proposed to an assembly of preachers that something be done for the evangelization of the heathen, the president arose hastily, and shouted in displeasure, "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen he will convert them without your aid or mine." A bishop of the Church of England publicly and powerfully argued against the idea of the missionary enterprise. The Parliament of England declared against it. In 1796 the General Assembly of Scotland carried the following resolution: "To spread abroad a knowledge of the gospel among barbarous and heathen nations seems to be highly preposterous inasmuch as it anticipates, nay, it even reverses the order of nature." One preacher praised the "happy ignorance of the untutored savage." When a charter was asked of the Massachusetts Legislature for the American Board, a member objected on the ground that America had no religion to spare. The proposal provoked much opposition. Missions to the heathen have been called "organized hypocrisy." The secular press generally, until quite recently, spoke in terms of disparagement and mild contempt of missions. Foreign missions have been pronounced a failure over and over again. It is my purpose to show they have been a

success. In this paper I shall aim to prove that the lowest classes have been reached.

The gospel in the islands of the Pacific Ocean has worked a marvelous change. Savage strifes embittered the lives of the people. Wars among them were almost incessant and most cruel. John Williams, the missionary, once visited Harvey Island, and found that its population had been diminished by war from two thousand to sixty; seven years afterward, he again visited this island, and found that there were only five men and three women surviving, and these were still contending who should be king.

Captain Cook expressed the opinion that nothing would ever be done to christianize the Pacific Islands. He declared "there were no motives in public ambition or in private avarice for such an undertaking." He knew little or nothing of the motives that move men in the enterprise of world-wide missions, which had its origin in the highest development of Christian character.

In December, 1794, a company of ministers met in London and formed the now historic London Missionary Society, and one of the leaders of the meeting said: "We are called together for the funeral of bigotry; and I hope it will be buried so deep as never to rise again." The constitution of the new society declared that "the design of the society was not to send Presbyterianism, Independency,

Episcopacy, or any other form of church order or government, but the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the heathen." The new society purchased and equipped a ship at an expense of \$58,000. Thirty missionaries were sent to Tahiti. In September, 1796, the good ship "Duff," flying an ensign, the figure of a dove with an olive branch in her mouth, sailed from Portsmouth. The people of Tahiti not only worshiped innumerable gods, but also the spirits of deceased ancestors. Immorality, polygamy and infanticide prevailed to a wonderful extent. The children were generally killed by strangling or by piercing with a bamboo. A missionary once asked three women, whom he casually met, whether they had killed any of their children. One replied that she had killed nine, another seven, and another three. A father of nineteen children confessed to the murder of them all, and after hearing the gospel he wept at the remembrance of their deaths. The wife of a chief was greatly troubled in the hour of her death by remembering that she had put to death her sixteen children.

There were almost continual wars. During the first fifteen years of the mission there were ten wars. James Alexander says: "The immorality of the Tahitians reached its climax in the strange organization of men and women, called Aeroi, who lived together, indiscriminately, without marriage, spending their time

in licentious dancing and feasting from village to village, and killed their children. They kept up their organization only by initiating new members."

Captain Cook said : "There is a scale of dissolute sensuality which this people have ascended wholly unknown to every other nation, and which no imagination could possibly conceive."

Such was the condition of this otherwise charming island when the brave missionaries reached it. Pomare, the king, was most vicious and savage. The missionaries estimated that during a reign of thirty years he sacrificed two thousand human victims as offerings to his idols.

After a long night of sixteen years of toil, the gray light of a new day could be seen. A chapel was built at the request of the king. Soon the converts were numbered by the hundreds. The national idol, Oro, was now made a post for the king's kitchen, and finally cut up for fire-wood. Nearly all the other idols were destroyed, together with the temples and altars. Twelve of the idols were sent to the London Missionary Society as souvenirs. The natives aided in building schools and churches. The king erected a great house of worship containing three pulpits. He was baptized in the presence of four thousand of his subjects. The missionaries aided in writing a code of laws, and when it was finished the king called

together seven thousand natives and read it to them. It was well enforced. This code of laws gave peace and order and prosperity to the island. The king died in a joyful Christian hope. The work went on from island to island, and many renounced and destroyed their dumb idols to serve the living God. In 1839, Captain Harvey made the following observation respecting Tahiti: "This is the most civilized place I have seen in the South Seas. It is governed by a dignified young lady of twenty-five years of age. They have a good code of laws, and no liquors are allowed to be landed on the island. It is one of the most gratifying sights the eye can witness, to see on Sunday in their church, which holds about five thousand people, the queen near the pulpit with all her subjects around her, decently clothed and seemingly in pure devotion." Charles Darwin, the naturalist, had only words of commendation for this missionary work. After a visit to the island, he said: "Before we lay down to sleep, the elder Tahitian fell on his knees, and, with closed eyes, repeated a long prayer in his native tongue. He prayed as a Christian should do, with fitting reverence, and without a fear of ridicule or any ostentation of piety. At our meals, neither of the men would taste food without saying beforehand a short grace. . . . On the whole, it appears to me that the morality and religion of the inhabitants are highly creditable."

Tahiti became a radiating center of the gospel light. Native converts went to neighboring islands preaching the Word. The natives on surrounding islands, three hundred miles away, hearing that Tahiti had abolished the worship of idols, came to obtain books and to receive instruction. The missionaries witnessed the literal fulfillment of the promise, "The isles shall wait for His law." The news spread as far as the Hawaiian Islands, where idolatry was voluntarily abandoned before a missionary from America had ever reached the islands. The high priest was the first to apply the torch to the heathen temples. The natives went every-where destroying images and sanctuaries of their paganism, even to the most distant islands.

A band of missionaries from Boston reached Hawaii in 1820. The people were given over to the most senseless idolatry and to the most revolting immorality. Modesty was unknown, and the traffic in female virtue became a trade, and every foreign vessel was a floating Sodom. Marriage laws were unknown. The paganism of the people took on its worst form at the funerals of their chiefs. Besides making human sacrifices, they utterly abandoned themselves to sensuality and violence. They threw aside the restraints of decency as they did their clothing. They filled the air with loud and long-continued wailings and the noise of shell-trumpets. They knocked out their front teeth,

lacerated their bodies, set fire to houses, danced in a state of nudity, and appeared more like demons than human beings. They put their children to death. One woman told a missionary that she had buried all of her thirteen children alive. The missionaries once rescued a boy from the grave in which he had been placed to be buried alive, and he grew up in their care and became the most popular preacher in Hawaii.

The presence of the missionaries soon worked a wonderful reformation among the people. Congregations numbering thousands gathered to hear the preaching of the gospel. Schools were opened. The king was the first pupil, and after he had learned to read he gave command that every one in his kingdom should attend the mission schools. In a few years 30,000 of the people were able to read and write. The missionaries soon prepared school-books, tracts, and translations of the Scriptures. In 1832 a translation of the New Testament had been distributed. Titus Coan, the missionary, could not go to all who were anxious to hear. He asked them to come to him. The people settled by the thousands around the little village of Hilo, and here was held for two years a unique "camp meeting." There was not an hour, day or night, that he could not rally an audience of from 2,000 to 6,000, at the sound of a bell. The old church was packed with 6,000 hearers and a new building

with half as many more. He had no leisure. He once spoke three times before breakfast. He set the people to work, and more than 40,000 were visited from house to house within five miles of the central station.

During twelve months 5,244 people had been received into the church. On one Sunday he baptized 1,705, and 2,400 sat down together at the Lord's Supper. What a scene was that! What a gathering! The liar, the thief, the murderer; the mothers whose hands had reeked with the blood of their own children; those whose eyes, noses, lips and limbs had been consumed with the fire of their own or their parents' former lusts, gathered about the table of the Lord. The hoary priest of idolatry, with hands but recently washed from the blood of human victims, was at that service. These all met before the cross of Christ with their enmity slain, "washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God."

During the five years ending June, 1841, 7,557 persons were received into the church at Hilo. When Titus Coan left Hawaii he had, himself, baptized about 12,000. Sunday was better kept than in the United States. Fifteen houses of worship were built, mainly with the labor and money of the people themselves:

If you were to go to Honolulu you would feel like you were in a city of this country. You would see street-cars, telegraph and tele-

phone lines, and electric lights. You would find a score of steamers plying between the islands and other lands. You would see natives dressed like Americans, engaged as teachers, lawyers, ministers and government officers. Where seventy-five years ago there was an unclothed race of savages, you would now find a civilized community, supporting their own churches, and with marvelous success carrying on Foreign Missions. The Hawaii national motto is: "The life of the county is righteousness." Hon. Richard H. Dana, a distinguished lawyer of Boston, while on a visit to the island in 1860, wrote as follows: "Whereas the missionaries found this island a nation of half-naked savages, living in the surf and on the sand, eating raw fish, fighting among themselves, tyrannized over by feudal chiefs, abandoned to sensuality; they now see them decently clothed, recognizing the laws of marriage, going to school and church with more regularity than our people do at home, and the more elevated portion of them taking part in the constitutional monarchy in which they live."

The aborigines of New Zealand not only feasted on enemies who were killed in battle, but they specially fattened slaves for their feasts. A poor slave girl would sometimes be commanded by her master to bring fuel, light a fire and heat an oven, and then would be knocked in the head and cast into the oven. The children were taught the severest cruelty

from the first. When a child was named, small pebbles were thrust down its throat to make it hard-hearted. The little ones were taught to be liars and thieves. In 1772, the natives killed a ship's crew numbering twenty-eight men. Ten years later they killed ten sailors and cooked and eat them in triumph.

Mr. Marsden preached his first sermon here on Christmas Day, 1814, from the text, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." It was ten years before the first conversion. Not until 1830 was the first public baptism, when a chief and two natives were baptized. Before the end of the year there were thirteen more. After this the progress was rapid. In 1842, Bishop Selwyn wrote: "We see here a whole nation of pagans converted to the faith. Where will you find throughout the Christian world more signal manifestations of the presence of the Spirit, or more living evidence of the kingdom of Christ?" There were soon 20,000 church members. Speaking of the influence of the mission on New Zealand, Charles Darwin said: "The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. . . . Several young men redeemed from slavery by the missionaries, were employed on a farm; they had a respectable appearance. I found there a large party of children collected together for Christmas Day, and all sitting around a tea table. I never saw a nicer or more merry group; and to think that this was the center of

a land of cannibalism, murder, and atrocious crimes.”

The history of missions to the Fiji Islands is a picture of the brightest light shining in the deepest darkness: While all the natives of the Pacific were barbarous, the Fijis were superlatively bad. The missionaries witnessed scenes too horrible to be described, too full of fiendish cruelty to be imagined. The Fiji went beyond the ordinary limits of blood-shedding and cruelty. They were a disgrace to mankind. Female children, especially were killed. “Why should a girl live?,” they would say. “She can not poise a spear; she can not wield a club.” There was a custom of strangling the widows after the death of their husbands. It was the privilege of the oldest son to take the lead in strangling his mother at the death of his father. When one chief was lost at sea, seventeen of his wives were strangled. When the army was defeated in 1839, eighty women were strangled.

Cannibalism was one of their greatest sins. This inhuman practice has been known in other ages and countries. The tribes along the Congo seek human flesh and delight to find “long hogs,” as they call human victims. But in the Fiji Islands it existed to an extent and with horrors unsurpassed elsewhere in the world. When James Calvert went there his first duty was to gather up and bury the bones of eighty victims sacrificed at a cannibal feast.

He lived to see this very people who had taken part in that horrible meal seated about the table of the Lord. It was interwoven with the whole frame-work of society, so much so that not only in the case of prisoners taken in war, but on the most ordinary occasions, such as the building of houses, the launching of a canoe, the offering and eating of human sacrifices were considered indispensable. Cannibalism was one of the important things in the training of children. Mothers would rub a piece of human flesh over the lips of their children in order to give them a taste for blood. One of the favorite games of the children was, in imitation, the whole process of a cannibal feast. They played cannibalism as our children play church. To such an extent was this crime that few died a natural death, and for the same reason an old man was seldom seen. One missionary estimates that within four years no less than five hundred persons were sacrificed and eaten within twenty miles of one island. They ate human flesh chiefly from the love of it. It was more palatable to them than pork. It is said the flesh of foreigners was often too strong with salt and tobacco to be good. A certain king was accustomed to return from neighboring islands with strings of the bodies of babies hanging from his canoe like strings of fish or other game, tribute exacted from their parents for food. The higher the rank the more this revolting custom was prac-

ticed. A man named Loti had his wife help him bring wood for an oven and a bamboo knife, which she cheerfully did, and then killed and cooked her, and invited his friends to help eat her. Twenty-eight persons were once seized while fishing and merely stunned and then thrown into an oven; and some of them recovered and attempted to escape, but were driven back upon the red-hot stones. A chief registered the number of bodies he ate by stones set up on end, and a missionary counted eight hundred and seventy-two stones. The ovens of Bau, used only for cooking human bodies, were said to be seldom cool. A king said: "White men make good eating; they are like ripe bananas." As many as fifty bodies have been cooked for one feast. Among these would be found men and women of all ages, and even little children. On one occasion the tongue of a prisoner was cut out and eaten raw, and while the sufferer begged for speedy death, the king was laughing in high glee. Two men were taken in battle and compelled to dig a hole in the earth for an oven and cut the fire-wood. Their arms and legs were then cut off, which were cooked and eaten in the presence of the men still living.

These facts are sufficient to show the dark cloud that hung over the group of beautiful islands. The people bordered the line of total depravity. But they were not beyond the power of the gospel. Nowhere else did the

worst forms of savagery seem so overpowering. It was a long, hard struggle. After years of toil, the reward came. The change was complete, and the growth of the Christian community rapid. On the 30th of April, 1854, the king ordered the great wooden drums to be sounded to call the people to the important service, at which heathenism was renounced and the gospel embraced. These drums were never before beaten except to call to war or to a cannibal feast. In 1857, the king put away his many wives and was publicly baptized. He and his people became loving and gentle. The old king, once treacherous, and a bloodthirsty cannibal, died in 1884, a faithful, gentle, intelligent Christian, who was greatly beloved by all who knew him. The lion had become a lamb. Churches were organized, places of worship were provided, which were crowded with great congregations. In every island there was scarcely a house in which could not be heard daily morning and evening prayers in the family. Out of a population of 120,000, at least 102,000 were regular attendants of the church. Forms of Christian civilization were adopted. Your property is as safe in Fiji as in Tennessee or Ohio. The Fiji were formally annexed to Great Britain in 1874. In the ceremony of cession, the king handed his war-club to the commissioner, saying: "The king gives her majesty, Queen Victoria, his old and favorite war-club—formerly, and until lately, the

only known law of Fiji." Sixty-seven years ago there was not a single Christian in Fiji; to-day there is not an avowed heathen. For many years cannibalism has been wholly extinct.

There is a church building at Bau. In the walls are to be found stones that were once gods, stones gathered from the ruins of ancient heathen temples, stones taken from fortifications over which men once fought, bled and died, grim, hard stones that for ages absorbed the tears and blood of generations of men who walked this earth without God and without hope. To-day within the walls of this strange church building stands a rough boulder of gray rock that was once known as the *killing stone*, against which scores of poor victims of lust and murder have been dashed to death to make a feast for the heathen lords of Bau. This grim memorial of dark days has been turned into a *baptismal font* from which many hundreds of men, women and children have had water sprinkled upon them for baptism. There would have been a *baptistery* instead of a *baptismal font* in this building if a fuller gospel had been preached. We rejoice, however, at the mighty work of God accomplished in Fiji by our Wesleyan brethren. They have done the will of God in making known his saving grace in that land.

The Fijian church is a missionary body. It has sent out its workers to New Britain and

New Ireland. The light of the gospel has flooded the whole land and transformed it and made it another kingdom in the family of the civilized nations of the earth. "The uplifting by the sun of the briny waters that surge around these islands, to float in the sky and gleam in hues of light, is not more wonderful than this transformation by Divine grace of the foul and fiendish heathen into humble, loving and lovable Christians—into sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ."

The Gospel was preached to the Fuegians of South America. They were an exceedingly low type of the race. Admiral Sullivan wrote to Darwin of the influence of the mission, and said: "During eleven years the mission fowl-house had remained unlocked and not one egg had been stolen." Darwin replied that he "could not have believed that all the missionaries in the world could have made the Fuegians honest." The most quarrelsome, the most dishonest, the most superstitious and cruel of Tierra del Fuego, became models of virtue and industry, and lived in the very shadow of the cross.

Let us look at Greenland, among the ice-castles of the north. The people were as frozen and as repellant as the climate. Success among the stolid, stupid Greenlanders seemed as hopeless as melting the ice-mountains of the Frozen Pole. They knew not God. No lower type of paganism was to be found on the face

of the earth. They were without temples or idols. Their only religious emotion was fear. The native language had no words to carry spiritual ideas. At first the gospel seemed to have no power to impress them. They ridiculed whatever the missionaries said. While the missionary spoke they feigned sleep and snored. They would drown the singing with howls and beating of drums. They broke open the houses of the missionaries, destroyed their furniture, stole their food and manuscripts, pelted them with stones, and destroyed their boat. And when starvation looked them in the face, they would not even sell them a morsel of food, though they had an abundance. The Eskimos were repulsive dwarfs. Their looks were ugly, their habits filthy. They wallowed like hogs in the mire of their own filth. At last the long winter of persecution and patient waiting felt the warm touch of a new spring time. The icy hearts began to break up. The whole life of the people was changed. Awful cruelties were replaced with Christian kindness. They now had thought and care for others. Churches and schools were planted, and the whole aspect of the country was changed. Less than fifty years ago the last professed pagan died.

The gospel conquered the Hottentot terror, Africaner. This desperate outlaw was known as the "Bonaparte of South Africa." He waged a constant, cruel and relentless war with

the natives about him. He stole cattle and burned huts. When Robert Moffat started to his village he was warned that the savage monster would make a drum-skin of his hide and a drinking cup of his skull. Africaner was an outlaw. A reward of about \$500 had been offered for his head. This desperado's bloody hand was against every man. But where could be found a man that would capture or kill such a monster? Moffat, the peerless missionary, broke his stony heart and won him through the preaching of the gospel. Afterward, an African chief, gazing at Africaner, said to Moffat, "Look! there is the man, and the lion, at whose roar even the dwellers in far distant hamlets fled in terror from their homes." The Government of Cape Town sent for him and the reward offered for his head was actually spent in gifts for himself and presents for his people. He traveled with Moffat as a collaborer in the gospel. The last words of this remarkable trophy of Divine mercy were these: "I feel that I love God, and that he has done much for me, of which I am totally unworthy. My former life is stained with blood; but Jesus has pardoned me."

Thuban, the king of Upper Burma, was a monster of cruelty. When he was inaugurated, the event was celebrated by a massacre so horrible that several hundred of the nobility were among the victims. The sacrifice of human life was common. When the city of Mandalay

was built, fifty-six young girls were slain, that the eight gates of the city might, by their blood, be secured from all invaders. Thirty years later, in the same city, the Baptist Missionary Conference was held, the Judson Memorial Church was dedicated, and Burmese Christians had given thousands of dollars toward the cost. The choir was composed of native Karen. At the close, Tamils, Telugas, Burmans, Karens, Shans, Eurasians, English, Americans and Chinamen sat down together at the table of the Lord.

These are only a few examples of the success which have attended the preaching of the gospel among the lowest classes of the race.