

THE  
CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN.

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No. VI.—JUNE, 1879.

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PROGRESS IN THEOLOGY—BUTLER OR  
MACAULAY?

**B**ISHOP BUTLER, in his great work, writes as follows:—"As it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at. . . . Nor is it at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before." The field of Scripture is here likened to the field of nature, and it is suggested that discoveries remain to be made in the former, similar in importance to those which are being made in the latter. In the context of the passage quoted, Butler distinguishes between "practical Christianity, or that faith and behaviour which renders a man a Christian," and "the study of those things which the apostle calls 'going on unto perfection,' and of the prophetic parts of Scripture;" and he wishes us to understand that it is upon the province more remotely connected with faith and practice that the knowledge which we may expect thus to increase will shed its light. This great and sagacious thinker is careful not to assert that the truths which he supposes may still lie concealed in Scripture, will, in the present state, be certainly brought to light; for he expressly says, "if the whole scheme of Scripture ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things." Still, the words of Butler might well be cited in favour of the view that important discoveries in theology yet remain to be made—discoveries such as may prove of essential value in removing objections to the scheme of revelation. Theology, according to this

nations the truth concerning Jesus? Yes, but it would have been an excuse, not a valid reason; and we, who pride ourselves upon our Pauline theology, have not in this matter even the spirit of Paul, still less the spirit of Jesus Christ. Is, then, Great Britain to be deemed a modern Holy Land, upon which are to be lavished all the exclusive privileges of a specially chosen and favoured nation; are we to appropriate to ourselves the great and precious promises about Zion, her peace and her prosperity, and be content if now and then a few proselytes from the outer world gather to the name of our Lord and God; is that the Gospel we have learnt, is that our narrow thought of His great longing who "had compassion on the *multitudes*"? Methinks He looks down now on the millions of Eastern lands with a deeper sympathy and more earnest longing than upon us, who are withholding from them the bread of life whilst we are feeding to the full.

Pardon a personal remark, I would not have dared to say so much that savours of fault-finding, were I not finding fault with myself also. In all honesty, though in much ignorance, we go on making our blunders, and God is full of forbearance with us still. But when we find out our mistake, when we see that the Bible is not upon our side in any course we mark out for conduct and practice, we are in the path of danger if we persist in our old ways. And if Churches and individuals, looking at the questions I have referred to in the foregoing observations, discover divergences between their procedure and the unerring record of Holy Scripture, it cannot be well with them, and they cannot expect a blessing in opposing God's order and plan concerning the evangelisation of the nations. I appeal to men familiar with the Word of life, competent to discern its meaning, capable of interpreting the purpose of Christ in relation to the nations of the world; and I invite them to take for their text this thought, and to seek to impress it upon the membership of their Churches—OUR PERSONAL SERVICE FOR THE PERISHING AT HOME, OUR COSTLIEST OFFERINGS FOR THE PERISHING ABROAD.

JAMES E. MATHIESON.

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## CHRISTIANITY IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

**T**HE position of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands as related to other nations and the general interests of commerce; their peculiar formation as having been thrown up by coral insects from the sea, some portions being even now in the process of formation; and their strange history as connected with both civilisation and Christianity,—excite the interest of many to a degree which would not be warranted by their population or resources. Being by no means so inaccessible as they were a few years ago, a larger number of visitors are now attracted to them, and so far as the impressions thus formed are reliable, a wider extent

of knowledge is possessed on some particulars, so that it might seem unnecessary to write more about them. Yet I am convinced that many have erroneous ideas, especially of the religious condition of the islands ; and, therefore, without claiming to be beyond criticism, I have decided to give some results of personal observation after a recent visit, attended with great pleasure and profit to myself.

I. THE PEOPLE.—The introduction of new influences by Christianity, and contact with civilised nations, have greatly modified, but not essentially changed, the national features and habits of the Hawaiians. They still live in grass huts, though much of the furniture in them is unlike that used by their fathers. They still eat the poi and fish which Captain Cook found to be the food of the natives, though some articles have been added to their bill of fare from the lists of the strangers who have gone to live among them.

In like manner, their peculiarities of character remain essentially the same, notwithstanding the improvements taken from those who have taught and affected them. Prominent among their characteristics is simplicity. This appears in everything, but is more universal in the passing than in the rising generation. They were a nation of children when first discovered. Many have thought that as they were involved in frequent and fierce wars, as they were often violent in their religion, making even the offering of human sacrifices a part of their worship, as they were cannibals, at least in one or two of the islands, for some years after they were discovered, they must have a peculiarly savage disposition. And it has been believed that the murder of Cook was proof of this. Explanation of all these facts, however, is found in one distinguishing element of their national, social, and religious life, which they call "tabu." The king had the right in this way to constitute any article or person consecrated to his use, devoted to his interests, or a sacrifice to the gods. Any act which the king disapproved was "tabu," and, therefore, at any cost, to be surrendered to whatever fate he might decree. Wars were thus the result not only of loyalty to the king, but of devotion to the gods. Whoever opposed, or undertook to dethrone, the king, was "tabu," until he was successful, when he assumed the right of him whom he had deposed. Captain Cook fell under this ban, because of his too great assumption, or rather because he could not maintain all he assumed. Conquered enemies were condemned to slavery or death, by torture, or by being eaten, or by any other means, simply because they had failed of success. And everything was really under the control of this one tremendous power of "tabu."

It will be seen that this institution would hardly have been possible except among a very simple-minded people, not self-asserting, not resolute, but gentle, yielding, inclined to superstition, and having but few independent and heroic men. To such people, their king would be a leader, absolute in his rule, and they would follow him almost in a mass.

This indicates another characteristic, which is still quite manifest, but was formerly prominent—viz., their social character, inclining them to live and act together. Were they only animals they would be called gregarious, and even when applied to men this is not wholly an inappropriate term. They felt entirely dependent on their leaders; this naturally gathered them into flocks, with common sentiments and interests. The feudal system was never more despotic than on these islands, when each was a separate monarchy; and after Kamehameha the Great conquered the whole group, and established his dynasty, the entire population really became his serfs, and all the land belonged to himself. This general level of the people brought them together, and cultivated a disposition to brace against each other, and find their comfort and advantage from association. In process of time, the domain was divided between the different branches of the royal family, except what was retained as crown land, and the people were distributed with the soil. In this way, different factions gradually grew up, but those included in each faction continued to have the inclination to herd together. They owned no land, and but little personal property. They had no opportunity to accumulate what might segregate them, and they made the pleasure of life consist for the most part in intercourse and social enjoyment. Hence, they had frequent clannish and religious convocations; they spent much time in promiscuous visiting, festivals, games, and various modes of conference. By these means, what one knew all knew; what one enjoyed all enjoyed; isolation was very rare, and always intolerable. This peculiarity was remarked by Captain Cook in his report of the natives, as he saw them; and the missionaries afterwards not only remarked it, but, as we shall see, turned it to account for facilitating their work of evangelisation.

Only one other characteristic we notice—they are highly emotional. As savages, their feelings were by no means refined. They seemed to be almost destitute of sympathy, as we are wont to regard that word, and when, for any reason, any one became a burden, or unable to contribute to the common stock of enjoyment, they were remorseless in their purpose to be rid of him, without regard to relationship or past advantage from him. As a nation, they were without natural affection, and entirely disregarded family ties and obligations, whenever selfish interest prompted, excelling most heathen in this heathenish outrage of nature. But for all this, they had a large element of emotion in their composition. It appeared in their love for music, their fondness for dancing, and the most exciting kinds of games, and even in the forms of vice in which they took the most pleasure. Everything was popular in the ratio in which it roused and interested the people. All public appeals were to the feelings. Their assemblies were conducted so as to create the greatest possible enthusiasm, and no loss was to be reckoned if it was the occasion of a passing pleasure. This peculiarity was the door through which some of the heaviest calamities entered by which the

people have been cursed; but as it became known it proved also a means of facilitating the advancement of good among them.

II. THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.—By a series of providential events seventy years ago, four Hawaiian young men were brought to New England, who, becoming converts to Christianity, longed to have the news of salvation conveyed to their countrymen. They had received a little education in different places, and, under the direction of several persons, into whom they infused not a little of their own desire, in 1819, three of these, with seven Americans and their wives, sailed from Boston, under the patronage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as missionaries to the Sandwich Islands.

On the 21st March, 1820 they cast anchor in the bay where Cook first landed, and but a short distance from the spot where now stands the monument erected to his honour and memory. They supposed they would find a people still utterly given up to idolatry, and to all kinds of vile habits as before, but a surprise awaited them. They learned that the old King Kamehameha had recently died, and had left the advice that the idols should be destroyed, and religion abandoned. His son, on his accession to the throne, followed up this advice, ordered the images of the gods to be burned, introduced some of the usages and habits of the Americans who had lately gained favour with the people by honourable trading, and was apparently waiting for some further knowledge, that he might do more. A council was held during several days, as to what should be done with the missionaries who had come to make their homes with them, especially as they proposed to teach them a new religion, some fear being expressed by the king that they were but the advance company of a nation that designed to conquer them. After full consultation, however, this fear was removed, and they were permitted to land. The little band was divided and assigned to different stations, on different islands, and at once the work of Christianising the natives was commenced.

The king and the chiefs, some of whom had been priests of idolatry, were among the first pupils in the schools, setting an example to the people, which was enthusiastically followed. These schools were opened for teaching the English language, since all manifested such eagerness to learn, and through this medium as much progress was made as possible in making known the essential truths of the Bible and the new religion. But it was soon apparent that the teachers must construct a written Hawaiian language, and, accordingly, a portion of the missionaries were appointed to this task—a task as difficult as it was important and necessary. Within an almost incredibly short period, I think about three years, this task was completed, and school-books and a translation of the Scriptures were ready for use. Other missionaries soon came from America, and with them came also about as much money as the work undertaken required.

Among the first converts were several of the prominent chiefs, and

the mother of the king was the first of these to be baptised. Great and radical changes in public morals followed. The laws of the land, so far as there were any independent of the royal will, were revolutionised, and based on the principles of the Bible. The entire character of the people underwent a change, at least in outward appearance, and the influence of the missionaries became well-nigh supreme. Churches were formed in all the islands. Houses of worship were erected, great and beautiful still, as they stand almost within sight of each other—monuments of the devotion and sacrifice of those first Christians. As soon as they were opened, they were filled with worshippers. Revivals of religion, or rather the conquests of religion, were marvellous in their extent; and only by a species of circuit-riding could the ministers compass the wishes of the eager throngs who would crowd together to hear the Gospel. It was a serious question, in some cases, how to receive the great number who desired to unite with the Churches. One case has been widely published as unprecedented in missionary experience, in which Rev. Dr. Coan, of Hilo, baptised eighteen hundred in a single day, and received them into the different Churches of which he was in charge.

In view of such surprising facts, summed up in the statement, that within the period of labour of the first men who bore the tidings of salvation to these shores, the nation became civilised, and the mass of the natives became professed Christians, the question has interest—How are we to account for the change? No doubt much is to be attributed to the ability and wisdom and skill of the missionaries, who, as a body of men, have probably not been surpassed by an equal number of the army of noble missionaries who have borne the Gospel to the heathen. More, however, is to be attributed to the providentially opportune time when they landed. And more still—all, indeed, in a sense—to the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, who has never more signally exhibited His agency in connection with the truth, in turning the hearts of lost men to God. Yet, in addition, I think that not a little of the result is accounted for by the antecedent facts connected with the characteristics of the people. Their simplicity and gentleness of disposition, taken in connection with the supreme influence of their leaders, and their dissatisfaction with their idol-worship, which had become so general before those came among them bringing the Gospel, opened the way for just such a religious revolution as followed. As the king and chiefs immediately accepted the new religion, and some of them became zealous advocates and teachers of its truths, multitudes of the people felt inclined to follow their example. In neighbourhoods and families, if the parents or other prominent members were ready to believe the words of the missionaries, the inferiors and children would almost in a mass accept the faith. Then their emotional nature rendered this general inclination enthusiastic, and the Gospel became a fire that burned its way over all the islands, increasing as it advanced, and meeting little opposition, till it came to be the dominant influence in all affairs.

It was to be expected that being promoted in such a way, for the most part, and owing its success largely to the peculiarities of the people, it would not be of so solid and reliable a type as might be desired. A few years were enough to demonstrate that the idea of Christianity among the people was very imperfect, being modified by many of the notions which they retained from their former habits and sentiments. Still a large number were thorough Christians, and the churches they formed were very effective, not only in maintaining the supremacy of the Gospel in their own land, but in the creation of mission agencies by which it might be sent to other groups of islands in the Pacific. In this connection, a few words respecting the means of prosecuting both these departments of church work will not be inappropriate.

It became manifest to the Foreign Missionary Board, by which this revolution had thus far been conducted, that it could not be permanently and wisely carried on as a purely missionary work. The churches must have native pastors, as soon as these could be prepared for such service, and they must be made self-reliant and self-supporting, the missionaries acting only as overseers and advisers while they lived among the people, and no others being sent out to them from America. The Board acted upon this policy, and now the churches are supplied with pastors who have been educated in the mission schools and families, so far as they are educated. The result of the experiment may, on the whole, be regarded as satisfactory ; yet that there should be many imperfections and some failures is inevitable. Neither members of the churches nor natives outside would have the respect for those from among themselves who were suddenly elevated to such a position, which had been felt for the old missionaries, who had been their spiritual leaders from the beginning. And the pastors could not be thus elevated while retaining many peculiarities that could not be eliminated by so short a training, without either becoming in many instances austere and overbearing, or unwise and injudicious. It must take time to overcome all the difficulties and evils incident to so great a change.

A proper theological training school is now maintained in Honolulu, in which an average of twelve or fifteen young men are in process of education, and from this men will go out from year to year who will become better and better qualified for pastoral service. Of course, they are not passed through a thorough general education, but having a reasonable amount of knowledge before going to the seminary, they are carefully taught theology from the Bible as a text-book, and after three years' study become relatively good students of the Word of God, and able to teach others also. Several of the native pastors are really able men, and, under the direction of the missionaries, have become leaders in ecclesiastical affairs ; and although very many of the churches are small, yet (so far as I could judge from my limited observation and inquiry) they are as vigorous and have as much spirituality and influence in their neighbourhoods as the majority of like churches in our own country.

A convocation of ministers and delegates from the churches is held annually, in which all have the advantage of general conference, and by reports, discussions, and plans they strive to increase the efficiency of their varied agencies for usefulness.

Soon after churches were formed on the Hawaiian Islands, the people began to consider their duty to send the Gospel to the South Seas. The discussion had not gone far before a missionary association was formed, and several families and some young men and women volunteered to go to the southern islands, and bear the good tidings. A son of one of the first missionaries became leader of the enterprise, and with more or less success this work has ever since been maintained, yearly communication being had with the stations thus established, by which supplies of men, provisions, books, and other needed things are sent. Much good has been accomplished on the distant islands to which the mission was sent, but had no more resulted than the reflex effect of the effort upon the churches that have continued it, often with great sacrifice, the abundance of the return for all the cost could not be doubted.

Only sixty years have passed since the introduction of Christianity in the Hawaiian Islands. Some of the men and women who were the first to tell them of the Bible are still living to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" Some of the first converts are still living to relate with thrilling interest the contrast between what they saw and felt before the new religion came, and what they see and feel under its transforming power. It has been a marvellous history, from whatever point it may be viewed, and this notice of it may well be followed by the only other item to which we have room to direct attention.

III. THE EFFECTS.—For a time, the verdict of the world was that there had been no parallel in the history of civilisation to the change that had occurred in these islands, and few attributed this change to any other causes than the religion of the Bible. Of late years, however, there has been a conflict of opinion as to the facts, and some doubt has even been expressed whether there may not have been more evil than good as the incidental, if not direct, result of the change of religion.

In regard to the state of the fact, the actual condition of civilisation and morality now found among this people, it is evident that we must not judge them by the standard of nations long settled in moral habits, but must compare what they are now with what they were sixty years ago.

The first thing that strikes one, in this point of view, is the social condition of the people. There is much simplicity—much that seems to be but little removed from a state of nature, and that may offend the taste and the sense of propriety of some accustomed to the habits of refined life; and a casual observer might even suppose that there could be no good in connection with such exhibitions. But more careful observation will reveal many things that mark a vast improvement on a state of nature. There are real homes in very many of these grass huts. There are family ties, and genuine affection, and



sacred influences, that hallow these homes. There are gentle and genial relations in society, enjoyed with many customs that a higher civilisation must reject, yet indicating great advance from savage life, and the dominant influence of moral restraints and somewhat cultivated instincts. Their domestic life, notwithstanding its imperfections, seen especially in their apprehension of the relation of the sexes in some aspects, is far above that of many other lands where Christianity has been much longer known. Indeed, the only prominent failure to meet our views of what should be found in society respects the marriage bond, and the prevalence of chastity among the females,—not with all, but with too many. On this subject it has been found very difficult by the missionaries to eradicate the feeling which heathenism everywhere fosters, that woman is inferior to man, and must be his slave; that virtue in woman is to surrender herself to the wishes of the man who for the time has most influence with her; and that it is not necessary that this man should always be one and the same. There is, however, a marked improvement in this respect, and the next generation will, no doubt, be, to a large extent, removed from the control of this heathenish sentiment. But it is pity more than blame they deserve, when we find those who give clear evidence on all other points of genuine piety, and whose hearts are apparently warm with love to God, still almost destitute of conscientious convictions on a subject touching which we should have supposed they would be most sensitive.

Another feature of interest is found in the prevalence of education, under the patronage of the Government, and supported by a general tax. Neat little schoolhouses are to be seen everywhere, and the cases are very rare in which a native under forty or fifty years of age cannot read and write. Many of them make great advancement in study, and there are several higher schools well supplied with teachers, books, and apparatus, providing the means of good education. The desire for education, and all the facilities for its attainment, have sprung directly from the example and effects of the mission schools, and must, of course, be regarded as the product of Christianity alone.

Closely connected with the general education of the people we should consider the character of their government and the ability with which it is administered. For many years the kings in succession have been well-educated men, and the executive and judicial officers, who were natives—and a portion of these are always natives—have been prepared for their duties, so that they compare favourably with the English and American officers with whom they serve. The Parliament, composed much as is that of Great Britain, has its business transacted in the Hawaiian language, and its deliberations are dignified, and often conducted with great ability. As a whole, probably, the affairs of the little kingdom are as successfully managed as those of much older nations, and certainly there is more regard for benevolent and educational and moral institutions, and for the true elevation of the people, than is found in most

civilised lands. In this result the influence of the missionaries may be clearly traced.

Similar advantage has been derived in developing the products of the country. A considerable part of the arable land is now under cultivation, though not owned for the most part by the natives, and great aid is furnished by the Government towards this development of the resources of the soil. The people, like those in all tropical countries, are naturally indolent, and not thrifty. This fact has made them poor, as a rule, but a treaty with the United States has given such a stimulus to all kinds of production, that a decided change has of late been noticed in their industrious habits. This has had a good influence, in many respects, but chiefly in securing more general comfort and thrift, in the diminution of vice, and for the first time for nearly fifty years checking the decrease of the population, and securing a slight advance.

The present religious condition of the people is not as favourable as might be hoped, when only superficially observed. The first revolution, from its very nature, and from the characteristics of the people, could hardly fail to be followed by reaction. Contact with other nations, and reading of a mixed and general nature, would naturally incline the second generation to be more independent than the first, more resolute, more disposed to question; and so constituted they would be less readily affected by the faith that made such an impression on their fathers. This is manifest as a fact; and as a consequence there is not such universal attendance upon church services, and such marked regard for religious things, as was to be noted twenty years ago. Yet, on the other hand, when one of the present generation is converted, he becomes a more staunch and reliable Christian than his father, and the control of Christian sentiments and the spirit of religion is as positive as ever, though not so peculiarly seen in acts of worship and scenes of devotion. Viewed from one direction, there has been decline. On the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that the history of the next fifty years will exhibit the Christianity of the islands as on a broader and more substantial basis than during these last fifty years, wonderful as these have been in their display of its effects. Christians will be more intelligent, more able to ally themselves with the world's great Christian movements, less under the power of remaining superstition and vice, and better fitted to lay the foundation for an enduring Christian civilisation than those who rushed in such flocks into the churches when they were first formed.

Enough, I think, has been said to convince most minds that a great and radical change has been effected among the Hawaiians, as respects all that usually enters into a nation's history. All Christians will rejoice to find in these changes a fresh proof of the power of those influences which accompany the Bible to transform at once the hearts of individuals and the character of nations.

JAMES EELLS.