

## **HARVEST WORK AMONGST THE BLACKS**

QUITE recently Present Truth reached our dear Brother Booth, who for some years has been engaged in missionary work in Central Africa amongst the blacks. So greatly impressed was he with the Scriptural presentation of the DAWN volumes that he made a long journey to Allegheny to confer with us respecting the possibilities of presenting the harvest message to the Christian converts of Africa, with whom he has been considerably in contact. Brother Booth was the originator, we understand, of the so-called "Industrial Missions" of Central Africa. These established industries amongst the blacks, instructed them in agriculture and other arts of civilization, at the same time bringing the Bible, and the Redeemer and redemption taught therein to the attention of the natives. Several of these missions started by Brother Booth have since passed into the hands of others, and some have come under denominational control.

We informed our dear brother that we, too, were interested in the colored people – year, in all mankind; but that seeing the way of the Lord more particularly than we once did, we no longer feel that the salvation of the world is a responsibility upon our shoulders, but upon the Lord's, where it belongs; and that as we had come to understand his Word we found therein that he had not neglected his responsibility to his creatures, but had made a full provision through Jesus for all the sons and daughters of Adam, and that in due time under the Millennial Kingdom all are to be brought to a knowledge of the Truth. We assured him of our sympathy with mission work and with every kind of good work for the reformation and uplifting of all the members of our race, but that our understanding is that the harvest work differs considerably from a sowing work, a planting work. We explained that the harvest time into which we have entered is in our view

designed of the Lord for the ripening or perfecting of character amongst those who are his; that from amongst these the elect number may be completed, and that following their glorification they, with the Master, as the King and Priests of the coming age, will promote the knowledge of the Lord and every good work, and restrain Satan and every evil influence, that every creature may come to know the Redeemer – that every knee may bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God.

### **EARNEST CHRISTIAN CONVERTS**

It was then that Brother Booth surprised us by telling us that if manifestations of Christian love were to be taken as an indication of Christian character (to which we agreed) then he could assure us that there were some as true Christians amongst the blacks of Africa as any he had ever found amongst the whites [R3942 : page 55] anywhere. He surprised us greatly by narratives of his own experiences amongst this simple people of nature and how much of real kindness he had experienced at their hands. Trusting in the Lord, he went without spear or sword or gun over hundreds of miles amongst savage tribes, some of them cannibals. He found them savage toward their enemies, yet kindly disposed toward those whom they could trust as friends. The white people, however, they did not recognize as friends, and this was his chief difficulty. They threatened his life, and when asked why, they said, "We know you white men: first you come with the little book and talk peaceful words; then you inform others and they come with guns and kill us and take our property and force us to labor in the carrying out of their plans, so that we become slaves. We do not want you; stay in your own country that your God gave you. Let us keep our country and live in happiness as heretofore." Brother Booth was obliged to tell them that he could not answer for his brethren – that he regretted to say that there was considerable truth in their charges; but that as for himself they could see that he brought no gun, no weapon, but

merely the little book, and it had a message in it that would make them happy as it had made him happy. "Kill me if you wish to. If God's time has come for me to die I am ready and willing – perhaps this is the place where God intends I shall die. But let me tell you about the little book and what it says." Thus he would get them to listen to him and to listen to the Scriptural story of sin and how it came, of the death of Christ and its value in the sight of God, and how they all could be partakers of the blessings from that sacrifice, and by turning from sin and giving their hearts to the Lord could have divine joy and peace instead of bitterness and anger and strife.

Brother Booth told us that many of the natives are zealous for knowledge, and that some of them have become very earnest preachers of the Word and quite willing to lay down their lives, if the occasion required, in the service of the Truth so far as they understand it. He told us that in South Africa quite a number of educated negroes are owners and editors of newspapers, having gotten their education in various colleges. He urged that many of these blacks of South Africa and also of Central Africa should be of just the right **[R3943 : page 55]** condition of heart and mind to receive the glad message of the Millennial morning and the establishment of the reign of righteousness in the hands of the great King and the glorified Church. He says that he himself had felt so depressed by the conditions surrounding him there, and by the thought that all who were not brought to a knowledge and love of the Savior were going to eternal torment – that his mind was greatly distressed, and he felt sure that there was something radically wrong with his message. He had returned from Africa to Scotland in perplexity as to what would be his best course. It was at this time that he came into contact with some of the friends of the Truth in Scotland and had the DAWNS put into his hands. He besought us to undertake some missionary work on behalf of the poor blacks, amongst whom he has labored for now fifteen years.

Under these conditions it is not surprising that we fell in line with Brother Booth's proposition, inferring that the Lord had guided him to us, and was now directing us respecting another part of the harvest work. The Society accordingly has for a time undertaken Brother Booth's expenses as its missionary to those peoples with whom he is acquainted. He can speak several of their languages, while others he can reach through interpreters, and some in South Africa can read English. He was quite surprised when we informed him that the WATCH TOWER has a regular list of subscribers in Africa to the number of forty – not very many, it is true, but after all quite a good many, everything considered. Brother Booth started on his mission shortly after the first of the year, and by the time our readers get this he will be at work. It will be some time before he will have anything to report, and then it will require a considerable time to reach us. Meantime we have assured our dear brother of the love and sympathy of the Lord's dear people who are rejoicing in Present Truth, and bid him God speed, and pray for the harvest work amongst the savage tribes. Who knows but what there are some true grains of ripening wheat in that far-off land, to whom the Lord would send the present harvest message for their further development and perfecting before they can reach the garner.

### **NEARER FIELDS WHITE FOR HARVEST**

Already quite a little work is under way amongst the negroes of Jamaica and Porto Rico, as was exhibited in the report recently published in these columns. But Brother Booth's zeal for the black brethren has had the effect of stimulating our interest in them, and the more we reflect on the subject the more deeply interested do we feel in the harvest work amongst these people right at our doors. Brother Booth emphasized the fact that many colored people have great reverence for God and considerable honesty of mind, and that as a rule they are ready to investigate,

especially when the presentation is made by the whites, and when they can see consistency of life in the would-be teacher.

We wish to call the attention of the friends in general to this quarter of the harvest field, with the suggestion that in quite a good many of the little gatherings there is more than a sufficiency of talent for the service of the Church as leaders of Berean Studies, etc., and that some might find time and good opportunities for presenting the Divine Plan of the Ages to colored Christians of their vicinity. Would it not be worth while to visit some of their meetings, and in a wise and kindly manner tell them very briefly something about the end of the age, the dawn of the Millennium, and the Kingdom that then is to be established in the earth, etc., and to proffer a lecture on the Chart of the Ages if they desire. We believe that invitations of that kind would be frequently accepted, and doubt not that some amongst the blacks would respond earnestly. Our [R3943 : page 56] hopes along this line are supported by the fact that in various parts of our country Berean Bible Study classes have already been started amongst the colored friends. Indeed, of a number of these dear brethren we could surely say that, in rightly dividing the Word and clearly presenting it to others, very few amongst the whites will be found their superiors. We could also say of them that, so far as their knowledge goes, their standard of integrity and morality seems to be equally high with them as with the white brethren. Our suggestion is that the white brethren shall seek to carry the message to the blacks as opportunity may afford. This does not signify that the colored brethren should desist from serving those of their own race and color in their own localities. We will be glad to cooperate according to our judgment of the Lord's will with any, either whites or blacks, who desire to engage in this section of the harvest field.

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