

WORLD DOMINION

The World Dominion Movement advocates Informed Continuous Co-ordinated Evangelism to reach everyone at home and abroad. Its basis is belief in the Deity and Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the World's Only Saviour, and in the Final Authority of Holy Scripture.

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The West Indies To-day

F. DEAVILLE WALKER

FOR sheer tropical beauty, few parts of the world can equal or surpass the West Indies. That great chain of islands, stretching for more than two thousand miles across the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea, has been compared to a necklace of emeralds. Let us try to visualize a chain of mountains, in the form of a vast crescent, with huge peaks and many volcanoes. Now let us imagine this range of mountains sinking slowly under the sea until only the peaks remain visible. There we have the West Indies; those numerous islands are in fact the mountain summits of a mighty submerged chain, and some of them are still volcanic. With a few exceptions, they are enchantingly beautiful, rising from the azure ocean to a height of anything from about 1,000 to 7,000 feet, and clothed with a rich mantle of tropical vegetation. In many places they rise romantically from the sea in broken cliffs and bold promontories, with deep bays and coves fringed with white sand and thousands of graceful palms. We do not wonder that Columbus called Jamaica 'the Earthly Paradise'; but other islands rival it in beauty; indeed some think that Dominica and Grenada surpass it.

There is the charm, too, of historical associations. From British Guiana and Trinidad, in the south-east, right round to British Honduras in the north-west, and all the surrounding shores of Central and South America and the intervening seas, the whole region is rich in historic memories. One is constantly in the tracks of Columbus or Balboa, Drake or Raleigh, Nelson or Rodney. Santo Domingo is the oldest city in the New World, and in its ancient cathedral (the oldest Christian Church in the Western Hemisphere) lie the mortal remains of Columbus. In deep water off Nombre de Dios Drake lies in his leaden coffin, surrounded by what remains of five vessels sunk to bear him company. Barbados, the Bahamas and Jamaica are three of the oldest British colonies—the first two having

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their own Houses of Assembly dating from the middle of the seventeenth century.

It is extremely interesting to study the different strata of civilization represented in the West Indies to-day. In the islands there are no longer any representatives of the aboriginal Arawak Indians found there by the Spanish discoverers : they were completely annihilated and are now only traced by fragments of pottery and flint arrowheads. But on the mainland, in the forests of British Guiana and elsewhere, a few surviving Arawaks may still be found. The next stratum consists of the Caribs, who completely conquered the Lesser Antilles—the eastern half of the great chain of islands—not long before the coming of the Spaniards. A few survivors of this once powerful savage race may still be found in the islands of Dominica and St. Vincent, and in British Honduras on the western mainland. Possibly the petroglyphs, or rock pictures, found in several islands, may be the work of the Caribs—or perhaps of even older inhabitants.

The Spanish stratum is much more in evidence, especially on the mainland where there are many Spanish republics—old Spanish colonies that have thrown off the yoke of the mother country, but remain Spanish in language, in religion, in temperament, and in manner of life. On the island Columbus first colonized, the Republic of Santo Domingo brings us into close contact with Spanish life, and other islands—Porto Rico, Trinidad and Jamaica, for example—still have traces of their erstwhile owners. Even though in many places Spanish blood has been crossed with other strains, the result is distinctly Spanish ; and old cities like Panama, San Jose, San Domingo and San Juan, with their ancient churches, fortresses and houses, their streets, their *plazas* and their *patios* are abiding witnesses of the great Spanish era.

Other islands represent the French stratum—Martinique, Guadeloup, and Marie Galante remain French colonies. The ' Black Republic ' of Haiti, still speaks the French language and retains not a few French characteristics ; and Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada and Trinidad,

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though now British, have still many traces of French occupation.

Other strata are also much in evidence in certain places—Danish in St. Thomas, St. John's and Santa Cruz ; Dutch in St. Eustatius, Saba, St. Martin and Guiana. For more than a century the British stratum has been dominant over the greater part of the archipelago ; but during the last forty years American influence has been steadily spreading and is now exceedingly powerful from the Virgin Islands to Panama. The islands of St. Thomas, St. John's and Santa Cruz (purchased from Denmark), and Porto Rico (captured from Spain), and the Canal Zone (purchased from Panama) are possessions of the United States of America ; Cuba and Haiti are under American influence, and American commerce, shipping and air-lines are powerful factors over the whole western half of the Caribbean Sea.

In some ways, the most prevalent of all is the Negro stratum. To some extent it is pure ; but to a very large extent it has crossed with the various European and American strata, and the result is a great race that is best described as ' West Indian.'

To-day, in the islands and certain mainland areas, the overwhelming majority of the population are either black or coloured. They are the descendants of the Negro slaves of days now past. In most of the islands white people form a very small minority.

Perhaps the most significant fact about the West Indies is that we are there witnessing the birth of a new race. Nature has chosen this region to be the scene of a modern experiment in race-formation by the fusion of older stocks, and the process is going on before our very eyes. The parent stocks are widely dissimilar—the White races from Europe and the Negro peoples from West Africa. Moreover, this fusion is taking place, not in the homeland of either, but far away from both. The circumstances of colonization on the one hand and of slavery on the other, carried representatives of both races across the broad Atlantic to the West Indies ; and in those beautiful islands,

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roughly equidistant from Europe and West Africa, the new race has already been born.

The process began three hundred years ago in the illicit intercourse of white planters with slave girls. Not infrequently the master gave his coloured offspring more or less education; they lived about his house and were allowed privileges, so that they became accustomed to a European mode of life. As the years passed, 'Mulattos' and 'Quadroons' married with one another or consorted in their turn with white men—in or out of wedlock. This process has been going on for more than three centuries; the new mixed race has been born, and is now numbered by hundreds of thousands. It is neither Black nor White, but Coloured—the colour being of every possible shade from dark brown to pale olive (scarcely distinguishable from white), according to the admixture of blood in the individual. It is not correct to speak of these people as 'Negro'; they are not true Negroes, any more than they are true Europeans. The term 'Coloured' is used to distinguish them from the full-blooded Africans on the one hand and the Europeans on the other. The best name for them is West Indian. We must learn to adopt that term, for it is the true name of a great and growing race. They form a very large and important section of the population.

The position then is this: we have in the West Indies to-day three distinct races: (1) the Blacks (who predominate); (2) the Coloured (an important and steadily increasing factor); and (3) the Whites (a minority). This great new Coloured race is continually receiving new blood from both the parent stocks. The extreme ends of the line—the pure Black and the pure White—seldom intermarry; but every year white residents marry with the lighter coloured West Indians and pure Africans marry with the darker West Indians. (We speak of legal marriage, usually carried out in Christian form.) The present writer has come across not a few instances of exceedingly happy unions of this kind, and has had the pleasure of staying as a guest in their homes for longer or shorter periods. In the West Indies these mixed unions—both legal and illicit—

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are exceedingly numerous and are steadily increasing. In this way, the great process, Nature's own experiment with the race problem, goes steadily on, and there is every reason to believe that the experiment is already proving successful. There are clear indications that the pure Negro element will, in time, be absorbed into the Coloured, and cease to be a separate section of the community. It is best for us to drop the distinction and apply the term 'West Indian' broadly to all.

The 'Coloured' West Indians take their place quite naturally in the general life of the community—commercial, social and religious. Many of them occupy important positions in the business houses, in the Churches and in Government departments. In the British West Indian colonies the colour of a man's skin has little or nothing to do with the position he occupies, the employment he follows, the salary he receives or the house he lives in. The less capable people (be they White, Black, or Coloured) naturally sink to the bottom; the more capable rise in the scale. With the exception of the Bahamas, British West Indian colonies are comparatively free from colour prejudice, and nowhere are there any legal colour bars. The people mingle together, work together and in the churches worship together. In the schools and colleges the children and young people play and study together without distinction of race. School life is doing a great deal towards breaking down racial barriers, and intermarriage is a natural result.

In some parts of the world, notably Africa, it is said that 'half-castes' exhibit 'all the vices and none of the virtues' of their progenitors. In many cases, for very obvious reasons, this is true. But it does not hold good in the West Indies, for there the conditions under which the children are born and trained are totally different. And this is due almost entirely, probably entirely, to the influence of the Churches.

In recent years there have been signs that the West Indians are becoming race conscious. The development of this consciousness is seriously hindered by the insularity of the islands. It is natural for the people to think in terms of

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their own island. They speak of themselves as Jamaicans, Barbadians, Dominicans, Antiguans, Trinidadians or Virgin Islanders. The more intelligent are beginning to realize the essential solidarity of the whole West Indian race, and with many of them this is becoming a political as well as social, consciousness.

Unfortunately there are, in a few places, notably in Jamaica, signs of race-bitterness on the part of certain sections of the Black community. It is largely due to that apostle of race antagonism, Marcus Garvey, the founder of the 'Universal Negro Improvement Association.' This is a comparatively new and disturbing feature of West Indian life. It has its roots, of course, in the United States, and it has a tendency to spread. The present time is one of transition. It is a formative period for the great new race, and, therefore, a critical period.

For fully a century and a half the Christian Churches, through their missionary societies, have been making a most important contribution towards the development of the growing West Indian race. Beginning in days of slavery and utter degradation, the missionaries, often in the face of most bitter opposition and persecution at the hands of the White pro-slavery mobs, have taught the people at least the outlines of Christian belief and moral practice. To-day the overwhelming majority of West Indians are, at least nominally, Christian. In the Republic of Haiti, and among numbers of the poorer and illiterate folk elsewhere, there linger traces of the old African superstitions; but most people are baptized in infancy and after death receive Christian burial. Scores of thousands of West Indians are loyal members of the Churches to which they belong—Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Moravians, Congregationalists, Plymouth Brethren (so-called) or others.

Perhaps we can make the position clear in this way: First there is an inner circle of truly Christian people, whose loyalty can be depended upon. They are the very salt of the earth. Outside this circle there is a larger one consisting of well-meaning, warm-hearted folk, enthusiastic when moved, but less reliable than the others. Then there

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is another circle of adherents whose religion is held somewhat lightly ; their attendance at the services is irregular, they are apt to change with the wind, and their character in many cases leaves much to be desired—people for whom we hope for the best but upon whom we cannot rely. Have we not, in our homeland Churches, people who exactly fit into these three circles ?

Outside the Churches are very large numbers of West Indian people, whose Christianity is scarcely even nominal ; folk who seldom, if ever, enter a place of worship, save for a christening or a funeral, or, perchance, a wedding. Among these the moral tone is often painfully low ; gambling, drinking and sexual indulgence are sadly prevalent ; and, especially in the country districts, there is still a good deal of the leaven of African paganism intermixed with their very doubtful Christianity. In some places illegitimacy is as high as seventy-three or even eighty-two per cent.

The conditions obtaining outside the Churches are a constant peril and challenge to those within ; and although the majority fight nobly and live victorious lives, there are always the weak ones who fall—not a few to be reclaimed later.

All this means that the West Indian Churches have almost unlimited opportunity for evangelistic effort in their own towns and villages, and evangelistic campaigns of the kind we are familiar with in England are constantly undertaken. In the West Indies the day has not passed for such efforts, if suitably led and properly guarded against emotionalism. A merely passive Christianity is not enough ; definite aggressive action is greatly needed if the Churches are to hold their own against the ever-increasing secularism and materialism of the present day.

It will be asked, ' What progress are the West Indian Churches making towards self-support and self-government ? ' Speaking for the Methodist Churches, the question can be answered very definitely ; the 500 Churches with their 200,000 members and adherents are normally self-supporting, meeting entirely the cost of upkeep of their churches and schools and the stipends of their ministers

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(White as well as West Indian). The parent Society in England is responsible for certain overhead charges, such as the training, passages, furlough allowances, and pensions of its missionaries, and grants for exceptional purposes. In times of very special trouble, wrought by hurricanes, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, floods or drought—things to which many parts of the West Indies are particularly liable—the Missionary Committee helps with special grants.

The problem of leadership for the Churches is a most important one, and provision for the training of leaders inadequate.

Spain

There are few European countries that present so many problems to the foreign student as Spain. Passionate individualism is the outstanding trait of the Spanish character, and this individualism is reflected in the wide divergencies between the dialects and characteristics of the people of the different regions of the country; it complicated the years of troubled search for a political and economic system which succeeded the golden days when Spain dominated both the Old and the New Worlds; this individualism makes a simple statement of any situation impossible, whether in the study of the people of Spain or of their history. 'I understand myself, and God understands me,' explained Don Quixote; an unilluminating statement for the student of the country which he personifies.

Attempts to simplify the present tragic crisis to terms of a Fascist-Communist issue are, therefore, as useless as they are misleading. Reference is made to this under 'Current History,' but it needs to be emphasized that the present Constitutional Government of Spain is composed of, and supported by, men of the finest intellect and unquestioned integrity to be found in the country, and that it has afforded greater encouragement to the Protestant minority than any previous régime. This was illustrated in a remarkable way soon after Don Manuel Azaña, who was the translator into Spanish of Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, became President. He received a deputation of the Spanish Evangelical Alliance in the National Palace, and, to their acknowledgment of a favour never before accorded to a Protestant group, replied, 'Now fortunately times are changed; the doors of this palace are always open to you.'

Though it may be difficult to discriminate between the various parties, engaged in the present war, one fact emerges clearly: that it is for the success of the Government that the Evangelicals in Spain are praying.