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THE
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE SLAVES
IN THE WEST INDIA COLONIES
ADVOCATED AND DEFENDED.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE
THE WESLEYAN
METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
IN THE
NEW CHAPEL, CITY-ROAD, LONDON,
APRIL 28, 1824.

BY
RICHARD WATSON,
ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THAT INSTITUTION.

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IN THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS

BY RICHARD WATSON

SERMON

PREACHED AT

THE WEST INDIA

METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The profits of this Sermon, published at the request of the Annual Meeting of the Society, will be appropriated to the West India Missions.

NEW CLARET STREET, LONDON.

APRIL 1811

RICHARD WATSON

OF THE SOCIETY OF THE WEST INDIA

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

LONDON

PRINTED BY RICHARD CLAYTON

AT THE CLARET STREET

SERMON, &c.



1 Peter ii. 17.

HONOUR ALL MEN.



WE call Christianity, emphatically, a *revelation*. It is so. It is a revelation of GOD, of a REDEEMER, and of a FUTURE LIFE. But with scarcely less emphasis may it be entitled a revelation of MAN. At its first promulgation, it placed him under aspects new, at least, to the world of Gentiles; and, to this moment, it continues to stamp upon him this signature of his value in the sight of God, that all the truths which the revelations of the inspired Scriptures contain were made for his sake; that for him the veil has been withdrawn from the attributes of God; for him the Redeemer left "the bosom of the Father;" and for him the manifestations of immortality now bound the vanities of the present life with the stupendous realities of another.

Its discovery of the solemn and consolatory relations in which man stands to God, is accompanied also by a most interesting declaration of the relation in which man stands to his fellows. When two passages were recorded in our Scriptures by the inspiration of their Author, views on this subject as novel as they were tender and benevolent were opened on the world. One affirms, that God "hath made of ONE BLOOD all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" that they are of one family, of one origin, of one common nature: the other, that our Saviour became incarnate, "that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Behold the foundation of the *fraternity* of our race, however coloured and however scattered. *Essential* distinctions of inferiority and superiority had been, in almost every part of the Gentile world, adopted, as

the palliation, or the justification, of the wrongs inflicted by man on man; but against this notion Christianity, from its first promulgation, has lifted up its voice. God hath made the varied tribes of men "*of one blood.*" Dost thou wrong a human being? He is thy BROTHER. Art thou his murderer by war, private malice, or a wearing and exhausting oppression? "The voice of thy *brother's* blood crieth to God from the ground." Dost thou, because of some accidental circumstances of rank, opulence, and power on thy part, treat him with scorn and contempt? He is thy "brother, for whom CHRIST DIED;" the incarnate Redeemer assumed his nature as well as thine; he came into the world to seek and to save *him* as well as thee; and it was in reference to him also that he went through the scenes of the garden and the cross. There is not, then, a man on earth who has not a FATHER in heaven, and to whom Christ is not an advocate and patron; nay, more, because of the assumption of our common humanity, to whom he is not a BROTHER.

Thus "the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards *man* appeared." But here brutal ignorance and affected philosophy agree to ask the question, "*Who are MEN?*" intimating, that, if the benevolent principles just laid down are not to be disputed, the application of them must be narrowed; and that, as to various tribes which bear the human form,—several of the tribes, for instance, to which the charity of Missionary Societies is extended,—it is doubted whether they have this claim to *brotherhood*, because it is doubted whether they have any title to *humanity*. A civilized savage, armed with the power which an improved condition of society gives him, invades a distant country, and destroys or makes captive its inhabitants, and then, pointing to their contrary colour and different features, finds his justification in denying them to be *men*. A petty philosophy follows in the train, and confirms the hesitating deductions of ignorance. Its theory is, that the gradations of animated nature are gentle, and almost imperceptible; and, not content that the ape and baboon should fill up the chasm which exists between the quadruped and man, an intermediate link must be invented; and thus the coloured skin and the peculiar visage of the Negro and the Hottentot are placed against their title to humanity, and millions, by the dreams of a theory, have been struck out of the *family* of God, the *covenant* of grace, and that *fraternity* which the Scriptures have extended to the whole race of Adam.

But our Scriptures have not left us to determine the title of any tribe to the full honours of humanity by *accidental* circumstances. To *man* has been given the *law*, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and to be capable of loving God is the infallible criterion of our peculiar nature. So extensively has this principle been applied by Missionary Societies, that the philosophy in question is now refuted more by *facts* than reasoning. They have

determined whether the races cast out and spurned by this theory are our *brethren*, and, as such, entitled to our fraternal yearnings; they have determined who are *men*, by determining who are capable of that universal and exclusive law to *man*, the love of *God*. The *Negro*, through all his shades; the *Hottentot*, through all his varieties; the *Indians* of America and the *natives of New Holland* have all, in our own days, been inspired with the love of *God*, through the Gospel: and again we see, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but that Christ is all in all." Thus have missionary operations not only enlarged the sphere of benevolence, but extended the vision of a hoodwinked philosophy.

But what means the text, "HONOUR ALL MEN?" That it is to be taken in its most extensive range of application is clear from what follows—"love the brotherhood." All men are to be *honoured*; but Christians, who form but a *part* of mankind, are to be *loved* with that special regard which is enjoined in the special command of Christ to his disciples, "love one another." The whole race is first mentioned, then a part of the whole; and thus, whatever the precept may imply, it comprehends, in its obligation and in its object, men of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

What, then, is the "HONOUR" which we are enjoined to pay to "ALL MEN?" Should we, with some, confine it to external courtesies and signs of respect, yet even this tends to impress us with some great peculiarity in man; for who treats an inferior animal with courtesy? Why, then, this distinction between the most degraded man and the most pampered brute, but that between them "a great gulph is fixed," and that there is no approximation at all in the two natures? Thus the very precept in the text, if interpreted to mean nothing more than external salutation and respect, rends asunder the fleshy veil in which all that is eminently *man* is enveloped, and exhibits to us, as the basis of the courtesies we are bound to render to "all men," without distinction, a being of superior capacity and delicate feeling; a nature which, in common with our own, has its sense of degradation and of honour; which sympathizes with us in our joys and sorrows, in the cheering influence of kindness, and the keen resentment of neglect and contempt. But this would be a very imperfect representation of the import of the text. To "*honour*," as the word signifies, is to *estimate* the value of any thing, and to proportion our regards to the ascertained value. Apply this rule to man. Estimate his value by his Creator's love and by his Redeemer's sufferings; by his own capacity of religion, of morals, of intellectual advancement, of pleasure, of pain; by his relation to a life and to a death to come; and you will then feel, that to honour man is to respect him under these views and relations; to be anxious for his welfare; to contemplate him, not

only with benevolence, but even with awe and fear, lest a prize so glorious should be lost, lest a being so capable should be wretched for ever.

These remarks have an intimate connexion with the subject which I have been requested to bring before you in this discourse. It is not for me to range over the wide field of the labours of this Society, and to lead you into the varied scenes of human error and diversified superstition on the one hand, or of missionary triumph on the other. It is assigned to me to fix your attention upon one branch only of the Society's exertions—the Missions to the Negroes of the West Indies; but, narrow as is the field, and uniform as is its aspect; though, in many respects, this part of your work has become familiar to you, and wants that interest which novelty and incident give to other departments of exertion, I confess that I regret nothing in the task but my own insufficiency to plead its principles, to display its urgency, and to exhibit its success. But for that I should feel the greatest pleasure in offering you my feeble testimony in behalf of Missions so signalized and encouraged by the blessing of God, and so worthy of your prayers, exertions, and liberalities.

With reference to your Missions to the Negroes of our West India Colonies, I direct your attention,

- I, To the objects of your Christian sympathy and care;
- II, To their civil condition;
- III, To the effects of past exertions;
- IV, To circumstances which may encourage your zeal and perseverance.

I. To the objects of your sympathy and care:—they are **AFRICAN NEGROES.**

1. In touching this subject, allow me one principle, and I desire no more, in behalf of this class of our fellow-men. Allow me, that, if, among the various races of human kind, one is to be found which has been treated with greater harshness by the rest, from its possessing in a less degree the means of resistance; one whose history is drawn with a deeper pencilling of injury and wretchedness; that race, wherever found, is entitled to the largest share of the compassion of the Christian Church, and especially of those Christian nations which, in a period of past darkness and crime, have had the greatest share in inflicting this injustice,—and you concede to me the ground of a strong appeal in its favour. That appeal I make for the Negro race, the most unfortunate of the family of man. Abundantly has it multiplied, but only to furnish victims to the fraud and avarice of other nations. From age to age its existence may be traced upon its own sunburnt continent; but ages, which have produced revolutions in favour of other countries, have left Africa still the common plunder of every invader who has had hardihood enough to obdurate his

heart against humanity, to drag his lengthened lines of enchained captives through the desert, or to suffocate them in the holds of vessels destined to carry them away into hopeless, foreign, and interminable captivity. It has been calculated, that Africa has been *annually* robbed of one hundred and fifty thousand of her children. Multiply this number by the ages through which the injury has been protracted, and the amount appals and rends the heart. What an accumulation of misery and wrong! Which of the sands of her deserts has not been steeped in tears, wrung out by the pang of separation from kindred and country! What wind has passed over her plains without catching up the sighs of bleeding or broken hearts! And, in what part of the world have not her children been wasted by labours and degraded by oppressions!

2. To oppression has been added *insult*: they have been denied to be *men*; or deemed incorrigibly, because *physically*, embruted and immoral. The former I shall not stay to answer. Your Missionaries have determined that; they have dived into that mine from which, we were often told, no valuable ore or precious stone could be extracted, and they have brought up the gem of an *immortal spirit*, flashing with the light of intellect, and glowing with the hues of Christian graces. But, if it be somewhat too late to chase the Negro out of the current of our common blood, and to sever his relation to Adam and to God, yet may you all see, in publications written, I say not within a century past, but within twelve months of the hour in which you meet to promote the intellectual and moral improvement of this injured race, that, at least, the Negro is so degenerate a variety of the human species as to defy all cultivation of mind and all correction of morals.

Two descriptions of men come to this conclusion. The first is composed of those who have had to contend with the passions and vices of the Negro in his purely pagan state, and have applied no other instrument to elicit the virtues they have demanded than the stimulus of the whip and the stern voice of authority. Who can wonder that they have failed? They have expected "to reap where they have not sown," and "to gather where they have not strewed;" they have required *moral ends* without the application of *moral means*; and their failure, therefore, leaves the question of the capacity of the Negro untouched, and proves nothing but their own folly. In the second class are our *minute philosophers*, who take the gauge of intellectual capacity from the disposition of the bones of the head, and link morality with the contour of the countenance; men who measure mind by the rule and compasses; and estimate capacity for knowledge and salvation by a scale of inches and the acuteness of angles!

And yet, will it be believed, that this contemned race can, as to intellect and genius, exhibit a brighter ancestry than our own!

that they are the offshoots, wild and untrained, it is true, but still the offshoots of a stem which was once proudly luxuriant in the fruits of learning and taste, whilst that from which the Goths, their calumniators, have sprung, remained hard, and knotted, and barren? For is Africa without her heraldry of science and of fame? The only probable account which can be given of the Negro tribes is, that, as Africa was peopled, through Egypt, by three of the descendants of HAM, they are the offspring of CUSH, MISRAIM, and PUT. They found Egypt a morass, and converted it into the most fertile country of the world; they reared its pyramids, invented its hieroglyphics, gave letters to Greece and Rome, and, through them, to us. The everlasting architecture of Africa still exists, the wonder of the world, though in ruins. Her mighty kingdoms have yet their record in history. She has poured forth her heroes on the field, given bishops to the Church, and martyrs to the fires; and, for Negro physiognomy, as though that should shut out the light of intellect, go to your national Museum, contemplate the features of the colossal head of Memnon and the statues of the divinities on which the ancient Africans impressed their own forms, and there see, in close resemblance to the Negro feature, the mould of those countenances which once beheld, as the creations of their own immortal genius, the noblest and most stupendous monuments of human skill, and taste, and grandeur. In the imperishable porphyry and granite is the unfounded and pitiful slander publicly, and before all the world, refuted. There we see the Negro under *cultivation*; if he now presents a different aspect, cultivation is wanting: that solves the whole case; for, even now, when education has been expended upon the pure and undoubted Negro, it has never been bestowed in vain. Modern times have witnessed, in the persons of African Negroes, generals, physicians, philosophers, linguists, poets, mathematicians, and merchants, all eminent in their attainments, energetic in enterprise, and honourable in character; and even the Mission Schools in the West Indies exhibit a quickness of intellect and a thirst for learning to which the schools of this country do not always afford a parallel.

3. But the Negro has been doomed to another degradation. It was not enough that he should be stultified in intellect and brutalized beyond correction in morals: he has been represented as under a divine anathema, a part of an accursed and devoted race; and thus he has not only been denied the honours of a human intellect, but excluded even from the compassions of God.

To this race has been applied the prophetic malediction of Noah, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren," the descendants of Shem and Japheth; and because they have been supposed to be under the *ban* of the Almighty, it has been concluded that every kind of injury might, with impunity, be inflicted upon them by his creatures. Nothing

is more repulsive than to see men resorting to the word of God for an excuse or a palliative for the injuries which they are incited to inflict on others by their own pride and avarice; going up profanely to the very judgment-seat of an equal God, to plead his sanction for their injustice; establishing an alliance between their own passions and his perfections; and attempting to convert the fountain of his mercy into "the waters of bitterness." But the case they adduce will not serve them. The malediction of Noah, if we even allow it to be one, and not a simple prediction, fell not upon the Negro races; it fell chiefly on Asia, and only to a very limited extent upon Africa; it fell, as the terms of the prophecy explicitly declare, upon *Canaan*, that is, in Scripture style, upon his descendants, the Canaanites, who were destroyed or made subjects by the Israelites, and, perhaps, upon the Carthaginians, who were subverted by the Romans. Here was its range and its *limit*; the curse never expanded so as to encompass a single Negro tribe; and, Africa! with all thy just complaints against the *practice* of *Christian states*, thou hast none against the *doctrines* of the *Christian's Bible*. That is not a book, as some have interpreted it, written as to thee, "within and without," "in lamentation, and mourning, and wo;" it registers against thee no curse; but, on the contrary, exhibits to thee its fulness of blessings; establishes thy *right* to its covenant of mercy, in common with all mankind; and crowds into the joyous prospects which it opens into the future, the spectacle of all thy various tribes "stretching out their hands unto God," acknowledging him, and receiving his blessing.

But, if the prediction of Noah were an anathema, and if that malediction were directed against the Negro races, yet, let it be remarked, it belongs not to the Gospel age. Here the anathemas of former dispensations are arrested and repealed: for no nation can remain accursed under the full establishment of the dominion of Christ, since "all the families of the earth" are to be "blessed in him." The deleterious stream which withers the verdure of its banks, and spreads sterility through the soils it touches in its course, is at length absorbed and purified in the ocean, ascends from thence in cooling vapours, and comes down upon the earth in fruitful showers. Thus Christianity turns all curses into benedictions. Its office is to bless, and to bless all nations; it is light after darkness, and quiet after agitation. The *restoring* and the *healing* character is that in which all the Prophets array our Saviour; and, if partiality is ascribed to him at all, it is partiality in favour of the most despised, and friendless, and wretched of our kind. The *scythe* has gone before, and, in all ages, has swept down the fairest vegetation, and left it to wither or to be trodden under foot; but "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, like the showers that water the earth"—"all nations shall be blessed in him, and all people,"

in grateful return, "shall call him blessed." Well may we exclaim with the Psalmist who recorded these grateful revelations, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doeth" these "wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

From these observations on the Negro race, I call your attention,

II, To the civil condition of that portion of them which, in our West India Colonies, claim our Christian care. They are in a state of bondage, and in number amount to about *eight hundred thousand* souls.

I approach the subject of West India slavery, not, as some might suppose, with fearful steps, for I know that no danger can arise from the sound and explicit views which you entertain on this subject. I know the objects which you propose, and the clear and Christian course which your Missionaries abroad have undeviatingly pursued for now near forty years, during which they have been pursuing their important and benevolent labours in those Colonies. I advert to it only as it is connected with Missions, and under this relation the system of our colonial bondage may be regarded in four views.

1. In the first place, it has illustrated the patient and submissive character of the Negroes, and, on this account, has entitled them to our good-will, and given them a claim upon our exertions for their improvement and welfare.

Let us do the Negro justice. He has been our servant, and he has not been a troublesome and unruly one. There is something affecting in that simplicity of the African which, on his native continent, has invited rather than resisted aggression. With a spirit more buoyant, suspicious, and resentful, the Negro tribes would not have been for ages an easy prey to every plunderer and hunter of men. Their shores would have bristled with spears and their arrows have darkened the heavens; nor would the experiment of man-stealing have been twice repeated. The same simplicity and tameness of character distinguishes the Negroes in their state of bondage. It has not required a violent hand to keep them down; their story is not that of surly submission, interrupted by frequent and convulsive efforts to break their chain; and the history of slavery nowhere, and in no age, presents an example of so much quiet, under the same or similar circumstances, where the bondage has been so absolute, and the proportion of the dominant part of society has been so small, or so insulated from the body of the empire. But what do we infer from this? Does it impress us with no respect for this patient race of enslaved men? Does it not lay us under additional obligations to seek their benefit? Answers it not a thousand ridiculous fears as to the effect of imparting to them the light of

Christian instruction? If the Gospel taught compassion and mercy to the Scythian of ancient times and the Goth of the middle ages, and if it is now stealing with an emolient influence over the fierce barbarism of the American Indian and the New Zealander, shall the news of your sympathy, the voice of your Missionaries publishing peace, and the implanted meekness of your Gospel, rouse the pacific Negro into headlong revenge and fury, and spread bloodshed and violence over the fields he has tilled and through the habitations of his employers? If we apply a power so calming to the boisterous sea, will it lash into wild commotion the lake slumbering within its hills? Were the Negroes of an opposite character; were the experiment to be made on men of harder nerve and sterner mould, you would make it without fear; but, when the Negro race is in question, you may well smile at all these predictions of mischief and misery. You have replied to all these alarms by the facts which your Missions have exhibited. For near forty years you have had Negro societies and congregations in the West Indies, and not an instance has occurred in which one of them has been found in rebellion or detected in conspiracy. You found *docility*, and you implanted *principle*; you found *patience*, and you exalted it even into *charity*.

2. This condition of servitude has rendered our neglect in not instructing the Negro population of the Colonies in the principles of religion the more criminal, because it has taken away the ground of every excuse which may be made for the omission of so obvious a duty.

As a nation, we are guilty of permitting so large a portion of our fellow-subjects, of our very *servants*, to remain under the darkening and corrupting influence of Paganism; nor can it be said, that we have not been, till recently, reminded of our duty, or not strongly urged to it. A public call was made upon the nation, near *one hundred and fifty years ago*, in a very able and powerful work published by the Rev. Morgan Godwyn, a clergyman of Barbados, and entitled, "The Negro's and Indian's Advocate, suing for their admission into the Church."* This book, printed in London, in the year 1680, and dedicated to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, contains an earnest and argumentative appeal to Christian principles and to good policy on this important subject; but the call was made in vain, and the great mass

* The title in full is, "the Negro's and Indian's Advocate, suing for their admission into the Church, or a persuasive to the instructing and baptizing of the Negroes and Indians in our plantations; showing that as the compliance therewith can prejudice no man's just interest, so the wilful *neglecting* and *opposing* of it is no less than a manifest apostacy from the Christian Faith."

of the Negro population were suffered, to the shame of Christianity and Protestantism, to remain unpitied as to their best interests, and still excluded from the salvation of the Gospel.

I have said, "to the shame of Christianity and Protestantism," for in our hands, and with respect to the Negro slaves, both have been tarnished; and, if we have a due sense of the *honour* in which we ought to maintain both, even that may become a powerful motive to stimulate us to future efforts commensurate with the case, and to remove a reproach which time has only accumulated. For it is impossible to turn to those Colonies without blushing for the profession we have made of a religion of zeal and charity. At different times, and in different places, Paganism and Christianity have been seen in contact with each other, but under circumstances which cheer the spirit and elevate our confidence in the benevolent energy of our religion. The first ages of the Church present scenes of this kind. Christianity was constantly extending itself into the darkness around it; wherever it was introduced, it commenced its assaults on Paganism, and, though spurned and persecuted, though frowned upon by power and resisted by mobs and magistrates, it turned not away from the contest until it had hurled down one of the proudest forms of established Paganism, and, in the triumph of exulting charity, waved its banner over the mighty ruin. Through ages of relentless persecution, it remained true to its own uncompromising and aggressive principle, till, "out of weakness, it was made strong," and, by patient faith and the omnipotence of love, it had put to flight "the armies of the alien." At a lower period we see the activity of the same principles and affections, though under other circumstances. The Paganism of barbarous nations had launched itself into Christian lands, and wielded there the supreme dominion; but the spirit of Christianity, though decayed, was not extinct; zeal for the conversion of men had not become an empty name; it seized upon the conquering Goth, and, struggling with a ruder form of superstition than that which pagan Rome had presented, at length subdued it to itself. The irruption of these nations from the north was like a snow-storm from the same rude quarter, driven wide and distant upon fields warmed by milder skies, and still reverberating the heat of but recently obscured suns; and, wide as the drift was spread, it no sooner touched the soil, than it began to yield to its influence, and the rugged wintry waste was speedily changed into a scene of refreshed verdure and renovated beauty.

If we turn to our Asiatic empire, Paganism and Christianity are there also in contact; but the scene is instructive and cheering. There the power is Christian, but it resorts not to carnal weapons for the propagation of the faith; the idolater is not coerced, and toleration of the evils which Paganism inflicts upon

society is carried, at least, to its extreme limits. But Christianity is not inactive. Under its patronage, the manly science of Christian nations dawns upon the intellect of millions; the Scriptures pour their streams of sacred truth through the varied dialects of an immense population; and the labours of the Christian Missionary find a full protection and a cheering patronage in all the gradations of authority.

But when we look at Christianity as planted in the midst of the Paganism of the West Indies, again, I say, we may blush for its dishonoured name and its withered honours; honours never so tarnished in any hands as our own, and those of a few other *protestant* colonial powers. Look at Christianity and look at Paganism as they coexist in the West Indies: are they (with a few exceptions, modern in date and limited in extent) in conflict? Has Paganism any fears of attack? has Christianity any ardour of conquest? Age after age passed away, and they still reposed together in dull and slumbering harmony. The *form* of Christianity was there; but it was destitute of *life*; the heart was without feeling, and the hand without activity. The Pagan felt that he had no share in the care and compassion of the Christian, and the Christian resigned the Pagan to his ignorance and spiritual dangers;—as *a matter of course*, he was to remain untaught, unpitied, and unsaved. There was Christianity, with her whole apparatus of instruction and salvation, and hope and joy; but not for the Negro: her temples rose, but to him they were not the house of prayer: the holyfount of baptism was there, but not that he might “wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord:” the broken sacramental bread was there, but not that he might eat and live for ever: the ministers of Christ were there, but the Negroes were considered “no part of their charge,” nor, from their limited number, could they be to any great extent. What excuse, then, is there, what palliation, for ages of criminal neglect by the *nation at large*? for this chill and heartless Christianity? If any be set up, that the Negro of our colonies is *a slave* is the answer to it. He *was wholly in our power*; no obstacles to the kind and persevering application of the means and ordinances of instruction existed, nor could exist, in such a state of society. What, as a *national act*, is now proposed to be done for the extension of Christian instruction, might have been done a century and a half ago; the accumulation of Pagan ignorance which now exists might have been prevented; and African ignorance and superstition been wholly banished from the Colonies. That pious individuals and Missionary Societies have waked whilst others slept is their praise; that you have taken so large a share, in late years, in this long unthought-of duty, is to your honour; but the debt we still, as a country, owe to the very credit of our religion, and the deep arrears of obligation, and

Christian kindness to the untaught slaves which are yet undischarged, you will, I trust, feel to be commanding motives to a quickened zeal and to undiscouraged perseverance.

3. The third consideration is, that, limited as the application of the means of Christian instruction by Missions to the Negroes has been, they have triumphed over all the obstacles presented to moral improvement by a state of bondage, and have afforded, by that circumstance, the most obvious evidence of their beneficial tendency.

To my mind, there is nothing in the history of the Church which so strikingly exhibits the power of our religion as its triumphs over the moral evils so uniformly and necessarily inherent in a system of slavery. That is a state in which no class of society, the dominant or the subject, is not vitiated; vitiated in temper, in principle, in conduct. All history is in proof of this; and, if that failed, language, as to the enslaved class at least, would supply the testimony. We call that man a *villain* who unites baseness and treachery with his crimes, and complicates vice with deceit and cunning; but the *villain* was our ancient *slave*, and *villany*, in its original acceptation, is *slavery*. We find the same association in other languages, ancient and modern, all stamping it as the fact of experience, that slavery is essentially demoralizing, and that it compounds into the character all the faithlessness and feculence of moral turpitude. There is a class of mere human virtues, which may exist independently of the direct influence of religion and *principled* morality. Such are, honour, honesty, generosity, patriotism, and others, which, though but conventional, and the shadows and images of real virtue, are corrective in their influence upon society, and give it a higher tone and a purer character; but even these cannot, except by very accidental circumstances, vegetate in this soil, nor flourish in the fog and impurities of this stifling atmosphere; they require a purer air, the brisk wafting of the nobler passions, the excitement of hope, the warmth of charity, and the mountain breeze of freedom.

Yet what is impossible to man is possible to God. Where virtues of human offshoot and of earthly seed cannot strike, there the Spirit of God, by his word, can mould the soul of man into a productive soil, and make the desert of a slave's heart rich with the verdure of, at least, the *passive* and the humbler graces. Christianity effected this among the slaves of the ancient world. It gave cheerfulness to submission, and patience to wrong; it created charity where gratitude could have no place; shut the lip of reproach and silenced murmuring; taught "*servants*" (slaves) to serve not with "eye service," but on the nobler principle of "doing it to the Lord." And yet I do not think, that the power of Christianity was exhibited among those ancient slaves in aspects so marked and impressive as in producing the

same effects among those of our own Colonies. The character of that ancient bondage was different. In some respects, indeed, it was more cruel, but in none so galling to the feelings. The ancient slave was not cut off so absolutely from intellectual improvement; he was not so insulated from the bustle and stirring movements of a great empire; he was not so put out of the range of the domestic charities; above all, he differed not, usually, in *country* and in *colour* from his masters, or that colour was not to him the *badge* of physical shame and degradation. The *abomination of caste*, founded on the hue of the skin, did not exist, as in modern Negro slavery, with its associations of disgust, on the one hand, and of deep mortification, humbled feeling, and often deep resentment, on the other. But religion in our own Colonies has triumphed even over these. Its light has penetrated, so to speak, the solid darkness of minds left without instruction; it has struck the spark of feeling into hearts unaccustomed to salutary emotions; it has reconciled man to the degradation of colour and feature; it has produced charity towards those who have dealt out to them the most humbling kinds of insult; breathed over passions which, when once awakened, are terrible, the calm of resignation; and taught the spirit, spurned from every other resting place, to rest in God, and to wait for his salvation. If these have been the triumphs of religion in modern slavery; if all this was achieved even at a time when the condition of our slave population did not assume that hopeful and improving character which, thank God, it does at present, you can despair of nothing. The field of exertion is before you; its most rigid clods have been broken up and prepared; and it only remains for you to sow, with a hand more liberal, the seeds of truth, and peace, and righteousness, to reap, year after year, a full-eared and unfailing harvest.

4. My last view of West India slavery, as connected with missionary exertions, is, that the character and manner of its termination altogether depend upon the infusion of Christian principles into the minds of the slave population.

In the present circumstances of the world, nothing human can be more certain than that slavery must terminate throughout the British empire. No thinking and observant man, who looks abroad upon society, and notices the current of opinion, both as to its strength and direction, can doubt of this; at least, I have met with no one who doubts it; and, if the probability of the case be so strong, nothing can be less wise than to refuse to look forward to this approaching and, whenever it arrives, this important result.

In one of two ways only will that state of society be terminated in the West Indies: by the operation of bad principles and passions; or by the salutary and controlling influence of Christianity, co-operating with lenient government. Let each, for a moment,

be considered, that you may discern more fully your clear path of benevolent duty.

Slavery may be terminated by principles bad in themselves, or bad as they are connected with inconsiderate and violent passions. Is this improbable? When it is remembered, that the West India slaves neighbour upon states which are breaking off their connexion with European powers, and emancipating their brethren; that a large island presents to them a picture of a sanguinary and guilty, but successful revolt; that in this country principles destructive of order, and loyalty, and civil duty are continually issuing from the press—a press which, by various means, reaches them; that even just principles of freedom and right are, and always will and ought to be, debated at home with warmth and boldness; we have, on the one hand, a view of the *excitement* which is operating upon society in these Colonies, and that with constantly increasing energy. On the other, let us suppose this excitement to go on without the communication of religious principles and the introduction of measures of civil amelioration to regulate, control, or neutralize it, and that all such attempts, upon a large scale, are resisted and discouraged; then an elastic fluid of tremendous power is condensed by every stroke, and a surly application of that resistance to the evil which mere power, without the aid of *moral means* can supply, will only delay the explosion, to render it more expansive and fatal. This is one method by which slavery may be extinguished—one which we all deprecate, and which every good man will exert himself, with his whole might, to prevent.

The other is the gradual termination of this now increasingly anxious state of servitude, by the influence of Christianity preparing the slaves for those measures of wise and benevolent policy which the local and the supreme Government may adopt for their benefit, and co-operating also with them, in all their stages, to render them efficient. This is not an *end* which we formally propose, as the friends and supporters of Missions. Our object is immediate, to do good by bringing men under the practical and saving influence of religion. We form no ulterior plans; we follow the direct course of instant duty to make men Christians, whether Indian or Negro, bond or free. But it would be a folly, on proper occasions and in proper places, not to admit, that the Christianity which is so active in our world, in the present day, is working onward to *civil* ends and to definite improvements in the outward condition of men wherever it prevails, and, consequently, in the West Indies. Indeed, it has several times been observed, in official papers published by the Colonial Legislatures, and in the course of the controversy which has been recently carried on on these subjects, that Christianity must destroy modern bondage, as it destroyed the slavery existing in ancient

Europe; and as to this silent and peaceful operation of its principles some have judiciously refrained from expressing any alarm, and have professed to regard the result even with complacency. The view they have thus taken of the influence of our divine religion upon society is founded in truth; for though, in states very partially Christianized, slavery may continue, as one of many evils not yet fully reached by the remedy, yet, when the mass of a community is leavened with its influence, the subjection of man to man, *as a slave*, must cease. The reason of this is, that our religion, on the principle of its own two great social laws,—to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do to others as we would have them do to us,—makes it an imperative duty to render every man's condition as felicitous as the present mixed state of things, where the rich and the poor must still exist, and toil and suffering cannot be excluded, will allow. But the discipline which Heaven has imposed on sinful men, rigid as it is in many respects, is compatible with the abolition of slavery. This is not, as experience in our own and other countries has proved, one of those *necessary* evils which must remain after all the triumphs of religion; and, therefore, Christianity must abolish slavery throughout the world, in the accomplishment of its own plans of benevolence and renovation. It is a blot which cannot remain amidst the glories of Messiah's reign. It is solely a *punitive* evil, not a *corrective* one, and is, therefore, inconsistent with the dominion of *mercy*; it implies, in its most mitigated form, an *injustice*, and is, therefore, contrary to the full dominion of *righteousness*. These are the principles on which we assuredly conclude, that Christianity, largely and efficiently diffused, cannot consist with this state of society. If our neighbour is to be loved as ourselves, he cannot be left in a condition which no man on earth, however miserable, would choose—the condition of a slave. If, as in the text, all men are to be HONOURED, no part of them can be left in the degradation of being the very property, the goods and chattels of others; in a state in which they are *things*, not *men*. But, strong as are these principles of our religion, and I am not disposed to keep them out of sight, or to disallow, for one moment, the force of the objection often made to the Christian instruction of the slaves, that it must diffuse principles and feelings inconsistent with this kind of servitude, yet is there nothing alarming in this view of the tendency of the Gospel. It connects itself with no violent revolutions, no ensanguined instruments, no violations of order, no storms of passion, no sweeps of vengeance. It is the Gospel of *peace*. It teaches men to sustain injury with patience until they are relieved by legal means, and to trust rather in that disposing of men's hearts which belongs to God than in an arm of flesh. It does not influence one class of society only; but it advances, wherever it is in progress, with a growing potency upon all. It is, like the

stealing light of morning, soft, penetrating, and expansive : society rises together ; the governed and the governors are enlightened and ameliorated ; power becomes *protective*, and laws *righteous, equal, and merciful* ; the standard both of *right* and of *humanity* is raised ; feelings of friendliness connect the extremes of society in a common bond of good-will ; a regard to circumstances dictates and regulates improvement ; and, in the case of slavery, the door of freedom is set open, not forced by violence ; and he who, under such prudent regulations as a paternal governing power may think it right for the safety and interests of all parties to adopt, “ may be free,” as the Apostle Paul observes, “ chooses it rather.” These are *ends* which, as I have just said, you do not *formally* propose ; these are objects which are to occupy other cares than yours, the cares of men in situations of authority and influence, and of the country at large, in the exercise of its public and civil duties ; but it stamps a value upon your exertions, and may operate as no mean motive to your activity in them, that, by moralizing and evangelizing a large portion of your fellow-subjects, you are preparing them to the hand of a wise philanthropy, and the benevolence of the parent and colonial Governments, that they may be invested with civil rights and the privileges of a Christian people.

III. Hitherto our observations have been general, or rather your attention has been directed chiefly to that vast and wild desert which is presented by, at least, *seven hundred thousand* human beings in our West India Colonies, upon which the light of the Gospel, as yet, has never shone, and in which no seed of truth and righteousness has been planted ; but I now turn to the effects produced wherever Christian care has extended Christian cultivation. There are, thank God, fertile spots in this extensive waste, and, wherever they meet the eye and cheer the heart, they are the *creations of the Gospel*. What, then, have been the effects, I say not upon thousands, but upon tens of thousands of this class of degraded men ?

Let us try the question :

1. By the communication of Christian knowledge.

I grant that the elements of Christianity only have been generally imparted, and that the opportunities of many of the slaves to attend instruction have been, in comparison of our own, few, and often interrupted. I grant, also, that we shall not find among them the doctrinal disputant and the subtle casuist, or the power of mastering many of the difficulties of Scripture ; but have we considered what the communication of the *elements* of Christianity to a Pagan mind imports, and that it is in its *elements* and *first principles* that its saving power consists ? In the case of an African slave, it has not, I allow, to displace those multiplied perversions of truth which an erring but more cultivated reason

creates, nor to dissipate those illusions of a corrupt but highly wrought imagination with which Asiatic superstition fills and bewilders the soul of man. Take it only that his mind is little more than a mere *blank*, as to religious truth, yet how powerfully does that appeal to our hearts! It is a blank which excludes all recognition of God, and all knowledge of his intercourse with men; which shuts out the history of our Saviour's incarnation and sacrifice; which admits no moral distinctions; which catches no light from the immortality which rises before us in the Gospel, in forms so impressive and influential. O sad condition of man, when his case is considered thus *negatively* only! But, in the minds of thousands of these slaves, this broad and utter *blank* has, by missionary care, been filled up with that "excellent knowledge of Christ" which brings with it all those spirit-stirring, controlling, and cheering truths to which I have just adverted. At least ten thousand of their children in our Mission Schools, and under the instruction of Missionaries, catch, with the first opening of their understandings, the rays which break from this vast scene of religious intelligence; whilst numerous societies and congregations of adults throughout the islands listen to them from the pulpit, meditate on them at their labour, talk of them in the hut, sing them in hymns, and, in admonitory advices, commend them to their children. The light has not fully dissipated the darkness; but that day has broke which never more shall close.

2. By the production of morality.

The want of principle, the absence of moral and even of decent manners, and the practice of crime among the Negroes have been the constant topics of complaint among men connected with this species of property, and the facts, as to the Pagan slaves, are not to be questioned. These are the effects, the necessary effects of Paganism; and indeed we have heard, of late, in the heated discussions which have occurred, that nothing better could be hoped even from Christianity; that to teach them religion would produce precisely the same effects as the Heathenism of their uninstructed state; that the result would be to relax the nerve of industry, to kindle the angry and to nurture the vengeful passions, to break the bond of obedience, and to spread devastation throughout the Colonies. "Can the same fountain, then, send forth sweet streams and bitter?" or, can you trace the same effects to opposite and contrary causes? Are Christian light and Pagan darkness equally the sources of vice and danger? If so, we must lay our censures equally upon each; and if we hesitate to do this, then are we compelled to choose against which of the two we will direct our cautionary expressions of alarm as the cause of evil. To such persons we may say, "Choose you whom you will serve: if the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, follow him." If you attack Christianity as the

mischievous agent of immorality, then be Christians in *name* no longer, and go over to the purer and more peaceful Paganism of the slaves you rule; but if you refuse, then propitiate an injured Christianity, and acknowledge that you have been ignorant of its nature, and that you have mistaken all its tendencies." That is the only alternative for such persons, whose judgment, not whose settled principles, we may charitably hope to be in fault; but for you whom I now address, the confidence which you have in the beneficial influence of religious instruction upon the Negro population of the Colonies has a full justification in open and acknowledged facts and a long and extensive experience. What has so generally raised the religious slaves into confidence and offices of trust but their improved *character*? What has rendered them more *healthy*, another fact, but their *temperance*? What has given the instructed slave a richer *peculium* than his fellow, another acknowledged fact, but his quickened industry? What has enabled the Committee of this Society to say, that, for forty years, no slave in your societies has been either a conspirator, a rebel, or insubordinate, but the influence of the precepts of obedience enjoined by the Gospel which he has been taught? What has created so many excellent friends of Missions among the planters of the Colonies generally, and most in number where your Missions have been longest established, and are, consequently, best known, but the obvious moral improvement of their people? What are the answers we have been enabled to give to the calumnies with which we have been assailed? Not hypothetic reasonings from abstract principles; not idle declamations; not promises for the future to atone for the failures of the past; but *facts* detailed in the annual Reports of the Society, confirmed by the frequent and ample testimony, not of Missionaries only, but of persons of the greatest observation and influence in the Colonies, of the salutary and important effects of religious care upon the temper, the happiness, and the conduct of the slaves.

3. By the introduction and establishment of *Christian worship* among this heathen and long-neglected people.

It may be truly said of the uninstructed slaves of our Colonies, that they have *no religion*; that whatever mythology they had originally in Africa, the Creole slaves, now the larger portion of the slave population, know and practise, beyond certain superstitions which have no connexion or meaning, none of the forms of Paganism, and have, therefore, no worship of any kind. I know not how this consideration may affect you, but on *me* it seems to make an impression more sad, and to convey the idea of a desertion more complete, than if imaginary powers called forth their hope and their fear, and than if the more innocent forms of even a delusive devotion occupied their attention, and gave

exercise to their intellect. For how dull and inert an object is a human mind, when its powers lie unawakened by either a false or a true devotion! How fades from the sight the lofty distinction between man and the inferior animals, that the former is capable of converse with invisible powers! Yet this is the case of many hundred thousands of uninstructed Negroes. Other Pagans, even though they greatly err, acquire ideas of greater or less sublimity, and affections of some degree of force. Nature is not viewed by them with stupid, senseless, inobservant gaze. But to the Negro of the Colonies the heavens above are vacant, both of the true God and of unreal divinities. To him no spirit whispers in the woods, no patron power presides over the fountain; his blessings are connected with no invisible superior Benevolence; he has no trust in imaginary guardians; no refuge from trouble, delusive as it may be, in the creations of his fancy, or in the legendary deities of his ancestors. I know, indeed, that, as to *moral good* and the hopes of a *better life*, nothing substantial and saving can emanate from false religion; but I am not sure, this life only being considered, whether the Negro would not be a gainer in intellect and quickened feeling by the introduction of some of the milder forms of Paganism itself; and if so, we reach the deepest conception of his religious destitution. What then shall we say, if, to a considerable part of this deserted and neglected race, the labours of Christian Missionaries have opened the glory, the sanctity, and the comforts of even Christian worship? This they have done; and nothing makes a stronger appeal in behalf of such labours to the heart of a benevolent and pious man, than the results of this kind with which they have been followed. The true God has been revealed to their minds in the splendour of his own revelations: the heavens have been taught to declare to them HIS glory, and the firmament to show forth his handy work: they know him now as their "Father in heaven," and have learned that his watchful providence extends to them. Rising suns, and smiling fields, and rolling thunders, and sweeping hurricanes all speak of HIM to Negro hearts; and Negro voices mingle with our own in giving to him the praises due "unto his name." The history of the incarnate God and the scenes of Calvary have been unfolded to their gaze: they hear "the word of reconciliation," are invited to a throne of grace," and there "find mercy and grace to help in time of need." They have the Sabbath with its sanctities, and houses of prayer raised by the liberality of their friends, receive their willing, pressing crowds. One to another they now say, "*Come, and let us go up to the house of the Lord;*" and tens of thousands of them now, in every religious service, join us in those everlasting anthems of the universal Church, "*We praise thee, O God! we acknowledge thee to be the*

Lord!" " *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!*"

4. By the effect produced by Christianity upon their domestic habits.

It conveys a volume in a single phrase, as to the moral condition of the slaves, to say, that, before they were brought under the care of Missionaries, marriage was almost entirely unknown, and that it remains so wherever religious influence has not been applied. In consequence, the purer affections could have no place in their hearts; parental yearnings had little tenderness, filial regards no foundation in esteem; and a degrading and destructive immorality swept down decency, order, health, and happiness. Jealousies, brawls, and fightings were the product of every day; the hut was the scene of revel or of strife; and the toil of the field only suspended the discord or interrupted the revel to give new energy to the exasperated tongue, and vagrancy to the midnight prowl.

It is amongst the noblest triumphs of missionary patience, that these vices have been subdued in so many thousands. Without the sanction of civil law, a sanction which to this hour does not exist;—by the simple force of religious instruction; by the habit of submission to the commands of Heaven which has been formed; by the creation of *conscience* and *the fear of God*; all the sanctities and moral and civil benefits of marriage have been introduced. About twenty thousand Negroes, in the Wesleyan Societies alone, are now living in this "holy state of matrimony;" and, within about four years, four thousand marriages have been performed by their Missionaries. Many of these have become the heads of families; distinguished from the rest of their fellows by the existence of a superior relation between them and their children; by the strength which virtue gives to affection; by that care for each other which that affection and that relation only can supply; by more of respect abroad, and by peace at home. These are the result of your benevolent exertions, and you may reflect upon them with unmingled joy—the Zacharias and Elizabeths of the plantations and the town "walking in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless:" children who share the care of *both* their parents, the effect alone of regular marriages; children whose morals are guarded by parental example; who feel themselves raised by their very legitimacy above the spurious breed around them; many thousands of whom follow the steps of their parents to the house of prayer, are taught in the Mission Schools, and who convey to the hearts of Negro parents a thrill which never, in former times, spread its delightful sensation through one of their race, when, at the public examinations of the schools, catechisms and large portions of the

Scriptures are repeated, and hymns of praise are poured forth, in trilling accents, from their infant voices. These instances of care for the Negro youth, on the one hand, and of their improvement, on the other, are not now, thank God, as formerly, exhibited on a scale too small to attract public notice, though then, perhaps, they had even the greater merit; but these are labours which, however opposed in some Colonies, have the kindest patronage in many others. Planters, magistrates, governors, and presidents have often, of late, taken a part in these examinations of the Negro schools, mingled in the delight of those new scenes, and distributed commendation and rewards for proficiency in the Scriptures, and for orderly and devout behaviour in the house of God.

5. By the effects produced by their religion in trouble, sickness, and death.

I say nothing of *wrongs*; but, in the ordinary calamities of life, what is the refuge of Pagan Negroes? They have none; they are "without God" and "without hope!" Grief rises into rage, or subsides into despair, till a new and sharper pang rouses the heart, and agony again relieves itself by expression. But in this the beneficial influence of Christianity is strikingly displayed, that it has taught those who knew no refuge, no hope in trouble "to possess their souls in patience," by teaching them that God "careth for them;" and to disburden an oppressed and sinking heart, by "casting their care on him," and resorting to his throne of mercy in their simple prayers for succour.

Where religion is not, superstition still retains its place, and it is generally of a gloomy, often of a destructive character. Such is the superstition of the African slave. He believes in *Obeah*, and often fancies himself under the power of the professors of that art of destruction. His spirits sink; his appetite forsakes him; he shuns society; the power of his imagination produces an overwhelming dread of approaching calamity and death; and, after lingering a short time, he dies the victim of his fears. So common has this evil been, as to call for the severest laws against the practice of *Obeah*, and law has done something to check the evil, but religious influence more. So well is this known, that when no other motive has, with some owners and managers, existed to call in the aid of missionary exertions, they have been sought as the remedy for this fatal superstition; and where instruction has most prevailed, *Obeahism* has, for the most part, disappeared. The doctrine of providence has banished it; *that* has erected the prostrate spirit of the Negro, taught even his feeble mind to despise these occult powers, and saved his life by implanting within him a sure *trust* and *confidence* in God.

Sickness is the lot of all, and the Negro is subject to some

peculiarly tedious and afflictive forms of disease. Paganism is always selfish and unfeeling. This is its character among Negroes. The slaves are taken care of by their owners in sickness, as a matter of course; but they are usually deserted by their fellows. The nominal husband leaves his wife in hopeless affliction, and seeks another; the wife, in like manner, abandons her husband, and forms a new connexion; and thus the sick and the dying are forsaken by all, except those whose attendance is compelled. The scene is changed wherever Christianity has extended its influence. The sick have heard the voice, "Is any afflicted? let him pray;" and his relatives remain with him, to minister to his wants and to share and soothe his anguish.

The Negro funerals are a disgusting scene; they are accompanied with ridiculous gestures, noisy drumming and shouts, with drinking and feasting; yet, now and then may be discerned a spirit pierced too deeply to join the deafening riot—hearts which have felt the full pang of separation. The dead are not always forgotten by the Pagan Negroes; they resort annually to their graves, and offer food and liquor to their departed relatives. A Negro mother in Jamaica was known, for thirteen years, to make this annual visit to the grave of her daughter, and, in an agony of feeling, to offer her oblation. Thus "they sorrow without hope." We respect the strength of the affection; we lament its downward earthly tendency: all the thoughts of that poor mother were in the grave with her child, and the only object of that unabated love was the mere dust of a dissolved frame. Such is Heathenism! Melting and mournful thoughts steal over the recollections of the bereaved Christian mother too, and time has no power to dry up the fountain of her tears: years may pass away, but the memory of the forms over which she has hung with maternal fondness suffers no decay; it keeps its place to the last hour of the most extended life. But, when she thinks of her children, she thinks of them as in *heaven*, not as in the *grave*; she knows the result, the resurrection from the dead; and, urged onward by this hope through her remaining pilgrimage, she hastens to embrace them again in the kingdom of God. What a contrast in death has been created among the sable population of these Colonies by Christianity! The harsh sounds of Pagan grief and carousal have, in ten thousand instances, given place to the solemn hymn of praise which celebrates the entrance of another redeemed spirit into the mansions of light; the storm of passionate grief, to the calm resignation of piety; and the sad pressure of despair, to the lightened feeling of a hallowed hope. The Negro burial-grounds have, during the last forty years, presented spectacles once unknown—funeral trains, preceded by the Christian pastor, consigning to the mansions of the dead those who, when living, had been taught from his lips how to die, and pronouncing, with a

confidence delightfully cheering to his future labours, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!"

This is a feeble sketch of the good effected by the Missions in which you have, with so much zeal and benevolence, interested yourselves; and, feeble as it is, and much as it falls below an adequate representation of their efficiency, I am persuaded, that, by my thus recalling to your minds facts with which most of you are familiar, you will be induced to bind yourselves anew to this work of mercy, and, as a Society, to take your full share in the exertions which yet are necessary to banish the remaining darkness which broods over these interesting islands, and to bring the whole slave population into the fold of the Church of Christ.

IV. I call your attention, finally, to a few circumstances tending to encourage your zeal and perseverance.

1. The first is the public recognition which has been made by Parliament and by the Government of the country, of the necessary connexion between the Christian instruction of the slaves and the amelioration of their civil condition.

This is a principle, the force of which has always been felt by observant men; it has been acknowledged and acted upon by many benevolent planters abroad, and the effects produced upon the character of the Christianized slaves by missionary labours have been an ample comment upon it. It is, indeed, certain, that just and beneficent legislative measures can proceed but few steps without supposing the previous or concurrent influence of religion upon those for whom they are intended; and of this the Order in Council for Trinidad, which contains the plan of Government for bettering the condition of the slaves, is itself a proof. You legislate for the removal of the whip, as a stimulus to labour, and the ground assumed is, that man is a being capable of being governed by moral motives, and that it brutalizes him to treat him as an irrational animal. The principle is sound; but it is just in proportion as religion discovers to man his immortal and accountable nature, convinces him of the value of character, and shows him his interest in the mercies of God, that he feels more sensibly the distinction betwixt himself and the inferior animals, yields more readily to *human* motives, and spurns, with a more elevated feeling, whatever is offensive to the just dignity of man. It refines, so to speak, the *sense* of humanity, and thus lifts up the degraded class above the level of embruted character. You legislate for the establishment of a Sabbath, that the worship of God may be observed; but this supposes both instruction in the principle and habits of respect for the institution. Law may make a day of *rest* from toil, but it can do no more: a day of real worship, a Sunday, which shall exert a *moral influence*, is the

sole work of religion. The same may be said of marriage, to which the Pagan Negroes are most averse; to the purchase of manumission, which supposes an industry and a habit of economy which never exist but as rare exceptions, where religion has not, in some considerable degree, exerted its energy; and to the giving of evidence in courts of law, which necessarily supposes, in order to the full communication of the privilege, both the knowledge and the fear of God. Look, then, at the whole of that plan, and ask to what extent it can, by any possibility, be applied with efficiency among totally uninstructed and Pagan slaves. It supposes Christianity, in some degree, to begin with, and it depends upon its diffusion for its full accomplishment. Religion and policy are combined in it, and wisely. Wise and beneficent laws can do little without Christianity, and Christianity is aided by wise and benevolent laws. Law is not to wait until Christian instruction is perfected; Christianity is not to delay till legislation has done its office. Both have their posts assigned them; but, to produce moral and civil amelioration fully among a slave population, both must act together, and each will derive strength from a mutual, simultaneous, and harmonious co-operation. All this is recognised in the Order in Council, and that very plan justifies your past efforts, and, indeed, tacitly applauds them. It encourages your persevering exertions, and you will not remit your efforts when you see them thus connected with all that is benevolent and wise in the plans of your rulers, and all that is hopeful in the advancing condition of your fellow-creatures. I may add, too, that it will produce in you no feelings but those of satisfaction, to see a project for employing additional labourers in this long-neglected field emanating from the zeal of others. For myself, on principle approving of an ecclesiastical establishment, when connected with religious liberty and full toleration; convinced as I am of the great moral benefits which have resulted from the national Church, and are still resulting from it, at home; thinking it the solemn duty of every Christian Government to place religious instruction within the reach of all its necessitous subjects, I contemplate the plan of an Establishment for the West Indies as the discharge of a long-neglected national obligation, and augur great good from it, if not immediately, yet ultimately. We have long been labouring in the work of Negro instruction; we have been almost exclusively so in the majority of the Colonies; but we welcome the Establishment into this field of toil, reproach, and danger. Alas! how much of it must, after all the agents which can for a long time be sent out, remain untilled! a circumstance which would render party spirit on any side at once injurious and detestable, and stamp it with its most odious features of folly and of shame.

2. Another source of encouragement is the increased and

increasing number of friends to the religious instruction of the slaves in the Colonies themselves. This is to be acknowledged in thankfulness to God and in justice to men. When we speak of men in masses, without discrimination, we must inevitably sin against charity or against truth. The proprietors of slaves are to be divided into two classes, and the same distribution may be made of the Colonies themselves. Some are friendly to missionary exertions, and others are hostile. There are "who love darkness rather than light," and there are who love light rather than darkness. This is a place and an occasion which, on the one hand, forbids to flatter, and, on the other, to refuse "honour to whom honour is due." The majority of persons connected with slave property stand chargeable with criminal neglect, or the great proportion of slaves would not now be degraded and immoral Pagans. Not a few have been still more criminally hostile and persecuting. They have paced round their enclosures of darkness and vice, intent upon nothing so much as to scowl away the messengers of light and mercy, by whatever name they might be called, and to seal up the wretched people under their power in ignorance and barbarism. This has been the spirit of individuals in some islands, and the spirit of the community in others, as in Barbados and Demerara. But, still, in the Colonies collectively religion has had its advocates, and slave instruction its fostering friends; and for a few past years the number has been increasing. Pious and benevolent proprietors, at home and abroad, have felt their responsibility to God, and have distinguished themselves by a generous flow of feeling to man; and to them the greater honour is due from us, because they, too, have had to bear the reproach of fanaticism, and have had to dare to be *singular*. By West Indian liberality have many of our numerous Mission Chapels been erected, repaired, and enlarged; our expenses relieved, and our Missionaries in part supported; and, under patronage of the most respectable kind, they have often been protected from the malice of their assailants, and cheered and encouraged in their labours. In the midst even of the late agitations, the Society has received a greater number of invitations to extend their labours than at any former period; and but that its funds will not yet permit such an exertion, thirty additional Missionaries might be sent out this instant, with assurance of acceptance and openings for full and promising labour. This is surely a motive for unabated and even quickened activity. It is only in two or three of those Colonies that men calling themselves Christians stand guard before every avenue of the kingdom of darkness, alarmed at the approach of every foot which is "shod with the preparation of the Gospel;" painfully and pitifully anxious that Satan should "keep his goods in peace," and placing all their hope of safety and prosperity in the perpetual exclusion of their slaves

from the light and hopes of the Gospel. All this alarm at peaceful men and the peaceful Gospel which they preach would be ridiculous, did it not operate to obstruct a work of so much necessity and mercy. Better thoughts, we trust, will ere long prevail among this class of misinformed or prejudiced persons. For the Colonies generally, they are largely open to your work of charity; in almost every place there are some who will give a cheering welcome to your Missionaries, and in every place the Negroes themselves are prepared to listen to the heavenly message: for, let what else be said of them, this cannot be alleged, that they turn away their ears from instruction. Plant your Missionaries where you will, they will not fail to surround themselves with crowds of attentive Negro hearers.

3. A third source of encouragement is the improvement which has taken place in the character of many white and free coloured people in the Colonies.

To carry the influence of Christianity through a dark and neglected population many agents are necessary, besides Clergymen and Missionaries. If we look around upon our own country, and observe through how numerous channels the stream of instruction and moral influence is poured, and the impulses which it receives in its course by the various operations of philanthropic and Christian activity, we shall be convinced of this. Here rank, influence, property, the intelligence and activity of thousands in the middle ranks of life, and the hallowed offerings and valuable co-operations of the pious poor, are all combined to remove the ignorance and correct the vices of society; and with all this, much remains to lament, and much to be accomplished. The importance of this ample co-operation of many and various agents is, however, manifest; and as to home improvement, we found our best hopes upon it. For a long period this was entirely wanting in the West India Colonies, and still exists but partially; but it is growing up with that improving character which distinguishes both white and coloured free persons, in a few instances, in the worst of the Colonies, and to a very encouraging extent in the majority of them. There was a time when the scene presented by West Indian society was almost unmitigated; when it was an almost unvaried mass of human suffering on the one hand, and dissipation and immorality on the other; when little was seen but the harsh lord and the despairing slave; gloomy servitude and a proud and vexatious tyranny; when almost every youth who was sent from the parent country to take up his residence there, however generous in his nature, however fortified by his education, plunged into an atmosphere thick with the moral infection, and lost, by a rapid process, his humanity, his principles, and his morals. Here was the reaction and the curse of *Slavery*; it had its revenge in the corruption and

moral death which spread around it. Men in possession of Christian truth refused to apply the corrective to Paganism, and Paganism turned its transforming power upon them:—the white man became black; and the slaves over whom he ruled only served to exasperate his temper, and to give vigour to his passions: they provoked his pride, irritated his anger, plunged him in sensuality, obdurate his heart, and fixed upon the Christian name the degrading marks of a Heathen character. But better and brighter scenes have now, for many years past, been displaying themselves, partly by the influence of the rising spirit of religion in the parent country extending itself to the Colonies, and partly by the direct operations of piety and zeal in the Colonies themselves. The benevolent planter, the religious manager are not unfrequently seen. Many persons resident in towns, of respectable rank in society, have, for some years, given, and are still giving, the influence of their station and the activity of their endeavours to do good. The moral character of the free coloured people, all of whom are intelligent, many of them well educated and possessed of property, has, in many of the islands, presented a visible and cheering improvement, in spite of the demoralizing effect naturally resulting from that most unchristian and impolitic prejudice indulged by the whites generally against them on account of their colour, and their being considered as a degraded class. A very large number of the females of this class, especially, are rising into character under the influence of religion. The concubinage to which formerly they were doomed, almost without exception, to white men, or to men of their own colour, has, in many instances, on the older Mission stations, given place to honourable marriages: the character of this class of females has been rescued from its former degradation: character having been given to them, esteem has followed, and, instead of the coloured women being as formerly, and as a matter of course, the objects of seduction, in those islands where the Missions have been longest established, there are many who, for piety and delicacy of mind and conduct, are not exceeded in any part of the world. From the matrimonial connexions which have been thus formed, founded on mutual esteem, families are now training up in the fear of God, and under the influence of religious example and education; and it is among those eminently exemplary and excellent females of colour, which your Missions may place among their most interesting trophies, that we now find teachers for our schools, patronesses and visitors of benevolent societies, instructors and guardians of the virtue of female youth, and active and talented agents for many other offices of pious charity.

Finally, the blessing of God upon our work commends it to our affection and perseverance.

Were we now, for the first time, called to enter upon this scene of labour, and to make the experiment upon the Negroes of the Colonies and on their native Continent, undirected by experience, uncheered by success, and surrounded with the chilling prophecies of failure, it would still be our duty to set forth. The solemn obligation to repair past neglects, to redeem our character, and to show compassion to our perishing brethren, would all demand that we should make the attempt in the face of the world's scorn and the world's anger. To *others* was assigned that task. Revered men! they waked whilst the *world* and even the *church* slept; they dropt the tear over scenes which all looked upon with indifference; they regarded as the purchase of the Saviour's sufferings a race which others had chased out of the family of *man*, or on which had been fixed the mark of Cain or the curse of Canaan. Perhaps they trembled whilst they made the experiment. Strong as was their faith, did it never falter, when not only the insulting white, but the degradation of the pitied race itself seemed to scoff the effort; and when, through every chamber of that vast sepulchre of souls, dead in sin, a forbidding voice seemed to issue, "*Can these dry bones live?*" Perhaps it did falter. The language of the anxious hearts of the first Christian labourers, pressing forward in a work as yet uncheered by a conversion, and often cheated by fallacious promises of a success which only bloomed to wither, might, perhaps, often be, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" The prayer was heard. Faith, small as a grain of mustard-seed, has the prerogative of removing mountains. They went out weeping, bearing precious seed; and the very earliest labourers came again "rejoicing, bringing the sheaves with them." They opened the path to their successors, who have carried out the work to the extent in which it now presents itself, and thus it has descended to our cares, stamped and characterized with the most obvious proofs of a Divine sanction and of the special co-operation of God. What else could have produced the effects which we now behold? Unpatronized by power, uncheered by a smile, often persecuted, always ridiculed, counteracted by demoralizing circumstances, watched with suspicion; this was its history for many years; yet in those years it had, from among a Heathen population, raised up thousands, of whom one, who had a large acquaintance with the fact, says, with a truth which might be established by many specific instances, were you not familiar with them—

"However debased by vice the slaves were in the days of their ignorance, they are now sober, chaste, industrious, and upright in all their dealings. Nor is this all; they are eager, punctual, and persevering in all the services of devotion. Their domestic circle is distinguished by the daily exercise of prayer and praise; and the Sabbath is called 'a delight, the holy of the

Lord, and spent in the solemnities of his sacred worship. This is indeed wonderful! In a country where the Sabbath is devoted to public traffic; where, comparatively speaking, marriage is not so much as thought of; and where it is common to indulge in the most debauched inclinations, without the least restraint, to see them keeping the Sabbath day holy, renouncing all their criminal connexions, and standing forth as examples of purity and religion, is manifestly the Lord's doing, for nothing short of the power of God could obtain a victory like this over habit, example, and such corruption of the human heart."

Into a work, thus marked by the Divine blessing, you are called to enter with renewed vigour; and, since it has thus succeeded, and is still in vigorous and hopeful operation; since it is increasing yearly its friends and patrons, and has excited others to commence similar enterprises of religious charity; and especially since we see the cause of Negro instruction and protection engaging the attention and interests of all classes of our countrymen, can we doubt but that the delightful time is hastening, when Africa and all her sons shall partake, after ages of desertion and injury, the full mercies of the Gospel? It is one of the most cheering harbingers of this consummation, that the nations of the earth are staying the ravages which have for ages wasted her shores; that two of the most powerful maritime states, our own country and the United States of America, have at length raised their principles to the only proper standard by which such outrages can be truly judged, and have declared the slave-trade *piracy*. Thus "the shields of the earth, which belong unto the Lord," have thrown the protecting shadow of their justice over those defenceless coasts where the Christian name has been most deeply dishonoured, and the rights and feelings of men have been most criminally outraged. But the spiritual mercies branch off in more numerous streams, and pour forth for Africa a more copious current. We need no laborious and critical investigation to determine whether "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God;" no prying into the mystic counsels of Heaven, to ascertain whether "The time to favour her, yea, the set time, be come." Go to the Colonies, where her sons are in captivity: scarcely is there one of them where this Society alone has not one or two, in many five or six, sacred buildings for worship and instruction devoted to their use, and which they regard as peculiarly *their own*. One Colony I except. Sacrilegious hands there rent it to the earth, and denied to the Negro his "house of prayer." But that is a solitary monument of shame; for the rest, in those crowded congregations, in those spacious edifices, Ethiopia already "stretches out her hands unto God," and, led by the light which creates our Sabbaths, meets us at the same throne of grace, and receives, with us, the benedictions of the common *Father* and

the common *Saviour*. And the prophetic promise is dawning upon *parent Africa* also. Hottentots, Caffres, Boschuanas, Namaquas, Corannas, Griquas, in the south, Bulloms, Foulahs, and Mandingos, in the west, some of all your tribes are already in the fold, and hear and love the voice of the great Shepherd! We hail you as our BRETHREN! the front ranks of all those swarthy tribes which are deeply buried in the vast interior of an unexplored continent, you stretch out your hands unto God, as a signal for the tribes beyond you; and the signal shall be followed, and every hand of thy millions, Africa! shall raise itself in devotion to thy pitying Saviour, and every lip shall, ere long, modulate accents of grateful praise to thy long-concealed, but faithful God.

God is eminently with us in this "labour of love;" nor is it the least important of the indications of his presence, that he whose prerogative it is to send forth labourers into this harvest is conducting the steps of so many into the African field; that a number of holy men, from year to year, have infused into their hearts a special compassion for this race, and prefer to ease at home, and the peace and credit of the Christian ministry in their native land, the danger, the toil, and the reproaches which still attend the work of Negro instruction. Let the memory of those who have finished their work be blessed; of those who have burnt in fevers, languished in prisons, sustained, with meekness, the scoffs and jests of the impious, and sunk into a premature grave. Their "reward is on high" and their "work with their God." And, as to those who now endure the Cross and glory in it, whether they labour under the suns of the West Indies, or in Western Africa breathe pestilential air, or in the southern parts of that continent toil over hills and through deserts, "to seek and to save that which is lost," let these be witnesses to us, on the part of God, that He is with us. What gold could purchase such instruments! What education could form them! What implanted principle of human action, where wealth, and honour, and ease are all absent, could send them forth! They are the instruments of Heaven, prepared to our hand and for our use, and indicating, by the very nature of their preparation, the special use to which we are to apply them. They are the agents to carry forth our charities to the Heathen, to bear our light into the darkness we pity, and our mercy into the misery over which we sigh. Without them we should sigh in vain, and our sympathies would terminate in ourselves; by them we reach and relieve the case of destitute millions, and transmit the blessedness of which we are anxious that all should partake. Thus man is made a saviour to his fellow, and the creature of a day the instrument of conveying blessings which have no bound but a limitless eternity itself!

Enter, then, more fully into the spirit of the text, and "HONOUR ALL MEN."—I love these brief and general sentiments of benevo-

lence which come upon us so suddenly and with such frequency in the New Testament. They show *fulness*, and the fulness of a more than human kindness. If uninspired man had uttered them, he would have felt them to be so novel, so far removed out of the common course of the thoughts and feelings of mankind, and would have anticipated so many objections, that he must have thought it necessary to accompany them with the ingenuity of apology and the labour of argument. But their very *manner* shows that they come from God. It is for Him to be authoritative, and they are uttered in the appropriate form of *law*; it is in Him only that goodness exists in *infinite fulness*, and these precepts of charity are its affecting manifestations—the gushings of that yearning tenderness with which he regards all his creatures. O God! it is from thee that we learn to love one another—to love man, because thou lovest him; to “honour him,” because “thou hast set thy heart upon him.” When from these views and principles we go forth into the world, what contrasts do we behold! Is man loved and honoured by man? The fiercest beasts of the gloomy forest are not to him what he is to his kind: theirs is the ferocity of hunger, his that of malignity; theirs is appetite, his is passion. But there is a redeeming power at work in our world, and that is the *word* of the living God, the *Gospel* of peace and salvation. Wherever that comes, it is a shield to the defenceless and a refuge for the oppressed. Orphans find in it a father, widows a husband, slaves a Master in heaven, the wronged and spurned “a Judge in his holy habitation.” What sorrows has it cheered; what injuries has it arrested; what benevolent creations has it spread around us! How soft are its tones of pity; how loud its denunciations of wrong and violence! The yearnings of philanthropy, the ardour of missionary zeal, the active love of our neighbour, the awful equity of law, the loftiness of patriotism are all its own. These are the blessings which it has conferred at home, and these are the effects which it is working abroad. With this high commission, it is charged by its Divine Author to visit every land, “to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” O when shall this “glorious Gospel of the blessed God” dawn upon all lands; when shall it wipe away all tears; when shall floods clap their hands, and forests wave instinct with the universal gladness, and hills rejoice, and valleys sing, and the Gentiles of every lip and name “glorify God for his mercy!” Said I “When shall it *dawn*?” Where is the land on which it dawns not? The illustrious morning breaks, and the shadows fly away! In the most distant wildernesses and deserts of the world, deserts never till of late vocal with the sound of salvation, the voice of the heralds of

the universal Saviour-king is at length heard—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God: every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, FOR THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT."

In behalf of one branch of those great operations which the Church of Christ is carrying on to hasten this consummation, you have been now addressed. To your care and liberality the Negro Missions in the West Indies are commended. Remember the immense number of Pagan and uninstructed slaves which remain, and suffer me to leave upon your minds a strong impression of your duty respecting them, by closing what I have said with an extract from the work I before referred to. Melancholy it is, that, after the lapse of one hundred and fifty years, such an appeal should be so applicable, and that so much should yet remain to be done, and so many difficulties and obstacles to be encountered. Thus the Author of "The Negro's Advocate" pleaded in the year 1660, and, though dead, he yet speaketh to us:—

"Let us consider, that we have no more dispensation for our silence than the Apostles, with other succeeding holy Bishops and Priests, had, who first planted and watered the Church with their blood, and went about and preached every where, when it was death to be a Christian. That faith is an active and prolific grace; and cannot remain in idleness, but must operate and employ that heavenly heat which it receives from above, for the use of others. That there is no neutrality in this war, and that whoever is not actually in arms, prepared to fight against sin and infidelity, is to be reputed a *conspirator* with them. That there is the same heaven and salvation proposed for the conversion of slaves, as of more illustrious grandees; the whole being but the saving of souls; the effecting of which upon but a very few is worth the labour of many all their lives. Even we, no less than St. Paul, are debtors 'to the Greeks and Barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise.' And God hath, by an extraordinary providence, brought these people to our very doors, to try our justice, and to see whether we will pay his debt, unto which, if ever any did, each soul of us does stand most firmly obliged. Look upon them, and you cannot but see in their countenances the lively effigies of St. Paul's Macedonian, imploring your help: and O! let not the blood of souls cry from the earth for vengeance against us. Reflect but upon the sad doom denounced against the fearful and unbelieving, Rev. 21, and remember that the first great founders of our faith were no cowards. Think what shame it is, that we have given such just cause to the enemies of religion to reproach

and triumph over our timidity, or, which is worse, our temporizing for filthy lucre. Nor let the opposition and peevishness of unreasonable men dishearten us; as knowing that our true portion is to be sent forth as sheep amongst wolves; and that success is, for the most part, the companion of a restless industry. Even so we, overlooking all difficulties, and pressing still forward to the mark, if we faint not, may obtain that prize for which we set forth, and accomplish a work greatly tending to the glory of God, and to the happiness of these poor people's souls, no less than of our own. And O, were our duty, as St. Chrysostom sweetly exhorteth of piety and a virtuous life, faithfully complied with, 'we might soon, and even without miracles, convert the world.' 'Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees,' as saith the Apostle. 'Let us be instant in season and out of season,' and keep back nothing of the whole counsel of God that is necessary for the souls of men."

May these sentiments deeply affect us, and all whose connexion with the West India Colonies especially binds them to uphold the credit of the Christian profession, and to manifest the zeal and kindness of Christian charity.

THE END.

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