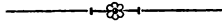


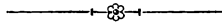
WEST AFRICA AND CHRISTIANITY.



A Lecture delivered at the
Rochester Theological Seminary, New York, U.S.A.,
SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1900,

BY

REV. MARK C. HAYFORD, D.D., F.R.G.S.



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ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
ROCHESTER, N.Y.,
October 1st, 1900.

Rev. Mark C. Hayford read a Lecture on the Gold Coast Mission to our students last Friday evening, giving them a considerable amount of useful information, and making upon them the impression that he is a cultivated Christian man.

AUGUSTUS H. STRONG,
President.

TO
Herbert Marnham, Esquire,
as
A Humble Acknowledgment
of
HIS LIBERAL SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN GENEROSITY
by which
The Cause of Christ in Africa
has been
Materially Served,
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
by His Friend,
The Author.

ERRATA.

Page 5—10th line from top		<i>complement</i>	for	“compliment.”
„ 12—13th	„	<i>parts of Tropical Africa</i>	„	“parts of Africa.”
„ 21—28th	„	<i>coercion</i>	„	“coersion.”
„ 23—17th	„	<i>polygamy</i>	„	“polgamy.”
„ 24—33rd	„	<i>excess in the number of women as compared with that of men</i>	„	“excess in the number of women as compared with men.”
„ 25—33rd	„	<i>Oriental</i>	„	“oriental.”
„ 30—23rd	„	After “yea” read the following part omitted:— “that such divorces would not have been free from doing wrong, yea that”		
„ 34—10th	„	<i>Shonghay</i>	for	“Shonghey.”
„ 37—17th	„	<i>Mohammedan</i> (as elsewhere spelt)	„	“Mohamedan.”
„ 42—31st	„ <i>decrepit</i>	„	“decrepid.”
„ 60—2nd	„	(foot note) <i>Sarbah</i>	„	“Sabah.”

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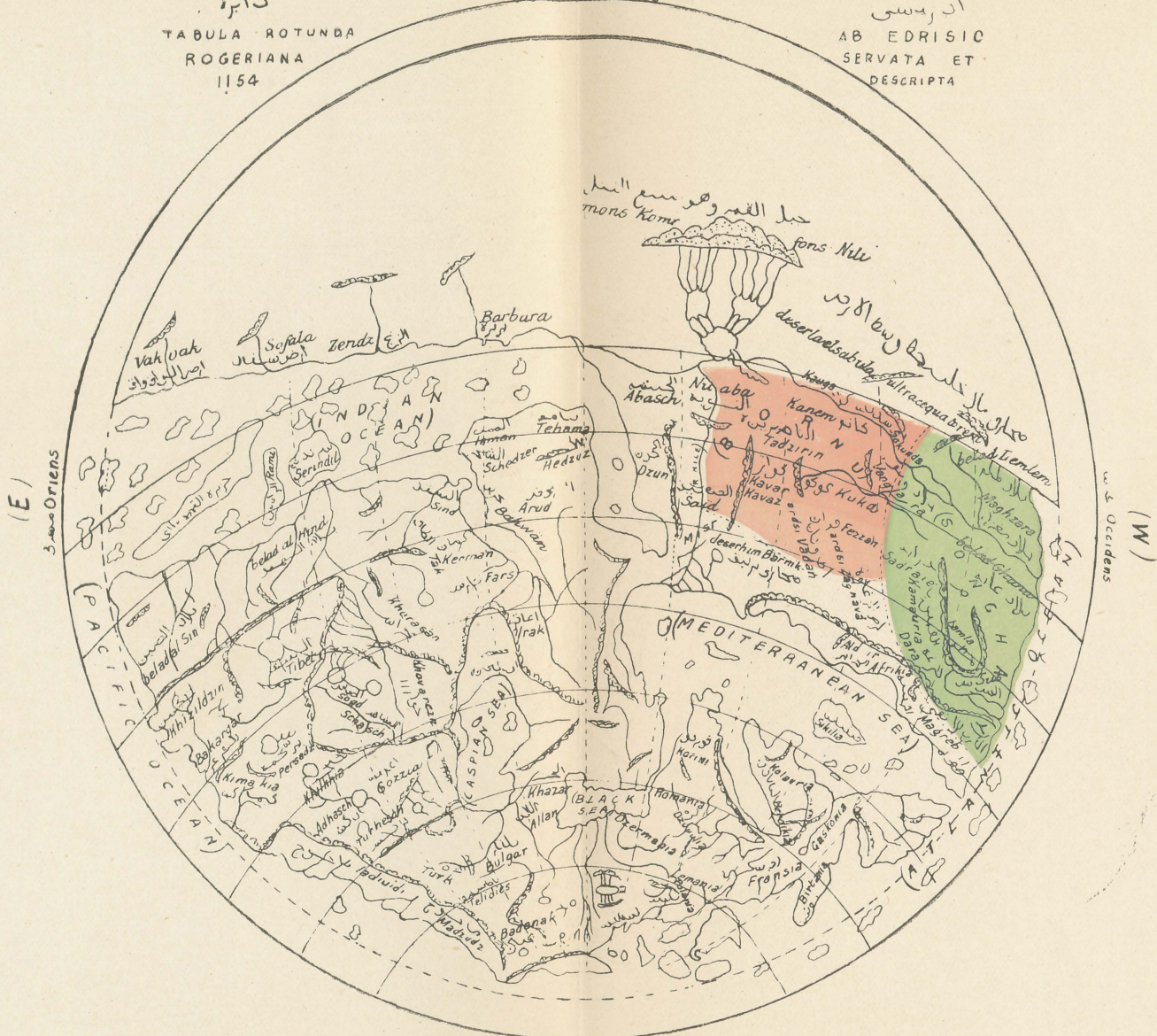
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دائرة
TABULA ROTUNDA
ROGERIANA
1154

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DESCRIPTA



J. Bruz maig 1846.

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(N.)

PREFATORY NOTE.

I HAVE, in preparing this lecture for the press, made some additions to its substance, as delivered in America at the Rochester Theological Seminary, New York, under the conviction that any additional discussion or consideration of matters bearing upon the welfare of Christianity in West Africa will not be out of place.

The Arab traveller El Edrisi's map of parts of Africa and the Eastern Hemisphere, published in the year 1154, and given herewith, has to be studied upside down ; but in that position, which accords with that in which our modern Western maps are drawn, several of the countries, &c., of the Old World are easily identified, the positions of which will be found to be remarkably accurately fixed, the whole execution doing great credit to the Oriental geographer of that far-off time. The names in brackets have been added to further facilitate the identification, while the dotted lines mark off Songhay from Bornu or Kanem, approximately indicating the extent of each of those two great Negro Empires of the Middle and earlier Ages referred to in the earlier part of this work, and which have been coloured on the map.

In Chapter I, on the "Past of West Africa," I have deemed it well to let certain authorities speak, and in their own language ; and, as I consider they have put the case presented better than I could have put it, I have not done more than to introduce them, and to draw the necessary conclusions from the facts established by them. The other

chapters have been written on different lines, that answering the objections to the training of Africans in Europe or America for missionary or pastoral work having been introduced in consequence of the refusal of *some* Missionary Societies, within recent years, to educate Africans in England, in other words, to afford them in the place where the best is obtainable the opportunity for the highest Christian culture, which anywhere is desirable for, and eminently useful in, the work of the Christian Ministry. And although, perhaps, more than anybody else will be, I am conscious of its many imperfections, yet, if in this book, among other things, should be found any suggestions, expressed or implied, which may aid the cause of Christianity in Africa, and be, in however slight a degree, of service in determining some of the vital questions upon the proper adjustment of which depends the larger and more permanent success of that cause there, I shall not be sorry that I wrote or published it.

MARK C. HAYFORD.

LONDON,
May, 1903.

West Africa and Christianity.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO, AND THE PAST OF, WEST AFRICA.

SO far as we have any authentic account of it, the introduction of Christianity into West Africa was by the King of Portugal in the year 1481, from which time dates the contact of the Natives of that part of the world with European Christian civilisation, although the French had been trading down to that region since 1380, and had actually built a fort at Elmina in 1383. To quote the words of Dr. E. W. Blyden—the prince of African *literati*—“In 1481 the King of Portugal sent ten ships with 500 soldiers, 100 labourers, and a proper complement of priests as missionaries, to Elmina,” from which spot Christian knowledge spread to other parts of the country. The Romish missions, however, were abandoned in time, for from the year 1723 nothing was heard of them—they were given up, and “disappeared altogether from West Africa.”—*Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, p. 56.

Before noticing the circumstances which led to their abandonment or failure, the attempts since then made to re-establish Christian missions there, the success or non-success of those attempts, and the best means of promoting the evangelisation and the educational interests of that region, let us ask, What was the condition of West Africa before the introduction of Christianity into that part of the globe? It will be of interest and service, doubtless, to learn or recall something of the past of that part of the African continent, particularly as the question is often

asked, "Has West Africa really had any past worthy of the historian's attention, or the student's consideration? Has it ever taken part in the race of the nations for that which ennobles humanity in political government, in society, or in religion?"

The following descriptive note¹ in a publication connected with the work of the Church Missionary Society of England fully answers the question:—

"Before England was a Monarchy, and whilst the Heptarchy was still a troublesome fact, there existed in the northern parts of the Sudan [or Country of the Blacks] several large and fairly well ordered native Negro States, which had developed indigenously a comparatively high condition of civilisation. Some of these States attained to vast proportions, one, for instance, that of Songhay, was nearly half the size of Europe, stretching from the Atlantic to what is now called Sokoto, and from Borgu to Morocco.² The Empire of Bornu was also very nearly as large. But now little remains of these ancient glories. . . .

"It was about the middle of the 13th century, that is, when the third Henry reigned in England, that the Empire of Bornu rose to its zenith. The seat of

¹ See Paper on MARY H. KINGSLEY by the author, pp. 11-13.

² The causes which led to the declension of this Empire are thus described by Canon Robinson:—

"Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Sultan of Morocco crossed the desert with an army of 4,000 men, armed with muskets, and succeeded in defeating the Songhay army, which was then unacquainted with the use of firearms. Then, as the native historian says, 'peaceful repose was succeeded by constant fear; comfort and security by troubles and suffering; ruin and misfortune took the place of prosperity; and people began everywhere to fight against each other, so that property and life became exposed to constant danger; and this ruin began, spread, increased, and at length prevailed throughout the whole region.' Partly in consequence of this defeat, and partly owing to the introduction of slave raiding, which dates from this period, the empire began to decline, and finally split up into a number of independent states."—*Nigeria: our latest Protectorate*, pp. 10-11.

its government was then in Kanem. It was then known by the name of Kanem, and is so shown on El Edrisi's map published in 1153, but its name subsequently became changed to that of Bornu, which has continued for many centuries until this day. Now Bornu, or rather, as the natives spell it, Bar-Noa, means the land of Noah, and its people are called Ka-nuri, that is, the 'people of light.' . . . The greatest extent of the empire was from the Niger to the Nile, that is, about 1,400 miles, embracing what are now known as Wadai, Baghirmi, Darfur, Kordofan and Kanem, which is now tributary to Wadai. It remained prosperous, although occasionally suffering vicissitude, until the middle of the last [18th] century, when an Arab seized the throne, and civil wars and discord ensued, which have resulted in its present decadence.

“Although Bornu has been reduced to about the size of England, it is by no means an unimportant State. Its form of government is constitutional, but its Sultan is practically despotic, being the head of both Church and State, and the mirror of all excellence and infallibility. He has a special body-guard of horsemen still coated in suits of armour, manufactured in the country. He has twenty metal cannons which were cast in the capital. Kuka, the capital, contains 60,000 inhabitants. . . . There are [besides Kuka] many other walled towns in the country. There is a large trade done in the country 'in horses, cattle, asses, sheep, goats, ivory, ostrich feathers, indigo, wheat and leather, besides native manufactured goods, woven fabrics, pottery and metal ware, which are highly prized throughout the Sudan,'” and, we might add, outside the Sudan too.

But, comparing the past with the present, the writer

correctly adds in the account from which we are quoting :—

“What a different condition of things to that of earlier ages, when the native historian, Iman Ahmed, wrote of the then Princes of Bornu, that they were ‘learned, liberal toward the Ilama, prodigal dispensers of alms, friends of science and religion, gracious and compassionate towards the poor.’

“But, it may be asked, how are these statements known to be facts? The answer is, because they have been written down by native Negro historians. The celebrated traveller, Dr. Barth, saw and perused their books when he stayed for a year at Timbuktu, and for eight months at Kuka, and he copied therefrom extensive chronologies now in the possession of the British Foreign Office. But how do we know these books to be genuine and not spurious and modern? Because at the time when the Moors occupied Spain, there lived a geographer of that nation named El Bekri, who wrote a book on Africa in 1067, one year after the Battle of Hastings. Parts of his work are still extant, and his main facts agree with those of native authors. . . . Then again, an Arab traveller, El Edrisi, who wrote in 1153, and who published a map of Africa, a copy³ of which exists in the British Museum, gives corroborative and later information with regard to Bornu and other smaller states.”—*Account of the Past History and Present Condition of the Western Sudan*, added to *Bishop Hill's Address to Young Men of London, 1893*, pp. 12-16.

Canon C. H. Robinson, Lecturer in Hausa in the University of Cambridge, in his able work on Nigeria, written in 1900, and previously referred to, also says :—

“^h Songhay was then nearly half the size of Europe

³The date on the copy, to be seen in the British Museum on “S. 128 (1) No. 8,” is 1154.

. . . The empire of Bornu was of nearly equal size . . . In the thirteenth and again in the sixteenth century it attained a very high degree of civilization and prosperity. In the middle of the last century an Arab adventurer seized the throne, soon after which the empire began to break up. It is now confined to the province of Bornu, which is situated on the western shore of Lake Chad, and is about the same size as England.”—Pp. 9-12.

Not less interesting and instructive is the following from the London *Baptist Times and Freeman*, the organ of the Baptist Denomination in Great Britain and Ireland, on the “Origin of European Civilisation” :—

“ One after another, the beliefs of our youth are being shattered. Until comparatively recently it has been unquestioningly believed that we belong to the Aryan race, coming originally and in successive migrations from the steppes of Central Asia. The cradle of the races, civilisation and languages of Europe, was to be found in the neighbourhood of the Hindoo Koosh Mountains. That theory seems to be breaking down under the researches of modern science. Pre-historic criticism now maintains that we owe nothing to the Aryan races except our language and the destruction of an early civilisation. The evidence on which these conclusions are based is the science of craniology, *i.e.*, the shape and formation of the skull. It is said that the skulls of the inhabitants of Europe do not resemble those of the Aryan races in shape or essential characteristics. They invariably resemble the skulls found in European tombs of pre-historic times, except that they show some modifications traceable to Aryan intermixture. We are slowly being led to the conclusion that our far off ancestors came from the lake regions of Central Africa. On this hypothesis we are

allied to the Kabyles and Berbers in Northern Africa. Further evidence in support of this theory is found in the archæological discoveries of recent years. Undeciphered inscriptions show that the early inhabitants of Greece and the ancient Etruscans spoke languages and had a culture in no way related to the civilisation and languages of Greece and Rome." (*Issue of June 28th, 1901.*)

On the question of the relationship of Central Africans with the Berbers of North Africa, the following from Canon Robinson, from whom I may quote again, throws additional light:—

“The Hausas [in Nigeria] in early time evidently regarded the Bornuese people as being closely connected with the Berbers of North Africa, as is shown by their calling a Bornuese man ‘ba-Berberchi,’ or the nation ‘Beriberi.’”—*Nigeria*, p. 11.

Although it is a historical fact, that, as far back as the time of the Phœnicians, the West African coast and parts of the hinterland became the scene of operations of those early traders and navigators—the somewhat scanty account left us of those exploits being supplemented by three discoveries made in the gold-bearing lands in the Wassaw part of the country, viz., that of the “aggrы beads,”⁴ and of the “traces of ancient workings, in two cases

⁴The beads, the manufacture of which is a lost art. are unique specimens of ingenious workmanship. They are thus described by Bowdich:—

“The plain aggrы beads are blue, yellow, green, or a dull red, the variegated consist of every colour and shade. . . . The variegated strata of the aggrы beads are so firmly united, and so imperceptibly blended, that the perfection seems superior to art: some resemble mosaic work, the surfaces of others are covered with flowers and regular patterns, so very minute, and the shades so delicately softened one into the other, and into the ground of the bead, that nothing but the finest touch of the pencil could equal them. The agatized parts disclose flowers and patterns, deep in the body of the bead, and thin shafts, of opaque colours, running from the centre to the surface. . . . The colouring matter

consisting of tunnels, which had been driven into the bowels of the hills to follow up a gold-bearing vein," together with that of "the remains, in one of the tunnels, of antique bronze lamps designed to hold a wick floating in oil," and seemingly of Phœnician origin—yet, doubtless, it was the later and indigenous development, before, during, and after the Mediæval Ages, in the Western Sudan, of a high condition of civilisation, whose wave passed over the whole area from the Atlantic to the Nile, that, more than anything else, brought the Natives of West Africa, in a good many places, the knowledge of the useful arts, and accounts for the advanced state to which these had attained before modern times.

In fact, this is not the only part of Africa South of Egypt and Barbary where evidences of a civilisation of a conspicuous nature have been discovered.

On the Zambesi, in Inyanga, and in Manicaland Dr. Carl Peters has recently, according to his very interesting account

of the blue beads has been proved, by experiment, to be iron; that of the yellow, without doubt, is lead and antimony, with a trifling quantity of copper, though not essential to the production of the colour. The generality of these beads appear to be produced from clays coloured in thin layers, afterwards twisted together into a spiral form, and then cut across: also from different coloured clays raked together without blending. How the flowers and delicate patterns, in the body and on the surface of the rarer heads, have been produced, cannot be so well explained."—*Mission to Ashantee*, pp. 267-8.

Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Ellis, who has written a very full history of the Gold Coast from the earliest times, on this point, says:—

"Exactly similar beads have been found in ancient tombs in North Africa, in others in Thebes, and in parts of India; and when it is remembered that Sidon was famous for such work, it is not unreasonable to ascribe a Phœnician origin to them. It might well be that they were bartered by the Phœnicians with the natives for gold dust, for they are only found in the gold-producing districts of the Gold Coast. . . . What is certain is that the beads were introduced into the country from the sea, for had they been brought overland, from Egypt for instance, some of them would certainly have been found in the far interior, which is not known to have ever been the case. And as the natives had these beads in their possession when the Portuguese first explored the Gold Coast, they must have been introduced there before the re-discovery of Western Africa by the nations of Modern Europe."—Pp. 10-11.

appearing in the *Journal* of the African Society for January, 1902, p. 176, found the ruins of "whole Cyclopean cities" and "fortifications," &c.; and, however this eminent state was reached, and through whatever agencies, here, and supported by other data, stands revealed the fact that in Negroland generally, in Africa, there has been known in past ages much that has characterised the great nations of the earth, which occupy a common plane, and in whose advancement in the knowledge of the more important arts and sciences Africa has from the earliest times taken a leading, if indeed not the most leading, part.

The answer to the question as to what accounts for the present comparatively benighted condition of parts of ^{Tropical} Africa which at one time were highly civilised is found in the fact of the desolation wrought by the Sultan of Morocco, who, marching from the North in the sixteenth century with an army equipped with firearms, the use of which was then unknown in Central and West Africa, overthrew the powerful empire of Songhay, ruining the civilisation of that region and its established social order—much in the same way as the civilisation of Southern Europe was destroyed in the Middle Ages by the Northern Teutonic tribes, who, pouring down upon it, ruined its enlightened institutions, and introduced the ignorance, superstitions, and evils of the Dark Ages, which covered seven long centuries—to which work of desolation have to be added the havoc made from the latter part of that century, and continued to be made, by that "sum of all villainies"—the slave trade or slave raiding, and the dismemberment of Bornu.

We shall in the next chapter consider an important Institution in one of the countries of West Africa, whose past has been under review, namely, that affecting Marriage in Fantiland (including here the Akan countries), otherwise known as the Gold Coast, and the effect of that Institution on Christian and missionary enterprise there.

CHAPTER II.

THE AFRICAN MARRIAGE INSTITUTION ON THE GOLD COAST—
SHOULD IT BE RECOGNISED, AS THE INSTITUTIONS OF OTHER
LANDS ARE, BY THE CHURCH ?

AMONG the African customs which are of great national importance, and which vitally affect Christian or missionary work in the Gold Coast (Fanti) Country, which may be taken as fairly representing other parts of West Africa, where customs of a similar nature more or less prevail, stands prominently that which bears upon the Marriage Institution, and by which the union between the contracting parties is cemented by the payment of a “consawment” (money or other token given in pledge), or of a “consawment” and a dowry, the amount of which is determined by the position, social and otherwise, of the intended husband.

In contracting such a marriage, it is required that the families represented by the man and the woman should be, and they are by the law of the land, brought under mutual obligations, by which the integrity of the union is, as far as possible, preserved, or sought to be preserved. In fact, generally speaking, it is impossible for a man or a woman to *marry* there without the knowledge, consent and co-operation of the parents and other members of the families concerned, who make it a point to enquire into the history of the persons between whom the alliance is proposed with a view of ascertaining whether, upon physical or moral grounds, the union is or is not desirable.

Thus, if a person is ascertained to have come of ancestors who suffered from any hereditary or infectious disease, such as consumption, leprosy, or syphilis, marriage with him or her would be disallowed or discouraged. Similarly, if his or her ancestry has been criminal, or if he or she personally has been so.

There are, of course, some who have been known to act contrary to the ordinary requirements, as in everything else in this life some will be found to go against the common regulation; but these are only the exceptions that prove the rule.

The observance of the common custom, however, saves the position of inexperienced maidens, who might otherwise be courted into marriages, into which they might afterwards very possibly have to regret entering; and, as may be gathered from what has been said before, no marriage contracted without the sanction of the principal and responsible people in a family would, by the law, be recognised.

Where, for instance, the parents, or other responsible members of a family, are inaccessible, being in a distant place, marriage may take place, if the contract is effected in the presence of "creditable and respectable witnesses, or in the presence of the chief or headman of the place" (Sarbah: *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 41). Usually, however, in that case, it is considered desirable or necessary to effect it before those belonging to the same tribe or clan, some of whom are to be found scattered in different parts of the country.

Should the "blood relations" be accessible thereafter, the "consawment" received by those acting in their place, together with any dowry paid, would be returnable to them.

Where consent is held to have arbitrarily and without justification been withheld by the parties who might have

given it, marriage may take place under the same conditions; but the Chief, or other person or persons of consequence, before whom it takes place, must thoroughly satisfy himself or themselves that the withholding of the consent was indeed without justification, and that the case of the parties seeking the union is an unquestionable one. Such cases, however, are of infrequent occurrence, and are treated as exceptional ones on their own merits when, and if, they do arise, the onus of proof, of course, falling upon those alleging the improper withholding of consent. In such instances the payment of a "consawment" may be waived, unless the Chief, or other person or persons previously spoken of, will accept the responsibility of receiving it. Where these are members of the same clan, the matter is considerably simplified, for they may then readily accept the responsibility.⁵

Thus is the unreasonable action of parents, &c., where it occurs, restrained and checked, and their rightful intervention in the interests of those dependent upon them, and whose weal or woe affects them, encouraged and facilitated.

Here, as may clearly be seen, there is a decided advantage over the English law, by which the converts to Christianity in West Africa are obliged by *some* of the Missionary Societies to marry, and by which the entire responsibility is thrown upon the contracting parties, the law upholding the contract, however injudiciously entered into, if only

Cruikshank, writing upon the institution, the existence of which makes this possible, says (Vol. 1, pp. 49-50)—

"A feeling of attachment to each other exists between individuals belonging to these families [clans] even though of different nations, and we have known instances of inheritances claimed, and obtained upon the plea of this relationship, to the prejudice of a blood relation, where there has been no male to come to the succession."

"The whole of these peoples are divided into twelve tribes or clans, wholly irrespective of their several and distinct nationalities."—*Sarbah: Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 3.

the parties should have arrived at a certain age, not, however, necessarily the age bringing with it the greatest amount of wisdom and sound judgment for the successful conduct of their affairs in the complicated relations in which they presently find themselves, and without having had to go by the maturer judgment of older parties interested in them, as they should have had to do under the African law.

The question of individual liberty, of course, here comes in; but it is a liberty for which many, looking back upon disastrous courses which might have been prevented—courses whose victims daily increase, as evidenced by the many divorces and separations which constantly take place in all parts of the world, particularly the English-speaking parts thereof, with which we are more specially dealing here—have no cause to be particularly thankful. Liberty which, in time, entails trouble upon the inexperienced has certainly not much in its praise.

Of course, there are cases in Europe and elsewhere in which a similar precaution is taken by parents, when they veto undesirable marriages by or with their children; but here the will of the child may override that of the parent, and the law support the son or daughter, which is not ordinarily possible under the African (Fanti) law, which recognises it as its distinct province to save, as far as it can, the position of those who might otherwise act under the impulse of mere blind love, to their sure sorrow and irreparable loss in time.

By the payment by the man of a “consawment” and a dowry, or of the former alone, to, and by the actual receipt of the same by, the representatives of the family of the girl to whom he is to be married, which payment, whether in money or in kind, is divisible among the members of that family, the interest or responsibility of each of the

said members is recognised, and each recipient becomes personally concerned about, and pledged to seek, the welfare of the relationship introduced by the marriage, and will usually do his or her part to keep it intact. Here, again, there will be, as in all human affairs, mishaps; but these are as much as possible guarded against, by creating a solidarity of interest in the matter.

A marriage so contracted, which is recognised as the uniting of a man and a woman to live as husband and wife *for life*,⁶ stands until some cause held to be justifiable—such as adultery, the practice of witchcraft, or impotency—is found to terminate it; or until, through some very grave differences which defy peaceful settlement, it is felt that the husband and wife will be happier apart than together, when—and happily such cases are not very common—the union is broken. If it be, however, the husband who has brought about that state of affairs, he loses his “consawment,” or “consawment” and dowry, and all expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, which he has incurred on account of the wife, and which may amount to a very considerable sum, which would otherwise, *i.e.*, were the woman the offender, be recoverable from her or her family; and he may be made also to pay the woman a substantial compensation. Thus is the marriage tie sought to be secured.

Above I have given three causes which generally bring about divorces, *viz.*, adultery, the practice of witchcraft, or

⁶ “Marriage is the union of a man to a woman to live as husband and wife for life. It is sometimes preceded by betrothals, which often take place long before a girl arrives at a marriageable age. This is done when a person desires to be connected with the family of a friend, or desires his child or relative to be so connected with a desirable family. . . . This betrothal is perfectly binding on the family of the girl, who is regarded as the wife of the person betrothing her. . . . A man may not marry his uterine sister, his father’s sister, or mother’s sister, or brother’s daughter, or mother’s sister’s daughter.”—Sarbah: *Fanti Customary Laws*, pp. 38-9.

impotency, desertions being very seldom known, and, therefore, very little taken account of. Here the Fanti law of divorce differs from that of some other countries, "civilised," or "uncivilised," in Christendom, or out of it. But in no two countries, wherever situated, are the marriage and divorce laws precisely alike. Even in the United Kingdom the English law of divorce is different from the Scotch. Under the latter, *e.g.*, desertion alone is held to be a justifiable ground for *divorce*, while under the former it is only a ground for *judicial separation*. The Scotch law places a husband and a wife upon an *equal footing*, which the English law does not do, and is in that respect superior to the latter.

Again, in the British colonies, as such, laws prevail which are more or less different from the English. In Victoria, *e.g.*, desertion alone, or habitual drunkenness with cruelty on the part of a husband, or drunkenness with neglect by a wife of her domestic duties, or imprisonment extending over a certain number of years for a crime or crimes, or a violent assault, besides adultery, is a ground for *divorce*.⁷

⁷ The *Marriage Act of 1890, 54 Vict., No. 1166*, provides the following:—

"74. Any married person who at the time of the institution of the suit or other proceeding shall have been domiciled in Victoria for two years and upwards may present a petition to the Court praying on one or more of the grounds in this section mentioned that his or her marriage with the respondent may be dissolved:—

"(a) On the ground that the respondent has without just cause or excuse wilfully deserted the petitioner and without any such cause or excuse left him or her continuously so deserted during three years and upwards:

"(b) On the ground that the respondent has during three years and upwards been an habitual drunkard and either habitually left his wife without the means of support or habitually been guilty of cruelty towards her or being the petitioner's wife has for a like period been an habitual drunkard and habitually neglected her domestic duties or rendered herself unfit to discharge them:

"(c) On the ground that at the time of the presentation of the petition the respondent has been imprisoned for a period of not less than three years and is still in prison under a commuted sentence for a capital

In America we find the most divergent laws prevailing in the United States, where adultery, cruelty, desertion, or incompatibility of temper, is made a sufficient cause for *dissolving* a marriage.

In all the countries above referred to, it is worthy of note, that in no case is the absolute standard fixed by the New Testament with regard to the one and only cause which it allows as justifying divorce—namely, adultery—exclusively followed.

I have instanced above the cases of the two freest and, in some respects, most advanced nations in the world—the English and the American—to show what differences in marriage laws exist even in the countries having most in common. But in these countries, with all the differences noticeable in their laws relating to marriage and divorce, there are married men and women who are Christians, and who are *worthy* of the name, although they were married by national laws which do not in every particular correspond with the law of the New Testament. How come they then to be consistent Christians? It is, of course, because, despite national laws, they are living by the higher law of the Bible, which was enunciated by Christ.

crime or under sentence to penal servitude for seven years or upwards or being a husband has within five years undergone frequent convictions for crime and been sentenced in the aggregate to imprisonment for three years or upwards and left his wife habitually without the means of support :

“(d) On the ground that within one year previously the respondent has been convicted of having attempted to murder the petitioner or of having assaulted him or her with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm or on the ground that the respondent has repeatedly during that period assaulted and cruelly beaten the petitioner :

“(e) On the ground that the respondent being a husband has since the celebration of his marriage and the eighth day of May one thousand eight hundred and ninety been guilty of adultery in the conjugal residence or coupled with circumstances or conduct of aggravation or of a repeated act of adultery.”—*Victorian Statutes*, p. 2387.

See also *The Statutes of New South Wales*, pp. 43-4, Act No. 14, 1899.

Hence, as may readily be perceived, it is not the human law which makes the *Christian*, but the *law of Christ*, by which all professing Christianity should be made to go, whether they be in the married state or not. Accordingly, we hold that no Christian convert should be *compelled* to marry by any foreign law, whether English, Scotch, Australian, American, or by whatever name known, any more than the Apostles of our Lord compelled their converts to marry by the law of any particular country of their day; or a Scotchman, or a Victorian colonist, to be a Christian, is bound to marry by the English law, or an American by other than the law of his country. But, marrying in whatever country by the recognised law of that country, the converts to Christianity should be required to live according to the New Testament ideal set up by Christ. To refuse to marry by any alien law is indeed *no sin*, but it *is sin* for a Christian, of whatever nationality or creed, to refuse to *live up* to the standard required by his Master. If the converts themselves desire to be married by any foreign law, the provisions of which they well understand, by all means let them be; but, in our view, there should be *no compulsion* in the matter—in that for which we have no authority *whatever* in the Bible.

One hears it sometimes said that the “*Christian rite of marriage*” should be insisted upon in dealing with converts. This is certainly a desirable thing; but care should be taken to distinguish between a Christian rite and the requirements of the civil law, in whatever country that law might obtain. A Christian rite of marriage, rightly regarded, is one that affords the “contracting parties” the opportunity of having the Divine blessing invoked on their union, and of receiving Christian instruction in connection therewith. If we are right in so defining it, we may ask, Cannot any Christian minister or missionary invoke that

blessing upon, and impart that instruction to, his converts, by whatever national and recognised law (as that of the Gold Coast is) they may elect to be married, without *forcing* them to marry by some foreign law, whose import and intent they often do not fully comprehend, as do the people for whom it was made?

Mr. J. M. Sarbah, the leading Authority on African law, as it obtains in Fantiland, remarks, with reason, that “the attempt to force the English law of marriage on the native converts has had a most disastrous effect,” and adds, “Without knowing or studying the principles of the law of marriage as it obtains in the Akan and Fanti countries, the Christian pastors urged the government to legislate; the result is the marriage ordinance, which, being quite unsatisfactory from many points of view, has now become a veritable stumblingblock in the Christianizing efforts of the several missionary agencies. From the English law point of view, a man’s family is that of his father, and pedigree is generally traced in the male line. The converse is the case with the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, Asanti, and other neighbouring places.”—*Fanti Customary Laws*, pp. 37-8.

If the reader has carefully followed the preceding observations, he will have noticed that in every instance it is the use of *force* or *compulsion* in this matter that has been repudiated; for we see no objection to his or her being so married, if any one with a full knowledge of what it involves, and without coercion, elects to be married by the English or any other foreign law, our objection being against the coercion used in the matter in some of the Churches, generally by denying the native converts Church rights and privileges (as on the Gold Coast) in other words, by not fully receiving them into Church membership, but holding them only “on trial,” till they are *made*

to marry by the English law, *even though they might have already been married by the African*, which is fully recognised by the English Colonial Government there.

I have traversed the ground I have gone over, in dealing with this subject, largely to show that, in their intent at least, the Fanti laws of marriage and divorce can bear favourable comparison with those of other countries, in which marriages under the said laws are rightly not made a ground for shutting out people from the Church, or limiting their ordinary privileges therein, although it is well known that, when they have come into the Christian fold, they will have to live upon a higher standard than that afforded by those laws of human making; and to indicate what, in our judgment, could very reasonably and justly be done by all those engaged in religious work in West Africa, namely, the giving, without prejudice to the law of Christ, of the proper recognition to the marriage institutions of the country, as is given by them and the Church generally to the institutions of other lands.

Accordingly, to the question heading this chapter, we feel justified in returning an emphatic "YES!"

I may, in closing, mention that concubinage is not recognised at all by the Fanti law. Sarbah, in this connection, rightly says (*ibid.* p. 45): "A woman living with a man as a concubine is always looked down upon, and is considered immoral, however wealthy she may be."

CHAPTER III.

POLYGAMY.

AS every Christian worker in West Africa has seriously to count upon Polygamy, which, as an established system of domestic life, confronts him at almost every turn, I may here, though somewhat briefly, consider it. The strongest case for it is, I think, what Dr. E. W. Blyden has recently quoted in his remarkable articles (published by Messrs. John Scott & Co., 46, Cannon Street, London), on the late Miss Mary H. Kingsley, which originally appeared in *The Sierra Leone Weekly News*. It represents the views of a British traveller in Africa between the years 1768 and 1773, James Bruce of Kinnaird, Esq. Says this gentleman :—

“I know that there are authors fond of system, enemies to free enquiry, and blinded by prejudice, who contend that polygamy, without distinction of circumstances, is detrimental to the population of a country. . . . The reasons against polygamy which subsist in England do not by any means subsist in Arabia or Africa; and that being the case, it would be unworthy of the wisdom of God, and an unevenness in His ways, which we should never see, to subject nations, under such different circumstances, absolutely to the same observances. . . . From a diligent enquiry into these parts I find the proportion to be fully two women born to one man. From Suez to the Straits of Babel-Mandeb the proportion is fully four to one man, which

I have reason to believe holds as far as the Equator and thirty degrees below it. . . . Without giving Mohammed all the credit for abilities as some have done, we may surely suppose him to know what happened in his own family, where he must have seen the great disproportion of four women born to one man. With this view he enacted, or rather revived, the law which gives liberty to every individual to marry four wives, each of whom was to be equal in rank and honour. By this he secured civil rights to each woman, and procured the means of doing away with that reproach of dying without issue, to which the minds of the whole sex have always been sensible, whatever their religion was, or from whatever part of the world they came. . . . The Imam of Sana was an old man when I was in Arabia Felix in 1769, and he had eighty-eight children then alive, of whom fourteen only were sons. The Priest of the Nile had seventy odd children, of whom, as I remember, above fifty were daughters. . . . Mohammed, in his permission of plurality of wives, seems constantly to have been on his guard against suffering that which was intended for the welfare of his people from operating in a different manner. He did not permit a man to marry two, three, or four wives unless he could maintain them. He was interested for the rights and ranks of these women; and the man so marrying was obliged to show before the judge or some equivalent officer that it was in his power to support them according to their rank."—*Travels, &c.*, Vol. 1, pp. 280-6.

In this quotation, however, Mohammed will be seen to have made considerations other than that of the mere excess in the number of women as compared with ^{that of} men, which is more or less true everywhere, or almost every-

where, weigh with him in determining whether or not a man should be a polygamist. And this is precisely the case with those who do not go in for polygamy. Mohammed had sense enough to appreciate the fact that, whatever the difference in numbers above referred to might be, if a man could not support them, there was no wisdom or virtue in his taking to himself additional wives. But what if a person could afford to keep say a hundred wives? Even then Mohammed thought, evidently, that, upon other considerations, it would not be wise to allow polygamy to that extent, and even though there would be always, in certainly a good many cases, a surplusage of women to make the taking of so many by a certain number of individuals possible. And what he found out others before him had, and after him have, though some in a fuller measure than others. The decision of the point, therefore, rests not merely upon the physical capacity of mankind, or the physical requirements of womankind, nor yet simply upon the noted disproportion in numbers, but upon higher—moral and other—considerations. Regarded in this light, the issue becomes very simple.

To deal with the *principle* of polygamy *per se*, and not so much with the limitation fixed by Mohammed—for all who believe in polygamy, or practise it, are not Mohammedans, nor go by Mohammed's prescription—the question is, Can a man fulfil his obligations, moral and spiritual, *best* by having a plurality of wives, or by having one wife? If a man has many wives, can he in *every* respect discharge the duties of a husband fully and truly to each and all of them? Will domestic peace be *best* promoted thereby? If the principle of *polygamy* be allowed, where could the limit be consistently placed, since all who can afford to keep more, as in several Oriental and African countries they can, may not *care*, as said before, to be

Mohammedans, or to be, as they often are not, bound by Mohammed's ruling on the point, if by any at all? Suppose a person had two or three hundred or more wives, because he could support so many, as several besides King Solomon have had, since he could not in reason be expected to, and he would not upon any conceivable hypothesis, be able to discharge his conjugal duties *fully* towards them all, would not that circumstance drive the women, or some of them, to a life of secret immorality? This unhappy result has, as might be expected, often actually been known.

Among others which might be given, the story of the King of Nupe, in Nigeria, which was told the writer by the late Venerable Archdeacon Henry Johnson, when the latter was in charge of the Church Missionary Society's work in Upper Nigeria, illustrates the point.

This King, as is common with those of his rank in that region, had taken to himself several wives, who were, as usual, kept in a harem. But he had reason to suspect that all was not going on well there, and, in time, definitely learned that the keeper of the gate of the place had been bribed by some of the women, who were occasionally let out by him. The King ascertained what hour of the morning these women usually returned, and unexpectedly one morning, to the consternation of the keeper, posted himself before cock-crow behind the gate to await their arrival. The sequel can easily be imagined. One by one, the women came in to find the King there, and felt that all was up with them, for, by the law of the land, they had incurred the penalty of death by their infidelity. But the magnanimous part of the story here follows. After a temporary rage, which agitated his whole frame, the King broke out: "After all, it is my own fault, and it is the result of keeping so many women whom I do not need"; whereupon he ordered the women to go and fetch their

“paramours,” to whom, instead of imposing upon them the death penalty, he gave the women in marriage. Thus, it will be seen, polygamy has evils inherent in and inseparable from it—evils which do not attend monogamy, which certainly, in more than one respect, has an advantage over it.

It is sometimes alleged that monogamy is responsible for the existence of the hosts of women who form the class of unfortunates who so lamentably prostitute themselves, *e.g.*, in European and American countries. But if a woman will not stand by virtue, nothing will make her do so, if even she is married. She will in that case commit adultery, and eventually prostitute herself. The greatest social lepers in this respect are often those who, having married before, have been untrue to their marriage vows and fallen, or who, having been engaged to be married, have been faithless. These, “of all ages,” are far harder to reclaim, far more fruitful of evil, more brazen-faced and irresistible, than the comparatively few inexperienced young girls who are “driven,” as they erroneously think, by unhappy circumstances to the street, and their ranks are constantly recruited from the ever-widening circle of those women who deceive and are deceived.

Otherwise the well-known very hard conditions of life, and the keen struggle for existence in populous urban centres, account very largely for the pursuit of that life which appears profitable, gay, and easy; but is immeasurably costly and hopelessly ruinous to the harlot in the long run.

Another reason why in Europe and America, as compared with many Eastern and African countries, so many unmarried women are found, is that, in the latter, every man, as a general practice, marries a wife, who is usually selected for him, before, or when, he arrives at maturity, by his parents or

other relatives, who consider it as part of their first duty to secure desirable partners, which, as a rule, they are able to do, for their children. The result is that almost every girl is bespoken from her birth or infancy, is carefully watched and trained as one betrothed, and is in due course married, having not merely to take her chance when she grows up of finding a husband for herself, which, for one reason or another, she might or might not succeed to do.

This, however, is not the case in European or American countries, where the obligation of every man to marry is not so generally recognised by public sentiment. Bachelorship has thus in Africa not the honoured place it appears to have in other quarters of the globe. It is rather, unless obviously justified, and by very special circumstances, regarded as a despicable suspicious condition of existence, unworthy of any true man.

Then the wars which mankind still consider it fit periodically to wage one nation with another, and which make such a sad havoc among the ranks of men, are also responsible for the excess in the number of women, which is noticeable in almost every place, as also the risky lives led by many men in connection with their avocations, and which at times end fatally.

But some of these causes are not inevitable, and it stands to reason that if men would be induced to marry more, which is perfectly practicable; if women would be more sensible, and thus encourage larger honourable relations and more marriages with them; if brothels and private bawdy-houses, of which, to their unspeakable shame, bachelors very often avail themselves—although married men are sometimes also found there—paying harlots what, with care and the exercise of economy, might enable them to marry and keep homes, however humble, of their own; if the general public sentiment should be

emancipated from the influence of that lax view as to sexual morality which appears largely now to characterise it, and even in the professedly most Christian countries, whose appalling iniquities are even more inexcusable by reason of the abounding light vouchsafed to them; if reasonable parental control should be more rigidly exercised, and more firmly supported, and respect for the aged more assiduously inculcated, thus weaning the young from that ignorant, hollow conceit which often ruins them; if the attending by these of questionable places, whose exercises do not minister to moral elevation, should be prevented, as it could be; in other words, if we were a little more "*puritan*" in our ways, unpopular as that word (which, rightly understood, carries with it the conception of the most chastening factors of life—*true* life) is in our day; and if those who have, or profess to have, the welfare of humanity at heart should labour to secure those ends which will make the world what God intends it to be, all sexes would doubtless be materially benefited—temporally and physically, morally and spiritually.

The fault, then, which they can correct, lies with men and women themselves, and not with the monogamic system, which, whatever may be said of polygamy, from whatever standpoint, serves certainly, from a Christian point of view, the higher moral and spiritual ends, for which men ought to live, far more effectually. The *highest* life is that after which *every* Christian, who is a "king" and "priest" unto God, should aspire. There are no heights of *spiritual* experience and excellence which are not the common heritage of *all* followers of Christ, however humble in ecclesiastical position some of these may be. In other words, every Christian may be as good as a deacon, or a bishop (or elder), who, not so much for temporal as for spiritual reasons, is commanded in the New Testament,

and because that will help him *best*, to be “the husband of one wife.” Accordingly, of every Christian and Christian convert, although it will involve self-denial, which indeed is the fundamental principle of the religion of Christ, the practice of monogamy should, as introducing, spiritually, a more helpful condition, be required.

The question whether polygamists should be received into the Church at all has exercised the minds of many—among them eminent Bishops and Missionaries—who have rightly desired not to make their position more difficult than the New Testament makes it.

The views of the Right Rev. Dr. Bickersteth, Bishop of Exeter, on this point are worth noting. Says the Prelate :

“The inspired Apostle says a bishop, a deacon, an elder, must be ‘the husband of one wife.’ The earlier commentators, who we may presume represent the mind of the Primitive Church, unanimously interpret this with Chrysostom as precluding a polygamist from the pastoral office. And men like Calvin and Tyndale, and, to come nearer ourselves, the judicial Scott, distinctly affirm that other converts, who had married more wives than one, were not compelled to put any of them away, yea, ^{that such divorces would not have been free from doing wrong, yea} that they might have produced very bad consequences in domestic life, and increased the opposition of the civil powers to the preaching of Christianity. If we, then, forbid baptism to those who as heathen or Moslems have contracted marriage with more wives than one (wives as distinguished from concubines), are we not, I ask, in danger of making the narrow gate yet narrower than our Lord and His Apostles made it, and of putting a needless hindrance in the onward progress of Christianity. The barrier is a very real one. ‘Polygamy,’ said our experienced missionary, Mr. Townsend, ‘is

the great question in Africa; if polygamists were admitted, we might baptize half Abbeokuta.' . . .

“Then, if the polygamist candidate for baptism is required to put away all wives but one, the question already suggested, what will be the effect upon those he repudiates, is a very serious one. What a barrier it must be to their embracing Christianity, which they feel has degraded them from the position of a lawful wife to that of a divorced woman! Can we imagine them reading the words of Malachi, ‘For I hate putting away, saith the Lord, the God of Israel.’ (Mal. ii. 16, R.V.)

“Surely I have said enough to prove this subject is at all events worthy of the patient consideration of the doctors, and fathers, and legislators of our Church. I may mention that my son in Japan tells me that Bishop French, of Lahore, has, after much investigation, come to the conclusion we ought not to refuse polygamists admission to the Church of Christ, but only to the pastoral offices. That a Bishop of learning so profound, of ecclesiastical research so varied, of conscientiousness so tender, and of experience so ripe in the mission field, should have deliberately come to this conclusion, is to my own mind a most significant indication of the leading of the Spirit of truth.”—*Paper read at the Church Congress, Oct., 1886.*

The exclusion of polygamists from any of the scripturally recognised orders (the Presbyterate and the Diaconate) in the Church being justified, and upon the New Testament, the question is, What would be the position of these polygamists if admitted into the Church? Could they be on a par with its ordinary members, who do not belong to the two orders spoken of? It is clear they cannot; for it is from these members only that the orders of bishops

and deacons are intended to be, and are, supplied. If they could legally occupy a place among them, then they could be eligible for those orders for which we see they are not eligible; therefore, unless a fourth place could be created for them in it, apart from that of bishops (or elders), of deacons, and of lay members, they can have no place in it. The attempt, therefore, to keep them out of Church membership may be regarded as an attempt to prevent the creation of an anomalous condition in the Church, that of having in it those who in reality cannot stand on an equal footing with its ordinary members—those whose scope in respect of services which any Christian may render, or which ought to be open to every Christian, is necessarily limited. Accordingly, it appears to us that polygamists can only be received under limitations which will place them distinctly below the standing of the humblest monogamist in the Church. The position given by some Churches to them is that assigned to those known as “catechumens”—those under preparatory instruction until their condition shall be favourable to their being made “members” of the Church, of whom the Church at present knows of only one kind. By whatever name they will be known, however, by any particular Church, their position in it will be unique, as noticed before, and necessarily less than that of members commonly so known, and it will be, of course, the duty of each Church, according to its best light, to determine what rights it will give them, if they are received at all into it, since we have no scripture about the matter.

As regards their wives, it is argued that, having each only one husband, they come under a different consideration, and the limitations upon their husband's position ought not to be allowed to affect theirs. This seems reasonable where we are dealing with cases in places where the women are in a

state of ignorance, and cannot therefore be said to be “parties to their husbands’ actions ;” but in other circumstances the position would materially be affected, as, for instance, where a woman, living in a place where the Gospel has been proclaimed for years, and knowing the Scripture provision on the point, goes and marries, or allows herself to be married by, a man having already a wife. In such a case, of course, the man and the woman should, in common fairness, stand or fall together. It becomes, then, a matter in which each application for membership in the Church should be separately treated on its own merits, and with due regard to its special circumstances.⁸

⁸ The provision of one of the Churches on the Gold Coast (The Wesleyan), on this point, may here be given : “ It should be left with the Superintendent Minister to decide whether, on an investigation of the case, the wives of polygamists should be received into Church fellowship.”

— *Year Book, 1893*, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV.

HEATHEN WEST AFRICA AND MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE THERE.

BEFORE dealing with the question of marriage on the Gold Coast, and of polygamy, I was reviewing the condition of West Africa before the introduction of Christianity into that part of the globe ; and the reader will have seen that that part of the African continent had, before the dawn of the twelfth century, developed indigenously a high condition of civilisation.

“ About the time when Knut the Dane sat on England’s throne, reigning from Edinburgh to Sussex,” the “ negro king of Songh^hoy, named Za-Kasi, who was the fifteenth of his dynasty, embraced Islam. In the year when William the Conqueror died, that is, in 1087, Humé, the negro king of Bornu, whose dynasty was founded in the time of Alfred the Great, also embraced Islam. These were momentous facts with very far-reaching consequences ” (see *Account of the Past History and Present Condition of the Western Sudan* referred to on pp. 8-9), including naturally the adoption of Islamism in a great part of that region.

And now we may ask, What was the condition of those there whom the tide of the Mohammedan influence did not reach, and who, whatever their estate—good, bad, or indifferent, as that might have been—were without, or had lost, the knowledge of the true God, who, though somewhat imperfectly, was proclaimed by the propagators

of Islam—the condition which also characterised them up to the time of the introduction of Christianity among them ?

They were pagans, they worshipped, as those unconverted among them still worship, natural objects which inspired fear or veneration. The angry sea; the swift running stream, falling over some rocky precipice, and forming a beautiful cascade, or a sublime cataract; the calm pool, or placid lake, reflecting on its surface the magnificence of the heavens, or the foliate beauties of nature fringing its borders; the woody grove, awe-inspiring and majestic; or the individual tree with overspreading bowers, mighty and storm-defying; the bleak rock, capable, in a sense, of telling the story of the ages—these they bowed the knee to, and revered. Then they worshipped the spirits of the departed, and the wooden images or “*jujus*” which their priests consecrated for their homage, and in which the spirits of the dead were supposed to reside. But over and above all these things was that Mighty One, who naturally, in a large measure, was nebulous to them, and yet from whom they believed they derived their being. They knew that His breath was sufficient to extinguish their life, and that upon His pleasure they depended for their earthly welfare. But they had no access to Him, for the priests interposed between them and that Great Being human and diabolical agencies, which were supposed to work all evils, both physical and moral; and, although God was above all, and was the Rewarder of those who did evil or good, yet, according to their ideas, He allowed the world to be ruled by these inimical agencies.⁹ The name given to this Being by the

⁹ “It will be of interest,” says the Rev. Dennis Kemp (an English Missionary, well known in Methodist circles), “to know that the natives are decidedly of opinion that his highness of the lower regions has a white

Fantis (of the Gold Coast) is "Yankupon," the Great Friend, otherwise "Otcheranpon," the Dependable or Never-failing One, the literal idea being that of leaning against some stupendous object which never yields—as the rock never yields from under the limpet. Other terms are:—(Timne) "Kru Masaba," Father God; (Aku) "Oba Olodumari," Almighty Universal King; and (Congo) "Zambian Pungo Dezo," the Great Almighty God. These express the same idea of omnipotence and of sympathy, in which all His creatures have a share.

This was the most definite conception they had of the Great Ruler of the Universe and Judge of Mankind. But, since human and satanic agencies had a direct free hand in ordering the affairs of the universe, it became necessary to propitiate these evil spirits with sacrifices of various kinds. Human victims were usually decapitated or spiked. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty"—the result, in the present instances, of a blind superstition which led its subjects to imagine that the malignant powers of nature might thus be appeased. Sometimes, too, human beings were sacrificed in order that their spirits might attend the exalted dead in the world of spirits.

complexion. In a description of Guinney are the following stanzas:—

'The land of Negroes is not far from thence,
Nearer extended to th' Atlantick main,
Wherein the Black Prince keeps his residence,
Attended with his Jeaty-coloured Train,
Who in their native beauty most delight,
And in contempt do paint the Devil white.'

—*Nine Years at the Gold Coast*, p. 23.

This proves, in a way, that evil, which is represented by the Devil, is foreign to our proper nature, and abnormal. For, whereas the whites represent "his highness" as black, the blacks represent him as white—also by that which is foreign and abnormal to them, although often enough, everywhere, we find devils in domestic, and, to us, more familiar human, forms.

Cannibalism does not appear to have been known or practised except by *some* of the *most* degraded tribes—happily not the most numerous—who were so grossly or extraordinarily superstitious as to believe that the spirit of intrepidity or valour of the enemy, whose heart or flesh was eaten, or mixed up with their drink (for usually it was the flesh of enemies taken in war that was made use of), would enter the eaters or drinkers, between whom and their fellows on the same continent a great difference was indeed apparent—a difference revealing the *best* and the *worst* in *human* nature, which, wherever found, presents, in one form or another, its finest qualities as well as its most execrable features.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that polygamy, the natural outcome of their social laws, was prevalent in every part of the country.

But, whether pagan or Moham^medan in their practices, they were clannish in their habits, and, for mutual security and help, observed certain common laws of good faith, hospitality and benevolence within the circle of each clan, and, sometimes, even generally. The people were, and still are, many of them, attractive personally, being primitive in their simplicity (though not easily caught napping, once they have been made suspicious), industrious, docile and affectionate.

Such was the condition of at least some of the heathen parts of West Africa before the introduction of Christianity into the place—a condition which, whether it be regarded as retrograde or original, while presenting some redeeming features, presents also the tragical, and much that is deplorable, and that needed the light of Christianity and true education to correct and ameliorate.

Let us now see what attempts have been made to establish Christianity there, connecting with it educational work,

since the abandonment of the Romish Missions in 1723.

1. A Moravian Mission was opened there in 1736, but was closed in 1770.

2. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was represented at Cape Coast in 1751 by the Rev. Thomas Thompson. Fourteen years later, Philip Quacoe, an African clergyman and Oxford graduate, was appointed to the charge at Cape Coast Castle,¹⁰ as Chaplain, and continued to labour there until his death in 1816. A few years later, the S.P.G. withdrew from the Coast.

3. The Wesleyan Mission began its West African work in 1811, "although it was contemplated as far back as 1796, when Messrs. A. Murdock and W. Patten were set apart for work in the Foulah country."

The Mission to the Gold Coast dates from 1834, with the arrival there of the excellent missionary Joseph Dunwell.

4. The Church Missionary Society's Mission opened in 1804.

5. The Basle (Lutheran) in 1828.

¹⁰ This, in which is found the resting-place of the renowned poetess, "L.E.L." (Letitia Elizabeth Landon), afterwards the wife of Governor Maclean, who died in 1838, "from an overdose of Scheele's preparation of prussic acid, inadvertently taken," or, as some think, from heart disease, was the castle in whose dungeons, in times past, from Sir John Hawkins' days in 1562 until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the hapless captives, kidnapped or procured as the result of raids, or by other iniquitous means, used to be confined, and in dark, slimy, horrid cells, whose construction precluded all hope of the victims ever escaping therefrom.

Atkins, speaking of this castle, mentions "the spacious vaults under the square, or place of arms, cut out of the rock, and divided into several rooms, so as to contain a thousand slaves;" and Ellis adds—"The slaves were chained and confined in these dungeons—now used as stores—often for weeks at a time, till a ship came to carry them to the West Indies. They were all branded on the right breast with the letters 'D. Y.' (Duke of York)." And now that the nefarious traffic, which decimated Africa, and bred evils which it will take generations yet to undo, is at an end, England owes a debt of reparation to Africa, which she cannot pay too soon, and which she should discharge only too cheerfully, as also should America and the other nations that shared in that base business.

6. The Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland started in 1846 on the old Calabar River.

7. The North German Mission began work in 1847.

8. The English Baptists have also had missionary operations on the Congo since 1879, similar work having been done at the Cameroons from the year 1840 till 1887. Mission work in this part of Africa, it is worth noting, however, was originally begun by the African himself. In the *Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1892*, the following interesting account of it appears, p. 156 :—

“In the year 1833, the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery in all British possession passed both Houses of Parliament and received the Royal assent, and in 1834 that abolition was an accomplished fact. Amongst the slaves who were liberated in the Island of Jamaica were some who had been kidnapped from the West African coast, and in their bondage had obtained the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free. It became the desire of their hearts that they might be permitted to carry the Gospel to the heathen homes whence they had been torn. When it was suggested that it was a perilous undertaking, and that possibly they might be enslaved again, they answered with a noble simplicity, ‘We have been made slaves for men, we can be made slaves for Christ.’ But those who went forth upon this business possessed but little training, and were backed by no adequate organisation, and it soon became evident that their efforts would end in failure ; then it was that, in the year 1840, the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society felt called upon to carry forward the work that seemed on the very point of extinction. It should, however, never be forgotten, that the initial step was taken by the African himself ;

all that followed sprang from that beginning." The absolute necessity for proper and the best training for African missionary workers will be seen from this, and, of course, it goes without saying, that an adequate organisation in connection with that work is also highly essential.

9. The Native Baptist Union, embracing twenty Churches, with a membership of 1,600, in Yorubaland (Lagos), Sierra Leone, Fantiland (Gold Coast), Iboland (Niger), and Dullaland (Cameroons)—see *Baptist Handbook* (published under the direction of the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland) for 1903, p. 531—and which is doing very good work, comes also rightly under notice. This Union was formed four years ago, among others, of Churches of a much older existence.

Since 1822 American missionary agencies have been represented by Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Lutherans.

Again, the Roman Catholics established themselves at Elmina in the year 1881, and have since spread to other parts of the coast, carrying on aggressive work.

The work also of the United Methodist Free Churches, the "Church of God," and Lady Huntingdon's Connection, which is now amalgamated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church of America and its vigorous branch in Sierra Leone, must be mentioned, for these various Churches have also done much for which the country must be grateful.

The Wesleyan, the Basle, the Baptist, the Roman Catholic and the Church Missionary Society's Missions are important organisations in West Africa, and occupy the country from Senegambia to Guinea (after which the gold coin "guinea" is called, by reason of the fact that the first coin was made of gold from that part), and to the Congo,

about 3,000 miles of coast-line, including Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Lagos, the Niger Territories and the Cameroons.

The Liberian (Republican) coast is occupied by American missionary agencies and African Baptist and other Churches.

Little has been accomplished on the Ivory Coast (French). Christian laymen from the Gold Coast have recently been encouraged in their efforts to take the Gospel to the heathen there, and it is hoped that the authorities will offer facilities for more general work.

In the whole of that part of Africa, with which we have been dealing, however, it is estimated that there are not more than 160,000 Christians out of a population estimated to exceed 60,000,000, the educated portion of which population is even less than the number of Christians.

Of the evangelising and educating agencies still employed in West Africa, those on the Gold Coast—in some respects the most important country in West Africa—are the Wesleyan, the Basle, the North German, the Roman Catholic and the Baptist, which was introduced four years ago.

After the labours of the first four bodies for the average period of half a century, however, that colony and its hinterland, which are estimated to contain between two and three millions of inhabitants, are found to have not more than 40,000 Christians, and of an estimated school population (without that of the hinterland) of 240,000, according to official returns, only “five per cent. of the school population” are in attendance at the Government-aided schools, to which may be added the proportionate percentage, which is infinitesimal, if not practically nil, of 1,290 children in the smaller and what are known as “non-assisted schools.” (*V. Reports, Colonial Directors of Education, 1895-7.*) Since 1897 the need for larger efforts

to advance education there has even become greater, by reason of the recent annexations of places in the hinterland, and the influx into the Colony of more members of the interior tribes.

This, then, is the position of affairs which confronts one, and calls forth larger Christian and educational efforts on behalf of the country. There is need there also for proper technical and industrial schools, the supreme importance of which is admitted on all hands. And what applies to the Gold Coast applies more or less to other parts of West Africa.

Speaking of the situation at an important public meeting, over which he presided, Dr. Quartey-Papafio (Government Commissioner of the District of Salt Pond) said :—

“The question is whether a new agency is not required to help on the work of education and evangelization. Of the population of the colony and protectorate (without that of the hinterland), estimated at two millions, how few indeed have been reached! Only a few thousands are Christians. Perhaps not more than twenty or thirty thousand are even nominally Christian. I think the need for larger educational advantages for our people, and for the greater spreading of Christian knowledge, must be felt by every true friend of the country.”—*Sierra Leone Weekly News*, January 28th, 1899.

Here, also, are to be found, at the market-places or elsewhere (particularly at Cape Coast, a chief seaport town into which flock people from all parts of the country), poor, diseased, and decrepid, half-starved people having no proper medical aid, and destitute of the ordinary means of livelihood.

It is true that they are found here in comparatively

smaller numbers than in some other places in the world ; but they do exist notwithstanding, and in all their pitiable destitution and misery which appeal strongly to one, and call forth practical sympathy on their behalf.¹¹

At the beginning of this paper I proposed to notice the circumstances which led to the closing up, or the failure, of the Roman Catholic Missions inaugurated in the fifteenth century.

These missions do not appear to have made much of, or to have developed, an African Ministry or Agency, but remained as an exotic plant. Accordingly, when the foreign element withdrew, or failed from climatic or other causes, the Church representing the work of the Missions, and which was not tended by the sons of the soil, brought up to know and appreciate their responsibility in the work of evangelising their country, also ceased to be. In other words, they failed to take, or retain, hold of the native and unfluctuating element, and to make it the means of regenerating work among the aboriginal and permanent inhabitants, who alone can *perpetuate* Christianity in a country ; and, if at this day permanency is sought in Christian work, it will be found, not merely in converting a certain number of the native peoples, but in getting the converts to be the instruments by which to win and secure their brethren for Christ and His cause. The sense of individual responsibility must, more than is often found done at present, be deepened in them, and they must be

¹¹ Upon the emancipation of the slaves after the Ashanti War of 1873, a good many of them who were shiftless, having, as might be expected, had no spirit of self-reliance and thrift developed in them during their slavery days, and who had neither land nor any other property worth speaking of, sank into a state of abject poverty and destitution. It is mostly from this class of people, particularly where diseased, that Gold Coast pauperism draws its numbers. For years they have been seen in the market places, especially at Cape Coast.

made to realise, and give a practical recognition to, the fact that Christ's commission is also to them—to go and make disciples in His Name by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS TO TRAINING AFRICANS IN EUROPE OR AMERICA FOR MISSION OR PASTORAL WORK ANSWERED.

I MAY at this juncture notice some of the objections sometimes made to the training of Africans in Europe or America for mission or pastoral work in their native land, although it is on every hand admitted, that the work of the evangelisation of Africa can best be done and perpetuated by Africans themselves, who must for that reason have the necessary qualification.

And first, *strange as it may seem*, some appear to regard the work of training Africans as *Missionaries* as something that ought not to form part of the "ordinary missionary enterprise," regarding the command of Christ, "Go ye . . . and make disciples," &c., as having an "especial application to European and American Christians." But our Lord's command, it is certain, has no special or exclusive application to any one individual, class, or race, but is intended for all Christian converts, and all followers of His alike. So, then, when African converts are brought to, and trained in, Europe or America, the command to them also is, "Go . . . make disciples," &c., as it is to the English or American student, or any other Christian.

The injunction, absolute in its nature, is, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). And, if the African convert is being trained in England or elsewhere to be competent to strengthen his brethren,

united to him by special ties of kindred, there does not appear to be any just reason why any fault should be found with the course, provided it can reasonably be expected to effect the desired end.

Here I should say that what is spoken of as the "ordinary missionary enterprise," with its methods, has, under the blessing of God, effected a very great deal, for which all other methods must have grateful regard. But, as we understand any other methods which seek, by the training of Africans in Europe or America, to make them competent to evangelise and educate their people, there is nothing in them which aims to cut off the services of anyone, white, black, red, or yellow, who may feel called upon to go to Africa, and has reason to believe he or she can stand the climate, and do good work there. They do not represent an excluding system of jealous supercession, of which indeed anyone could reasonably complain. They appear rather to be a helpful, less costly, more saving and expeditious way of fulfilling the Saviour's command, which is for universal recognition and obedience. For, if, by these means, a saving in valuable life or money, in the interests of the Master's universal work, should be effected, all concerned would certainly have something for which to be thankful; and, so far, the experiment has not been without beneficial results. Indeed, the desire to save, as far as possible, our best for the Master's service is not necessarily the outcome of cowardice in that service, or "a direct appeal to Christian cowardice," as some have thought. It is rather the common wisdom enjoined by our Lord Himself, when He said to His disciples, "Be ye wise as serpents." Christian obedience has not a narrow but an all-comprehensive sphere, within which it is exercisable; and, no thanks to us, if, when God opens the way to us by which we can accomplish more, and save more, for Him,

we do not avail ourselves of that way, and thus prove ourselves *unwise*. Thus, while there should be no diminishing of foreign missionary activity and interest—rather much more than less of it—it will be found a judicious course for the Church and missionary societies to avail themselves of every opportunity to fit Natives, in the places most favourable to their intellectual and moral development, to become efficient teachers and thoroughly reliable leaders of their people.

2. It is objected, to use the words of a writer in a leading religious journal, that there is “absolutely no warrant for the system, either by precept or example, in the New Testament.” But, unless we make a stupendous mistake, Paul (then known as Saul) left his home in “heathen Tarsus” to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, in Jerusalem, for religious training; and, unless we equally greatly blunder, that is recorded in the New Testament (Acts xxii. 3). We are perfectly aware that at the time Paul did so he was not a Christian; but he occupied, in relation to the Jewish religion, the same position as that occupied by a Christian or Christian convert in our day to the Christian religion, and who goes to, say, England for further Christian training or instruction. In both cases it is the worship of the only true and living God—in the one case, through the symbolism of the Jewish ritual; in the other, through Him whom those symbols typified; and the example of Paul on the comparatively lower plane of Jewish religious life points only too correctly to the greater necessity that exists for “separation” for larger and deeper knowledge on the higher plane of Christian life. Dean Farrar, in his great work on the *Life and Work of St. Paul* (p. 18), quoting from Philostratus, tells us that “Apollonius of Tyana, who was afterwards held up as a kind of heathen parallel to Christ, was studying under the

orator Euthydemus at Tarsus at the very time when it must also have been the residence of the youthful Paul ;” and how “ even Apollonius, at the age of thirteen, was so struck with the contrast between the professed wisdom of the city and its miserable morality, that he obtained leave from his father to remove to Ægæ, and so pursue his studies at a more serious and religious place.” And, if it was expedient for the heathen and, as we have seen, for the Jew also, in the interests of their respective religions and their life-work, to prosecute their studies at more religious centres, is it inexpedient for the Christian, African or otherwise, in the interests of his higher life-calling and work, to be trained away from his home, and in more favourable circumstances ?

But, if even the New Testament afforded us no example of a change of residence for a religious training, common expediency would legitimise studying, or being trained, under more propitious circumstances, such as Europe or America affords. The Church to-day nourishes in her bosom a number of things of which we have no mention in the Bible. There is, for example, in the Word of God no express command to build churches, to institute Sunday Schools, and found Bands of Hope, &c. ; but who, because they are not commanded, denies their high utility and necessity, and that they are means, perfectly legitimate, by reason of the noble ends they are intended to compass ?

3. But then it is said, “ Whatever may be hoped from the influence of Christian homes upon the converts, the most of what they will witness in the white man’s country is calculated to make them wish to live for pleasure, and to do anything rather than hazard their lives for the Gospel’s sake.”

To say this is to speak only as a man, and without a moment’s reflection upon the almightiness of the Divine

power, upon which Christians must *everywhere* depend to overcome the world, and not only to live, but to die, if need be, for Christ. This observation is applicable, of course, if by this objection we are to understand that it is meant that the convert-student must needs succumb under the temptations under which he will come, and of which there are always enough in one form or another anywhere—in Christian countries. What is claimed as keeping a Christian, white or black, as remarked elsewhere, is the power Divine—in other words the Spirit of God working in him or her “*to will and to do of God’s good pleasure.*” Counting or relying upon this, the Christian, of whatever nationality, and whether old or young, has within him or her that which is greater than the evil forces outside. “*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.*” And, again, we have it, as declared in his extremity to Paul by the Lord “*My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*” And, further, “*the promise,*” we are assured, “*is to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*” (Acts ii. 39.)

But, it is rejoined, “cases are known in which the consequences of training in Europe or America have been distinctly harmful, multiplying misconceptions, and assisting the development of vanity and self-conceit.”

This, a little reflection may show us, is the fault of the particular recipients of the training, and not necessarily of the training itself, any more than it is the fault of Christianity that some of its professors are false. In fact, do what one may to prevent them, cases of failure will occur *anywhere*, and *wherever* students are trained, but to argue from this that others who promise well should not be given a chance is in the highest degree unreasonable. Among students trained in *Africa*, the same evil propensities of human nature sometimes reveal themselves in individual

cases, where the seed sown has happened not to have fallen "into good ground," which is possible anywhere, and against which it seems hopeless to find an absolute security in Christian work. We can only go by what we see, and by the apparent fruit, but how often do we notice a defection in the individual of whom we expected better things? "How do even the mighty fall sometimes!" The conviction in fact daily forces itself upon all engaged in Christian effort, and who have any spiritual insight, that there is no immunity from any possible evil in this sin-stained world, no absolute security, except through the power that brings to the soul Christ-likeness and the impress of the Divine, and makes it what it ought to be, even the power of Christ in us, the hope of glory—spiritual glory—here and hereafter. Where a student has failed, he has failed because he has not received in himself this power, nor lived by the strength of Christ, which is sufficient in, and for, all things; and not because he has happened to be trained in Europe or America, which does not fail to be an excellent training ground for the student who, in the first place, knows *experimentally* the salvation of God in, and through, Christ. Happily such have not been wanting among the great majority of Africans who have come to Europe—England particularly—to qualify themselves more thoroughly for God's work. All our African Bishops, Archdeacons, Canons and the host of other ecclesiastics in the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches, missionary and otherwise, all over West Africa, with the heads of the educational institutions, are, the ablest and best of them, men who have had more or less European education and training, or have travelled in Europe or America, and, having had their views enlarged, have added materially to their stock of original knowledge—a fact which is a complete answer to any objection or implication that

the training of African students in Europe for missionary, pastoral, or educational work necessarily spoils them, or fails of its purpose.

That local institutions, African or Asiatic, whose equipment is, as a rule, poor—compared with that of the excellent schools and colleges in Christendom—and local environments are not sufficient to afford the best to students is also shown by the fact that missionaries, *some* of whom are opposed to the giving of more advanced education, and the opportunity of higher mental culture to Africans—by sending them to Europe or America—send their own children in the Mission Field to one or other of these places for that education and culture, which evidently they find cannot so well be had in Asia or Africa, even though the missionaries themselves be on the spot.

In fact, we cannot but regard the policy favoured by *some* of our European Christian friends—that, practically, of “cooping up the African within his own soil,” and excluding him from “cosmopolitan privileges,” thus limiting his range and his opportunities of superior culture, as a most short-sighted and suicidal policy. They may thus have a worker whose limitations will help to make him a mere tool in their hands—which *some* do not mind, or seem rather to prefer—but they thereby, intentionally or otherwise, effectually prevent his expansion into a fuller manhood, and the unfolding in him of the highest powers which have made races strong and sufficient to take the necessary lead in their own affairs, secular or religious; and thus the *true* end of all foreign pioneering work among aboriginal peoples, that of inducing the development in them of the qualities carrying with them the greatest strength and efficiency, and which shall enable them to take their proper place in the Kingdom of God on earth, or in the world generally, becomes defeated.

4. Further, it is objected, that “the teaching of the English language and customs to the subjects of a foreign state is certain to produce Governmental jealousy and hostility.” But the fact that the European States (under whose rule all the African colonies and protectorates, in which missionary operations are being carried on, are) have for centuries vied with each other in practically encouraging linguistic attainments, and the learning of each other’s manners and customs among their subjects—and what is true of their subjects at home in this respect is generally true of them abroad—removes the force of this argument. On the other hand, anyone with a knowledge of the English language has a great advantage over one who is without, by reason of the commercial and other relations that more or less subsist between the colonies and protectorates of the different European powers.

As regards the teaching of English customs to the subjects of a foreign state, their knowledge of English usages will not necessarily make them disloyal to their own and proper governments. It will add to their knowledge, and, as knowledge is power, other things being equal, to their power for good. Of course, it will naturally be expected that the subjects—domestic or foreign—of any state will learn the language and customs of that state, and the missionary is not commissioned to subvert the natural harmless order of things. But where converts have, *e.g.*, been made by an English missionary, *if he has been permitted at all by the foreign state to make them in its colony or protectorate*, their learning the English language, or anything of English origin, *of their own accord*, cannot reasonably be expected to provoke the jealousy and hostility of any enlightened governments such as we are here dealing with.

5. Again, it is said, that “it is hard to see how moral

and spiritual training, such as converts from heathenism need, can be given in a land where public opinion makes the practice of heathen vices and superstitions impossible, and by teachers who can have little, if any, knowledge of what the inner life of heathenism really is."

It is worth noting here, however, that all that is vicious and sinful springs from the evil within the human heart, which is everywhere the same. The peculiar feature of heathenism is that it sanctions idol and spirit worship, and the observance of superstitious rites in connection with that worship; but, otherwise, the depravity of heart in the African is precisely the same as in the European. The absurdity of idol and spirit worship with its attendant observances, however, is easily seen by the heathen themselves, sometimes even before they are brought under the Gospel light, and converts, particularly if educated, seldom, if ever, return to it. The more serious trouble is in combating what St. John calls "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," by which men *everywhere* mostly fall, and much, or more, of it is seen in the civilized parts of the earth, which therefore would furnish sufficient evil for an object-lesson to students, if this is perpetually required in connection with moral and spiritual training; and if, as the objection seems to imply, they must be exercised in places where evil object-lessons stare them in the face. It is, however, not indispensable that one should live in the very haunts of vice or crime to know enough of that vice or crime to loathe and hate it, and to learn to fight evil in whatever form it may appear. If anything, immediate and *constant* contact with the one or the other is more likely than not to blunt our susceptibilities, and to create a spirit of indifference in regard to it; for, if familiarity breeds contempt, it as surely breeds indifference, which is the mother of contempt.

Where the evil of American slavery was felt most was not in the Southern States, where the hapless slaves suffered untold misery, and pined away under the inhuman treatment of heartless masters, but in the North, which knew no slavery, although enough of it to rouse its righteous indignation against the iniquitous and shameless system which in time it succeeded in demolishing. And so the possibility of training a person in one place to hate a specific form of evil in another can be conceived.

The student coming here from Africa generally knows enough of African heathenism and superstition, and has no need to know more of it in England, or anywhere else, if indeed that were possible, but he can here be given that higher moral and spiritual training which will fortify him against the evil which he has to put down in his own country.

With respect to their teachers, they would be in no worse position than the missionary who goes out, in many cases, fresh from college to teach the people in Africa, and who often knows much less than his teachers whom he leaves behind him, and who certainly can train others, as they trained him for spiritual work against heathenism, if they are Spirit-filled and guided, as we have reason to believe many of them are.

6. Then, again, it is contended that "an extended stay in Europe is bad for the Natives physically, and that they lose their hardiness thereby"—a generalisation which is contradicted by actual facts. The scores of African physicians, surgeons, barristers, mining and civil engineers, &c., to be seen in West Africa, were all, or nearly all, trained in Europe, and live well enough there, not being the victims of malarial fevers and other peculiar ailments which, unguarded against, and often through their mistakes or injudiciousness, kill off Europeans there. Similarly with

the preachers trained in Europe. In other words, if the African trained in Europe suffers in Africa, it is, generally speaking, as any other African suffers; for the stay of three or four years, which is usually all that is found necessary for him in Europe, is hardly long enough to work such a change in the African's system as will necessarily jeopardise his health in Africa afterwards. It is true that some few young men, from indiscretion or constitutional weakness, die either in England, or after they return to Africa, as they might, from one cause or another, have done had they remained at home, but these are, again, only the exceptions that prove the rule.

In Europe or America a lawyer, for instance, is not ordinarily expected to have the same hardiness as a sailor, or a farmer, yet he lives well enough in his way, as does the latter. So with the African professional man, who is naturally less hardy, in some instances at least, than his manual toiling compatriot, the difference between the two being only that produced by the difference in their respective occupations.

7. On the industrial side, it is objected by some, in connection with the teaching of handicrafts, &c., to African students, that "few, if any, of the European arts and handicrafts would be of use as a means of gaining a livelihood, except in countries already under the influence of Christianity, and considerably advanced in civilisation." Granted. Then they will be of use in some places, and their acquirement by the students should for that reason be encouraged. In other places they will introduce, or help to develop, industries which cannot fail to benefit both the native missionary or pastor and those whom he is teaching.

Here, as in other things, the "children of this world" are in their generation becoming wiser than some of the "children of light"; for, otherwise, why should the State

(regarded here as distinct from the Church) constantly, as in the case of Great Britain, send soldiers, African and otherwise, to England, to be trained more fully after the superior and more approved discipline of Europe, for military service in its colonies and protectorates, when, while more could certainly be given, for that work which requires even more careful preparation and training, as for an office which is higher and more important than any that is merely temporal, some Christians advocate for the African the minimum of knowledge that may be given! But we are persuaded that those who favour this course will yet come to find that cheap, or comparatively cheap, things, however temporarily useful they may appear, are not after all, or in the long run, the best either for the service of man, or of God.

CHAPTER VI.

NATIVE AGENCY IN CHRISTIANISING WORK IN WEST AFRICA.

THAT the hope of any country principally rests upon the children of that country is a well-established truth, and one which is of the utmost significance, whether we consider the civil or political history of nations, or their ecclesiastical or religious record.

The Christian religion has been taken to Africa to peoples whose languages, customs and rites are different from those of the people through whose instrumentality that religion has reached them, although a good many of these customs and rites are intended, as may be seen by studying their history and inner meaning, to compass the same great ends of human life as they exist in the countries of those who introduced that religion. In such circumstances, it is easy to see that the *most* successful way of reaching the various peoples—however necessary pioneering work by foreigners is, or may be—is to make use of an agency with which they will feel thoroughly at home, and which will appeal sufficiently to them—in other words, an agency which is native, and can therefore fully grasp the meaning of local conditions, and gauge their true purport and intent, which foreigners, however intelligent, cannot so well understand, and with which, therefore, they cannot so well sympathise, where sympathy therewith is necessary—taking as it does, all the world over, a native to thoroughly

understand a native, his idiosyncracies, depth or shallowness of nature, his aspirations, superstitions, hopes and fears, his true aims and ends. Such an agency, cultivated, and fully enlightened by God's Spirit, is the desideratum of African Christian work, as it is indeed that of evangelistic work anywhere else, and its importance cannot be overrated.

As to this, and the best means by which to evangelise and educate Africa, I shall let the Rev. Dennis Kemp, who laboured there for nine years, and became one of the General Superintendents of the Wesleyan Missions there, speak in the following extracts from a publication of his:—

“Our Church, while recognising the importance of other agencies in the mission field, endeavours to give due prominence to the great command of Christ to proclaim His truth to the heathen. In this work we have to depend more upon native than upon European agency. . . . Our native preachers are, as a rule, ‘workmen that need not be ashamed.’ . . . The way they can grapple with the conscience, apply the truth, and help the seeker in search of Christ is most gratifying. Our motto has been ‘The Fanti for the Fantis.’

“The European staff, which is, comparatively speaking, much more costly than is the native, is liable to interruptions at any time. The frequent absences on account of furlough seriously affect our work. In nine instances out of ten the European has scarcely been enabled to understand the manners and customs of the natives before he is removed either to England, or to that country from whose ‘bourn no traveller returns.’ Hence the importance of developing a native ministry.

“But there is a still greater reason than those already given. The life of the consistent native

Christian is a greater testimony to the power of the Gospel than the life of the European ever can be. The life of the devoted white man is in danger of being misunderstood. By the native he is placed on a pedestal far above the poor black man. The native ascribes to superior nature, and to propitious environment, that which ought to be ascribed to the transforming power of the Gospel of Christ. But the consistent life of the man of colour appeals to his fellow-countryman. He is skin of their skin; his life is known from his youth upward; he is trained [more or less] under conditions known to them, and similar to theirs. In his case his associates can but attribute to the Gospel the changed life he lives. He is a standing advertisement to the Gospel he preaches, and his message gains cogency from the fact of his life. When a man can get up and say, 'You know me and my former life; you witness the life I now live. This life I live, not of myself, but through the power of the Christ whom I proclaim'—the effect is conviction. Preaching, as a missionary agency, we put in the foreground, and in honour we prefer our native brethren."

Even so does the African minister in honour prefer his European or American brethren, who have been willing to risk their lives for Africa's good in the missionary path, and thus made it possible for the African more or less to take upon his shoulders and, as his legitimate obligation, carry forward the work of Christianising his country.¹²

¹² West Africa has, in fact, not only produced noteworthy preachers and divines, among whom may be mentioned the late Bishop Crowther, Bishop Johnson, the late Archdeacon Johnson, Canon Moore, the late Rev. Principal May, of Freetown, Sierra Leone, but also lawyers, physicians and engineers, who were, or are, exceedingly brilliant members of their various professions. The career of the eminent Sierra Leone barrister, who was knighted by the

The time, we venture to think, has, in the providence of God, at last come when Africans shall, more than they have done in the past, take a prominent part in the effort to bring their people to the knowledge of Christ—when “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God.” The activities of the age certainly include those of native Africans, who in various ways are working to raise their countrymen to a higher plane of religious life and of education. These, among whom stand men like Dr. Mojola Agbebi (who was the first, fourteen years ago, to form in Lagos a Native African Baptist Church, which has had as great an influence for good as any other Church in that important colony, and has accomplished more in the missionary line than any other single Church or Chapel there) and Archdeacon Crowther, of the Niger Delta, and his worthy colleagues, who have made the Delta Native Pastorate the great success it is to-day, are the links which connect the present with the past of Africa, when the greatest teachers and preachers of Christian truth, whom the world had ever known since the days of the Apostles, lived upon its Northern shores in the earlier centuries of the Christian era.

The Native Church, strong and triumphant, because

Queen of England a few years ago—Sir Samuel Lewis—is well known; while Mr. John Sabah, Member of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast Colony, whose work has rightly constituted him a standard Authority on African Law, as it obtains in that section of Africa, worthily occupies a place among the rising jurists of the day. The name also of the able physician, Dr. E. Quartey-Papafo, of Edinburgh University renown, is well known to those conversant with West African affairs, who also cannot be ignorant of the splendid achievements of Mr. T. B. F. Sam, who for several years has stood very successfully at the head of all, white or black, entrusted with large engineering and mining interests in the Gold Coast Country. And need I speak here of the man whom the whole civilised world delights to honour as the profoundest scholar and finest writer West Africa has produced, and who is admittedly one of the greatest intellectual giants of this age—Dr. E. W. Blyden!

God-guided, Spirit-filled, and beauteous in holiness, will be the crowning glory of Christianity in Modern Africa, as in other lands. As the Rev. Dr. John Clifford, than whom we know not of any man greater or better in all England, beautifully describes it, in connection with its inception, trials, growth and final triumph, it is the—

“ New creation of the Lord Jesus . . . —the new social order which He has formed, and whose permanence He has guaranteed, saying, ‘ The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ We believe in the integrity and capacity of the *society* of redeemed and regenerated men, who meet in His name, and discover by actual experience that He is a real contemporary, bestowing His power and grace not only on individual men, but on societies of men, and accomplishing, through these societies, His redemptive mission to mankind. We know the risks incident to the free and uncontrolled action of such communities. So did He ; but He ‘ built ’ them, notwithstanding, and when they failed, as they did at Corinth and in Galatia, in many things, He did not destroy them with the breath of his mouth, but He bore with them, educated them by the responsibilities He put upon them, and made them witnesses to His power and grace.”—*Centenary Volume, Baptist Missionary Society, 1892, p. 263.*

The Gospel, with the light of education, is bound, more than ever it has done, to triumph in Africa. Over her hills and dales will yet float the standard of the Crucified One, as a symbol of His victory over the land of Ham—once the greatest land of earth, the birthplace and cradle of the arts and sciences, when Egypt sat supreme, the mistress and teacher of the world. Things have since then changed. No longer do men hear of the glories of an African Luxor, or walk the extensive and marvellous mazes of national

works unsurpassed, in magnitude and magnificence, by any in modern times. But what Africa has lost she will regain, in part, or in whole, and regain with what she never possessed, because she could not possess, in ancient times—the knowledge of the Risen Christ; and that will chasten her inner life, and make her a perpetual and courted power in the life of the world.

To quote (if I may, with some few necessary modifications) from the illustrious and immortal Harriet Beecher Stowe:—

“If ever Africa shall show [as in the providence of God she is now showing] an elevated and cultivated [Christian] race, and come it must some time her turn [more than she has done in the past] to figure in the great drama of human improvement, life will awake there with a gorgeousness and splendour of which our cold Western tribes faintly have conceived. In that far off mystic land of gold, and gems, and spices, and waving palms, and wondrous flowers, and miraculous fertility will awake new forms of art, new styles of splendour, and the Negro race . . . will perhaps show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life.”

One way in which the Gospel triumphed in a remarkable case in West Africa, I may, in concluding, tell, as it is given in the life of the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, admittedly the greatest missionary pioneer to the Gold Coast of West Africa, and an African by descent:—

“In the year 1848, Christianity was introduced into the little beach village of Assafa, twenty-two miles eastward from Cape Coast. In its immediate vicinity was the sacred grove of Mankessim, the mysterious abode of the great National ‘Bosum’ (god). This

spot was consequently the great centre of pagan influence for the Fanti country.

“John Warden, a native Christian of Anamabu, and hunter of wild game, made this his temporary abode. By his consistent conduct, and his religious observance of family worship, the villagers were attracted, and became enquirers. Two priests became sincere converts to the Christian faith, and joined the Christian hunter in fellowship. Very soon . . . a little Church was formed, with a membership of thirty persons. . . . Then followed in rapid succession a series of severe trials.

“The rainy season which followed was very light, and the crops, in consequence, not very productive. This calamity the priests ascribed to the apostacy of the Assafa Christians, and their trespass upon the sacred grove. The great Bosum, in anger, had withheld the needful rain, and the converts were pointed out as the cause of the drought. This culminated in the pagans suddenly attacking the converts, who were lodging with some Anamabu Christians, and violently expelling them from the town. Among the number was the hunter. When he called upon Mr. Freeman to report the circumstance, he appeared joyous and resigned, though in the scuffle he had received a severe blow in the eye, and was otherwise bruised.”

The Government here interfered on behalf of the persecuted Christians. Their persecutors were arraigned before the British court, and tried.

“Twenty-two of the Christian converts were called, and related their persecutions and losses. It transpired that they had simply cut a strong pole for the more convenient carrying of green withes for a fence—an act which had often been committed with

impunity by the pagans living near the grove.”

The sequel was that their persecutors were punished, and publicly disgraced, and their “chief, Edu, returned to Mankessim, dejected and vexed that he had been duped by the priests. As usual, he went to consult the oracle, and the great Bosum answered out of the darkness, as heretofore. But the suspicious chief had placed men in ambush, who suddenly pounced upon the spot, whence the mysterious voice proceeded, and captured the speakers, who were no gods, but men—no better than the rest of men about them. For the mystery there was no longer respect or fear. The angry chief at once put the priests in irons, and kept them prisoners.”—(*Life*, by the Rev. John Milum, F.R.G.S., pp. 122-8.)

Thus did Christianity triumph over idolatry and superstition, and thus did judgment return unto righteousness. Pagan ideas have now given place to healthy Christian sentiment in several places. The life and habits of the people have largely changed. Where they were formerly not so, they are now fairly well clothed.¹³

The destruction of human life upon grounds of the requirements of Pagan worship ceased long ago—

¹³ On this point I may give the views, quoted in the *Gold Coast Chronicle*, of Sir F. M. Hodgson (late Governor of the Gold Coast Colony), which deal with the question of clothing there:—

“The existing European style is more befitting the nineteenth century civilization than the aboriginal two fathoms of Manchester cotton. But what we shall ever maintain is this, that ease and comfort should be studied. . . . The universal abandonment of the European style is not what we want. What we require is the European style *minus* its heavy accompaniments. To be running about our streets in the garb of the old folks at this hour of the day is just as ridiculous as to see the people of Pall Mall or the West End (London) in the garb of the ancient Picts and Scots. But by all means let us avoid the opposite extreme, namely, heavy outlays of money on thick tweeds and superfines in a tropical region.”

thanks to the intervention of Christian Governments Polygamy is becoming less common, and is, of course, not practised among those won over to, and living in, the Christian faith.

Many indeed have been the triumphs of the work of faith and love—a work in which the African is rightly, and under God, taking, as will have been observed, a leading and successful part. Indeed it is only by faith and love—the fruit of the indwelling Spirit—that the battle can be won for Christ; and the failure of some missionaries, European or African, has arisen from their not cultivating the spirit of humble yet unwavering trust in God, and of *charity*, without which we are nothing—the spirit that characterised the Master who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, humbling Himself, that we through His poverty and humility might be exalted, though not less by His love to us, and by its realisation in our experience. The spirit which makes him feel, and act as feeling, his importance in the presence of the heathen, or those less favoured than he, and whom he would Christianise, at times insensibly, or almost so, steals upon the missionary worker, injuring his influence. For, however much in error or ignorance any man may be, the moment he finds that his would-be benefactor approaches him in a patronising, self-complacent, or supercilious manner, that which is best in him rebels against that manner, which is at variance with that of Christ, who made Himself of no reputation, taking upon Him the form of a servant. Hence the great virtue of realising *who hath made us to differ*—of acknowledging our *Master and Him alone* in all we are and have—as the one to whom power, as well as grace, belongeth.

If the relation of some personal experiences as to the effect of faith may here be permitted, the following accounts may be given as illustrating the faithfulness of God's word and promises.

In one village, Amamama,¹⁴ as we entered it, we found a "big dance" with "tom-toms" and other instruments of jubilation much in evidence. For a while it seemed as if it would be a difficult matter to draw the people from the boisterous scene to listen to our message. We halted and prayed, and then marched into the village, trusting in the power of God. For a time the scene seemed aggravated by our presence. We proceeded to the house—a two-storey "swish" building—of the Headman of the place, who was favourably disposed towards the Lord's work, and had given his name to us on a former occasion, as an "enquirer," although his doing so had by no means influenced the greater portion of his people to come to us. We prayed with him, and gave a short Gospel address to him and his household. Presently the noise of the "tom-toms," and of the dancing, ceased, and in streamed a number of the men and some of the women too. The address was continued, on finishing which, the men rose *en masse*, and went out of the room. We were wondering what it was about when they returned, and stated that they had decided to join the Christians, and that they would like to have their names enrolled, which was done, some of the women also offering themselves. The number enrolled was about fifteen, and we all, with the Headman's household, returned thanks to God for inclining the hearts of the people to Himself, and for the answer to our prayer.

Condemned to death, tremulous and pale with fear from the harrowing consciousness of his terrible crime, sat in the prison cell in the Fort of St. Jago, at Elmina, a culprit, who had taken the life of his own brother. Three native Christians went to see him, and pointed him to Him who saved the murderous thief on Calvary, and whose blood can make the foulest clean, but the unhappy creature only desired

¹⁴ A country village near the town of Cape Coast on the Gold Coast.

that he should have a bodily reprieve, and nothing done could bring him to see the awful realities awaiting the unrepentant, unpardoned soul, and that his only hope lay in his looking upon, and accepting as his Saviour, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. As they left the prison, one of them said, "*The man shall be saved;*" but it appeared a hopeless case to the other two. This was on Sunday, and the convict was to be hanged on the following Tuesday. Monday arrived, the visit was repeated, but there was no sign of a change in him—of a true contrition of heart, or of faith in Christ. On Tuesday morning a final visit was paid to him; but now faith had had its reward, and the testimony borne by the condemned man was: "I have at last realised what you were telling me about my soul, my guilt, and the Saviour of sinners. I have seen and felt my lost and undone condition, and I have prayed to the Saviour, who has, I feel, forgiven my awful sin, and now I am not afraid to die." Thus, like the dying malefactor on the cross, he was saved at the eleventh hour, and in answer to the prayer and exercise of faith.

But these are only two of the many instances in which the Gospel has proved its efficacy and potency in West Africa.

On the sites of the sacred groves—the sacred places of Fetish worship—now wave harvests of maize and other products, the fruit of men's labours. Places that were once the scenes of midnight orgies are now consecrated by the erection there of houses of prayer with institutions of learning. Where once were heard the shrieks and screams of those offered in propitiatory sacrifice, in the dark days of heathenism, may now be heard the songs of those who have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

But all this has a very limited application. One-tenth—did I say "one-tenth"?—a *hundredth* part of the work

needed to be done has not yet been done! What is the estimated number of 160,000 persons who have espoused Christianity by the side of the millions yet unreached, and, in thousands, daily passing away into a hopeless eternity? Nevertheless, it is gratifying to note that there is there the “sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees”—God’s signal for action, concerted action—a signal affording sufficient ground for larger hope, and larger enthusiasm and devotion, in the work of reclaiming that part of the African continent more completely unto Christ—for, according to the prophetic, world-embracing vision, its wildernesses and solitary places shall yet be glad, and its deserts shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

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