

JOHN MARTIN  
PIONEER MISSIONARY  
HERO AND SAINT



W. TERRY COPPIN



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JOHN MARTIN

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JOHN MARTIN.

# JOHN MARTIN

*Pioneer Missionary, Hero and Saint*

BY THE  
REV. W. TERRY COPPIN

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TO THE MEMORY OF OTHER  
BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO COUNTED  
NOT THEIR LIVES DEAR UNTO THEMSELVES IN  
ORDER TO TESTIFY, TO THE CHILDREN OF  
THE DARK CONTINENT, THE GOSPEL  
OF THE GRACE OF GOD

JUN 26 1967 11440418



## PREFACE

I SAW the subject of this little monograph but once. It was in the old Mission House in Bishopsgate Street, London, many years ago. He had come hoping to see one of his old boys, the Rev. T. E. Williams, an African minister, who, he understood, had just arrived home with me from abroad. But some one had made a mistake. My colleague was a Welshman, the Rev. E. J. Williams. The error gave to him a passing disappointment, and to me a life-long delight. Mr. Martin's face is before me now as if chiselled in marble—keen, refined, intellectual, benignant. The knowledge of his work had already made me feel great interest in him; it was now increased by his bright, brotherly, and sympathetic manner.

The writing of this biography should have been undertaken by a more skilful hand than mine. My only qualification is that I know intimately the places where

he laboured in Western Africa, and was associated with some of the devoted native pastors whom he led to Christ and helped to train for future usefulness.

Mr. Martin's life belongs to a past generation. But this record preserves some precious historical data, and seeks to preserve the memory of one of God's elect. A friend wrote, 'The memory of Mr. Martin is too precious to let go.'

I owe much to members of his family and through them to many kind friends whose communications have been most serviceable. The small compass of the work has prevented me from making nearly as much use as I wished of the material at my disposal, and from acknowledging by name every one who has been in communication with me; to all I am, nevertheless, sincerely and gratefully thankful.

W. TERRY COPPIN.

HOYLAKE,

CHESHIRE,

*October, 1910.*

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# JOHN MARTIN



## CHAPTER I

### LAYING FOUNDATIONS ; AND HIGHER CALLS

JOHN MARTIN was born on August 19, 1817, two years after the Battle of Waterloo, and died on August 19, 1908, his ninety-first birthday. He lived in five reigns, and was spared to see with deep thanksgiving, through God's blessing on the labours of his devoted successors, Methodism become a mighty power for good on the West Coast of Africa.

His birth-place was Ponsanooth, in Cornwall, not far from the famous Gwennap pit, where Wesley, Whitefield, and their fellow labourers so often preached to immense congregations, and where so many souls were led to God.

Notwithstanding its gunpowder mills (of which his father was manager), its woollen factory, and some tin and copper mines near by, his native village was a romantic place, educative to his gentle and impressionable spirit. The commons ablaze with golden gorse; the hillside bespangled with primrose and cowslip, wild pansy and violet; the glistening brooks in the valley bottoms; and the trilling lark making melody over all, were to him some of life's sweetest joys and happiest teachers; and he remained an enthusiastic lover of Nature to the end of his life.

His education, like that of most of the village youths of his time, began in a dame's school of a primitive type. But there his stay was short; for he was a quick learner and soon came to a knowledge of things far beyond her ken. It was from the contents of his father's library that he laid the foundations of that varied and practical knowledge which made him a delightful companion and an eminently useful minister in the kingdom of God. Like nearly all great readers, he began early to study hard books, and to cultivate his memory.

From his father he obtained a taste

for geology and a love of music, the earnest pursuit of which proved most useful to him in his travels as a missionary and in his work as a minister. It must have been a goodly sight to see that worthy man with his sons (each with his instrument) about him, leading the village choir, and conducting the simple and solemn yet joyous worship of the earlier Methodists. The Ponsanooth Wesleyan Choir had the honour of being the first musical body to introduce Handel's *Messiah* into Cornwall. All his boys did well. One became a newspaper editor and proprietor in Australia, another earned the eulogium of Sir Joshua Fitch of being one of the first day schoolmasters in England.

While still very young John Martin began what is now called a 'Reading Circle' in the surrounding villages. Good and learned books (at that time dear and few) were thereby read and discussed. One of the diversions of the scholarly and literary aspirants of those days was to set mathematical problems that it was thought and hoped other villages could not solve. John's father and the village schoolmaster were two of the leading protagonists. But it was

not long before the lad himself was acclaimed as champion over all.

Though from a tender age John was a student, he was a leader in the village games and always ardent at sport. This healthy country life and his good constitution largely account for his very long life despite the fevers which ceaselessly preyed upon him in Africa. His plucky spirit, which never quailed before village bully or African savage, was altogether out of proportion with his somewhat small stature and slender build. In these respects he strikingly resembled Wesley himself.

But it was through his conversion, after he had come to manhood, that his highest good came to him. From that hour his devotion was whole-hearted and enthusiastic. He longed intensely for the conversion of his brothers and comrades, who soon rejoiced with him, and became his companions in the new life. Under his leadership they began evangelistic work in the neighbourhood and surrounding villages, and together they turned many to righteousness. Men in loving, deadly earnest rarely fail to kindle other hearts.

The history of revivals testifies that

people will do strange things under religious as under other excitement; and Mr. Martin used to tell of almost incredible actions on the part of converts, both in England and in Africa. Of those days in Cornwall it was literally true, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.'<sup>1</sup> Men 'pressed' into it. They 'resisted unto blood, striving against sin.'<sup>2</sup> The attack would be carried on through the night and the next day rather than that Satan should have the victory. Young Martin would often spend the greater part of the night in prayer at home, and even stay long past midnight with any soul wrestling to win Christ. At three o'clock one morning a convert sprang up suddenly from his knees, and, hitting Mr. Martin heavily in the face so that the blood came, called out 'Praise God! He has saved me: He has saved me!' The godly watchers around gave thanks, all unconscious of the blood pouring down their leader's face. During one of these awakenings some of the girls, possibly singing or talking of God's doings at their work in the woollen factory, 'broke

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 4.

down,' and fell on their knees crying to God. The master, Mr. Lovey, a good Methodist, sent for young Martin; work was suspended, and the whole factory became a prayer-meeting, while the two men spent the day in directing the girls to the Cross.

John Martin's name soon appeared on the 'Exhorters' and Prayer Leaders' Plan,' and shortly after it was put on the local preachers' Plan 'On Trial.' Mr. W. Hearle, who is still living at Ponsanooth, remembers a cottage meeting in which Mr. Martin spoke personally to him and others, and gently and lovingly led them to Christ. He writes that even then the young preacher was 'a remarkably good man; and when he preached people drank in his words.'

John Martin impressed all who came into contact with him with his Christian excellence. Mr. W. H. Lanyon, the owner of the gunpowder works, in whose office he was, was particularly proud of his young clerk because of his character and preaching ability; and was desirous to hear him preach his trial sermon. The knowledge that he was to be there, as well as the circuit ministers, was too much for young Martin's courage. Always nervous

and retiring, his fears quite overcame him. As he approached the chapel he turned back, went in another direction and got into hiding. When it was time that the service should begin, he pulled himself together, knelt down behind a hedge, asked God to forgive him for his cowardice and to strengthen him to do His will. Thus fortified, he stole into the vestry to find his kind master concealed there lest his presence should prove an embarrassment. A word of explanation set both at their ease, and with his master in his own pew, the youthful preacher discoursed to the profit of all who heard him.

Scholastic facilities were few in those days, so he began to teach himself Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. A full account of these studies would prove as fascinating as the story of Elihu Burritt's quest of knowledge. John Martin never ceased to be a student. Even in Africa, where the enervating climate and multifarious duties often cause the relinquishment of many beloved pursuits, every spare moment was given to his books. And to such good purpose did he study that the Rev. William F. Moulton, D.D., when serving upon the Bible Revision Com-

mittee, used to discuss biblical difficulties with him.

As a local preacher he was very successful, for his mind and soul were assiduously cultivated. He had a divine passion for the salvation of his fellow men. One village, a few miles from his home, was notorious for its wickedness. For six months he made this place a special subject of prayer and desire. Suddenly, one Sunday, while he was preaching, there was a 'breakdown.' Several cried for mercy. The service became a time of glorious prayer, which ceased not until morning appeared. The revival continued for quite a year; and for many weeks the chapel was open night and day. The village was transformed.

Those who trusted and honoured him strongly urged John Martin to enter the ministry. At first he shrank back, partly from a deep sense of his own unworthiness, but mainly because he felt he must be truly assured that the call came from God. In after years he said to a young man, wishful to enter the ministry, 'I would sooner break stones on the road than stand as God's minister without a call from *Him*.' Having committed him-

self to Him who judgeth righteously, the 'call' came strong and definite; and he did not delay to obey it.

There was considerable doubt of his physical fitness for what was then a most arduous life. His studious habits and earnest evangelistic labours had considerably impaired his health. Purposely or otherwise he had to undergo a severe test. The superintendent minister planned him one Sunday for two places some distance from home and ten miles apart. His elder brother actually went with him and carried John on his back alternate miles in order to save his strength. So the task was accomplished. He was soon accepted for the ministry. College accommodation at Hoxton in those days was limited, and the best educated candidates were sent straight into the active work of the ministry. This was Mr. Martin's lot.

Owing to several deaths on the West Coast of Africa a 'call' was made for missionaries. The Coast had earned the gruesome title of 'The White Man's Grave.' The terrible seasoning fever was so often fatal that the outgoing missionary literally went with his life in his hands. John Martin doubtless wondered

that the appeal should just then have been made; but he did not waver. With his whole heart he offered himself 'a living sacrifice.'

This decision was made in August; and as he was to sail early in October there was no time to lose. Preparations had to be made and farewells taken.

In that year, 1843, the present chapel in Ponsanooth was opened; and it was greatly desired that Mr. Martin should preach in it before he left for Africa. The building was not finished, but a service was held to which the people came from far and near, so that the place was packed. The young missionary preached with great fervour from Num. xxiii. 19, 'Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?' It was a memorable time, and a gracious memory for many years.

Mr. Martin's home in London until he embarked was with the Rev. Dr. Alder. Another of the secretaries was the Rev. John Beecham, D.D., who was the author, among other books, of *Ashantee and the Gold Coast*. At Dr. Beecham's house the young missionary met the lady who was to be his future bride. Before he sailed

he registered this vow and prayer in his heart, 'If I am spared to return, and she is willing, she shall be my wife.' This memory and hope helped to sustain him in the lonely life of the far-off land. Five years afterwards that joy was his, and the loving and blessed partnership of fifty-six years began.

There lies before the writer as he pens this paragraph a much-worn and sea-stained journal filled with clear, neat handwriting. The folio must be inexpressibly precious to members of Mr. Martin's family. In it are the experiences and prayers of a true apostle, who, like his great prototype, was often in peril and weariness.

The first entry in this strongly bound journal is as follows: '1843. October 6, Friday, left London, with (Rev.) Mr. and Mrs. Annear, and (Rev.) Mr. Greaves in order to join the *Robert Heddle* (Capt. James Paddon) at Gravesend to proceed to Western Africa. We were accompanied by Rev. J. Beecham, Mr. Adams, Messrs. Buckley and Gillings, the Misses Alder, Beecham, and Hoole. Went aboard about 1 p.m. Fellow passengers, Rev. H. W. Hanson (Colonial Chaplain, Cape Coast Castle), Mrs. Hanson, Miss

Shackerley, Messrs. C. H. Bartells (Elmina) and H. Smith (Cape Coast).'

The discovery of a leak delayed the *Robert Heddle* for several days; but on the eighteenth this entry appears—  
'Wednesday. We left Gravesend for Africa. My heart was gladdened with the thought that at last we are off to the scene of our labours. I retired to my berth and read Matt. x. 19-33. Knelt down and offered myself afresh to God, to do and suffer His will, and prayed for grace to keep my vows. Felt sweet peace in trusting His providence. Lord, keep me from all evil.'

The old brig took fifty-five days for the passage. An express boat can now do it in fifteen. On December 4 Mr. Martin writes: 'The land of Africa in sight: a few miles north of Cape Palmas: several Kroo men came off in their canoes. Lord, save them!'

## CHAPTER II

### MINISTRY ON THE GOLD COAST

#### I.

#### IN LABOURS ABUNDANT

ALONG the great stretch of coast line, some 2,000 miles in length, between the superb scenery of Sierra Leone and the majestic littoral of the Cameroons and Fernando Po, no part is more interesting and picturesque than the Gold Coast. The shore is studded with great white forts, looking the whiter for the black rocks on which they are built, the green foliage by which they are hedged, and the blue water which laves their feet. Hills a few hundred feet in height, mostly rounded in shape and rambling in order, stand as a rampart between them and the erstwhile savage and mysterious interior.

Where these hills rise the thickest, there stand, seven miles apart, two of the finest of the thirty forts that once protected European interests. They

served the threefold purpose of terrorizing the natives, guarding life and property, and safely immuring the slaves of the European traders who trafficked with the different tribes. One built in 1479 is Elmina (the mine), and was so called by the Portuguese because of the great amount of gold in dust, nuggets, and ornaments found in the possession of the natives. Cape Coast Castle was built soon afterwards. Elmina is the first important port of call on the Gold Coast, and has better anchorage and landing facilities than Cape Coast. To save time, therefore, passengers often disembarked there for the latter place. The first missionary to the Gold Coast, the Rev. Joseph Dunwell, landed there on December 31, 1835; and eight years later, John Martin left his ship at Elmina and travelled onward by canoe, accompanied by the Rev. William Allen (B) who had come from Cape Coast to meet him.

On December 12, 1843, the young missionary landed at Cape Coast, and began his heroic and far-reaching ministry. The greatest of our Gold Coast missionaries, Thomas Birch Freeman, was on the beach to meet him. Mr. Martin's first act on landing was to pass over the

drawbridge of the great castle, under the walls of which he had landed, in order to pay his respects to that remarkable man, H. E. Governor George Maclean, whose head quarters were at the Castle where for seventeen years he wisely watched over and advanced British interests. He really created what is now known as the 'Gold Coast Protectorate,' and Miss Kingsley in her *Story of West Africa* has paid handsome and deserved tribute to his noble memory. To Mr. Freeman and all our missionaries he was ever a sympathetic friend and helper, until dysentery terminated his useful life. He lies by the side of his wife, the gifted poetess, Elizabeth Letitia Landon, in the open court-yard of the castle; and pensively has many a thoughtful traveller looked down upon the flags where G. M. and L. E. L. are simply cut in the enduring stone.

Two days after Mr. Martin's arrival a 'Recognition Service' was held. He writes: 'It was an interesting sight; 600 to 700 natives gathered together in the house of God to welcome the missionaries.' On the following Sunday he opened his commission from the text, 'Behold God is my salvation; I will trust,

and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song' (Isa. xii. 1-2).

Devoted German missionaries, on another part of the Gold Coast, had some years before laboured for a decade without a single convert. An American missionary also called upon Mr. Martin *en route* to Gaboon after nine years' ineffectual labours in Cape Palmas. Methodist work, however, had been wonderfully successful from the beginning. Within eight years eight chapels had been built, twenty-three local preachers placed upon the plans, and fifty-one class-leaders appointed. There were 715 scholars in the day and Sunday schools, with 211 communicants; £144 13s. 7d. was raised locally to support the work.

Mr. Martin preached in the commodious Methodist Chapel. He writes: 'Throughout the whole service I was plagued with the thought that I should never be useful to this people; and that I may as well return home. The service was hard, and my soul is discouraged. Lord help me! Save me from looking to man, his frown or smile; the hardness or softness of his heart: but help me to trust in Thee and credit Thy word.'

The next entry, dated nineteen days after, supplies an explanation of his singularly low spirits. He was already feeling the effects of fever. His Journal says, 'January 5, 1844. By the good providence of God I am again enabled to write, having been prevented for more than a fortnight past by the seasoning fever. Throughout, the loving-kindness of the Lord was manifested; and though sometimes beset with the temptations of the enemy of souls, and depressed by the influence of the disease, yet God was near to help and comfort.'

He was sufficiently recovered to be present at the annual missionary meeting held four days later. He notes that H.F. the Governor was in the chair, that Messrs. Joseph Smith and Hagan, native local preachers, gave 'excellent addresses in English which they afterwards translated into Fantee,' and that the collection amounted to £76 16s. 7½d.

John Martin allowed nothing to interfere with his work. He speaks now and again of dining at the Fort. There, in addition to the Governor, he could meet with the versatile Cruickshank, the author of *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast*, and other genial spirits. But the

brevity and tone of such entries clearly indicated, though he ever appreciated intellectual company, and could not abide small-mindedness and superficiality, his affection was set on 'things above,' and to him his missionary calling was (like that of the apostle Paul) 'this one thing I do.'

The entry under January 18 records his first District Meeting. It had five European members, the Revs. T. B. Freeman, Benjamin Watkins, Samuel Annear, Timothy T. Greaves, and J. Martin. The Rev. William Allen had a few days before left for Badagry *en route* to Abeokuta, the Revs. J. Brooking and G. Chapman were in Ashanti. That Synod has since grown into two Synods (Gold Coast and Lagos), made up of ten European missionaries, thirty-eight African ministers and about forty lay representatives.

For the first time since the Mission was founded, the 'Answer' to the 'Question' 'Has any minister died since the last District Meeting?' was 'None: all have been preserved from "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday."' But the brethren's cup of joy was quickly

spilled. In February, Mr. Watkins, 'loved by the natives and respected by the Europeans,' was re-united with his wife who predeceased him by eleven months; and Mr. Greaves (who came out with Mr. Martin), smitten with dysentery in the following July in Accra, passed also to his reward.

The very success of the work in Cape Coast made the missionary's life, single-handed as he generally was, most laborious. This was the programme almost every week-day when health permitted. After the early cup of tea, came private study of language and pulpit preparation and two hours with students; after the late breakfast, resumption of study and training of students; in the late afternoon, visitation of the flock and open-air preaching; in the evening, meetings or classes. Time had to be found for the frequent visitation of the elementary schools, the quarterly visitation of the other places in the circuit, and the general administration of an important mission station. 'Our circuit,' he states, deploring the inadequate attention which some places received, 'is 400 miles along the coast and 200 miles inland.' This involved no small amount of correspondence and

book-keeping. Add to these the responsibilities and cares of housekeeping and servants, and the multifarious duties of a jack-of-all-trades, and it will be realized that Mr. Martin fulfilled, like every faithful missionary, the first of John Wesley's *Rules of a Helper*—'Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time, nor spend more time at any place than is strictly necessary.'

The Sundays, though quieter and less distracting, were generally most exhausting. They began with divine service at seven o'clock in Fantee (often followed by classes and Sunday school ministrations), an English service at 10.30; at 2.30 another service in the vernacular, and a prayer-meeting at night. Mr. Martin usually preached in the open air between the afternoon and evening services. He loved every detail of his work, except what he called the 'secular' part. But everything was conscientiously done. That which he laments continually in his journals is physical inability to do all that was waiting continually for his hand. 'Poorly,' he writes, 'strength exhausted through over-exertion on Sunday.' Two days later, the entry is

made, 'Still unwell; unable to attend to my duties as fully as I wish.' And in another place, 'This climate has a sad tendency to weaken the memory and to becloud the understanding.'

Mr. Martin writes one Sunday: 'Was much afraid that I should be unable to attend to the duties of the day. But, having no one to assist me, I was obliged to exert myself, and conducted both services with much difficulty but with comfort to my soul. Was much cheered by an aged woman, who has been a hearer for some time, giving her heart to God.'

Frequent conversions and the real piety of many of the converts greatly cheered and encouraged him. But at times the recurring fevers and constant difficulties sorely depressed him. 'Have had several attacks of ague in all its forms, and yesterday began to despair of ever being of any use in this country.' In spite of being so frequently laid aside, his work was beginning to tell. He had now been on the Coast fifteen months. 'Good Friday. Was disturbed this morning about three o'clock<sup>1</sup> by cries of

<sup>1</sup> In times of religious festival and spiritual awakening it is no uncommon practice for the people to begin to gather three hours before daybreak in their places of worship.

distress and rejoicings, by singing and prayer. Several of the members had met in the chapel to pour out their hearts before God, and several were led into peace.' The Sabbath preceding this Good Friday was a 'high day' to him and to the church. 'This evening I preached from Isa. xii. 3, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"; nearly the whole congregation remained to pray. It was a blessed time. Several earnestly sought the Saviour. Hours afterwards, during the night, I heard some of the students engaged in importunate prayer; and in the morning when I arose (five o'clock) I was met by one (Solomon) with his face beaming who said, "I have found Him, I have found Him." Another student I saw was in great distress, crying aloud for the pardon of his sins. We knelt and prayed together for some time, until he too could rejoice in a pardoning God.' Though Mr. Martin could only celebrate the Lord's Supper, being too ill to preach on the following Easter Sunday, 'another of the students found peace.' The next night he was able to record, 'I met the classes for tickets,' and found 'many more earnestly seeking the Saviour.'

The terrible death-roll, and the arrival in England of survivors with shattered health, awakened great concern for the future of this most interesting and promising Mission. The Annual District Letter, dated November 8, 1844, and addressed to the District Meeting, asks, 'Is it not time that the Coast and the Interior should be supplied with native missionaries?' This was very much a counsel of despair. The Mission had then been founded only seven years. Native missionaries are not so easily manufactured out of the crude material in that brief time. But this all-important question was wisely kept before the minds of the brethren in letter after letter. The Gold Coast Mission has never had a man who more deeply realized the imperativeness of this policy, and more earnestly applied himself to carry it out, than John Martin. It has borne rich fruit in the fine order of native ministers which the Wesleyan Missions in Africa have had, and still have. John Martin was instrumental in making the wealthiest contributions to the native pastorate of all who have laboured there. He has been heard to give thanks to God for twelve African ministers who had passed

through his hands. As a saint, a scholar, and a teacher, he was eminently qualified for the training of men.

The Rev. J. A. Solomon, previously mentioned, was one of his first-fruits. He remained a 'beaming' witness to his life's end, and died full of years and good works after a ministry of forty-five years. Of the Revs. E. J. Fynn, T. E. Williams, T. J. Marshall, F. France, John Plange, other native ministers who came under his magic influence, we have no space to write. They belonged to the first generation of native pastors, and were largely the creation of John Martin. Through them and their children and their children's children, who have entered the ministry, thousands have been brought to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, and the gospel has been proclaimed to millions.

Thus modestly does he note in his journal the beginning of a work the exceeding value of which increases in estimation as the Mission continues its unabated progress: 'Cape Coast, September 17 (1845). This morning we commenced the duties of a branch Institution for the training of native agents and for the work of the ministry.

I hope to spend with them three or four hours every day; and believe if I can be instrumental in preparing any for usefulness to their countrymen, my mission to Africa will not be in vain.' Though it was an all-round training in English, theology, and biblical knowledge that he endeavoured to give, he was more careful to discipline and inform the mind and spirit than to encourage the parrot-like principle of repeating what was acquired without understanding. How gratified he was when his work was uninterrupted! 'I feel thankful that I have been able to meet the students regularly this week. I have endeavoured to give them a knowledge of biblical criticism, being persuaded it is better to put them in the right way of studying than to cram their memories with a number of facts.'

He turned the Local Preachers' meeting into a lecture-room: 'This morning we held our Local Preachers' meeting, when the principal doctrines of Christianity were discussed and simplified.' Many of these lay preachers were 'unlearned men,' able neither to read nor to write, yet able to preach 'in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'

As precentors they extemporized the praise of the service, and were enabled by their wonderful memories to repeat whole chapters from the Scriptures.

One of these brethren paraphrased the text, 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John i. 11) in this delightfully artless and artistic manner, 'He walked in and out among His own palm-trees, but they bore Him no fruit.' But the main thing Mr. Martin never lost sight of: 'Last evening I met the leaders as usual. All is comfortable, and we are looking for prosperity. Lord, help us always to recollect that it is by Thy Spirit.'

Within twelve months—1846—he had two of his students ready for nomination to the ministry. 'To-day two interpreters (student agents), with whom I have spent some time, were examined in the District Meeting, for recommendation to the committee at home as assistant missionaries. They passed the examination creditably. It affords me comfort when I reflect on the fact that Africa's sons are coming forward to publish the gospel of their Saviour. Jesus, go on conquering and to conquer.' One of these candidates bore his own name, John A. Martin;

the other was John Hagan. The former, unhappily, died about a year after his ordination in October, 1852.

Cape Coast Castle was filled with converts who flocked to the ordination from far and near. For those African Christians a journey of even one hundred miles on foot was a light undertaking. Rev. T. B. Freeman wrote, 'I never saw such a concourse of Christians in Africa.' The service began on a Monday morning at eleven o'clock in the presence of the Governor-in-Chief and his suite, most of the Europeans, and even a greater congregation than had assembled the previous evening, when the commodious chapel was crowded and numbers stood around the open doors and windows. On the previous evening the sermon had been followed by a lovefeast and the Lord's Supper. It was between ten and eleven when the company broke up. On the Monday evening a valedictory service was held for the newly ordained ministers, when the chapel was again filled with an enthusiastic and curious yet reverent people.

Mr. Martin had the joy of hearing, when settled in England, that his namesake and son in the gospel had not only

followed up his labours both in Badagry and in Abeokuta, but had had the great honour of being at the inception of the work in Lagos. John Martin told the writer, much as he 'longed to go to Lagos himself, the way was completely blocked, and it would have been at the imminent risk of his life and that of others to have attempted a Mission there in those terrible years of the "forties."' John A. Martin is buried at Lagos. Mr. Freeman wrote, 'He was one of the first-fruits of our work. Almost all that is good could be written of him extolling a character that was beautiful and excellent.' The teacher who was associated with him (afterwards the Rev. T. E. Williams) in notifying his death said, 'We have lost a pearl of most valuable price.' John Hagan did not attain the full degree of his companion. After doing good work he retired from the ministry on grounds of ill-health in the year 1851.

Mr. Martin's first excursion was to Anamabu, where there is now a very large church and membership. He passed 'through a very romantic and pleasant country, broken into hills and dales, covered with bush and forest trees, fruits and flowers, and enlivened

by the screams, whistles, and songs of birds of richest plumage, while myriads of butterflies of various hues and sizes fluttered about the path.' In entries recording other visits he writes, 'Our journey to-day, sixteen miles, has taken us through a most lovely part of the country. Some miles of it lay through groves of the picturesque feathery palm; sometimes through fields of corn (Indian and the second crop of the season); and sometimes through the deep shady forest. My heart bounded at the sight of nature's profusion. Gay and lovely vegetation disputes with the traveller every inch of ground even to the pathway! Travelling in the moonlight was almost as captivating as in the sunlight. The moon shone (through the forest) in all her beauty, while Jupiter and Venus adorned the eastern and the western skies. Towering trees cast their sombre shadow in the path pierced by her fair beams. Trembling lightning flashed from a distant cloud; spangled heavens and other glorious things conspired to call forth a burst of praise to Him who made them all. . . . Shortly after the service we left for Cape Coast. On returning we saw one of the splendid

Sisero-trees (*Spathodia*) in full blossom. It is at least 120 feet high.'

There was one experience, however, which did not captivate him: scarcely any one can endure with comfort the first night or two in the grim primæval forests of the Dark Continent. 'In our journeyings we have sometimes to spend the night in the forest; and until one has got used to it, the night cries of the wild beasts roaming for food are very disturbing. My first night I could not sleep at all, and I was particularly disturbed by a most dismal groaning, as if some one was in great pain. The next day I learnt that it was the sloth; it makes this heart-rending noise as it slowly climbs the tree. The snakes, fortunately, are not about much at night, but sometimes they have crept out to the warmth of our fire.' On another occasion he wrote, 'Left Yan-Kumasi unwell, not having had a good night's rest. The piercing cries of the sloth have been heard around throughout the night.'

His attention was often arrested by strange sights by the side of the way and strange people in the way itself. 'This evening I saw an open box placed upon four posts. It contained a human

skeleton bleaching in the sun. Most of the flesh had disappeared, carried off by the birds of prey. I turned away sickened at the sight. It was the body of a "pawn," or debtor. Dying in debt, decent burial is refused until satisfaction is made to the creditors. This pawn system is a terrible curse to the country. The number of free persons is very small. A parent will pawn a child or himself to a rich neighbour in order to obtain money. The creditor puts on an exorbitant interest, which demands the whole of the man's service to pay, leaving the principal still undiminished. If he dies a pawn, his children take his place in bondage. If he has none, and no friends who will pay, his body is exposed in this manner.'

Women with their foreheads 'besmeared with blood,' priests, priestesses, and people 'doing custom,' hideously bedaubed with pipe clay and covered with 'greegrees,' were a common sight. Sometimes the members of the priesthood would be seen foaming at the mouth and giving way to convulsive and unnatural distortions of the body, which are considered conclusive evidence of being immanent with deity. Next to the cruelty

which he saw practised, nothing so excited Mr. Martin's indignation as the unscrupulous way in which the priests duped the people and enriched themselves through their ignorance and credulity.

Mr. Martin had his red-letter days. One of the first he notes was the arrival of a ship with mails from his home. 'I received this morning a letter from my dear parents, bringing the first intelligence from them for the space of nearly eight months. Thank God, it is favourable: all are well. My feelings overcame me as I read of the comfortable state of my family, the conversion of my former neighbours, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the circuit and the county, the prosperous circumstances of their new chapel and of the mission cause; and especially when I read that at the prayer-meeting intercession was still being made for me.' Few and far between must have been these fête-days to the Europeans in those times and parts.

Anniversaries were days he rarely forgot. Some of them are of pathetic interest; every one reflects that thirsting after God and that holiness and desire for men's salvation which were the

mainsprings of his life. These were the things by which he lived and in which was 'the life of his spirit.' 'August 19. My birthday. My Maker has in His goodness spared me to see the end of twenty-seven years. I can take up the language of the Psalmist and "sing of mercy and judgement." My heart has been more than ordinarily grateful to-day. But how poor and contemptible are my best offerings! I wish to devote myself afresh to the service of God, and yet my heart is not willing to make the necessary sacrifices. Sloth too often prevails. I want a more impressive view of eternal things, a more vigorous faith in Christ, producing a contempt for the smiles and frowns of the world. My worst foe is within me. But the blood of Christ cleanseth me.' So wholly had he laid himself on the altar that those who knew him well wonder what there was left to be placed there. Four months after the above entry he registered another anniversary. 'It is twelve months to-day since I arrived in West Africa, little thinking that a year would pass and still leave me alive. How kindly has God dealt with me! May He enable me to glorify Him! Some who came out after

me are dead. Although the Mission has been established on this coast seven years only, there are fourteen graves of missionaries and their wives.' But the day he most gratefully commemorated was January 19, 'Eight years ago this day God in His great mercy pardoned my sins; and here am I telling the poor heathen of the same God and the same Saviour and the same pardon. God has been good to me.'

## II.

## IN OTHER SCENES AND PLACES

THROUGH the exigencies of the work Mr. Martin had for several months to remove to Accra: but a few days before doing so he was able to record a visit from a notable missionary party. 'Last week three missionaries and their wives, Messrs. Townsend, Gollmer, and Crowther,<sup>1</sup> of the Church Missionary Society arrived on their way to Abeokuta in order to establish a new Mission. I feel thankful that, since the Wesleyans cannot do more at present, others are coming forward and occupying the ground.'

The day he landed at Accra was the eighth anniversary of his conversion. He writes, 'Surely this' (God's great mercy) 'should stimulate and encourage me: surely *this* should lead me to devote all

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards known as Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowther. Mr. Townsend and Mr. Gollmer lived long in the Yoruba Mission, and did noble service.

I have and am to His service. Lord, help me!’ His experiences during some of the following days can be best related in further extracts from his journal: ‘January 20. Have been busily engaged in setting the house, &c., in order. Am now very weary. Prevent me, O God, from forgetting the house “in the heavens.”’ ‘January 23. Unwell. I have been endeavouring to set those things in order which owing to the absence of a missionary were in a confused state. It is by no means pleasant to cross the will of others; but duty must be done.’ ‘January 27. Yesterday was Sunday. Was not able to take any part in the services.’ But two days afterwards he was sufficiently recovered to attempt a little. ‘January 29. Last night we held a missionary meeting. It was well attended, and is the first ever held in Accra. The collection was £33 4s. od.’ Such an amount as this and other large collections recorded by Mr. Martin, are explained by the fact that the few white men present gave most generously. One of the best arguments for confidence at home, even as it is a reply to some who return home saying adverse and perverse things of missions,

is that, as a rule, they are liberally and cheerfully supported by Europeans on the spot.

The bracing season of the Harmattan at last began to set him up and he re-applied himself with his accustomed diligence and thoroughness. 'January 31. My health is improving. Brothers Brooking and Chapman left me this morning, and I am left for the first time in the care of an infant church. O Spirit, give me wisdom!' The chapel was often 'crowded to excess.' A teacher came to testify to his conversion; one of the students to a clear sense of his spiritual adoption; a number of the members were quickened into a higher life; many of the pagans gave up their fetishes and renounced idolatry; and numerous conversions made a deep impression upon the town. The Europeans also requested him to start a service in English (similar to that held at Cape Coast) which the Commandant, setting a good example to the other white men, regularly attended.

We have rarely heard of a man who could exercise the power Mr. Martin exerted upon others. The journal and letters lately received respecting his home ministry abound with instances in which

God gave him great boldness of speech and action. Men would tear fetish symbols from their persons, and remove idolatrous objects from the places of their abode and their work, at his word. He would ask heathen women, whose sacred day was not the Christians', and who were plying their trade and peddling in the streets on the Lord's day, and near the Lord's house, to retire, and they would return home. Chiefs, hostile in heart to the requirement of the gospel, and Mohammedans, opposed to the doctrine that Christ was the eternal, divine Son of God as well as the Son of Man, he would draw to his services, and then to private, quiet, affectionate and conscience-gripping conversation in his house. The journal speaks of a Roman Catholic chaplain from a Spanish man-of-war even attending his prayer-meeting, and telling Mr. Martin it was his intention to remain as a missionary at Fernando Po. He won the esteem and often the support of Pagans, Papists, Mohammedans and infidels alike; rejoiced wherever he discovered real goodness; and gave thanks for all success and triumph of the truth that God was pleased to grant through other hands and means

than those of his own and his coadjutors in the Faith.

Mr. Martin had not the power of some men to draw the crowd. He had, what is often better, the power to lay hold of individuals, in spite of themselves. At home and abroad he did many hard tasks. The thanks of the Synod at Cape Coast were given to 'T. B. Freeman and John Martin for exertions during a period of from six to eight months in rescuing the Cape Coast and Anamabu Circuits from the verge of ruin and re-establishing the mission in the confidence of the people of the country.'<sup>1</sup> The Conference twice specially sent Mr. Martin to circuits in Britain where the 'straightening out' seemed peculiarly difficult. He left each circuit both spiritually and financially prosperous.

His journal gives evidence, often deeply affecting and forceful, that the talisman that 'told' in his personal intercourse with men was the yearning love of Christ in his own heart; and that the panacea which healed wounds, solved difficulties, disarmed prejudice and silenced the opposition which he now

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the District Meeting.

and again encountered in his outside preaching was his presentation of the manifold love of God and the amazing mercy of the Cross. 'I have always found,' Mr. Martin writes, 'that "Christ crucified" is the subject which fixes the attention, prevents objections, and affects the heart.' So it was in an incident he relates: 'The gainsayer was hushed, and I believe his heart felt some meltings, while we talked of the love of Jesus, and whilst he confessed that he ought to love Him. As several promised to attend the chapel, we invited them there and then into the house of a member, which was close at hand, and prayed with them. Holy Spirit, enlighten their minds; affect their hearts; show them the things of Jesus!'

Before he left Accra he made, as he had done at Cape Coast, earnest efforts to check, at least in part, the abounding and degrading evils of many of the native 'customs.' The Yam Feast he found was a season of unbridled licence. Surfeiting, drunkenness, and immorality were indulged in by all classes old and young, and Satan held high and unfettered festival. He lodged, too, a protest against the funeral customs, 'the cause

of more than one half of the domestic slavery and pawns in the country.' He 'called on Teki, the head Penim of the Accra people, about them. . . . Like Okanta,' Mr. Martin writes, 'he is alive to the evils and would thank any person to abolish them.' Then he laments, 'The chiefs alas! are in want of energy themselves.' Knowing that the British Government only concerns itself to secure peace, order, and humanity, and leaves its subject races free to practise their social and religious ideas as they please, Mr. Martin realized that if the missionary did not seek to emancipate the people from superstition, raise their moral standard, denounce fraud, and lead them into the truth as we have it through Christ, then, with so much European evil living before their eyes, and increased liberty and wealth, their last state would become worse than their first.

The Rev. Henry Wharton (a coloured West Indian minister who laboured in West Africa for twenty-eight years) having arrived to replace him, Mr. Martin returned to Cape Coast. The toilsome land journey of one hundred miles proved very trying. It occupied nearly six days, for being poorly and feverish he had to

stay a whole day at Winnebah. On arriving at Cape Coast he received a hearty welcome from Mr. Freeman, of whom he invariably writes as his 'beloved superintendent.' He 'felt it to be cheering once more to mingle with old friends in the worship of God.' Work for a further nine months was resumed, but it was with impaired health. Still he toiled manfully on. When he had to be quiet he read all he could. And his reading was extraordinary for those days; not only for the number, but the high class, of books he got through. One wonders how he obtained them. Doubtless the Castle library helped him; and some cultivated European merchants then resident at Cape Coast, true friends of and believers in missions, would, in addition to his colleagues, partly supply his needs. Though he still laments that the climate with its fevers 'beclouds the understanding,' his criticisms indicate how well the contents of every book were digested. 'It grieves me that so much of my time passes, in which I am unable to improve myself or to do anything for the benefit of the people.'

All the same, the seventy-three pages that cover these nine months record on

most of the days 'something attempted, something done.' Partly for health and partly to assist his superintendent, he made a long visitation of their wide circuit. The chronicle of the itinerary is full of interesting details, some of which are herewith summarized. In the mission plantation at Napoleon he saw 20,000 healthy coffee plants growing; Tuesday being their sacred day (when the sea, they say, was made) the fishermen were generally at home and accessible to the ministers; in many places they were disturbed by the universal custom of firing off muskets for the dead; frequent appeals were made to them to establish schools; a common complaint of the villagers was of the frequent visits of hyenas, which killed their pigs, sheep, and goats; pitu, a sweet beer made from maize, and the palm wine (sap), were found to be favourite beverages; the Leaders' Meeting in frequent instances prevented members from appealing either to the native or British courts with, doubtless, better, and certainly cheaper results; the marriage difficulty constantly confronted them; and fetishism with its curious but superstitious and degrading customs was in evidence everywhere.

## CHAPTER III

### MINISTRY ON THE SLAVE COAST.

#### I.

#### BADAGRY; THE PLACE, THE PEOPLE, AND THE WORK

ANOTHER Synod drew on apace: after it Mr. Martin was to have sailed for England. How he came to embark for Badagry the following extracts from his journal will explain. 'February 19. District Meeting: Mr. and Mrs. Annear are obliged to return to England. The important and exciting question, "Who shall go to Badagry to take up their work?" was considered. I feared I was unfit, and hesitated; but lifted up my heart to God, and then offered myself to the meeting, if they thought fit to send me.' It had, however, already been decided on account of his health that a furlough home was necessary, and that the Rev. George Findlay<sup>1</sup> should go.

<sup>1</sup> He was the younger brother of the late Rev. James Findlay (father of George G. Findlay and William H. Findlay); they, G. and J. Findlay, were the sons of George Findlay, of Cullen, Banffshire (who died in 1854) and brothers of the late Alexander Findlay, also of Cullen.

Within a week, however, of his appointment this devoted young missionary sickened with his 'seasoning fever,' and passed to his reward after a ministry of a few weeks. Mr. Martin, attacked with fever at the same time, makes the following entries in his journal. 'February 25. In consequence of the want of native agents to supply the different stations, all the students at Cape Coast are to be sent out. So my labours with them for the present have ceased. Unwell—an attack of fever. Was enabled last night to enter "the holiest of all" and hold communion, sweet and rapturous, with God. March 1. Returned [from the service] unwell. My health has been unsettled lately. "Teach me so to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom"! March 9. Fatigued from watching again last night with our poor afflicted brother. I fear that he will not be permitted to labour in Africa. This afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Annear left for England. So is our number reduced. O God, help us to work while it is day. 10.—This afternoon at thirty-five minutes after three, poor Brother Findlay breathed his last, after fourteen days of severe suffering. To us it is a very great loss; to him a great

gain. II.—The mortal remains of our dear brother were this morning interred at the chapel. . . . I thought while standing by his grave, “*There* is one who offered himself for Badagry: God has interfered and said, “No.” Is there no one to take his place? Or shall Badagry be left without a missionary? My heart said, “Here am I, send me.” At a special meeting held this afternoon I offered myself (again) for Badagry, and I feel satisfied that my path is providential.’

The character of this offer will be evident when it is remembered that a voyage home was considered imperative and had already been arranged. Mr. Martin also had served two years on the Coast, a period considered in those days the outside limit of safety for Europeans. But this band of missionary heroes counted not their lives dear if they could win souls for Christ; and he and his brethren, weighing well the price that would have to be paid, agreed amongst themselves that at no cost must the work of God be abandoned. Humanly speaking, it seemed like signing Mr. Martin’s death-warrant. For more than two years he had been ‘bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord

Jesus.' During the previous year he had been able to record only one month of freedom from sickness, and in the year before that only four months. But commended by his brethren to God, Mr. Martin set out for Badagry, as the following extract shows: 'March 14.—Bade adieu to Cape Coast, and went aboard the schooner *Des Landes*, Captain Amy, in order to proceed to Badagry. Mr. (Rev.) Edward Addison accompanied me on board in order to go to Akra (Accra) to take charge of that station.'

He thus records his arrival at Badagry: 'March 22, 1846.—Was met on the beach by Mr. Morgue (the native agent) whom Mr. Annear left in charge of the mission. I bowed my knees before God on my arrival at the Mission House, and offered Him a heart glowing with gratitude for His manifold mercies. Blessed be God, I am Thine and Thou art mine! Ever keep me; and use me for Thy glory.'

What Mr. Martin already knew of Badagry and its people was calculated to repel and intimidate rather than to attract. In his speech in Exeter Hall in May, 1848, he spoke of it as 'a second Kumasi.' In some respects it was worse. There, at least, was absolute order. Every one,

from the king down to the slave scavenger, knew the way he had to go or suffer death: and though a savage monarch, Kwaku Duah outwardly acted as the missionary's friend and patron. But Badagry was a cockpit of trading, tribal, and international rivalries, where every one was an Ishmaelite and a law to himself. It was a veritable Cave of Adullam.

Through the influence of the missionaries matters had improved a little since Richard Lander left it ten years before to explore the Niger, yet the general condition of things was practically the same. The town was divided into self-governing districts, known respectively as English-town, French-town, Spanish-town and Portuguese-town, under chiefs always plotting one against another. There was still an open slave mart. The great fetish-tree, said to be nourished on blood, remained covered with skulls. Vultures and dogs were to be seen feeding on the bodies of innocents done to death for witchcraft, and upon the bodies of children mutilated and smashed because they had died possessed with evil spirits. The devil was publicly worshipped. Lander's full description is

too awful to repeat here. It was, as he said, 'Hell let loose.'

The landing at Badagry had to be made through the heavy surf on the exposed sea beach, then a belt of scrub-covered shore about one mile in breadth had to be crossed, and about half a mile of lagoon, before Badagry could be reached. The town stretched for a long distance along the picturesque, palm-studded, and mangrove-bordered side of this river-like inland water. Its beauty often captivated Mr. Martin.

In December 1841, in response to the appeal for a missionary made by the Sierra Leone emigrants to Badagry, the Rev. Dr. Beecham, notifying the committee's decision, wrote, 'That place must be taken up.' Mr. Freeman therefore went on to Badagry, taking with him building materials, and by November, 1842, had erected a mission house and temporary bamboo chapel capable of seating 200 persons. The Rev. William de Graft (a native minister) was left in charge of the station until the Rev. Samuel Annear arrived from Sierra Leone in March 1844.

Though the Mission<sup>1</sup> had enjoyed

<sup>1</sup> See its interesting history in *Methodism in West Africa*, J. T. F. Halligey, F.R.G.S.

European supervision for two years, and satisfactory progress had been made in the church and school, the condition of things was very different from the well-ordered and progressively spiritual church life and work which Mr. Martin had left behind him in Cape Coast. This only made him the more eager to get to work. On March 29, his first full Sabbath day, he writes: 'Shall I be useful here? Lord, help me. But does not the answer depend on myself in a great degree? It does. I feel ardently desirous to be useful. But obstacles appear to interpose. The members, I fear, are in a low state of grace. Some have been walking disorderly, and others have been discouraged. My faith sometimes staggers. But, O God! is not the work Thine? And art Thou not mighty to save? Increase my faith!'

He soon found that one of the chief obstacles to widespread evangelistic work was the many different tongues spoken in the place. It was a Babel. There was the Popo of Porto Novo and Dahomey; the Yoruba and Haussa of Nigeria; the Fanti and Ga of the Gold Coast, and the crude English of the Sierra Leone Christian emigrants; five distinct languages,

besides dialects of the same. Many a Sabbath he had to preach through interpreters in three languages. But he set himself to master the first two as he had mastered the third, and in fifteen months' time had the joy of completing the translation of the first catechism, the Commandments, and the creed in Popo; those in Yoruba and Fanti being already finished. He had, of course, first to reduce the languages to writing and to make vocabularies and grammars. His method for ensuring accuracy in expression and intelligibility to the people was excellent. Here is his plan: 'This afternoon I held a service for the translation of God's Word. I read Genesis i., and made explanatory remarks, and amongst us we sifted out the best words and phrases to be used in the Yoruba language.' What made Mr. Martin's work so thorough and so abiding was the great pains he took in translating and printing hymns, prayers, and scriptures, which he then very carefully explained to the converts, thus furnishing their minds with essential religious knowledge and at the same time often deeply affecting their hearts. He would have nothing done superficially, knowing that

with the heathen it was worse than doing nothing.

It was very greatly to his honour that, seeing the need of a universal alphabetical system for the use of all missionaries engaged in translation work, he diligently, with his fine musical ear, prepared one and submitted it to the missionary secretaries. The representatives of the various Missionary Societies, however, chose to adopt one which was prepared for them by a Hebrew scholar famous at the time. This, however, in practical working, quite failed, and, by universal consent, broke down by its own impossibilities. Mr. Martin was again consulted by the Wesleyan Mission House. His reply was that 'he had nothing further to offer than his former scheme.' This was in due course submitted to Dr. Lepsius, the leading German philologist, and, with some modifications of his, was adopted by the different Societies and is still in general use in language reduction.

Mr. Martin followed very closely the lines of work he had laid down for himself in Accra and Cape Coast. First and foremost he proclaimed Christ in public. The journal, on almost every page, speaks

of gatherings under tamarind, banyan-trees, and palms; under palm-wine sheds and by fetish-houses, as well as in the chapel. Taking his accordion or the larger melodion and a company of the converts or scholars, he would quickly, with the singing, gather a company, and deal with it so successfully that he rarely failed to note something for which to give God thanks. Opposition worth the name he rarely encountered, and when he did he bore off the palm.

Deeply interesting are the conversations he records, and the curious customs he discovered as he went about, and which he described so graphically with his pen. He would see people in his room when too ill to leave it; or when able to get thus far he would talk with them in the verandah. And he was never long without visitors. Chiefs, Mohammedans; naval officers, and all sorts of people from far and near would seek him out; and he earnestly embraced every opportunity to send people back to distant provinces with a knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and the Redemption of Christ. For example, he records a conversation with a man all the way from Bornu, by Lake Chad.

Next to this public work, he valued his training of promising youths for the manning of the mission stations. 'I want to secure every good boy for the service of the Mission, and to prepare him for future usefulness in extending the work in other parts.' Hence he was always in the schools, personally superintended those for adults, and himself daily trained the students he had selected for the native agency. God gave him the desire of his heart. Thomas J. Marshall, for years a delightful, devoted, and most useful native minister, was one of his first-fruits, for he received his first ticket of membership from Mr. Martin's hands. The Rev. T. E. Williams was another. 'Four persons, including the two assistant teachers,' he writes, 'have obtained peace with God. For these things I feel thankful and take courage.'

His zeal in pastoral visitation, proved too in his subsequent ministry in England, was another of his strong points. The journal contains many jottings of lost sheep recovered, straying members followed, and sick and dying people giving his soul as much refreshment as he gave them. 'Prayer,' said one of them to him, 'is like loading the musket.'

If we neglect morning prayer we are like a soldier who goes out to fight without his musket.'

In Simeon, a Mohammedan convert whom Mr. Annear had baptized, Mr. Martin found 'a diamond of the first water.' 'He is a faithful and holy man, full of zeal and of good works. He has accompanied me on many of my journeys and has proved most valuable and devoted. One day in the forest, when we feared an attack from a slaving party not far away, he and others surrounded me saying, "No fear, Massa; they kill *us* first. God lives. He will keep us."' Being very ill one day, Simeon expressed to Mr. Martin his willingness to die, and said, 'Whenever it is, I hope my Heavenly Father will say, "This is my son that was lost. I have found him again";' and tears of love and gratitude started from his eyes. I think it must be of this fine old Christian this story was once heard in Mr. Martin's company. Said the sufferer, 'When I get to heaven I shall go as fast as I can through all the courts until I get to the inner one where Jesus is, and I shall then fall down and praise Him and thank Him for His great love in dying for me; after

this I shall return to the gate and wait for you, my minister, until you come, and I will then take you in, telling everybody on the way, "This is the man who told me all about Jesus my Saviour." : :

## II.

## TRIED, YET TRIUMPHANT

WHILST Mr. Martin visited wherever there was an open door, he was particularly careful to become intimately conversant with all the chiefs of the town and neighbourhood. The result was that though he often had cause to oppose their policy, and to rebuke them for some of their actions, they not only entertained for him the greatest respect, but frequently called to consult him.

This mutual friendliness was to the advantage of both parties. He gave them in various ways invaluable assistance; they often preserved him from peril. So Mr. Martin was able to write, 'August 11, 1846: This morning I received a message from Chief Mewu, a tried friend, warning me not to go out in my boat on the lagoon as the enemy were not many miles from the town.' What is set forth in the following extract is but one of numerous ways in which, by his justice, candour, love and wisdom he

came to enjoy their confidence and regard: 'In consequence of some resistance to the authority of the chiefs during the week by some of our people I spoke from 1 Pet. xi. 13-17 on "the duties of subjects to rulers."' Many heathen were present, including one of the chiefs, and I did not fail to show him his duty.'

By far the most interesting character at that time in Badagry was Akitoye, the ex-king of Lagos. He was a well-disposed though a somewhat weak monarch, who had lost his throne by allowing, in spite of warning, his powerful and ambitious nephew and rival Kósókó to return to the island. Lagos was soon a scene of disorder and bloodshed, and by the help of the miscreant Domingo, Kósókó obtained the upper hand, and Akitoye had to flee.

At first he went to Abeokuta, but afterwards settled at Badagry, where he remained in exile some years. Kósókó, however, under the influence of the slavers and in league with the king of Dahomey, became so great a menace to Abeokuta and Badagry that in 1851 the British Government intervened, and after a fierce struggle drove him out. Akitoye, upon promising to foster legitimate

commerce and pursue a friendly policy, was thereupon restored to the throne. A new era then began for this important place and port. The Portuguese slavers were expelled from Lagos, legitimate European traders encouraged to settle, and Christian missions most successfully begun.<sup>1</sup>

The good feeling between Mr. Martin and Akitoye was unbroken; and its influence was a life-long good to the king. Dosumu his son, who succeeded to the throne, also came under the influence of the truth; and though he never outwardly professed conversion he would always willingly listen to the gospel. Three of Dosumu's sons were in the Lagos High School when the writer of this memoir was in charge of it. Ogunfumi died during his probation, a bright, promising minister. Akiloyé and Omoláyé became schoolmasters.

Mr. Martin thus describes the first call which Akitoye made upon him. 'He wore a European hat; the flowing cloth of his toga-like dress was blue silk and velvet, a large gold-handled sword (Portuguese make) was carried before him,

<sup>1</sup> On August 6, 1861, Lagos was ceded to the British Crown.

and a red silk umbrella was held above his head. He sat while his field-marshal Posu and the English chief Wawu stood, not daring to be seated in the presence of the king. We had a long conversation on religion and idolatry, on education and the trade of the country, and on other matters. When I expressed the hope that he would soon sit on his throne again, his attendants clapped their hands as an expression of approbation. The respect paid to sovereignty in this country equals anything of the kind in the East. Every one who approaches the royal presence prostrates himself with his forehead to the ground. When the king drank with me the attendants clapped their hands.'

Mr. Martin had the same gracious power over the fetish priests. At times they cursed him, but all the same he would see them in his services. The priests of Dagbe, a sacred serpent,<sup>1</sup> were a thorn in the flesh to Mr. Martin, for their temple adjoined the Mission premises. Often, at the most inopportune times there would be the beating of drums and blowing of horns in Dagbe's

<sup>1</sup> Serpents in Dahomey are as sacred as monkeys in India.

honour; and occasionally the reptiles would escape and devour the missionary's poultry. But there was no more redress than when a sacred Indian bull enters the yard and consumes the tasty chapatties. It had, however, a humorous side to it, as the following entry shows: 'The boa constrictor came into our yard and killed a turkey and a fowl. The event was speedily noised abroad, and in a short time a priest arrived with a big basket in which to take him, which he succeeded in doing, but only in the course of at least an hour or so. The fear which the priest displayed whenever the reptile moved called forth the ridicule of some of our people. We did not dare to attempt to kill it, as it was a god, and our property would have been destroyed and perhaps our lives lost.'

Bigoted Mohammedans came under the magic spell of his influence. They were frequently seen at his services, and were some of his most respectful hearers. When the minister of the Mosque died Mr. Martin wrote this interesting note: 'My Mohammedan friend, whom I have before mentioned as being well disposed to Christianity, died this morning. I saw him twice during his illness (on the first

occasion because he sent for me) and I spoke to him of putting his trust in Jesus as his Saviour: not being alone, however, I could not ask him directly his views respecting Christ.' The following extract refers to a visit which greatly interested him, showing as it did how far the news of his work had penetrated: 'Two Mohammedans (one a priest) visited me this morning. One came from Illorin, a large and distant town in Yoruba. He told me that the news of a white man being at Badagry and preaching the Word of God long ago reached them. He begged me to go up to that town (wholly Mohammedan) and assured me of a cordial reception. I gave the priest a copy of the Bible in Arabic which he can read a little. May the entrance of Thy Word give light.'

All unconsciously, every now and again, Mr. Martin reveals in his journal the secret of that strange, holy passion for souls which throbbed within him. To reduce expenses he had dismissed his canoe-men. They were men to whom he must have been not only attached but upon whom he relied for protection; for he confesses to missing them much, and feeling lonesome: 'But, whilst the people

are capable of much, for they have a reputation for cruelty and blood-thirstiness, God, who sent me here, will protect me as it is necessary for His work. One thing that helps me materially with them is that God has given me grace to live among them as *one of them*—one of His children, with them my brothers—and perhaps for weeks at a time I never remember that I am white and they are black. We are all one before Him, the Father of us all.'

It was well he had so much to encourage him, for he had to encounter difficulties, different and more numerous than any he had known before. As fast as the cruisers captured the slave-ships, so quickly did those who trafficked in the cruel trade redouble their efforts to make good what was lost. The journal pathetically reveals the fact that wars and rumours of wars were the order of the day. The conduct of some of the chiefs excited his deepest suspicion. One of them, a former friend, tried to intimidate Mr. Martin. His messenger brought word that the English (i.e. Mr. Martin and his two or three countrymen there) 'must expect trouble. . . .' 'These reports, true or false,' wrote the

valiant servant of his Lord, 'are generally beneficial to me: they drive me to the throne of grace, where I cry, "Lord, undertake for me." I knelt down and read the forty-sixth Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" and felt my confidence in God strengthened. I then told the messenger that these things will not alarm us: that we are determined not to leave the place unless driven away by main force.' But the recurring fevers and work and worry and difficulty must have brought him at last very low; for he begins to speak in a tone of unusual disquietude of his health. To aggravate matters, on account of the difficulty of frequent communications with head quarters (Cape Coast) he began to run short of food and money. Probably, like Mr. Annear before him, he had to sell and barter his belongings for food and the common necessaries of life. But, like David, he put his hope in God. On October 27, 1846, he wrote: 'A passage in the life of that devoted missionary, Henry Martyn,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A relative of the subject of this monograph. Mr. John Martin purposely changed the spelling of his name lest anything in him should tarnish the glory that is associated with that of Henry Martyn.

has afforded me much encouragement. "Who is He that maketh my comforts a source of enjoyment? Cannot the same make cold and hunger and nakedness and peril and shame to be a train of ministering angels conducting me to glory?" Nevertheless I often find myself turning my eyes wistfully to Cape Coast and hoping for some help to come. My health is so uncertain and my attacks are so frequent and prostrating that a great sense of loneliness often comes over me. But the good Father is here; why should I crave creature comforts?'

Thoughts of death evidently began to come to him. A few days before he wrote the above, having confessed 'I now feel much worn out,' he added, 'How cheerful is the thought that if faithful "I shall rest and stand in my lot at the end of my days."' But though he never allowed his feelings to affect his determination to work 'while it is day,' entries after this order become more frequent in the journal: 'My body is now very weary; and the thought of eternal rest is sweet to my soul. "They shall rest from their labours," saith the Spirit of truth. I thought of Paul looking with all the dignity, composure, and rapture of an

apostle on his future prospects, and I cried :

O, may I triumph so  
When all my warfare's past,  
And, dying, find my latest foe  
Under my feet at last.'

But he weathered this storm as marvellously as he had done others, and picking up again at the Harmattan, resolved to stay another year, if God would permit. He not only visited Porto Novo, which in after years, under his old pupil and convert, Rev. T. J. Marshall, developed into a flourishing station; but at last he arrived in Abeokuta. It was in reality to answer the Macedonian cry of the handful of Sierra Leone Christians there that he had first volunteered to go to Badagry; and now with the eager desire to preach Christ to its teeming population he dared the risk of another year.

A whole chapter would be required to do justice to his account of this romantic Mission; to the relation of his experiences in the forests; to his reception by the famous Chiefs, Sagbua (the Alake, or head civil chief) and Shodeki (the commander-in-chief), and to his establishment of our work there on a permanent basis.

He was hospitably entertained by his friends of the Church Missionary Society, who had preceded him, and who were promisingly settled there. But it was impossible for him to be long absent from Badagry; so, having inducted the native evangelist Morgue into his work, confirmed the native brethren in the faith,<sup>1</sup> exhorted them to follow all good things, and having arranged with the chiefs for the protection of the interests of the Mission and its members, Mr. Martin returned to the coast.

For four more months he continued his work in Badagry. Things were improving; for he notes that human sacrifice had ceased, and that the presence and influence of the Missions were telling perceptibly on the Slave Trade, though, alas! elsewhere it was still carried on by hundreds of other chieftains instigated by the foreign 'fiends' from Europe and America.

Sickness continued more or less to prey upon him, but the work did not stop. Whilst he writes sorrowfully of 'blank days,' and confesses 'an unemployed Sabbath yields no satisfaction,' he also

<sup>1</sup> They had been meeting in the house of a Mr. John Cole.

has entries like this, 'Have started another adult class.' 'Crowther has been spending a few days with me; communion refreshing.' Never did a missionary buy up, even in the face of extreme weakness and multiplying difficulties, the passing precious moments as did John Martin.

It is over sixty years since Mr. Martin pleaded for medical missionaries to be sent to West Africa in the interest both of missionary lives and of the poor natives; but a properly qualified man has not yet gone out there from the Wesleyan Methodist Church: over six decades have gone since he eloquently pleaded that England<sup>1</sup> would establish and encourage among the natives industrial Colonies for the cultivation of the cotton, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and other precious commodities which there grew wild; but Britain has only within the last few years begun earnestly to do it.

Another bad season had set in, but to his joy (for he would not leave the station unshepherded) another missionary had

<sup>1</sup> He gave evidence to that end before a House of Commons committee. Much interest was excited at the time; but the only thing done was the issue of a Blue Book.

arrived—the Rev. John Thomas. The long-looked-for furlough was now likely to become a reality. By the end of the year he was back again in Cape Coast both for the District Synod and for a few weeks of further service. The work had, to his great joy, grown much in his absence, as was evidenced by the fact that two hundred leaders, local preachers, stewards, and other office-bearers sat down to tea at the Quarterly Meeting. He visited several of the more important stations, and in bidding them adieu exhorted members and evangelists and the ministers in charge of them to take good heed to themselves and to the flock, over which they had been made overseers, and to continue strong in the faith.

The journal closes abruptly with this entry: 'January 13, 1848.—Busy preparing to depart to England, which we expect to do on Saturday 15, in the *Tweed*, Captain Catchpole.' But there is not a word of the voyage or of the arrival home. The reason is that he was again taken seriously ill and carried on board with little expectation of ever reaching home; as the Rev. William Allen, one of his fellow passengers, afterwards told Dr. Beecham and his family.

But, through God's blessing, his marvellous recuperative powers again saved him, and, though he never saw Africa again, he lived to see the work there spread and triumph as it has spread and triumphed in few places in the Wesleyan Mission fields with the exception of Fiji. Badagry has declined because its neighbour Lagos has increased. But from Badagry sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in the 'Macedonia and Achaia' of that region, 'but also in every place' in Nigeria where to-day the banner waves.

. . . . .

It was at Badagry that Captain Burton (afterwards Sir Richard Burton) spent a few days at the Mission House, and was much interested in the work of the Mission. After leaving, he wrote two letters to Mr. Martin expressing, in high terms, his appreciation of his work, especially emphasizing the wonderful uplifting wrought in the natives brought under its influence, remarking on their intelligence and high character—the result of the elevating power of Christianity. Mr. Martin made crushing use of these letters, many years later, at the Anthropological Society's meeting in

London, when Captain Burton read a paper asserting that negroes were but higher apes, incapable of elevation or civilization, and only fit to be beasts of burden for the intellectual white man, adding 'that any missionary who went out to convert them was either a knave or a fool.' Mr. Martin, in rising, said, 'I am a missionary; and I am neither a knave nor a fool,' then read the letters and made a powerful speech. Two members of the committee afterwards remarked, 'That missionary made an awful mess of Burton.'

## CHAPTER IV,

### MINISTRY AT HOME

MR. MARTIN arrived home in the spring. As the journal ends with his departure from Africa we have no record of his feelings as he saw once more the green hills and fields and woodlands of his native land; or of the emotions that in full tide would surge through his whole being as he caught sight again of familiar faces and grasped the hands of fond relatives and friends. One has to go through all he had seen and suffered and wrought to know the deep and tender feeling of his grateful and sensitive spirit when he found himself once more at home.

Partly in order to report himself, but doubtless chiefly to see that dear face the memory of which had often given him hope, Mr. Martin went straight to the home of Rev. Dr. Beecham. Then began between Mary Dorcas Beecham and himself that united love which sus-

tained them both in a partnership of fifty-six years. They were married on March 1, 1849. She passed to 'the abiding home,' October 26, 1904. It was an ideal marriage; for their lives were a beautiful example of a true and perfect Christian union of love and mutual helpfulness.

When the marriage was first agreed upon, it was with the full intention that, as soon as Mr. Martin's health permitted, they should embark for Africa. In the course, therefore, of the next few months preparations were made for their departure. But it became increasingly doubtful, as the time drew on, whether this would be possible. The debilitated frame was so difficult to repair that, at last, the Society's physicians absolutely forbade Mr. Martin's return. They declared that his constitution was so undermined that the first touch of fever would probably prove fatal. This was to Mr. Martin a bitter disappointment. His whole soul was in the African work, and he longed to have the joy and honour of building up the young churches which he had left so full of promise of multiplying good. For his own satisfaction he saw three other medical men separately, but

the verdict was the same. With a bleeding heart he acquiesced, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.' But May after May for twelve years, at each succeeding Synod he offered to return to West Africa if his Church would send him. The doctors predicted for him a good age and much work if he would be content to stay at home. His constitution had so withstood, in an almost miraculous way, repeated attacks of virulent fever that it was their belief the fever would gradually be worked out of his system and that he would have good health again. But it was not until the year 1876, twenty-eight years after he left the Coast, that he had the last of his yearly attacks of ague and fever.

Being compelled to settle at home, and being sufficiently recovered to take some continuous and systematic work, he was appointed by the Conference to the Pembroke Circuit. He lived at the Dock, becoming the first minister of the new chapel there. Having had to do with all sorts of men, he was soon 'at home' among his flock and fulfilled at Pembroke a notable ministry. Communications received after his decease, from persons converted through his instrumentality,

testify that he was an ideal evangelist, assiduous in pastoral visitation, forceful and upbuilding in his preaching. Mr. Morecambe, a surviving member of the church, writes, 'Being told of a family, every member of which was down with fever, and whom no one cared to visit, he went and just simply spent himself for their recovery and salvation. He had the house cleaned and proper comforts ministered to the sufferers. The father had been a heavy drinker, but this made Mr. Martin only the more anxious for his and the children's good. Happily they all recovered; and not only was the drunkard converted, but he joined the church, and the whole life of the family was changed.' This Christ-like action caused him to be regarded as a true friend of the poor and afflicted, and gave him great and wide-spread influence.

These were the days of the great Reform agitation. Methodism was being split asunder in all directions with strong, bitter, and violent strokes. Agitators tried to wreck the Dock church; but Mr. Martin acted with such tact, wisdom, and goodness that not a member was lost to Wesleyan Methodism.

It was to Pembroke that, six months

afterwards, he brought his bride. In a small cottage, with a good garden, they thought themselves 'passing rich' on seven shillings and sixpence a week; for they had other things to live upon than silver and copper. God gave them there not only their first born, but the little nursemaid (Margaret Johns) who became for forty-five years a rare ministrant and friend of the household.

Here also Mr. Martin had, for the first and last time, a public controversy with a Roman Catholic priest. He was well equipped for the fight, both by his reading in Africa and by his fine temperament. But he conducted the argument, as indeed he did everything, in so gentlemanly and Christian a manner that the priest and he became fast friends.

In the Midsomer Norton circuit, whither he went after leaving Pembroke, an old Army Major at Paulton (known to the writer), who had quarrelled with the vicar and who attended the Wesleyan church, used to affirm that Mr. Martin was 'the only gentleman in the village.' As among the artisans of the dockyard so among the miners of the pits, many through his ministry in this circuit were turned to God. What, however, Mr.

Martin specially gave thanks for was that he was allowed to lead to Christ one of the leading Freethinkers of the place—a professional man, highly intelligent and well educated.

His next move was to Exeter, and Topsham was the place of his residence. It was once the second seaport in England, and in Queen Elizabeth's days was a town of note. The silting up of the river Exe has destroyed and buried much of its former glory. The place is charmingly depicted in Mrs. Ewing's little tale *Reka Dom*. One leading family of shipbuilders and shipowners remained—the Holmans, a noble and devoted Christian household who were the life and mainstay of the Methodist church and true friends to its ministers.

While in this circuit Mr. Martin was called to be a 'ghost-layer'—at an old Manor House at Christow—the scene of Blackmore's novel *Christowell*. According to his vow he slept in the 'haunted chamber'; but, the ghost discreetly keeping away from such a redoubtable foe, the good people of the farm were satisfied that the 'haunting' was cured: certainly the ghost was never heard of again.

Mr. Martin did better work than this. He reclaimed more spirits than he drove away. Lamenting to an elect lady of his little church that 'he had not witnessed a revival,' she replied, 'No; but you came finding the names of twenty-five members on the books, and you are leaving with ninety-five (in your short ministry) and "no revival."' And the lady (Mrs. Brown—then Miss Holman) in writing of it adds, 'That was not enough for him. He wanted the world for Christ.' In Exeter itself he would often go down to 'The Quarter,' the poorest part of the city, and in love and power preach Christ to the neglected. Messrs. John E. Guest and E. Chick, who have kindly furnished a few particulars, write of that 'lovable, quiet, unassuming goodness' which, with other noble attributes of character, made his influence so deep and permanent that, years after he had left the circuit, he 'was instrumental in quieting several who would otherwise have espoused the cause of an unworthy man' and so have made a split in the church worse than it was. The former correspondent, along with others, refers to Mr. Martin's brightness and humour; and the members of Mr. Martin's family,

frequently advert to his almost boyish fun, and give examples of it. To the writer it appeared remarkable at first that the African journal should not reveal a trace of this natural playfulness. But reflection afterwards brought the explanation. Without doubt, his almost constant ill-health so depressed him; and the unspeakable sin, superstition, and cruelty that he daily witnessed in Africa so saddened him that he never had heart enough to write lightly of anything African; his fine spirit of reverence, too, would make him regard it as almost blasphemous to associate humour with the tender, solemn, pitiful, and holy sentiments which formed the chief subjects of nearly all the entries in the journal.

A gentleman from Manchester, spending his holiday in the Exeter Circuit, was so impressed by his preaching that an invitation to Manchester speedily followed, and Mr. Martin for the first time went north, where eighteen years of his future ministry were spent. His charge in the Grosvenor Street Circuit was Ancoats and Chancery Lane—a thickly populated mill neighbourhood where drink and dirt then ruled. The

Ancoats chapel had been almost emptied during the Reform agitation. But by his patient, earnest, God-inspired work, heavy and persistent visiting, good preaching and careful organization of workers, he refilled the chapel and brought back the membership to above its old level.

When the Rev. J. Gutteridge came to the pastorate of the United Methodist Free Church in Manchester, Mr. Martin not only called upon him and extended to him a cordial welcome, but appeared on the platform at his 'Recognition Meeting' and spoke words breathing a spirit of fine Christian fellowship. It was an act that revealed both his Christian charity and independence of character, though it is hard at this time, when the bitterness of Agitation days is wellnigh forgotten, to realize that the act required either. His action created a stir at the time, but did very much to help on reconciliation of feeling and mutual intercourse. The Rev. Marmaduke Miller, many years after spoke of it to one of the members of Mr. Martin's family as a noteworthy and most gracious act which had created warm good feeling in the hearts of many of their leading ministers and laymen.

Whilst the above incident does credit to Mr. Martin's noble spirit, the following is a testimony to his intellectual ability and resource. The great Dr. Candlish of Edinburgh was to give a lecture on the Bible in the Lesser Free Trade Hall. But on the morning of the day that it was to be delivered he was taken ill and could not come. Dr. Cather, the organiser of the course of lectures, called and asked Mr. Martin to supply his place. He modestly declined, but, when greatly pressed, agreed if Dr. Cather failed with the bearers of half a dozen names that he gave him he would take the lecture. Then feeling easy in his own mind that he would not be further troubled, he went out and did a full afternoon's work of sick visiting. On returning home to tea, to his dismay he found the doctor, who having failed to secure a lecturer, was waiting to enforce the fulfilment of his promise. Mr. Martin had time only to hastily pencil down a few thoughts, before hurrying off to face a large audience of some of the best people in Manchester, both clerical and lay. The lecture was a success, and brought him great praise. It also won him several good friends from

other circuits and churches, so that he came to be a notable man in Manchester life.

A number of letters from members of the old Grosvenor Street Circuit speak of his faithful, kindly, converting ministry. One says, 'What an honour to be the child of one of the holiest of men!' another: 'He visited us young men in our *lodgings*, an act unheard-of before. Powerful in the pulpit, sometimes making us tremble; yet out of it how kind and approachable; so thorough in his methods and helpful in solving our difficulties'; a third declares that 'Mr. Martin's sermons heard fifty years ago are more vivid to me than those heard last week. They gripped mind, heart and conscience at the same time'; a fourth contains this remarkable experience: 'In 1858 I heard him preach on "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." In 1876 I had a severe attack of illness, and in my delirium I was hearing that sermon over again, and during the remainder of my illness its memory and teaching were constantly with me, lifting up my soul to Christ continually.'

Bolton (Wesley) was the fifth circuit

of Mr. Martin's English ministry. Like Manchester, the larger sphere brought him greater success. He followed the lines of work he had employed abroad and at home. He went after the people, interested himself in their temporal and spiritual welfare, secured them and then trained them, so far as they gave him opportunity, in the things which make for godliness, peace, and heaven. The result was that chapels were filled, membership increased, finances improved, and more of the city that is from above was built into the city that is below. Lancashire was then in the grip of the cotton famine. Mr. Martin could no more see suffering and pass by on the other side than he could kneel in prayer and forget what he was doing. Mrs. Thomas Walker writes that she remembers him devising and carrying out a number of schemes of relief, sewing-meetings, soup-kitchens, &c.; and as many of the poor had pawned their best clothes and did not like to come out in the daylight, he got them to attend the week-night services. She once saw him 'baptize sixteen children of the unemployed, everyone of whom looked poor and starved.' Few could exercise upon the poor his gracious influence.

Another source of this far-reaching and abiding influence was his large and successful Bible-class. Many were members of it who had no other association with Methodism, and who came from other churches because of his deep, illuminating, and sanctifying treatment of the things of God. The Rev. John Pollitt, in a discriminating appreciation, says, 'My wife attended Mr. Martin's Bible-class and speaks of his never-to-be-forgotten Bible-lessons. The cream of the young people of the church sought admission to it. Excellent as was his preaching, it was in the class that he excelled, often speaking as one moved purely by the Holy Ghost.' Mrs. Walker, like Mrs. Pollitt, thought his influence was 'marvellous, withal he was so humble and unobtrusive.' After moving about in Methodism for fifty years Mrs. Pollitt writes that she 'has not met another minister who made exactly the same impression Mr. John Martin did.' Mr. Charles Heaton, who was co-Sunday school superintendent with Mr. Thomas Walker, in addition to drawing attention to his saintly and affectionate character, speaks, like many others, of the inspiring addresses he delivered on West Africa

at missionary meetings, kindling enthusiasm and provoking liberality. Nor is Mr. Heaton the only correspondent who has written that if he 'had to sit continuously under the ministry of one man, Mr. Martin would have been his choice.' 'One always thinks of him,' says Mr. J. R. Barlow, 'as a man of sterling qualities. He had such a fine spirit, a sweet voice, and a charming manner.'

In the year 1863 he came to London as one of the ministers of the Hackney circuit, and resided at Stoke Newington. Here, as in former spheres of service, he made 'full proof of his ministry'; and increased the number of his choice, life-long friends, James Smetham being one of the rare additions. On the division of the circuit, which took place at the end of his first year, he first became superintendent, and signally proved, what every succeeding circuit verified, his super-excellence in circuit management. Here too, he had the great joy of leading to the knowledge of Christ two highly educated Freethinkers, who with their families became devoted workers for God.

Manchester then asked him back again;

and he became superintendent of the Cheetham Hill Circuit. 'His three years,' Mr. John Cooper writes, 'were years of quiet and consistent progress, to which his suggestive and inspiring expository preaching, and his faithful pastoral and administrative work, greatly contributed.' Though forty years have passed, Mr. Cooper can 'call to mind a frequent epigrammatic sentence (from his pulpit deliverances) which burnt itself into the memory.' On another page there will be found examples of the overwhelming spiritual effect his preaching in this circuit often produced.

Altrincham was one of his happiest spheres of labour. His Bible-class, which he made a point of holding in every circuit, was very large, and productive of great good. Letters lie before the author, too long to be quoted, which speak eloquently and touchingly of his saintly ministry. Writing to one of Mr. Martin's sons, Mr. Parkes reminds him of the time when they both 'were on the brink of decision, at an after-meeting into which your father came from some appointment. He at once grasped the situation, and though he said little, the language of his look and action told how

full his heart was to see his son in the act of the consecration of himself to God.' Mr. John L. Barker testifies that 'He was throughout the circuit a universal favourite,' and cites an instance in which he came frequently to cheer, by his kind words and gentle manner and overflowing sympathy, one who, on account of the Franco-German war was in the midst of financial excitement and trouble.'

On arriving in the Brixton Hill Circuit in 1872, Miss Pipe asked him to conduct a Bible-class in her noted school, and always spoke enthusiastically of his work and influence. The Rev. W. A. Cornaby, of Chinese fame, was a youth at that time in the circuit, and, like so many others, gratefully acknowledges the direction and help he received from Mr. Martin.

When appointed to the Hoxton Circuit (London) he found heavy debts on the Trusts and on the Circuit Board; and, what was worse, there were divisions and a prevailing feeling of hopelessness. Mr. Martin was aware of this before he went, though the worst he did not learn until after his arrival. Some of his best friends sought to dissuade him from going, because invitations awaited him from wealthy and influential circuits. It

was represented that he would be 'throwing himself away on such a circuit.' But he had 'not so learned Christ.' He felt God called him to it, and he cheerfully obeyed, for it was his rule to lay every invitation before God and look for guidance. Aply assisted by his colleague, the Rev. G. R. Graham, he set to work, and gradually the tide turned. The influence of his inspiring spirit and the effect of his remedial measures were marvellous. Not a syllable hinting even, as many said, that 'they were past redemption' fell upon the people's ears. He showed them what great things they could do for themselves, and for the great, sinful, unreached multitudes around them; and, what he said could be done was done. The debts disappeared, the poor had the gospel preached to them, the chapel was again filled, the south wind blew, and peace and fruitfulness and joy were seen and heard again in the plentiful field.

Deciding to remain near the Metropolis, Mr. Martin removed to Chislehurst. The devoted spirit and faithfully-exercised powers which had wrought such wonders in Hackney Road, bore fruit at Chislehurst. Many members of some of the

best known families in Methodism, bearing illustrious names, were under his pastoral care and belonged to his Society and Bible-classes; all speak of him and his work in the highest terms of appreciation and affection.

It was in this circuit that the already well-refined spirit had to go again through the fire. One of his sons, a young man of twenty-two years, full of holy promise, who had just entered Richmond College as a designated missionary, passed away to the higher service. Mr. Martin's first sermon after the funeral, preached in the holy glow of a sanctified sorrow, was upon the text, 'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.'<sup>1</sup>

The period of 1881-84 found him pursuing his indefatigable labours in the Gravel Lane Circuit, Manchester. Mr. Martin, whilst not neglecting the larger churches, exercised special care over those which were smaller. Often the workers in these lose heart for lack of an inspiring and encouraging protector: one who can and will enter into their smaller politics and give his wisdom and high-souled ideas

<sup>1</sup> John ix. 4.

cheerfully to their service. He was always forward in this, both in Africa and in England, and ever had a special love for weak and oppressed causes.

What this attention meant to many who lived at a distance from the minister the following incident will show. Mr. Martin was accustomed to visit a gentleman of good position laid aside by a long affliction, and appeared to be the only minister who had much influence over him. The patient regarded him, however, with great reverence and affection, and was always very materially influenced by his counsels. After Mr. Martin's death a large photograph of his old pastor was sent to him, and he had it so placed by the bed that he could always see it. His relatives say that the presence of the portrait made a great difference to him, often bringing to him patience and resignation, and even happiness. 'There', he would say, 'is Mr. Martin watching me: I must be good.'

The story reminds one of the Brighton tradesman who, whenever tempted to an unworthy deed, opened the door of the parlour behind his shop and looked up at the noble countenance of Frederick W. Robertson, whose portrait hung upon his

wall. Again and again whilst writing this little monograph its subject has brought Robertson's face and spirit and stamp of intellect to the mind of the writer. Mr. Martin resembled him in several ways; and some interesting and striking parallelisms could be drawn between them: both were great sons of God, great lovers of their fellows, arresting and fearless preachers of what they conceived to be the truth, and great in their influence over the lives of others.

In 1884 Conference once again overruled his arrangements, and Mr. Martin was sent to Edinburgh. He had three golden years of peace and happiness. It is said that he never preached better throughout his long ministry than he did there. A Scottish congregation honours its minister, and this warm atmosphere of love overcame for the time that self-depreciation and shrinking modesty which at times was not only pathetic, but which undoubtedly kept him back from some of the foremost works and out of some of those foremost places in his Church for which he was so well qualified and equipped.

It was in Scotland that, much to his dismay and against his earnest protest,

he was elected Chairman of the District; and proved, as his brethren expected, an ideal chairman. His ripe wisdom, tact, and holy, Christlike standard of action he impressed upon all, and he did much to raise, heal, and inspire many of the struggling Wesleyan churches in Scotland.

It was here that the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young heard a great sermon of Mr. Martin's from the passage, 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?' and he wrote in *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* that of all the great sermons he heard at that time in Edinburgh from its great preachers there was not one which could compare with Mr. Martin's for grasp and force and influence. Mr. Young writes, 'It was one of the most powerful sermons I ever heard, and its influence will be with me as long as I live.'

At the time of Mr. Martin's death two years ago, the Rev. Samuel Chadwick sent this piquant paragraph to *Joyful News*: 'I have been forcibly reminded of my first appointment by the Conference. The Rev. John Martin was Chairman of the Scotland District, and I was appointed to Edinburgh as his assistant. I shall

never forget the day I arrived. It rained in torrents all day. In the afternoon Mr. Martin came to my rooms, and welcomed me. He was gracious, hearty, and fatherly. Before he left he noticed that I wore a coloured tie, and asked me to wear a white one when I preached next day. I had no small conceit of my non-clerical attire, and was prepared to fight anybody anywhere, but he reasoned so calmly and yet so firmly on incidentals and essentials that I went out and bought my first white tie. Many things had their beginning in the surrender of that day. Several times my superintendent heard me preach, and though he never criticized my sermons his skill in the art of encouragement laid me under a life-long debt of gratitude. I owe more than I can tell to his exalted and exacting standard.'

At first Mr. Martin was as averse to the black gown, worn usually by our ministers in the city pulpits of Scotland, as Mr. Chadwick was to the white tie. The ladies of Nicolson Square Church had bought a new gown for Mr. Martin, and he felt that, much as he disliked and felt hampered by its wear, he had no right to hurt the feelings of the good donors, and go contrary to the custom

observed at the church.<sup>1</sup> The argument that weighed with him would doubtless weigh with his young colleague. One feature of his successful work in Edinburgh was the class he held for students of the University. Dr. Hartley Bunting bears witness that his influence through it was of a deep and abiding character.

So successful had been his chairmanship that at the close of his term there was a strong movement, favourably regarded by Conference leaders, to continue his stay in Scotland as a chairman separate from circuit work and without pastoral charge; but he so strongly objected, preferring to close his days as a circuit minister, that the project was dropped. Although he had accepted Carlisle, Conference again overruled his engagement and sent him to Oxford, and again as Chairman. This change was largely effected by the great influence of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., who having been not only the superintendent

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to add that he afterwards enjoyed the gown, which gave added dignity and stateliness to his presence and to his pure, calm, finely-chiselled face. The frontispiece to this volume is from a photograph taken in the gown at the request of the ladies who presented him with it.

minister in Oxford for three years but also Chairman of the Oxford District, knew well its special and uncommon needs. He argued with his accustomed force, both in the Stationing Committee and in the Conference, that Mr. Martin, for whom he had the fullest admiration, would be, though now in his seventieth year, the man for the University city. When he had gained his end and Conference was over, in a leader in the *Methodist Times* on its decisions there were these lines: 'Conference has done no better work than the appointment of the Rev. John Martin (A) to Oxford.' And when his term there was ended, and he decided to retire from active work, that chivalrous and gifted Welshman wrote again in his paper a glowing appreciation of the character and work of his venerable and gifted friend. To Mr. Hughes it was much to be lamented that the Church should seem to have no place for the continued exercise of such mature wisdom and unique Christian influence and gifts as Mr. Martin possessed without also entailing upon men of his years the burdensome and wearing duties of a superintendency. His friend Mr. A. Pearson of Oxford, writes that Mr. Martin

'keenly felt his retirement from active service, as he was still in the possession of all his faculties and had an eager desire to continue in his pastorate.'

His record as Chairman of the District and superintendent of the circuit proves that he was by no means worn out, even physically. In winter as well as in summer he would go out on week evenings ten or twelve miles in an open conveyance in order to take week-night services, missionary and other meetings, and rarely preached less than six nights a week. The withdrawal of the minister from Woodstock by the Home Mission Committee greatly increased his labours as well as those of his colleagues (there being twenty-three places in the circuit). He was too chivalrous to spare himself and impose the whole burden on them, and too devoted and conscientious to leave the bereft village societies without ministerial oversight. Mr. Pearson affirms that the years Mr. Martin was with them 'stand out for internal peace and spiritual advancement unequalled by any period.'

It was here God allowed him a rare joy. At a Bible Society meeting the deputation from London exhibited a

newly published translation of the Gospels in the Popo (Dahomian) tongue by the Rev. Thomas J. Marshall, a native missionary. Mr. Martin delighted the audience with the intelligence that the translator was years ago a bright, godly lad whom he had led to Christ and whom he had afterwards trained for the ministry. As in Edinburgh so in Oxford, he paid special attention to the undergraduates, being most ably assisted by Mrs. Martin, whose home had an ever-open door, and whose table always a spare place for any young man who called. It became an increasing happiness to him to see at home and abroad so many young fellows, who had come under his influence, rising into positions of usefulness and eminence. His heart rejoiced when he heard of the appointment of the Rev. J. H. Ritson, M.A., to the Secretariat of the British and Foreign Bible Society and Mr. A. S. Peake, M.A., to a Professorship in the College of his Church; and mention might be made of many others.

## CHAPTER V.

### RESTING AND RELEASE

IT was in the year 1890 that Mr. Martin was placed on the retired list. His Synod and the Conference did him the great honour of special and most honourable mention on their respective records, and his brethren bore fitting witness to his long and exceptional service. Romiley, in the Trinity circuit, Stockport, was his happy home and quiet resting-place until he moved, seven years later, to Dean Row, Wilmslow, in the same circuit. Here he spent eleven years, living in all eighteen years after his retirement. In both places, though no longer a circuit minister, he was still known and beloved as a minister of Jesus Christ, well spoken of and looked up to in the little Cheshire villages as 'our minister.' Until 1904 he continued to preach frequently, reflecting wherever he went 'the glory of the Lord.' The first thought that came

to the minds of most as they caught sight of him, going in and out among them, was 'This is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually.'<sup>1</sup>

On October 26, 1904, his beloved wife, the companion, sharer, and in part creator of nearly fifty-six years of hallowed and perfect union, entered, after many years of suffering and weakness, the gate 'which is called Beautiful' to be 'for ever with the Lord.' The reader knows what she was as a girl; and others have written what she was as a loving, encouraging helpmeet to her husband; as a wise, solicitous, affectionate, godly parent, and as a mother in Israel taking her share in and sympathetically supporting all kinds of good work in her husband's circuit and outside of it. She undoubtedly inherited the best qualities of her father. Dr. Beecham was a man of very marked ability, who served his Church, first in the regular and itinerant ministry, then for twenty-five years as one of the general secretaries of the Foreign Missionary Society. He became President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1850, a time of great strain and disruption; but under his wise and tactful

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings iv. 9.

control much of the turmoil and bitterness of 1849 was assuaged. Mrs. Beecham, his wife, was declared by the Rev. William Arthur, who preached her funeral sermon, to have singular beauty of character, piety of spirit, and large sympathies for the well-being of all around her. Her daughter Mary Dorcas (afterwards Mrs. Martin) gave her heart to God when she was thirteen years of age,<sup>1</sup> and grew up under their ideal nurture into a winsome and noble woman. As a wife and mother her first cares were properly her husband and her home, but after that, she lived for all other good that she could do.

Mr. Martin's grief was great, but it was Christian; his loss was borne with saintly fortitude; yet he was never the same again. The illness which laid him aside for three years began not many months after this bereavement, and lasted till the end came, confining him to his room for about three years. But though the vigour of the outward man declined, the inward man was renewed day by day. Mentally he was quite brisk and took the liveliest interest in all that went

<sup>1</sup> See 'In Memoriam,' Mary Dorcas Martin, *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, October, 1905.

on in the world without and in the Church within. It was heaven on earth to be in his company. The Light of the Eternal burned in his heart, shone from his face, glowed in his conversation. So the days wore on: nearer and nearer, though slowly, he came to the City that hath no need of the sun; until on his ninety-first birthday the portals were opened and he was called into the presence of the King. Those who saw him lying in his coffin were struck with the peace and triumph of the face: serene and regnant in death was the pure countenance of the pure heart. The nurse who was with him the last two weeks, and who had not known him before, remarked that 'he must have lived a good life and a very happy one; for see,' said she, 'there is not a line on his face at ninety-one.'

Devout men carried him to his burial at Woodford, and sons and daughters and sons-in-law and grandchildren who had grown up to learn to call him—and the sainted one whom he had now joined—the 'blessed of the Lord,' gave thanks around his resting-place for the race well run, the course well finished, and the crown for ever gained.

The Rev. J. Beggs, the vicar, conducted

the service in the church, the lesson was read by the Rev. D. Solomon, and the prayer at the grave-side was offered by his long known and respected friend, the Rev. Alfred S. Geden, M.A., D.D. On the following Sunday a memorial service was conducted in the Wesleyan Church, Wilmslow, by its minister, the Rev. W. Fytche, and suitable reference made to the departed saint.

At the next meeting of the Synod of the Manchester District fitting and honourable notice was taken of his death; and at the ensuing Annual Conference, when his name was read out from the Death Roll and his obituary presented, many testified that a life of priceless worth had been taken from the earth.

The following is part of the resolution which was passed at his retirement in 1890, and part of the obituary which appears in the *Minutes of Conference* for the year 1909:

‘In consenting to the retirement of the Rev. John Martin (A) after a ministry of forty-seven years, the Conference places on record its high appreciation of his personal character and service. As a missionary in Western Africa he laboured for some years with considerable

success. Upon his return home his pulpit ministrations were highly valued and the most important circuits sought for the benefit of his ministry. He was specially selected by the Conference to represent Methodism in Edinburgh and in Oxford, where he also fulfilled the duties of Chairman of the District with marked ability. With an evangelical, intelligent, and winsome ministry which won the hearts of both young and old, he combined the charm of a beautiful and blameless life. . . .’ The remainder of the resolution prays for Mr. Martin’s further usefulness, and, what he experienced, ‘a happy eventide.’

The obituary notice in the *Minutes* for 1909 refers to him as student, teacher, and preacher; and speaks of his courtesy, sympathy, and saintliness. His self-sacrifice and success as a missionary and his long and laborious ministry at home also find honourable place.

## CHAPTER VI

### A MAN IN CHRIST

AN admirer<sup>1</sup> of Mr. Martin writes : ' There is an influence in every man which follows him, except that it finds no grave, no terminating point.' Thirty-seven years after Mr. Martin had left Abeokuta some who still remembered him told the writer that ' he was an earnest, holy, indefatigable missionary, carrying on circuit work between Badagry and Abeokuta during his superintendence of the Mission.' The Rev. George Stringer Rowe testifies that it was impossible to know Mr. Martin without loving and reverencing him. A young minister consulted his old tutor—the Rev. Benjamin Hellier—about some possible circuits. Mr. Hellier said, ' By all means go where John Martin is: it will be of lifelong benefit to you. He is the holiest man in London ' ; and testimonies such as these

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Carlos Crisford.

from such judges as Dr. W. B. Pope, John Hannah, the late Dr. Geden and others would almost fill a volume. Wherein lay this ascendancy over men in public and in private? What was it that invested him with such attractiveness and gave him such power with people of different countries and of varying degrees of enlightenment; of such different ages, emotional temperament, and schools of thought and religion?

His work explains much, but his life explains more. Christ has His exalted place in the thought of men largely because of what He was and is, and daily life and past history prove that the influence of His followers is in proportion to their resemblance to Him. John Martin was, to use St. Paul's expressive phrase, 'a man in Christ,' and therein largely is to be found the secret of his influence.

He possessed in no small degree those elements of manliness which Thomas Hughes sets forth in his *Manliness of Christ*. Painted savage and polished city man, the mill girl and the Girton girl acknowledged it. The way he dealt with insolent fetish priests, and brutal, slave-raiding chiefs, his unflinching encounters

with infidels and agnostics, his quiet courage before slum bullies and amidst fighting crowds, prove that he was one of the bravest of men. No timid-hearted man would have tackled as he did the late Sir Richard Burton. As he quailed before no man or mob, so he allowed no difficulty to daunt, no suffering to paralyse his spirit. He was conscious of his strength, but he was poles apart from the braggart. Of the thousands who knew him, none would dissent from the dictum of one of his colleagues that 'he was one of the humblest and gentlest of men.' If anything, his shrinking modesty was too unmingled and his retiringness too unselfish. A little justifiable ambition and self-assertion would have brought him more of that public honour he merited, and enlarged his usefulness to his Church and the wider world. But he shrank from public notice and front position; like a sensitive plant, he immediately closed at any pressure from without, and suppressed every impulse in which he suspected there lurked a single grain of 'the pride of life.' A colleague declares, 'He was one of the strongest and gentlest of men.'

His was a conquering courage because

it was combined with that tact which disarms and that justice which propitiates. His gentleness could never be construed as weakness nor his sensitiveness as cowardice. If he *had* to thrust with the lance he was a man to reckon with; but no opponent ever confronted him who was not made to feel 'John Martin would much rather heal than make a wound.'

The beautiful humility which breathed from him, the genuine sympathy that welled up in him, and his manifest disinterestedness in all he did, created confidence and drew people to him. This loftiness of character, therefore, was not derived from some solitary and outshining attribute which put other traits of character in the shadow, but, like all superlative goodness and power, it was a combination of fine points, a constellation of glories. He was 'a man of rare qualities of heart and mind, so blended as to produce a character of supreme value—attractive and effective from every point of view.'<sup>1</sup> He seemed to hold all his powers in a condition of perfect equipoise; exaggeration being as foreign to him as effeminacy was forbidding. If

<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Pollitt, and other ministers.

his devotion to and absorption in his work imparted to him generally a quiet and almost austere temperament or habit of mind, he could nevertheless relax; romp, tell tales and have merry talk with his children; be the genial centre of a company, and enliven every one with his vivacity and humour.

He was 'the man of God,' say all who had a right to judge, because he was a 'man of prayer.' He was but young when he wrote, 'I feel the need of much grace and of a great increase of faith. It is of great importance that a missionary should never forget that the carnal mind is enmity against God.' About the same time he wrote, 'I have felt the need to-day of more patience and goodness. The want of them grieves me; but I have not because I ask not.' And there must have been much asking that there should have been so much receiving. The journal is largely a book of prayer, for almost every other entry contains a supplication. The places are legion where such sentences as these occur, 'My soul has been much drawn out in prayer, and my heart exceedingly softened and blessed.' Now it is prayer for himself, for the fullness of Christ's indwelling;

now for his ministry, that the zeal for God's glory and compassion for souls may fill him; now for the poor, blind, misled heathen; now for the slave raiders, because 'all power and all good are from above.' In many a lovely spot, abounding with the repulsive objects and relics of a degrading fetishism, has he knelt down and poured out his heart to the Father. Whilst his soul revolted at what he saw and heard, he wondered not that the pagan saw in those beauty spots of nature the home of some deity; and he longed that they might be drawn to the highest beauty of Him who is perfect love, and purity.

The members of his family say that his life was steeped in prayer. 'It is not enough to say that he never did anything without prayer—his life was prayer: yet his times for stated and regular prayer were rigorously observed and every emergency and every undertaking was a time for a special laying of all before God.' 'I have several times,' writes one of his sons, 'not knowing he was there, gone into his bedroom or study and found him (say before a service or when preparing a sermon) on his knees in rapt devotion, seemingly unconscious of the

interruption; and I have many a time seen him come out from such communings with the look of God on his face.' 'When I die,' said a medical man, the member of another communion, 'I should like to have Mr. Martin by the bedside where I could see his face; it is full of God; it is such a beautiful face.'

Without doubt it was this prayerfulness that made him such a forceful preacher. The divine electricity passed through him to others, and often lighted, warmed, and quickened the hardest of hearts. The test of the greatness of all speakers is their ability to sway men to their purposes; and their nobility is proportionate to the greatness of their purpose. That John Martin aimed at the highest and could sway all to his purpose is the testimony, without exception, of all who heard him and who had to do with him. Written evidence of this lies before the writer.

He was not a 'popular' preacher. He held Frederick Robertson's views on this matter. At first he was tempted, like many young men, to pay more attention to what would attract and please. He became conscious, however, that it en-

dangered his spiritual manhood, and also that he ought to do better things for God; so he rigorously cut off his 'flowers' and devoted himself to making plain the deep things of God. It was this that made his ministry acceptable to the deep thinkers of his congregations; to all who sought after God 'if haply they might find Him,' and which gave to him that great success he achieved in his weekly children's services. As one has said, 'His sermons were like Ezekiel's river—a child could wade and an elephant swim in it.'

Though he never used notes in the pulpit and never had any manuscript of his sermons, he made most thorough and careful preparation. He would deeply think out his discourse, pray much over it, pencil a few heads and guiding thoughts upon a half sheet of paper or on the back of an envelope, then go with a sense of God's presence to his service, and leave the words to frame themselves.

Believing that truth is perceived more in the soul, through the higher emotions than in the intellect, his aim ever was to grip the conscience and arouse the will. His holy sincerity, cogent appeals to

reason, deep and careful exposition of God's Word, all concentrating in a powerful appeal to the conscience often made his deliverances irresistible in their effect. It was a common thing for the feeling to be so profound that at the close of a sermon no one would move or stretch out the hand for the hymn-book until he had actually given out the number of the hymn. Dr. Punshon is reputed to have been a fidgety hearer; but one day when listening to Mr. Martin he was seen to lean forward with his eyes fixed on the preacher, gradually raising his hand in reverential awe until it was above his head, and keeping it thus until the sermon was over. During the London Conference of 1880, when Mr. Martin was in charge of our church at Chislehurst, men like Drs. W. B. Pope and W. H. Dallinger and other eminent preachers, staying in the neighbourhood, made a special point of hearing him, and expressed themselves in very warm terms of admiration. 'His style was generally expository, simple and unadorned, with no leaning in the direction of the sensational; and, without any striking effect at first, it greatly grew upon you.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Broxap.

'Like all his work, it was surpassingly sweet and fragrant.'<sup>2</sup>

A leading note in his preaching was that of 'Entire Sanctification.' Like John Wesley, he never claimed to have received that blessing himself. But all who came into contact with him knew that he had, though he wist not that his life shone with the glory as from the presence of the Lord.

But this cultivation of the soul was accompanied by the most diligent cultivation of the mind, and it was largely the joint effect of a soul aflame and a mind enriched that made John Martin's ministry so potent for good. As stated at the beginning of this Memoir, he began after his conversion to read much and to read what was good and useful. Whilst by no means confining himself to it, for he read largely in general literature and philosophy, and gave lectures on astronomy and geology, yet his chief reading was solid, theological literature. He ever read as a student and scholar. Cultivating a keen and discriminating taste, an analytical faculty, and a wonderful memory, he laid up such stores of accurate knowledge that Dr.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. A. Pearson, M.A.

W. F. Moulton several times urged him, though without avail, to consent to be nominated for the theological tutorship at Richmond.

Even as a young man, whilst in Africa, his reading was not only extraordinary in the adverse conditions of life then; but the shrewd and pertinent criticisms in his journal of the books read show how he sought to master everything that he read. Thus he developed that logical grasp and mental acumen which were so marked in him. In the gold-mining industry there is a process by which the gold is made to adhere to mercury and the dross is driven away; so Mr. Martin could in his reading retain the essential and part with the unimportant. He has been often known to give the abstract of an argument contained in books which he had not opened for fifty years. This was continually manifested in his preaching, as he drew from his rich store-house treasures new and old. One, himself a student and preacher, who heard him only four years before his end, preach to a little village congregation, was 'astounded at the grasp of the subject, the fullness of the treatment, the spiritual insight, and the heavenly instinct re-

vealed.' Again and again he has surprised men, themselves masters in the art of preaching, by this power to explore the whole domain of truth. One minister, himself a notable preacher, who heard him once on the 'Three men' in Luke ix. 57-62, said, 'It was marvellous. I know; for I had been preparing a sermon on that subject for three months, and flattered myself I had got down deep; but as Mr. Martin quietly and lucidly revealed depth after depth of new truths, I felt amazed and humbled. I fear I shall never preach *my* sermon.' The thought has crossed the minds of multitudes of his hearers, 'Now all has been said that can be said,' but, again and again, the direct theme was viewed in a fresh light until it seemed a marvel of completeness. Yet it is testified that not even the young wearied of this preaching. 'In the speechless awe that dares not move,' he bore his hearers along in spite of themselves, and, to their surprise and wonder and joy, they found themselves in those heavenly places with Christ Jesus, whither he prayed and laboured that they might all be gathered.

Tennyson asks in his 'In Memoriam,'

Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Had John Martin no faults? He himself, in his deep consciousness of shortcomings, would reply there were many: and in the numerous letters, &c., that lie before the author, there are frequent laments of failure, of lack of love, and of slackness of heart. But the best saints are conscious most of wrong within. All who knew Mr. Martin magnified the grace which, in him, abounded towards men in wisdom and prudence.

‘My heart glowed when I saw the old crippled woman paying such earnest attention. O thou good Spirit, save her soul! My heart warms with love and concern for these Africans in proportion as I go amongst them. People sometimes speak of them contemptuously as “niggers.” I find in my work that there is neither black nor white in Christ. I never realize their colour. They are always to me fellow human beings for whom Christ died; and I find they readily respond to such treatment.’

‘*I never realize their colour.*’ Here is the keynote of his life amongst men at home and abroad; they were his brethren in and for Christ; for time and eternity.

He knew no man 'after the flesh.' He knew all as potential heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. So he became the John Hunt of West Africa, and one of the most heroic, saintly and useful ministers God ever gave to the Methodist Church.

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