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# MISSIONARY ASPECT, OF AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

*Extracts from an Address on the Missionary Aspect of African Colonization, by James A. Lyon, Pastor of the Westminster (Presbyterian) Church, St. Louis.*

"Resolved, That African Colonization is but the last of a series of Providences, as wonderful as they are gracious, the ultimate design of which is, to civilize and Christianize Africa."

MR. PRESIDENT:—There is no theme better adapted to enlarge the mind—to benefit the heart—and to impress us with a deep sense of the Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice of God—than that of a Divine Providence, reigning in, and ruling over, the affairs of men.

A most wonderful illustration of this singular truth, is to be found in the history of the AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE. It is now beginning to appear manifestly, that what men designed as a gratification of the basest and most revolting cupidity, God designed as the means to Christianize and civilize Africa! Hence, "African Colonization" has become one of the most interesting Missionary enterprises of the age, or of any age.

When we open the Bible, we find it replete with great and precious promises, in relation to the final triumph of Christianity over the whole world. "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord." David, in the Psalms, represents the Father as saying to Messiah, his Son,—"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And not only so, but it is said specifically of Africa—"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God."—These, and like Scripture promises and prophecies, assure us that the whole world is eventually to be evangelized, and Africa, of course, is one day to become a Christian nation. But *how* is this to be accomplished? Suppose that the question had been asked three hundred years ago, *How is Africa to be evangelized?* It would have been impossible to have solved the problem: for

*First*, There was then no ENTERPRISE in Africa, to bring it into contact with Christian and civilized nations. Commerce and trade are the most cogent of all the instrumentalities ever made use of by the providence of God, in diffusing the blessings of religion and civilization, save that of Colonization. It is one of the greatest agencies, in breaking down the partition walls of prejudice, caste, language, and religion, that separate different nations and tribes, and binding the race of man into one great brotherhood. It was *Commerce* that took the gospel to India—it is *Commerce* that is now taking it to the different ports of China. But three hundred years ago, there was no Enterprise in Africa, not even the *Slave Trade* itself, to bring it into contact with other nations.

*Second*, This could not be accomplished by CONQUEST, or the Colonization of Europeans, on that continent, from the fact that the Almighty seems to have proclaimed an interdiction in the character of the *climate* of that country, against the white man living there. The history of missionary efforts in Western Africa, fully sustains this fact. "Catholic Missionaries," says Tracy in his history of missions, "labored for *two hundred and forty-one years*, but every vestige of their influence has been gone for many generations. The Moravians,

beginning in 1736, toiled for *thirty-four* years, making five attempts, at a cost of *eleven* lives, and accomplished nothing. An English attempt, at Bulama Island, in 1792, partly missionary in its character, was abandoned in two years, with the loss of *one hundred* lives! A mission sent to the Foulahs, from England, in 1795, returned without commencing its labors. The London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Societies commenced three Stations in 1797, which were extinct in three years, and *five* of the six missionaries dead." "Here then are eighteen Protestant missionary attempts, before the settlement of Liberia, all of which failed."

These facts prove that it was not the design of the Almighty, that Africa should be civilized and Christianized by *conquest* or colonization of whites in that country. The question then again arises: if Africa is excluded from intercommunion with civilized and Christianized nations, for the want of enterprise, commerce, and trade — if there is an insuperable barrier existing in the *fatality* of her climate, against the ingress of Europeans, those who are supposed to have the blessings of Christian light and enterprise — *how is she ever to become evangelized?*

*Third,* There was not, *three hundred* years ago, nor is there still, in the Christian Church, sufficient *self-denial, zeal, and energy*, to send after the Negro and take him home, in order to civilize, educate, and evangelize him, and then send him back to Africa, to communicate the same blessings to the benighted brethren. Or even if we suppose, contrary to the fact, that there was a sufficiency of Christian zeal on this subject in the church, to send every year scores of ships to transport them by thousands and tens of thousands into Christian lands, for the purpose of being christianized and then sent back to Africa, they could not be persuaded to accept this gracious offer. Being rude, ignorant, savage, and debased, they could not appreciate the value of the blessings proffered them. They therefore could not be prevailed upon to expatriate themselves. They must consequently be taken by *violence*, if taken at all, a measure utterly subversive of the very gospel which we wish to inculcate upon them.

What now is to be done? How is this great problem to be solved? By what means shall the prophesy be fulfilled, which says: "*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God?*" There is no ENTERPRISE, as yet no commerce and trade in Africa, to bring her in contact with Christian countries. Her CLIMATE interposes an insuperable barrier to the white man going there in any numbers. And there is not a sufficiency of CHRISTIAN ZEAL in the Church, to send for them; and if they did send, they could not get them without bribery, or violence. God does not work miracles to do what man can and ought to do. How then, is this great event to be brought about? The Lord, who rules in, and reigns over, the passions of men — brings good out of evil — turns the curse into a blessing — and causes the wrath of man to praise him, thereby magnifying his own glory — *permits* the existence of that most diabolical and monstrous of all the outrages that ever polluted humanity, the "African Slave Trade" — and sends the *pirate* after the Negro, to bring him to this country, where he is *converted, educated, civilized*, and in due time sent back — as were the ancient Israelites with the spoils of the Egyptians — laden with the richest blessings of civilization and Christianity, with which to bless and evangelize Africa! Who can fail to see in this the wonderful Wisdom and Goodness of God! And where is the heart so cold, so insensible, as not to find in this, food for the most devout contemplation! "O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The second great aspect, in which this interesting subject is to be viewed, relates to the glorious wisdom of God's providence in PREPARING the Negro to be a Missionary in his own country.

The great object of Missions is, to *enlighten* the Mind, and *save* the Soul. But the Negro, without miraculous interposition, could not be qualified, in his

own country, for the performance of this great work ; because in an uncivilized, barbarous state, no sufficient *inducements* could be brought to bear upon the African, to prompt him to undergo the labor, toil, self-denial, and mental discipline, necessary to qualify him for becoming a Missionary. "Necessity is the mother of invention ;" but the savage African has but few wants, and they are for the most part supplied by the exuberant bounty of nature. His native soil produces spontaneously and in great abundance the fruits and herbs which supply him with food ; and the *climate* does not require clothing. Hence the African at home having but few wants, and these supplied by the hand of nature, *will not of his own free will and accord* undergo the toil and hardship necessary to acquire a knowledge of the useful arts and handicrafts of civilized life. Consequently the first step towards preparing him to enlighten and evangelize his benighted brethren, was to *take him away from his own country*, and place him under such circumstances as would compel him to acquire the necessary information.

In the next place, the Negro, by a most unchristian act, is brought to a Christian land and placed under circumstances *most favorable* to his CONVERSION, and becoming a Christian.

This position is abundantly corroborated by facts : for out of three millions of slaves in this country, at least a half a million — one in every *six* — are professors of religion, which is a proportion vastly greater than can be found amongst any other class of mankind, where the profession of religion is a voluntary thing on the part of individuals ! And not only so, but it is another remarkable fact, that there are more professors of religion, three to one, amongst the Slaves in America, than in all heathen countries put together ! The number of Evangelical Missionaries, in different parts of the world, is *one thousand four hundred and fifty-two*. The number of church members in heathen lands, including the *Colonists*, which, I presume, constitute a large majority of the whole, together with the families of missionaries, is only *one hundred and ninety thousand, six hundred and twenty-three* ; whereas there are no less than *five or six hundred thousand* professing Christians amongst the slaves in this country ! How amazing, and how gracious the overruling providence of God in making use of the "*Slave Trade*" — so wicked in its intention — so brutal in its execution — so abominable in the estimation of all virtuous men — as a means, indirectly, of saving more souls than all the combined missionary operations of Christendom, within the last three hundred years — thereby "*bringing good out of evil*" — "*turning the curse into a blessing*" — and causing the "*wrath of man to praise him !*"

The third preparatory step towards qualifying the Negro for being a successful missionary in his own country, is to CIVILIZE him. This is effected by the circumstances of slavery in which he is placed in this country. He is educated in the art of *Agriculture*, the very thing that is destined eventually to bring Africa in contact with other countries ; for it does not require the perspicuity of a philosophic politician to see that Africa is destined, ere long, in consequence of her exuberant soil and tropical climate, to become the granary and fruitery of the world.

He is educated in the *Mechanic arts*. Providence is, in a remarkable manner, bringing this about, by causing, as it were, the seasons to *emigrate*, so that where cotton was once profitably cultivated, it will not now grow — and were it not for the remains of "*Gin houses*" and "*Cotton-screws*," monuments of the departed, it would not be known to the rising generation, that cotton was ever grown in certain sections of the country. The result is, that the master must either remove his slaves in pursuit of the emigrating climate, or he must turn their labor into the channels of the mechanic arts, which is actually being done to a very general extent. And in this way Providence is preparing the Negro for a speedy return to his own country.

Proficiency in the mechanic arts renders the study of the *Sciences* necessary. Not that the Negro is sent to Academies and Colleges to study the sciences. but he studies them as Archimedes did, by actual practice ; for how could a

mechanic construct a *Bridge* — throw an *Arch*—rear a *Column*—pitch a *Dome* — weld *Metals*, &c., &c., without SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ?

The Negro, therefore, from the force of the circumstances of slavery in which he has been placed, is not only *Christianized*, but *CIVILIZED*, and qualified to become an active and component part of a civilized community — to *cultivate* the soil — to *build cities* — to engage in *trade* — to regulate *commerce* — to make *laws*, &c., &c. He is now *READY TO RETURN* to Africa, laden with, what may be termed, the spoils of civilization.

But we come to contemplate the third grand move of God's providence, in relation to Africa. The Negro is now *qualified* to return to Africa, but how will you prevail on him to go ?

And how is the Negro to get to Africa ? He has no "Moses" to lead him forth with signs and mighty wonders — there is no promise of *miraculous* interference — "manna" to supply bread — the "Rock" to send forth gushing streams — and a "wind from the Lord" to bring meat. And, moreover, the great and mighty sea, the broad Atlantic, lies between him and the house of his ancestors, and there is no "Aaron's rod" to divide these waters, nor "cloudy pillar" to lead the way ; *how* then is he to get to Africa ? The Lord provides. The fourth and final move, in this wonderful series of providences, was the organization of the "American Colonization Society." About thirty years ago certain benevolent persons, in different parts of the country, were simultaneously moved by an unwonted and unusual desire to benefit the black man. The idea of African Colonization was suggested, and immediately carried into execution. The colony was begun, and has grown with unexampled rapidity, until it is now an independent nation — "THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA" — extending its fostering wings over no less than *one hundred thousand* human beings, who are rapidly imbibing the spirit and principles of Christianity and liberty.

It is a fact, as remarkable as it is cheering to the heart of the Christian, that a larger proportion of the citizens of Liberia, (more than one half, I believe,) are professors of religion, than can be found in any other nation on the face of the globe ! Here then is the "salt" to redeem Africa from her impurities and corruptions — here is the "leaven" that is to convert the multitudinous nations of that continent into a homogeneous brotherhood ; and here is the "light" that is to penetrate all the dark places of that benighted land, and dissipate ignorance, superstition, and degrading error.

Again, commerce and trade have already commenced between the native Africans and the Colonists. There is a constant stream of natives going to and from Liberia, engaged in traffic, as yet on a small scale, 'tis true, but still it brings them in contact with civilized and Christianized men. By every visit they make to Liberia, they gain a great increase of light and knowledge, and return to their native retreats with tales as marvellous, and as exciting, as those of the Crusaders. This stimulates others to visit that strange land of the "white-black man." They go away with less respect for their own superstitions, and with greatly increased reverence for the religion and civilization of the Colonists ; and the time is not far distant when they will adopt their manners, customs, and their religion.

Once more — it will not be long, if it has not already occurred, until the the native kings and chief men will send their sons to be educated at the schools, colleges, and universities of learning, in Liberia — where they will be certain to abandon their idolatry and adopt Christianity in its stead, and return to their homes civilized and christianized, in due time to succeed their fathers on the thrones and in the governments of the various tribes and kingdoms of that wide-extended country. And it is universally true, amongst barbarous tribes, and indeed amongst civilized also, that such as are the rulers, so are the ruled — "*like kings, like people.*"

It is impossible for the most careless and indifferent observer and thinker not to see how Liberia is destined in a very short time — *short*, as measured by the clock of God's providence, for with God "a thousand years are but as one day" — to evangelize and civilize Africa.

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