

had to hide themselves in all sorts of corners in order to worship God. But by the efforts of missions, and by your sending missionaries to heathen countries to preach the Gospel, you have not only benefited the people to whom you sent the Gospel, but the blessing has rebounded with tenfold force, and benefited Great Britain herself; because it was not until you sent missionaries that the awful deeds and cruelties of slavery were brought before the English public. And no sooner did England know what slavery meant and what sorrows it caused, the families it scattered, the homes it broke up, and the way in which men were degraded and brutalized by it, than she at once put her shoulders to the wheel, and so the curse was removed from off the British standard.

I believe that it was in the year 1834 that Great Britain paid twenty millions of money for the abolition of slavery. The day when that Act was passed in England, the day on which it had the signature of the sovereign, that very day I—then a boy—was one of those that were set at liberty. I was eight years old when England passed the Emancipation Act. I was there. I remember being carried by my mother to the office, so that my name might be registered. But it was in the year 1838 that the great day came; and I shall never forget it. Our parents had to serve a longer time than we did. It was only children of a certain age that were set at liberty when the Emancipation Act was passed in 1834. In the year 1838, on the 31st day of July, our missionaries—among them William Knibb and James Philippo—gathered the fathers and mothers together; and they thought that if England had done such a great thing for us, we ought to give slavery a very respectable burial; and so we did. We had a first-rate mahogany coffin made; and, as some of our fathers were carpenters and cabinet-makers, they put all the polish they possibly could upon that coffin. It looked very respectable. And they had not only that, but a splendid grave, fit for a gentleman to lie in. We had all the implements of slavery—the whip, the torture iron, the branding iron, the handcuffs, a piece of the treadmill, the coarse frock, the coarse shirt, and the great hat (all things which were used in slavery)—put into that coffin and screwed down as close as possible. At about half-past eleven o'clock, on the night of July 31st, there were fourteen thousand people and five thousand children gathered and I was one of them. I remember that, as soon as the half hour came, the appointed signal was given all through the island, so that at that hour, I believe, every colored man that was to be found on the island of Jamaica was on his knees! And, as the clock began to strike the hour of twelve, William Knibb stood over the grave, and, at every stroke of the clock that sounded out the hour, he cried, "The monster is dying! The monster is dying! The monster is dying!" and when the clock struck the last stroke of the twelve, he cried, "THE MONSTER IS DEAD! BURY HIM!" We lowered that coffin into the grave, and that mass of human beings rose on their feet and sang the doxology:

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

And I can remember looking into my mother's face and seeing tears rolling down her eyes, while I, as a child, looked up and thought what a happy time it must be. As soon as they had sat down, all of us

children rose on our feet, and we sang a piece that had been taught us; and that piece was:

"Send the glad tidings over the sea,
The chain is broke, the slave is free;
Britannia's justice, wealth and might
Have gained the negro's long-lost right."

We sang that song; and I remember our marching, five hundred of us, to the Governor's house, where Sir Lionel Smith read the proclamation of freedom to all.

Now, it is more than fifty years ago since that happened; but, within that time, during the fifty years that have just passed, let me say that God in His own way has given testimony to the truth of His promise, that where the Gospel goes that Gospel will prove the power of God to salvation. We turn to our own country of Jamaica to-day, and we find that, within this half-century, God has not only removed the curse of slavery, but we have become a Christian people with Christian institutions. Folly, superstition, idolatry and witchcraft, in which our fathers believed, have all passed away; and to-day there is not to be found upon the whole island of Jamaica, taking all the different denominations that are therein, a single missionary church—all have become self-supporting and independent of missionary societies.

One could scarcely expect such a great change; but not only have we become a Christian nation, independent of missionary societies, but we have been taught by the missionaries who came to our country that freely we have received and freely we ought to give. So, on the island of Jamaica to-day, we have an independent Baptist Missionary Society of our own not at all connected with the society in England, and which sends the Gospel to the heathen afar off. This is the result of one half century.

It was supposed, you know, that the black man had not got any brains. They say that our heads are too thick. Phrenologists have looked at our heads and said that there are too many bones there; but missionaries that have gone to our country have felt it a very good thing that we have had a thick head, because, if we had not—if we had your soft head—all the brains would go! You know, when you get to our country, the first thing that you want is a "helmet." God has put our helmet on without giving us the trouble of making one. But our missionaries have found out that the black man lacks only opportunity and privileges. If you give him them, God can develop that man as well as any other.

Our missionaries, I say, have tried it. In the island of Jamaica to-day we have about two hundred and seventy Baptist churches. The Presbyterians have got their churches; the Church of England have got theirs; the Wesleyans have got theirs. Some of the two hundred and seventy Baptist churches seat two thousand people; and seventy of those churches are ministered to by young men, well qualified in our colleges, and who are now preaching the Gospel side by side with their European brethren. So much, friends, for the success of the Gospel in our land. Then we have Sunday-schools, high schools, grammar schools, and colleges of all the different universities. God has honored the men who went to our land and preached the Gospel, and given them encouragement by showing them that Africa, with all her supposed degradation and all her real degradation, is capable of receiving the