

EMIGRATION, AS AID TO EVANGELIZATION OF AFRICA.

The arrival at Monrovia, May 10, 1865, of three hundred and forty-six emigrants from Barbados, W. I., is regarded as an event of much significance in the history of Liberia. They were cordially welcomed, and at noon of the 13th of May, the male members of the Company were formally received by President Warner. On the following Sabbath afternoon a sermon adapted to the occasion was, by request, delivered in Trinity Church, Monrovia, by Rev. Alexander Crummell, B. A., Professor in Liberia College. The discourse was founded on Deuteronomy xxvi: 1-11, and abounded in energetic thoughts and reminders of duty.

REV. MR. CRUMMELL'S SERMON.

These words are a part of that summing up of the Exodus, made by Moses to the Israelites, as *he* was on the eve of his departure, and they well nigh the

close of their journey through the wilderness. The whole process of their colonization was now about to close; the land of promise, from the top of Pisgah, was suffered to greet his eyes; allotments of land, as the first lesson this evening showed us,* had been given to *three* of the tribes, and full preparations made for a new chieftain to lead them across Jordan into the promised inheritance of the Lord. The Prophet avails himself of this pause in his and their history, to relate unto them all the marked peculiarities of their history and migration; and to point out to them God's agency therein, and His intents and purposes.

They had been nigh four hundred years in servitude in Egypt. Their fathers, during all their sojourn in that land, had suffered the keenest miseries and afflictions. . But God had never suffered their bondage to be, entirely, at any time, unmixed and absolute evil. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity, he redeemed them." † Large providential favors were mingled with their sore trials; in all their tribulations, they were still God's people; much temporal prosperity, yea, even miraculous increase had been given them; the spectacle of high civilization was continually set before their eyes. Thus, in various ways, they were going through a system of mental and moral training. God was preparing them then for another land, and far distant duties. Generations passed away; and many a soul sank, and many a spirit fainted, and many a despairing man laid down and died; but the work went on. By and by, when God was ready for his own large ends and purposes, then He commenced the processes and the policies for that noble work, which tells, even in our day, in every Christian church and household in the world. The two special expedients to that end were, First, colonization, at God's bidding, from Egypt; and secondly, a re-settlement in the land of Canaan, *under the immediate direction of the Almighty.*

Doubtless it was a great trial to the children of Israel to leave that land, which time had now succeeded in making their home. How great a trial it was may be seen in their reluctance at the first, to follow the leader whom God had given them; and in their frequent sighings in the wilderness for their old home. "We remember," said they, "the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all beside this manna, before our eyes." ‡

But the hand of God was upon them; and when His hand is upon a people, it is destiny, and they cannot resist it. His hand was upon them; His hand guided them through all that "terrible" journey through the wilderness, which never passed away from their memories. For He had a great work for them to do; and this process of migration was the passage, through which they were to enter upon and to do that work.

This subject of colonization then is *a pregnant one, and a sacred.* We find

* Joshua I.

† Isaiah lxiii. 9.

‡ Numbers xi, 45.

it here in our Bibles, associated with some of the most important of God's plans and purposes. We find it here in the upturned faces of many men, women, and children; just touching our shores, singing the "songs of Zion," joining in olden Litanies, for the first time, "in a strange land," in this house of God. On this occasion, therefore, it will not seem unmeet that I call your attention to the *subject of colonization, especially in its relation to God's great work of evangelization.*

I am afraid I shall be somewhat lengthy; for it was only yesterday noon, I was requested to address you; and I have had but one single day for preparation. And as I have written in very great haste I am sure I shall hardly be equal to the subject; but I trust that under the circumstances, you will kindly bear with my imperfections.

I. The first point to which I beg to call your attention is the fact that emigration and colonization have ever been among the commonest movements of mankind. Nothing is more manifest in history than the wanderings of families and clans and tribes from one locality to another; creating new homes, and forming new nationalities. All along the tracks of time we see traces of such movements, on every soil of earth. Indeed, the fact of emigration is almost coeval with humanity itself; for it presents itself among the earliest of human records. It seems to have been a spontaneous, instinctive tendency of human nature; faint traces of such dispersions being discoverable, even before the days of Noah, among the descendants of Adam.* Then, immediately after the flood, so soon as family life began again to show itself, we read the significant words, "These are the three sons of Noah, and of them the whole earth was overspread."† And the same idea is more explicitly set forth in the chapter following, where the like genealogy of Noah's family is given, and where we are told "that by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."‡

This then we may take as a germ of the whole history of colonization. Here we stand at a great fountain-head of that broad stream of emigration which has filled all lands, and peopled multitudinous isles and continents. After the deluge burst three distinct groups of race and family, from the sons of Noah, each the common parent of divers and renowned peoples, whose names and deeds have filled the page of history.

Then we have those great events of dispersion which scattered abroad the Tartars through Asia; the movements which, in remote history, peopled the isles of the Pacific; the migrations which spread abroad the Malay family through portions of both Africa and America; the navigations which sent the Phœnicians along the coasts of both Africa and Europe; and those other great colonizing upheavals which have sent the Celtic race from Asia through all Europe.

In more modern periods we ourselves have seen the Northern nations of

* Genesis vi, 1-16.

† Ibid. ix, 19.

‡ Ibid. x, 32.

Europe, streaming out from their crowded homes to their own antipodes; and these again reproducing the forms of their olden nationalities, religion, and domestic life, amid the wildernesses of new worlds.

They have gone out from their ancestral homes, in commercial ventures, in incipient colonies, in corporations, in missions; and have raised up on the shores of America, of New Holland, and even of Africa and Asia, States, and Commonwealths, and Empires, already rivalling their father lands in population, in the energy of laws, in the influence of letters, in the vitalizing power of religion.

And thus you may see that emigration is a marked feature of the world's history; and that the transplantations of fragments of the children of Africa to this Western Coast, is not an exceptional fact; is not an isolated event. Colonization is history; prompting whole races of men, and determining the destiny of nations and continents.

II. But in the second place I remark, that these migrations of men have been *providential* events, ordered and regulated by the Divine will. Emigration, I mean to say, is not a casual or fortuitous thing. Both in its facts, and in all the principles and ideas connected with it, we may discover evidences of a large and comprehensive plan, which excludes all ideas of the accidental or adventitious.

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In what other way, I ask, will you account for those marked incidents in human history, where, from seeming disastrous causes, have flowed out most signal and saving results? Look, for instance, at the early history of the Israelites. See the way in which God brought them into Egypt. Note their four centuries of servitude there; and then, at length, their triumphal exodus therefrom under Moses. And now can *you*, or *you*, or any other man, blind your eyes to the fact, that all the magnitude of this story grew out of the providential events connected with the sale of Joseph by his wicked brethren? And then, if you place this large fact beside its seeming insignificant causes, how can you do otherwise than did Joseph himself; that is, run up from the painful details of his sufferings to the sublime philosophy which he announces to them:—"It was not *you* which sent me hither but God!"* And what does this suggest but the immediate remembrance of that signal parallel of history, so painful and so personal to ourselves, viz: the forced and cruel migration of our race from this continent, and the wondrous providence of God, by which the sons of Africa, by hundreds and by thousands, trained, civilized, and enlightened, are coming hither again; bringing large gifts, for Christ and his Church, and their heathen kin!

I know indeed that other, darker thoughts, are the more natural ones to our fallen nature. I know how much more prone we are to dwell upon our griefs and injuries, than the merciful providences which are intertwined there-

* Genesis xiv, 8.

with. And I must perforce yield somewhat, to-day, to the melancholy musings which contemplate, with anguish, ancestral wrongs.

Think, indeed, if you please; think, as you cannot but think, when you stand upon this soil, and look abroad upon that ocean, once so disastrous to our poor forefathers;—think of that long, long night of agony and desolation which covered Africa, as with a pall, generations upon generations! Think of that fearful hurricane of disaster and death, which, for nigh three hundred years, has swept over the towns and villages, and hamlets of this Western Coast, even to the far interior, carrying agony to multitudinous breasts of parents and helpless children! Think of that bloody and murderous colonization, which, in the holds of numberless “pestiferous barks,” bore millions of men and women and babes into a forced exile, to foreign strands! Think of all the murder, and carnage, and revenge, and suicide, and slaughter, on *this* continent and the *other*, which flowed from all this dark history, as a black river of death! Think of that glorious sea, made to image the majesty of its Maker; despoiled of its beauty, dyed with human gore, blackened with human crime, robbed of its harmony, and made to send up, through long centuries, one ceaseless wail of despair and woe to a just and holy God! Think of all the painful tasks, the forced labor, the want, the deprivation, the lashings and scourgings, the premature deaths; continued from generation to generation, on many and many a plantation; transmitted as the only inheritance of poor helpless humanity, to children’s children.

Think of all these things, which are indeed but partial pictures of many a sad tale from the lips of your fathers and mine; their own sad experience, or that of their sires; and yet when you have told all this dread story, I would turn with you to another and a fairer page. Amid all the morbidity of these cankering thoughts, my mind, I must confess, would fain run out to the adjustments and compensations which a just and holy God has intermingled with His dark and mysterious dispensations. And a brief reference to this feature of divine Providence will justify, I think, such peculiarity of thought.

For, first of all, our forefathers, in remote generations, “when they knew God, glorified him not as God,” and “did not like to retain Him in their knowledge;” and from age to age their sons, *our* ancestors, wandered off further and further from the true God, and kept heaping abominations upon abominations through long centuries, until the divine patience was exhausted, and God withdrew from our sires and their habitations, and extinguished the “forbearance and long-suffering” of ages; which is the direst wrath!

And then it was that the Almighty permitted the most cruel of all marauders to devastate this coast, and to carry off its people into foreign slavery. And most terrible was all this retribution upon Africa and her sons.

Here it rained anguish and woe for centuries. “And the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.”* And the exiled children of

*Genesis xix, 28.

Africa, in distant lands, were made "an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."* But mercy was mingled with all this wrath. Their lot was cast in the lands of men where the cross shone from their temple-spires, and the Bible was read at their altars. Terrible as was the ordeal of slavery, yet God restrained the wrath of their oppressors; not seldom did he turn the hearts of Christian masters and mistresses to them and their children; catechisings were commenced on many a plantation; schools, in course of time, began to multiply; a missionary, now and then, was sent to the colonies; right beside scourgings, and lacerations, and lawless legal murders, teaching and training, preaching and conversations, anti-slavery questionings, and emancipations were carried on; until now, at the close of nigh three centuries, millions of the children of Africa, on the isles and continent of America, have been turned from the paganism of their fathers; "the people that sat in darkness have seen a great light;" God has redeemed this injured people, and fearfully scourged their oppressors; tens of thousands of them, in all the lands of their thralldom, have received the enlightenment which comes from books and seminaries, from the Bible and churches; and now, as the end of all this chapter of providence, God is bringing scores and hundreds of them back to this continent, as colonists and merchants; as missionaries and catechists and teachers; and with them "casts the pearl of the gospel," † upon these heathen shores!

And now, when I look at the noble work which God has manifestly set before us and our children in this land, and think, especially, of the marvellous way by which God has brought us to it; I feel as if I could laugh to scorn all the long line of malignant slave-traders who have defiled and devastated this wretched coast of Africa, and fling in their teeth the gracious retort of Joseph: "As for you, ye thought evil against us, but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive." ‡ For *that*, I maintain, that is, "to save much people alive," *that* is the great mission of our race to this

*Jeremiah xxv, 9.

† This expression is borrowed from Marvell's [the Puritan's] "Song of the Emigrants in Bermuda." It is interesting to see that the Poet associates missionary duty with colonization adventure:—

"He cast
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast:
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound His name.
O let our voice His praise exalt
Till it arrive at Heaven's vault,
Which then perhaps rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexique bay!"

‡ The largest, the most distinct illustration of this fact is the case of "recaptured" Africans at Sierra Leone. From this body of redeemed men have sprung *two* of the most marked movements for the redemption of Africa, in modern times. 1. The emigration of Christian Yorubans, to the Egba country; which laid the foundation of the Abbeokutan mission. 2. The mission of my friend, Bishop Crowther—himself a native Yoruban—to the banks of the Niger.

coast: to turn this heathen population "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith." *

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

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