

Mission, Slavery, Freedom: Philip Cornford Recalls the Baptist Mission in Jamaica.

Introduction

Philip Cornford served a number of churches in New Zealand. He had arrived in the colony in 1861 with a business career, rather than ministry in mind. However he was soon called to the Auckland church which he served for 25 years. He was President of the N.Z. Baptist Union (1886-7) and came to be a respected elder figure in the denomination's life. This was the third phase of Cornford's career. He had held three pastorates in England and, before that, had been for eleven years in Jamaica with the Baptist Missionary Society. The dramatic events of the Baptist mission in Jamaica form the core of this account, published in the *NZ Baptist* 1886-88.¹ Cornford arranges his material in eight sections

- I Arrival and meeting with Knibb
- II The spiritual plight and slave history of the African population
- III Cornford's ministry and the death of his wife
- IV 'Superstitions' of the population
- V-VII The slave rebellion of 1831
- VIII A particular case of conversion and witness.

These 'Missionary Reminiscences' essentially cover material which Cornford had published in 1856 in a tract of the same title. Some details are added but there is little question that these are the later

¹ See *NZ Baptist*, June 1886 92-93; Aug 1886 125-126; October 1886 147-148; February 1887 17-18; May 1887 76-78; Aug 1887 115-116; Nov 1887 162-163; Feb 1888 25-26.

reflections of an older man. As such they take on a romantic tone in places.

Cornford was not present during the rebellion. Indeed he arrived after emancipation, in 1841. However he appears to have had intimate access to eyewitnesses among the missionaries and former slaves. His account is thus not a primary record of the events but it does provide a glimpse into the attitudes and interpretations of the Baptist missionaries and provides significant spiritual portraits of key slave leaders such as Sam Sharpe and Moses Hall. Beyond this useful, if limited, glimpse into a significant episode in Baptist mission history Cornford exhibits the spirituality valued and celebrated by Victorian Baptists. The account of Catherine Harding in section VIII is especially revealing in this regard.²

Missionary Reminiscences

I

Come, labour on!
The labourers are few, the field is wide,
New stations must be filled, and blanks supplied;
From voices distant far, or near at home,
The call is, "Come!"

When slavery ceased in the British West Indies, the success of mission work in Jamaica urgently called for a large increase of labourers. 'The harvest truly was plenteous, but the labourers few.' Ten additional missionaries with their wives, and several Normal School teachers, were accordingly soon sent into the field by the Baptist Committee; and kindred societies, in like manner, increased their representatives. The

² On the Baptist Mission in Jamaica the most up to date treatment is Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992) pp 68-105. On the Slave Rebellion see M. Reckord 'The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831' *Past and Present* 40 (Jul 1968): 108-125. Neither Cornford's 1856 version nor the articles in the *NZ Baptist* reprinted here are listed in Stanley's bibliography or cited by Reckord. His accounts add details not mentioned in these studies.

people had received the Gospel, and hungered for the Bread of Life. Pioneer work was accomplished; but ignorance, superstition, and vice, with all the evils of the natural man, remained to be combated.

The emancipated population, however, were so imbued with a sense of indebtedness to the missionaries, that for a time nothing in their power seemed too much for them to do to express their veneration and their love. Into this bright and singular scene of religious and social effervescence, I, with my beloved wife, entered in January 1841 – that is, within three years of the date of emancipation. Landing at Rio Bueno, in company with William Knibb, a band of sixteen in all, we found a throng of enthusiastic coloured people, in striking, motley attire, waiting to greet us. In our transit from the ship to the shore we had sung the very appropriate hymn - *How are Thy servants blest, O Lord, How sure is their defence!*

With hearts full of emotion, and eyes as full of tears, we sang till, as the last verse closed the song, our boat reached the shore. How well did it accord! How thrilling were its words!

Our life, while 'Thou preserv'st that life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, when death shall be our lot,
Shall join our souls to Thee.

We had counted the cost, and now we had touched the land which so often proved unfriendly to the life of Europeans. The die was cast. The hand was put to the plough, and we looked not back. Yet, as our ship quietly glided into the beautiful bay, and all were admiring the glories of the scene, the gruff voice of the mate was heard exclaiming, 'There's a death hole!' Experience had taught him how there the floating miasms spread the fatal fever abroad, and involuntarily he seemed to utter the note of warning. Alas, in a few weeks one of that happy company left us for 'the better land;' and all too soon my own loved wife followed the silent way, to dwell where Jesus is. Well was it for us that we foresaw nothing. We were called to go forward, and this we desired.

A few scattered houses facing the sea, with here and there a store, constituted the so-called town of Rio Bueno, which also had a small English Church at its farther end. High above us, standing solitarily on the rocky eminence, was a Baptist Chapel. It was grandly placed, with the ever-flashing sea full in view, with abundant foliage all round, and ensuring at all times the refreshing sea breeze, in which the inhabitants of tropic islands so much rejoice. Within we found nothing to suggest luxury. The sittings were narrow benches, placed very closely, that no

room might be lost. The 'gallery' for the Sabbath-school was under the floor, through which, in front of the pulpit, was an opening railed round, and all so formed that those in this gallery might both see and hear the preacher.

On this spot, some ten years before, another chapel stood, but in their rage against the missionaries, the planters and their friends had, during the insurrection, burned it to the ground. In a few months the ruins were covered with a plant which flourishes among the rocks, called 'the tree of life.' On this fact being conveyed to James Montgomery, the Christian poet, he penned the lines—

Where flames devoured the House of God, Kindled by hell, with
heaven at strife, Up sprang, spontaneous from the sod, A forest of the
'Tree of Life,' Meet emblem of the sanctuary, Which there had been, and
yet should be, Now on the same thrice hallowed spot, In peace a second
temple stands; And God hath said, 'Destroy it not!' For lo! the blessing
He commands, As dew on Hermon's hill of yore, LIFE - even life for
evermore!

Around, beneath, and rising sharply behind this spot were really 'ragged rocks,' though thickly covered with bush and undergrowth, through which there ran a narrow, winding, and difficult path. We were here informed that, shortly following on the burning of that building, one of the active participators in the evil deed was found lifeless among the rocks, having apparently in the night stumbled or slipped in such wise as to lose his life! This, by not a few, was ever regarded as an awful act of divine retribution; nor are we desirous to gainsay it.

The means of conveyance being limited, some of us had to wait awhile before proceeding to the abode, about eight miles away, of Mr. Knibb. Yet the delay was far from tedious, for we were excited by the novelties around us. We wandered amidst the tall cocoa-nut trees; delighted ourselves with rare plants, and shrubs, and fruits, and flowers; admired the humming-birds, the parrots, and the splendid butterflies; but most of all were glad to see and hold converse with the people.

At length, as the sun was nearing the horizon, we were summoned to depart. Soon the shades of evening fell strangely fast. The sea breeze died away. The feathery branches of the glistening cocoa-nuts ceased to move, and fell asleep. Then the stars shone forth in glory:—

Stars like moons, which, hung on high,
Breathed and quivered in the sky.

Then from out their hiding places came the many mirthful bats to take their evening meal, while countless fire-flies flashed on every side.

Thus we journeyed, attended by a party of our sable friends on horseback, till 'Kettering,' our destination, was reached.

Here we were welcomed by dear Mrs. Knibb in every way that loving-kindness could suggest. New friends and brethren also joined us, first in our repast, and next in our sacrifices of praise and prayer. What wonder that strange tumults were in our breasts, or that for the multitude of thoughts within us a few hours of retirement and solitude would have proved preferable to even such society? Here, then, in Jamaica we really were, not knowing what a day might bring forth. Yes, we were here, whether long to live and labour, or soon to die and rest, who should say? Ourselves we had, as with closed eyes, laid upon the altar. We had come 'bound in the Spirit to this land, not knowing the things which should befall us here.' Faith and hope were our rod and our staff to comfort us, and we wished for nothing, save to serve the Lord according to His will.

Our sleeping appointments were on the floors, because of the number to be accommodated, but not less comfortable than those of our ship. Yet who among us could sleep? Who could calm the surging thoughts, or quench the flashings of emotion? How oft did we rise to gaze on the glories of the sky, to feel the cooling balm of the richly-perfumed air, to enjoy the sight of shadowy hills and vales, the night song of innumerable insect tribes, or of the jocund mocking-bird! Brief and broken were our slumbers, for life seemed all too new for sleep. By dawn of day we were all astir, and ere the sun was hot, were gladdened by the arrival of the mission family, who came to rejoice with us.

At this time 'Kettering' was not properly a mission station. Our brother Knibb had here a needed refuge for his family from the heat and unhealthiness of the town of Falmouth, and within easy distance of the sub-station of 'Refuge.' It was a commanding position on an eminence, from which a wide extent of land and ocean were visible, and directly connected with a village, and allotments then beginning to be occupied by labouring people, who sought to acquire houses and grounds of their own.

Until now they had dwelt in hovels belonging to the plantations, for which, on their becoming free, they were compelled to pay extortionate rentals; and to deliver them, from this grinding oppression, these settlements were formed. We had come into this transition period. Freedom was little more than a shadow or a name, till the negro was absolutely free from the hands of his former masters; and this he had been quickly taught by grievous experience. Promptly to his aid our brethren had come, and through their efforts, in more than one sense, the slave became "free indeed."

II

Go, ye messengers of God,
Like the beams of morning fly;
Take the wonder-working rod,
Wave the banner-cross on high;
O'er the Negro's night of care
Pour the loving light of heaven;
Chase away the fiend despair,
Bid him hope to be forgiven.

As a missionary and philanthropist, Knibb was a man of special mark and celebrity. On behalf of the slave he laboured with his whole soul. His fervour and boldness in denouncing the abominations of slavery brought on him the burning hatred of the planters, and of all their sympathisers. His life was often in jeopardy, as were also the lives of his brethren, who fully shared in the strife. In one instance, through a false witness, bribed to make a declaration which by the law of the island would have brought him to the scaffold, Knibb was arrested and imprisoned; but the man quickly repented, and in open court denounced those by whom he had been suborned.

This event advanced Knibb to more prominence and power. It was evident that there could be no truce between Christianity and slavery. With Burchell as his coadjutor, Knibb laboured for emancipation through all England. He was called before a Committee of the House of Commons. Everywhere sought for and welcomed, on the platform he was unsurpassed. His form was manly and noble; his countenance benevolent and genial; his voice clear, melodious, and powerful; his command of language unbounded. To us he was now embodied sunshine - a magnetic force of goodness, devotion, and love.

His Church was in the little seaport town of Falmouth. The building was of brick, with galleries and vestries, accommodating about eighteen hundred. But this number was often largely exceeded, when, like bees at swarming time, crowds clustered at the doors and open windows, as well as thronged the vestries, the aisles, and the gallery stairs. The morning prayer-meeting was largely attended, many having left their homes before break of day, who filled the time between the services either at the school or in class meetings.

Our first Sabbath was with Knibb and his people. The very sight of that crowd, with black faces and glistening eyes, was most impressive. The throng was very dense, extending far around the building; yet the

silence was solemnising. No eagerness to hear could be more marked. No reverence in worship could be more apparent. No heartiness in singing the Lord's song could be more impressive. And when all stood up and sang to a glorious tune -

Yes, we hope the day is nigh,
When many nations long enslavèd,
Shall break forth add sing with joy,
Hosanna to the Son of David!
Hosanna! hosanna! hosanna to the Son of David!

The effect was overwhelming. Who could forget what, till so recently, these people had been and bad suffered? How many of them had shrieked under the driver's lash, or pined and groaned under every form of torture? Yet here they were all free, and seeking, if they had not found, the far greater freedom. And we, among them, seemed to have found a spiritual tropic clime, in striking contrast to the almost frigid zone we had left behind.

This church and congregation were a fair sample of those throughout the land. It had its sub-stations, its day-schools, and Sabbath-schools for adults and children alike. The general need for instruction was cared for to the full extent of the funds obtainable, and the people appreciated the benefits placed within their reach.

As a new arrival, my first care was to reconnoitre the field of service; hence I was glad of the opportunities afforded of visiting different places and sojourning among the brethren. The congregations were everywhere very large; the people mostly coming from estates at various distances, some even from seven to ten miles. In one instances, their homes were twelve miles from the church, and yet they cheerfully walked the distance to and fro. In the time of slavery, the missionaries had so little access to the people that it became necessary classes should be formed in different localities, and responsible appointed of the best men that could be found. These classes built their own houses for worship, wherein they met on Sabbath as well as other evenings; and those who had the oversight proved a valuable means of communication between the missionary and the people. In this way the system of classes and leaders had been established as one that was easily regulated, and that suited the exigencies of the time. By its means trifling discords were at once harmonised; individuals were subject to constant oversight; the sick had prompt attention; the poor and aged were known and relieved; the sanctity of the Lord's Day was guarded; anxious souls became known, and were introduced to the pastor; while the inconsistent, negligent, or backslidden were sought out, recovered, or brought under

discipline. The superstitious tendencies of the people were also kept in check, and the orgies common in olden time almost annihilated.

Social conditions, however, were far from satisfactory. Their former life was meant to bow and bind them to the level of the brute. Their tyrants had debased and degraded them to the uttermost, and there was nothing to aid them to rise. Their abodes were mere hovels. Their beds were mats spread on the floor, and that but bare earth. Furniture and goods for household use were rude and scanty. Everything betokened their recent casting upon the world, destitute of all things. To the unrighteous slaveholders England had given £20,000,000 as compensation for the surrender of stolen property; but to those of whose life-blood and unrequited toils they had enriched themselves, it gave literally nothing, not even a plot of land to cultivate. Yet many were smitten with sore diseases; many were aged, weak, or blind; some were widows with small children to care for, while others had families of whom scarcely any were fit for work. Surely not in this way did God send the slaves of Egypt forth; nor in this manner could the Hebrew set a bondman free.

Of course, the negro quickly awoke to a sense of his need. It was among the first signs of his new life; and in a fit of despondency I have heard him even wish for a return to his previous lot. In want of all things, with many depending on him, and with oppressions and unjust exactions grinding him on every side, it was not to be wondered at that men often felt care and worry were more than they could bear. The primary want was money; and if money could be had for labour, money the negro would have. But here the planters were leagued against him. They had gained their compensation by making oath that the average value of the labour was eighteen pence per day. When the labourers claimed this, they were met by extortionate rents, by the truck system, and by the burdens of taxation being laid wholly on themselves, while the rich were comparatively, free. When such unthought-of troubles came, their passion for independence was fired. For payments in cash they accepted lower and lower wages. For food they depended on their cultivations and a little salted fish. Meat was a luxury only. A "homestead" was the vision ever before them; and to call them lazy was unmitigated slander, a slander never heard from the lips of those who treated them justly. The words of one of them to me, in answer to a remark of mine, had a volume of significance when he said, 'Ah, minister, you dunno nigger yet! You t'nk nigger bring you two dollar when him no hab de grace o' God in him heart? Me say, No! Ah, you dunno nigger!'

Such in brief were some aspects of this sphere of labour. Here was a poor, oppressed, and uneducated people, intensely susceptible and affectionate, burdened with anxieties, surrounded by employers who hated them because they had escaped from their grasp. Missionaries were almost their only friends - certainly their only helpers. But we had no hoary idolatries to meet- no Popish priesthood to encounter - nor had we a new language to acquire. Some had come so recently from Africa, that they knew little beside their mother tongue. I knew one class of Eboe people whose meetings were always carried on in their own language; and to make up for their imperfect comprehension of the minister's sermons, the aged leader, who had been long in the island, said, "*Me break down de word to dem.*" Some of our brethren could tell to what tribes the Africans belonged by the differing lines and marks which had been cut in their faces whilst in their infancy, and from these people they had gleaned words of their mother tongue to help in converse with them. How very much for such people needed to be done; yet beyond giving them the Gospel, how little could we do! Oh, it was joy unspeakable that in such few and simple words the glorious Gospel could be conveyed; that the brightness of 'the Sun of Righteousness,' with its all-healing power, could be brought to so small a focus; and especially that this people, so 'robbed and spoiled,' were so ready to receive it!

None need wonder that we often found gross darkness resting upon the willing mind, and even the shadows of death; or that the servant of Christ needed much of blended sympathy and judgment in dealing with such a people. The old folk were slow to abandon their "charms," and sometimes as slow in losing their regard for omens and their fears of evil spirits. The influences of heathenism rested upon them, and were not to be wholly banished on the instant. Nothing but the higher life, flowing from a clearer knowledge of Christ, could truly exalt the soul and make it free indeed. Nor were they unconscious of this. 'None o' we is Christian yet,' said one of them to me, 'but we's trying for it. Dat's all!' Another once went very seriously to his leader and said, 'Seems dere's some secret in dis 'ligion, like Freemason, so you no tell all at once. Some hab de secret, and some can't get it for long time.' Were these not tokens that there was 'in the desert prepared a high-way for our God?'

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy
and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.
- 2 COR. viii. 2.

How far the people were from being "lazy" all things proved. Whence came the multitude of horses, which bore the produce of their grounds to market? Whence were all their needed equipments? What made their cultivation so richly productive - their walls and fences so perfect? How did they find the money for purchasing lands and building houses - for paying taxes and doctors - for supporting schools and churches; besides meeting those unenumerated requirements of life in food, clothing, and incidentals, which none can evade? Add to these the many voluntary labours for the Gospel's sake, which defy enumeration, and none will wonder that the very words 'lazy nigger' evoke the indignation of a Jamaica missionary.

My first settlement was at Rio Bueno— the place of our landing. The house for God was reared on the slope of a rocky steep, the way of ascent being over huge blocks of stone, or by a serpentine course where these were insurmountable. On a certain Sabbath morning our opening hymn was that of Dr. Watts:

How did my heart rejoice to hear My friends devoutly say,
In Zion let us all appear, And keep the solemn day!
Then, having read the first line of the following verse, 'I love her gates, I love the road,' I paused a moment, and exclaimed, 'No! we cannot say that. Let us pass on to the third verse— "Up to her courts with joys unknown" &c.'

As the service closed I noticed the congregation forming a number of groups, which remained to converse on something of general interest. Passing through these I caught the words 'Hi! de road too bad! de road 'poil de worship!' but of the object of the conference I knew nothing till on the day following a deputation came to ask for a supply of blasting powder. Having obtained this, each succeeding Friday, for several weeks, saw a strong party of men, women, and children giving voluntary labour to make a perfect road. And a perfect road they made for the house of the Lord; every inch of which was specially sanctified by a loving zeal which He well knew how to estimate and to accept. Had mere money been given for such work to be done by stranger hands, we could not, as we did, have celebrated its completion by singing with full hearts the whole of that song of Zion, without passing over the words—

I love her gates, I love the road,

The church adorned with grace
Stands like a palace built for God
To show His milder face.

This fact but exemplifies the prevailing spirit of the people. Many were the buildings for which all the timber was felled, prepared, and borne on the shoulder for miles; all the lime burned, and shingles split and carried by voluntary labour. 'But,' said the planters, 'that is your priestly domination; they will not work for us. The lazy lot would rather starve than work!' And this saying is commonly reported among them until this day. Nevertheless, the answer was not far to seek. I have known the planter who engaged a gang, at fifteen pence per day for each man's work, to clear the cane of weeds, &c. When the names were enrolled, as they were dispersing, the employer called aloud, 'Mind! It is for thirty chains a day!' Taking all in good faith, after a brief consultation the people assented. In due time the work was done. As the days passed, each one's work was measured and recorded; but when, all being finished, they went for payment, it appeared that in but few days had the full measure been reached. The fields being foul and the work heavy, in varying degrees it had fallen short; but in those instances only where thirty chains had been done *within the day* would the planter pay anything whatever!

The whole plantation was thus weeded and cleaned for next to nothing, "the hire of the labourers being kept back by fraud." On my earnest remonstrance, each labourer was 'presented' with half-a-crown; but all protested, 'We neber work for him no more!'

I knew the owner of another estate who had a general store, and who, when needed work was done, would absent himself, leaving tickets for the labourers, in exchange for which they might obtain flour, dried fish, clothing, tobacco, &c. On Sabbath days, secure from molestation, he might often be seen at home, but would disappear ere the day closed, till his people were tired out, and changed the tickets for what they could get.

Thus the people were driven to seek a livelihood away from the plantations, and on this wise. In Jamaica, only the rudest machinery and appliances were used for the production of sugar, so that not a third of that really grown ever reached the market; whilst in Cuba, every modern improvement was eagerly adopted, and slavery was not abolished. Hence the Jamaicans, unwilling to invest anything in improvements, sought their profits largely by 'grinding the faces of the poor.' So systematically was this done, that one man, who kept a record in a packet-book, once

showed me how on every estate within six miles he had been so cheated that he could work thereon no more.

Yet these people showed the riches of their liberality out of the abundance of their poverty. 'All giving and *always* giving' brought small contributions to a large amount; and when they had no money, its worth came in yams, fowls, eggs, coffee, chocolate, honey, or whatever they might have.

On my taking the pastorate at Rio Bueno, I was presented with a pair of beautiful horses which had cost £80. Expressing my surprise at the greatness of the gift, I was answered, 'We neber befo' hab a minister to call *we own*, and now we no want for *we minister* to be second to any in de island!' Of course I took these as church property, and on my leaving, left them behind. In such a climate horses were indispensable; and as public conveyances were unknown, the missionary would have been powerless without them, whilst by their means a great and effectual door was opened. In how many places far and near was the Gospel published, the people seen in their homes and met in their class-houses, and wide circuits of evangelistic meetings held! The life of 'labours more abundant' was a life of real joy. Wherever the preacher appeared, the people thronged. Sometimes an overseer has politely requested that my visit might be deferred, as it would stop the work of the estate; and afterward, to express his obligation, would prepare the largest building for my use, and attend at the service. Such gatherings were held as frequently as might be convenient - the first commencing as the day's work ended - the next at another village or township, according to distance, an hour and a half or two hours later - another and another following, till the midnight hour struck - deacons, leaders, and others also helping. Then would follow, in some green booth, the refreshing repast ere pursuing our homeward way through paths perfumed by the flowering orange, flashing with the fire-flies' splendour, and jocund with the night-birds' song. Or were the journey thought too long, the sweet bed of fresh plantain leaves in the negro's cot has been found a luxury indeed. Then at break of day a goodly circle of worshippers would meet, and the incense of that early hour would fill all the following day. No words can utter the joy of such never-to-be-forgotten scenes. No heart can think with what emotion the words would be ever coming to the lips:

In the desert let me labour,
On the mountains let me tell
How He died - the blessed Saviour,
To redeem the world from hell.

Nor were the days of my dear wife any less bright with joy. She found her special element in the schools, and the women sought her as a friend unknown before. To live each hour 'for Jesus' sake' made earth a heaven to her. Classes were gathered and taught, and her works brought their own recompense. Of those who came thus, there was one who said, 'Please, missis, Sunday teaching bery good; but it not enough, my sweet missis. Oh, if missis so good to make me come wid my chillern, dat we may learn more! The wish of course was granted, and the three wore often seen sitting by the hour on the floor, conning the words of the book, having come three miles for the privilege. At length, when the mother had adjusted her spectacles, a Testament, opened at the first chapter of John, was put into her hands. Looking up with wonder, she said, 'No, my sweet missis! Me can't read de booh yet!' On being urged to try, and slowly plodding through a few verses, she suddenly dropped the book and burst into tears, exclaiming, 'To tink dat me, poor ole cretur, lib to read God's blessed Book! The fact was too much for her, and on that day she, for her tears, could read no more.

In days so bright little did we think of dangers or of death. Our sky was cloudless. Our health was vigorous. The Lord was blessing us. Life was of the sweetest.

Yet, amidst all, the fever laid us low. Of the signs of its coming we were ignorant, and of remedies we had none. Far from help, thirty hours passed before a doctor came. In the second night after my wife's seizure, Mr. and Mrs. Knibb arrived, and did all in their power - in vain, alas! to her. Full soon 'she was not, for God took her.' Oh, the avalanche of sorrow - the dire catastrophe of that untimely death! Nor was I alone in my grief. In the following night, the officers of the church bore her sacred relics on their shoulders to Kettering, a distance of nine miles, for sepulture. They asked the privilege, and Mr. Knibb assured me their grief was so great, that not a word was spoken all the journey through.

IV

'Tis not the way that lay so bright before me,
 When youth stood flushed on Hope's enchanted ground;
 No cloud in the blue sky then bending o'er me,
 No desert spot in all the landscape round.
 A way I knew not—winding, rough, and thorny,
 So dark at times that I no path might see;
 But Thou hast been my guide through all the journey,
 Its steepness has but made me lean on Thee.

Restored health recalled me to my work, and to my home, which for awhile had of necessity been forsaken. Weakened in body and crushed in spirit, an exile, and bereft of what I held most dear, life seemed more bitter than I had ever dreamed. Alone in a building so large, that it was afterward taken for the Calaban College - servants' apartments being detached - I often found it unendurable.

The joy-giving pretence, the communing heart, the ever happy look and voice, were gone! How often did I fly from its precincts to soothe a fevered mind in the perfumed air, amid rustling trees, with the songs of birds, by the ecstasies of the instinct tribes, or, through hours of night, to wander where the phosphorescent wavelets played along the shore. How vainly! In health I suffered anew until, 'for the work's sake,' duty seemed to urge RIP to '*forget*.' Alas! the pent up waters only gathered to burst their bounds again and again, for though the loved may die, the love cannot. How touching to me at such a time was it, that, of his own accord, ray servant was wont to spread his mat, and sleep on the ground at my chamber door! How I blessed him as, without disturbing his slumber, I silently passed over him as I would! It was a lowly sign of his sympathy and love; yet but a sign of the spirit which in every way the people continually displayed. To record their many generous deeds is not possible; but they served to bring around me an atmosphere of love, which warmed my heart with admiring gratitude.

It was at this time, when, having about sixty persons to baptise in the sea at Dry Harbour, I found some persons ranged in the form of a crescent behind me. On my asking the reason for so singular a course, they looked one on another as if not willing to answer, till, being pressed For an explanation, one said with a smile - 'Shark too much 'bout dis place, Minister; we no hab shark for come take we Minister away.' With their own lives they stood for the defence of mine!

Ere long a very superior master was obtained for my school, who, with his excellent wife, shared my abode. Reports, however, soon reached them that the house was haunted, and they were seriously troubled. I had long been familiar with noises for which it was not difficult to account, as the place was dilapidated, and much liked by rats and bats; but these dear friends were not open to conviction. They fostered each other's dread so much, that their care for me alone kept them under my roof. By the parents and children they were treated with every token of affectionate regard, to which they were by no means insensible; but when it was affirmed that 'the duppies' had been seen riding round the house at a gallop, holding the tails of the horses for bridles - when they had removed a sleeper from his room, so that he

awoke in the passage on the following morning, with his feet raised on the steps - when by night they entered the master's room, rattling his keys, shaking the garments, and moving, now here, now there, whilst with his wife he sat up, bathed in cold perspiration, to listen, - and when one had, by night, really cantered a horse up to my door, when the wife was alone awaiting her husband's return, but, with the horse, had vanished, when she rushed out to meet him - it was too much! The good man loved his work, his scholars, and the people; but the untimely frivolities of these shadowy 'duppies,' which really injured no one, caused him to seek out another sphere.

That superstitions should be very prevalent among a negro population every one would expect; but many of these were trivial enough to excite only a smile, whilst all would die a natural death as the truth of God became more fully known. Nevertheless, some were long latent, and like smothered fires would by a breadth flame up afresh. Of these the most potent and mischievous related to the demon called 'Obeah.' It had long dominated in Africa, and the terror had descended from generation to generation, ever fostered by men who lived by its means. As agents of the spirit, they wielded his powers over pain, disease, disaster, and death. Obeah, as a magic spell composed of rusty nails, needles, pins, bits of glass, of bone or earthenware, of teeth or minerals, together wrapped in rags, was secretly placed to afflict the unwary object of malevolence passing over or under it. As poison, Obeah was mixed with food. Before the eye it defended fruit trees or provision grounds from theft. In the parish of Manchester, when from a drought the river had ceased to flow, the cause was traced to Obeah, and with great ceremony, in the sight of hundreds, 'Doctor Taylor' - like the African rain-maker - dashed into a deep hole and removed the cursed thing! Then the air rang with shouts of joy. Rain returned in three weeks' time, and the river flowed again; but common belief said, 'if Taylor had not taken out the Obeah, the river would have run no more!'

The counter-superstition was 'Myalism,' of which Taylor seems to have been a priest. For pecuniary considerations, the Myal doctor could discover the Obeah, and annihilate its power. The one superstition lived by the other; and if for awhile forgotten, these were liable, like the ghostly fears of my friend the schoolmaster, to return with grievous power. Such revivals have been at different times where least expected, filling hundreds with frenzies, stopping all labour, causing the wildest excesses, and rending families asunder. Some when reasoned with would be calm for some minutes, listen and weep, and then with blood-shot eyes, rave, and stamp, and foam, as if possessed with a devil. So, bursting through every restraint, I have seen them defy pursuit, and like wild

goats scale rocks and heights, rush down frightful steepes, slighting every obstacle, till from a wide circuit they rejoined their company. Hundreds on this account have been excluded from church-fellowship, but most of them at length returned with shame and humiliation, confessing their folly and their fault.

The practice of the Myal doctors was but a rude jugglery, carried on with forms and incantations; so that, having themselves secreted the terror, after much pretence of searching they would find it, burn it, and reap their harvests of compensation. From sufferers they would cure, it was made to appear that they abstracted pieces of glass, bone, metals, &c., thus ensuring an ultimate, if not an instant cure. How this was done, I explained to men whose intelligence was above the average, and sent them to confront and confound the deceivers. On their return, they were called on for their report at a deacons' meeting. Their reply was, 'Minister, we've nothing to say. We see it with we own eye!' 'And what did you see?' I asked. 'We see them take the sister, who have great pain in the shoulder. Then they bring basin and water. They then rub the place long time, and the Myal man put his mouth to it, and take out a big nail and spit it into the basin! Yes, we see it with we own eye!' And to them seeing was believing. They owned that no blood had flowed - that the extracted nail left no mark of its exit - and that none saw the nail come from the shoulder - yet of the fact they were fully satisfied, and argument having no power, I could but ridicule the whole affair, and dismiss them. However, I heard no more of their faith in Obeah or Myal, and among my own people the superstition thenceforth was apparently at an end.

Still more strange was the practice of catching the shadow, by which they understood the spirit, and screwing it down in a coffin; of course, very small but very neatly finished, so as to be worth preserving, after which, provided the coffin were never opened, Obeah could do the possessor no harm. The shadow was caught at night, generally among the trees, where strange feats of agility, speed, and strength would be exhibited to excite the onlookers and to seal the claim to a large payment for so great a work - usually an amount as great as, it was thought, the privileged person could pay. And what gross evils were not practised under this screen, or by means of the tyrannical power so wielded! Who dare defy such mysterious powers? Who that *feared* was not in danger of becoming the dupe or the victim of such agents of the devil? In the gross darkness of such superstition in former times every crime appears to have been committed, and almost always to have been safe from detection.

Having to deal with a people who had inherited so strong a leaning to superstition, rendered our examinations of candidates for baptism most anxious and wearisome. Moreover, such examinations were often repeated—the same persons frequently having to attend again and again, some for months, and some for years. For this work whole days, even two or three in a week, and also in successive weeks, have had to be entirely devoted. The person before the pastor might be nervously agitated, or really not have words whereby to utter what the heart contained. Baptism might be sought as a ministry of salvation; or the applicant might be too ignorant of the Gospel, or of himself; or the testimonies as to character might not be satisfactory. This work, therefore, demanded no common wisdom. Was apparent sincerity to suffice? Was character, in a difficult case, to turn the scale of judgment? Could all responsibility remain with the candidate? Must all the fancies and superstitions of the ignorant be set in arrest of the desire to unite with the Church of Christ? What rule could be fixed? We saw our hearers frequently in tears whilst listening to our addresses. Penitents from miles away have been found, before the dawn of Monday morning, weeping at my door, longing for counsel and comfort. To set before such any standard but ‘repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus,’ would have been to ‘quench at once the smoking flax;’ and if in admitting candidates to fellowship we at times were in error, the very rigid discipline of the Churches largely counteracted such errors, and clearly proved that in religious qualities the professed Christians of Jamaica were not behind those in more favoured lands. What a mercy was it to them, that salvation could be so simply presented and in so small a compass – ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!’

V

No sweeter is the cup,
Nor less our lot of ill;
’Twas tribulation ages since,
’Tis tribulation still.
No slacker grows the fight,
No feebler is the foe,
Nor less the need of armour tried,
Of shield, and spear, and bow.

On removing to Montego Bay, I found the Church had more than fourteen hundred members and some three hundred registered enquirers. The chapel would seat two thousand and eight hundred hearers, yet it was often insufficient for the congregation. Here, and through the wide region round, Mr. Burchell had long and abundantly laboured. With these people and for them, at the imminent peril of his life, he had faced the terrors of 'martial law.' Many were here to prove with what spirit and power he had preached the Gospel and proved 'a burning and shining light.' With him as its ever active and zealous centre, the religious machinery constantly expanded and worked with power. To the enslaved population it imparted life and light, comfort, hope, and holy impulse, which seemed the dawn of heaven below. The Spirit of God breathed like morning air, spread like contagion, and burned like sacred fire. What wonder was it that to 'a people robbed, and peeled, and spoiled,' the Gospel should be the power of God unto salvation? The Sunday markets threw the people by thousands into the missionaries' way. Like shoals of fish they came to those who were 'fishers of men,' and multitudes became the Lord's. As a sample, see William Plummer. This weary slave having brought his load of provisions, was attracted by seeing a great crowd, and urged his way till within hearing of the preacher's voice. His huge basket was soon on the ground, and with eager attention he leaned on the post at the corner of the street.

Like arrows piercing him, like lightnings lashing him, the words of God entered to his very soul. Lost to all but thoughts of God, when the service ended, he went to his humble abode, wholly forgetting the great load he had gone so far to sell, and groaning deeply under the far heavier load of guilt and fear. Then with all his heart he turned to the Lord, serving Him faithfully to the end of his days. I knew him well, and loved him much, as a man who was a saint indeed, adorning the Gospel of God in all things. Yet he was but one of the many seals to Mr. Burchell's laborious but blessed ministry, prosecuted with courageous constancy, though furious foes on every side plotted against his life.

It must be remembered that the white population called slavery a Divine institution, and deemed it essential to their very existence. Their commerce depended on it. Estates without slaves were valueless. Many possessed no other property. Emancipation meant universal ruin, and abolitionists were but thieves and robbers. But Christianity being incompatible with slavery, every missionary labouring for the slaves was *de facto* an abolitionist. That a sharp contest was inevitable they easily foresaw, but that was all. At length it came suddenly, in a way they had not thought of; but as it came from men connected with the Church under Mr. Burchell's care, their fury was unbounded. All Baptist chapels

were at once destroyed, and the life of every Baptist missionary was in danger; yet not only did the Lord not forsake His servants, but to them, in several instances, it seemed that His hand was stretched out against their persecutors. An officer of the militia used openly to boast that he 'would do for Burchell with this very pistol' snatching with the right hand the weapon carried in his belt at the left. 'I'll have his blood,' was an oft-repeated threat. But once, when at dinner, having, as usual, placed the pistols on either side of his plate, a gentleman opposite, attracted by their appearance, asked to see one of them. The very pistol set apart for Burchell's destruction was at once courteously handed for inspection. Having been much admired and praised, when about to return it, the friend of the officer playfully raised it, exclaiming, as he pulled the trigger, 'Have at you, my boy!' It proved to be loaded. The charge lodged in the officer's own breast, and caused his death! The Rev. T. F. Abbott told me he had by special enquiries learned that it was indeed 'that very pistol!'

From thickening dangers and 'perils by his own countrymen,' Mr. Burchell took refuge on board the *Blanche*, a frigate lying in the Bay. When at length it was known that he was to return to land, his foes crowded to the jetty, where another fiery officer declared that from the top of those steps he would 'throw Burchell backward into the boat!' But when nearing the place, the threatening demonstrations of the crowd alarmed the officer who was steering, and at the last instant, turning the boat sharply aside, he said, 'Give way, boys! give way!' So with all speed it shot across to another landing, and Burchell was saved. But as the frigate was about to leave, a dinner was given to a number of guests, of whom that officer in the militia was one.

Of course the entertainment was in all things most liberal, and the festivities prolonged. At last the company returned, and on those steps there *he* slipped and fell backward, his head striking the gunwale of the boat who had planned that fate for the missionary! From that fall, Mr. Abbott said, he never recovered!

Many and striking were the instances in which, after a similar manner, calamities and untimely deaths befell the men who were most prominent, either in destroying the places of worship, or endeavouring to compass the death of the missionaries. Of course, but little was said of them at the time, lest the greater anger of survivors should be roused by what they would have thought a presumptuous or cruel fanaticism in tracing the hand of God where they saw nothing but chance; yet among the common people impressions were left which were both deep and lasting. One woman, who, in wild excitement at the destruction of a chapel, was crying out, 'thank God! that den is down! Thank God! that

den is down!' suddenly fell down in a fit and expired. In another place, the leader of the mob which burned the house of God was found soon afterward dead among the rocks near by, having apparently mistaken the path in the night, and fallen to rise no more. To many, indeed, such facts had no significance; for it was ever, as the prophet said, 'Lord, when Thy hand is lifted up they will not see,' although 'verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth.' The immediate cause of that insane fury of the white people was the sudden insurrection among the slaves; which, though soon proved to be weak and futile, served at least to fill the island with terror. Naturally enough, it was attributed to those instructions and religious influences which could but make their condition of bondage intolerable; especially as their combinations in worship and Christian fellowship could but also show their vast numerical superiority in contrast to their oppressors. The discovery of danger had however come too late; though doubtless by many, who could discern no possibility of preventing it, the judgment had long been formed 'whereunto this would grow.' Not only had experience convinced the sufferers that their state of bondage was cruel and unjust, but added to this, the Word of God called them to a life which was, under their circumstances, impossible. For a while they could but groan, and cry, and suffer. They shed 'the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; on the side of their oppressors was power; but they had no comforter.' In proportion as they had enlightened understandings, quickened consciences, and changed hearts, their deep debasement was a torment grievous to be borne: and this often worse, from the fact that their so-called 'owners' were absentees, and themselves were left to brutish tyrants, from whom they could neither escape or appeal.

At length, as through a rift in a cloud or chink in the dungeon door, one man espied a ray of light. He was the butler of a wealthy merchant, and had learned to read. In the Baptist Church at Montego Bay he had been placed in the deacon's office, which he held with honour. No man than he was more unlikely to shake the foundations of society or rock the world. Gentle and faithful, wise, loving, and holy, he had no thought but to keep the even tenor of his quiet way. Having a nephew employed in the office of the *Cornwall Chronicle* newspaper, occasionally an old cast-away English paper reached his hands; and so it happened that, in one of these, he found a full report of an anti-slavery meeting. With a whirl of unwonted thoughts he read, and with a fluttering heart he pondered. That paper was carefully concealed, and more were eagerly sought. Wonders multiplied. Here were 'petitions' to the Houses of Parliament, carrying thousands of signatures. There was

the report of the Anti-Slavery Society, with thousands of pounds at its command. Besides, there were the debates in Parliament on the question of slavery. Sam Sharp soon found he 'had fire in his bones, so that he was weary of forbearing; he could not stay.' Friends were secretly collected to hear the amazing news. 'They were excited beyond measure, and spread the tidings far and wide. Ere long they were chafing with impatience, and debating what they should do, none thinking 'their strength was to sit still.' Then strange rumours got abroad, such as 'the King was going to send a letter to the Governor to make all slaves free;' which was followed by 'the King's letter had come, but the Governor kept it back.'

At last Sam Sharp suggested a plan of action which seemed to meet the case, a plan which was at once enthusiastically resolved upon. The white population was insignificantly few, and therefore to his mind powerless, if only the coloured people were united in their purpose. He was sure that 'union was strength.' What were the handful (13,000) of whites against all the blacks (365,000)? Hence they had but to join in a resolve not to work without payment, and the thing was done! He meant simply passive resistance. 'When we all say we no more work except you pay, dem can't make wel'

The impracticable nature of the scheme he saw not. Enough for him that it was morally right and just. Full of the thought 'We hab frens in England!' he felt that slavery was already doomed, and little was needed to achieve its downfall. The result was a secret society, pledged to act together when affairs were ripe. But as adherents multiplied, some doubted of success. They knew the men they had to deal with, and foreboded evil. Suddenly at one of the gatherings a man arose, and broke in with the scornful words, 'O 'noo all fool! O 'noo all fool! You tink dey mek we go free so? Me say, no! nebber! we will hab to fight for it ! We must get gun; we must get lead and mek bullet; we must get powder and sword, plenty too; and all be ready to fight for de free!' Then followed no doubtful murmur of the crowd. It was, 'Hear him! hear him! hear him!' on every side.

Conviction flashed through his impassioned words. The coming crisis was no child's play, but a storm of fury, fire, and blood. Sam Sharp was troubled, but still steadfast. He replied, 'No, my brudder! Dat is bad word! De Bible say, dem as take de sword must perish wid de sword. Beside, dere's no 'casion, 'pose we all agree. Dem's too few! We's de most! When altogeder we say, "We no work no mo', 'cept you pay," dem can't mek wel'

Hence long and earnest discussions began; and though many were averse to a bloody strife, there were few who did not seek in some way

to make preparation for it. Even the most peaceful said, 'If dey come to fight we, den we must fight; but we 'gree not to go for fight 'cept we forced to.' However, beyond the range of Sharp's direct influence, it is doubtful if the pacific spirit at all prevailed; and notwithstanding the passionate longing for liberty, by far the greater majority felt they were so powerless, that they shrank from committing themselves to the struggle whereof they knew nothing, and wherein life must be the stake.

VI

The hope of freedom had now become a feverish excitement, which ignorance and inexperience intensified. To revolt from established tyranny required as much calm judgment as unflinching courage. There was danger in impetuosity, which Sam Sharp foresaw; but against it he had no power. His thought of passive resistance found comparatively little favour, and dangers threatened in the reckless spirit of men too confident in their own powers. The secret combination was yet but limited, and many of the people were too wary to commit themselves before success was pretty well assured.

The storm, however, burst unexpectedly, and the conflict commenced with ruinous haste. It is true that multitudes, in a portion of the island, had entered the confederacy; but the combination of the whole people was far from being an accomplished fact. Three months had passed (but twelve would scarcely have sufficed for the preparation required), when the spark fell into the magazine of suppressed excitement and set the country, in a blaze. A woman at Salt Spring estate was to be flogged for a fault, and at once her husband, rushed on the planter, and inflicting a furious blow, exclaimed that his wife should never be flogged any more! In a moment all was uproar, panic, and confusion.

In vain the planter called on men to seize the rebel; none heeded his command. As soon as possible the message was sent to Montego Bay for help; but hours must pass before it could be got, and the men fled in a body. When darkness set in, a huge fire was seen blazing on the top of the hill. The red signal was soon answered by distant fires on every side. The insurrection was precipitated. On the morrow, bands of armed men were roaming abroad to burn, and destroy, to pillage and to murder. They dreamed of liberty to be purchased by violence and crime; but what else could be expected of men who, by their owners, had been kept in the darkest ignorance and deepest debasement? Some indeed were

horrified, and remained faithful to their masters; some were without weapons and incapable of joining the war; others clung to family ties, and so were quiet; while others again were mere cowards in whose breasts no aspirations dwelt.

No time was lost by the authorities in putting martial law into force; setting aside justice, mercy, and truth for the sake of expediency - which expediency was too often but that of blind passion. Sad indeed were the tales told, when, all was over, of cruelties causelessly inflicted, and of the reckless sacrifice of the innocent with the guilty. Victims were wanted to make terror dominate, and who these should be mattered little.

George Spencer, belonging to Fat-Quarter, was executed at Lucea 'for rebellion and rebellious conspiracy.' He was taken on Friday evening and the following morning brought to the military tribunal. Ensnaring questions were put to him by the president to make him criminate himself, and especially to involve Mr. Burchell. The man replied that he 'did not know Mr. Burchell,' 'he never saw him,' 'was not a Baptist,' 'he belonged to Mr. Watson's (Presbyterian Mission) Church.' An officer present, who was not one of the court, boldly protested against the injustice of the course taken by the president, but in vain. He was told that he had no right to interfere. The man was sentenced to be shot at once, but when led forth to his doom was not aware of the fate awaiting him! Seeing the soldiers, he asked the marshal, with evident surprise, 'Where are you going to take me? What are you going to do with me?' The only answer given him was by the officer in command throwing a jacket over his head and face, tying the sleeves around his neck, and, as he stepped back, giving the word to 'fire!' Immediately the poor fellow lay a bleeding corpse upon the ground! What mattered it whether he were innocent or guilty? Such summary slaughter would make others fear!

At Montego Bay, William Plummer was imprisoned with several others; but no case could be made out against them beyond this, 'they were members of the Baptist Church.' At length, the gaol being greatly overcrowded, it was as inexpedient to keep them as to let them go. Thus it happened that the gaoler entered the crowded cell on a certain evening, and very carefully closed up the only narrow opening in the wall which afforded ventilation. Soon after this he returned with a great pan of burning brimstone, which he set on the ground; then exclaiming, 'There, you devils! you will smell hell-fire to-night!' he locked the door. Narrating to me the story, with flowing tears Plummer exclaimed, 'God is so good, Minister! Oh, yes, God is so good! Else me no bin here to tell you. You see, dey want we all for go dead! De gaoler he 'spect in a

morning to see we is dead! Ah, Minister, God is so good and kind! You see dis? When de door shut, it no come close down at de bottom. Den we get on de ground and poke we nose close as we can to de hole—so we get a lettle breff. Den when morning come, dey open da door and see we no dead! Ah, yes! God is good! Else me no bin here to-day!’

These are but samples of the atrocities which in many forms were common at that time. All our places of worship were either burned or pulled down. Our brother Knibb, with other missionaries, was imprisoned, and Burchell had fled for his life to H.M.S. *The Blanch*, then lying in Montego Bay. But where was Sam Sharp, the innocent author of all this evil? He had taken with him some hundreds who were resolved to do nothing unless they were first attacked. They were prepared for the conflict should it be forced on them, but he would bear no weapon. He dwelt with them, at a place called Greenwich Hill, as the Christian leader, to counsel, restrain, and instruct. Daily worship was offered by the whole company every morning and night. Thus they simply awaited events, and gathered all the information possible.

Ere long it was reported that the missionaries were imprisoned for inciting to rebellion, and would be put to death; if, indeed, some were not already executed. The faithful Christian secretly resolved on the course to take. If the missionaries yet live he will save them from death. If any are dead he will save their reputation. Alone, in darkness, he makes his way into the town, and finds his brother. Rejecting every remonstrance, he goes to the house of the merchant, Mr. Grignon, his master, and boldly says he has come to surrender himself, because the ministers were accused of causing the rebellion, when he alone was responsible for the whole of it!

The day following saw the town and country alike full of wonder and excitement. The deed was entirely voluntary. The man, assured of a terrible death, was his own accuser. None charged him with a deed of violence or wrong. All that he had done his utmost to prevent. There was no evidence against him but his own. He had learned, ‘We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,’ and though life was as sweet to him as to them, he chose so to do.

Knibb obtained permission to see the prisoner in his cell, in the presence of witnesses. Before them he most solemnly charged him to state fully and fearlessly if any missionary had, in *any* way, said or done anything to lead him, or any one that he knew, to take a part in the insurrection. Sharp replied, ‘No, minister, you never did. Mr. Burchell never did. No one minister ever say such a word. But me read it in my Bible!’

Yes, indeed! That had been his teacher and his guide, and from it the principles and inspirations of his life had been drawn, whilst to them he adhered even to the end.

Of course, he was condemned to die. In prison he daily received from his kindred the hymns and chapters used at family worship, and to them he returned those he had chosen.

Full soon the fatal morning came. A merchant told me of his intense interest in the case, and the wondering admiration he felt for the man. He said: 'I saw him on that morning come from the gaol with form as erect, with steps as firm and face as bright, as if he had won a victory.' In front of the house at the windows of which his master's household appeared, he paused to bow his last farewell. At the scaffold he was calm and self-possessed. With a clear voice he told the crowd that he came to die because he thought they had a right to be free, but he had done no violence nor wrong. He declared his firm faith in the Lord Jesus and his hope of eternal life. 'Ah! my broders,' said he, 'now you see de heaben is like brass, and de eart' is like iron. You know what trouble we pass troo. But God is good, you will see! No sooner is me gone dan God will open de heaben and send de plenty o' rain, so you will all rejoice.'

Quickly the rope was adjusted, and the drop fell. At once great drops of rain began to fall from what was said to have been a cloudless sky. Torrents followed, and the people rushed away for shelter, exclaiming, 'Didn't God tell him to say dat word? Hi! what is dis mean?'

He was buried on the sea shore, till in due time a company of missionaries removed his bones. A beautiful coffin of polished mahogany, and a vault under the pulpit in the Lord's house, were prepared, wherein the complete skeleton was solemnly interred at midnight, in the presence of a great throng of those who loved him well. For five years I was preaching every Sabbath immediately above those honoured remains, always conscious that to Sam Sharp the missionary cause is more indebted than words can ever tell.

VII

No! think not I can ever be False to my Saviour's hallowed name,
 For aught that thou could'st offer me - A little life - a little fame:
 'Twere weak indeed to lose for them A bright unfading diadem.
 And if one passing pang I feel, Deluded crowd! 'tis felt for you:
 Ev'n thus resolved the Truth to seal, I would that ye were martyrs too!
 Blest Saviour! Lord of earth and heaven! Oh, be their sins and mine forgiven.

The insurrection naturally evoked the utmost hostility of the planters and their partizans against all missionary instrumentalities. A variety of circumstances led to this, which, when fully known, diminish our surprise, although they fail to form its justification. Primarily, the Gospel enlightened the minds and quickened the consciences of those who required to be kept as nearly as possible to the level of the brute if slavery were to continue. The missionaries made the slave of too much importance. They raised his sense of accountability from the earthly to the heavenly Master. They made him believe that God was his Father, and that before all others He must be served and loved. This alone was incompatible with the very existence of West Indian slavery. It was seen and felt that, sooner or later, a collision was inevitable. The missionaries knew this, and were ever on their guard. The planters *Mt* it, and, with rare exceptions, made no secret of their animosity. But when it was known that a Baptist deacon acknowledged the origination of the rebellion they were filled with madness, and intent only on repression and retaliation. Hence every religious meeting excited their suspicion and roused their ire. Without doubt these meetings gave opportunities for secret communications; and many would frequent them to advance the projects of the insurrection, who had no religious sympathies. Thus either before or after such meetings - which, indeed, were well-nigh innumerable - the passion for liberty was doubtless very zealously fired and fed. Even the most excellent of the people could, without injuring their piety, adopt the principle, 'We no work if you no pay.' Not having learned the sinfulness of all war whatsoever, many professed Christians, of every denomination, joined in the struggle for liberty. The Baptist Churches were chiefly involved in this because they had, beyond the rest, drawn the slave population to their fellowship. What wonder, then, if the planters knew that after the prayer-meetings on different estates secret conferences were held? And what wonder if reports were exaggerated until the white people were unanimous in their determination to suppress every semblance of religion which was not conformed to the Established Church? Hence amongst the slaves the most zealous were often singled out for vengeance, while those who wreaked that vengeance, as some afterwards, confessed, were wholly 'beside themselves' with fury.

In the south eastern part of the island a striking illustration of these things occurred. Among the multitudes attending Mr. Philippo's ministry, a slave named Moses was converted to Christ. To serve the Lord and seek the salvation of souls soon became the joy of his life. To multitudes far and near he published all he had learned. Many were led

by him to listen to the missionary. Many were the places where he gathered the people for worship; and many, by his labours, became his joy and crown.

At length, in distant parts of the island the insurrection had suddenly broken out. It mattered nothing to their masters that these poor people were far from the scenes of strife, and gave no sign of a rebellious spirit. The planters thought they saw in every prayer-meeting the sign of revolt. Among themselves the subject was always uppermost. None doubted the natural relation of these meetings to the insurrection. What were the missionaries but social firebrands? 'What did these black brutes, who had not one soul among a thousand of them, want with religion?' 'It was God's will that they should be slaves, and the Bible proved that beyond a doubt!' But what could now be done? Could they not stop this increasing rage for religion? Could not the mischief, which threatened so much, be nipped in the bud? To do this the chief man must be seized, and his followers scattered before they were ripe for revolt.

Such was the conclusion arrived at. Martial law being in force, it was decided that Moses should be apprehended at one of his meetings, and duly tried and executed as a mover of sedition. The place, the time, and the circumstances were all duly settled, and the end awaited with satisfaction.

The time arrives. The men who are to seize their victim advance to the humble cottage where prayer was wont to be made. All through the negro villages would be seen the tall cocoa-nut trees, whose light feathery leaves would rustle in the evening air whilst gleaming like silver under the light of the moon. The ever clear and cloudless sky, so full of glorious stars; the ceaseless ring of a thousand noisy crickets; the fragrance of the orange, flowers, and the song of the nightingale or mocking bird, make the nights in Jamaica surpassingly beautiful. But through all this, while the song of praise is heard in sweet accord from the unsuspecting throng, these angry men pursue their way. They listen awhile. In the darkness without, they scan the faces of the crowd within. The object of their search is not there! What can they do? Evidently suspecting that by some means their intention had been discovered to Moses, who in consequence had kept out of the way, they concluded that 'one man was as good as another to make an example of,' and so resolved that the leader of this meeting, whose name was David, a constant helper of Moses, should be taken in his stead. He was therefore taken as a prisoner. The charge against him was that he held a meeting for exciting rebellion, though it has not been shown that such meetings as he had presided at were prohibited by law. However, David was taken

to the town of Black River, and there, after the mock trial usual in such cases, was condemned and executed. We know of him nothing more, but every Christian can imagine much. He was living and working for his Lord, and for that he died a martyr's death. By the fury of ignorant malice he was sacrificed, and had any demanded, 'Why? What evil hath he done?' there could have been but one response: 'Away with him! Away with him!'

By special request, his head was, after death, sent back to the estate from which he had come. His death, in a distant place, does not serve the intent of the planters, which was to fill the people with a wholesome fear of their masters' power and determined purpose. Did they think that the Christians' fear of man was greater than the fear of God? This they meant to try. A suitable pole was chosen and brought from the bush. The people of the entire district were then brought together. The head, fixed upon the pole, was raised on high, and the trophy firmly secured. Then the spectators are told of the rebellion in the north and west, of its miserable failure, of the mad excesses of the rebels, and the terrible vengeance which had overtaken them. These sorrows, they were told, had all come through the so-called 'prayer meetings,' which at once and for ever must cease. At any cost their owners were determined on this, and to prove it David had been punished as a warning to them.

After much had been delivered to the same effect, the name of Moses was loudly called. Answering from a distance, he came into the circle before them all. Thus standing, he was addressed on this wise:— 'Now, Moses, you have heard all this, so take warning. Let us see that you understand all about it. Whose head is that above you?' Moses answers, '*Dat's David, massa.*'

'And what is he there for?'

For praying, massa.

'Well, listen! Do you know that *your* head should have been on that pole; and so it would have been if David had not taken your place? Now, mark! we'll have no more of these meetings; and if we catch you at them we shall serve you like David. Yes, *all of you*. We mean to serve you all alike. Do you hear, Moses?'

Indeed he did hear it. What could he do? To quietly acquiesce would be like denying his Lord. To declare his purpose to disobey would be construed as rebellion. It was a sore trial, but he was equal to the occasion. Kneeling by the pole under the head of David, he clasped his hands, exclaiming, 'Let us pray!' At once the assembled crowd were on their knees, and before their masters could recover from their

astonishment, Moses had secured their attention to his fervent prayer. We know by the issue that wisdom and grace were so given him then that they quietly listened till his prayer was ended. The spirit of that ever so emotional race was doubtless most fully evidenced on that occasion. The fury of the planters was quelled. They were satisfied - perhaps even ashamed. David had without cause been put to death, but Moses they had not the heart to destroy.

Ere I left Moses was old and grey. From that eventful hour he had continued his work, 'none daring to make him afraid.' I saw him at the house of his beloved pastor; and soon after he died of cholera. 'He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith; there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give him at that day.'

VIII

In the years immediately following emancipation the Sunday Schools were among the most interesting aspects of our work. The number of adults who took their places with the children surprised as well as greatly pleased us. To read the Scriptures for themselves was a much coveted privilege. Age was as much disregarded in the classes as if thirsty throngs were crowding to pools of water. Thus, with the early prayer-meetings, the class-meetings held by leaders and deacons, the school of the morning and afternoon, and our public services, suitable occupation was found for the immense gatherings on the Lord's Day, and no appearances dishonoured its sacredness. Sabbaths then were, in Jamaica, days of holy joy and praise, and all could see that 'the fields were already white unto the harvest.'

Nevertheless, the ingathering was a very anxious and tedious work, owing to the ignorance of the people, their superstitions, and their former habits. Applicants for baptism came in crowds, and the work of the leaders was indispensable for sifting these. Of course their judgments as to proofs of conversion were not relied upon, although from their knowledge of the candidates their testimony was very important. As the rule, they introduced for the pastor's examination those they could commend, and were carefully consulted before such were received. Whole days in succession were frequently spent in these examinations, and it was not unusual for neighbouring missionaries to be called in to help in so great a work, many, even of such as were approved, being examined again and again. Not a few on these occasions would be

pronounced unsuitable, who yet would seldom fail to appear from time to time for months, and even years. We were painfully conscious in all this that we were not infallible, and could but act on judgments formed very often on uncertain data. Without doubt many were sent away who, could we have known more, ought to have been received; and just as many, for the same cause, baptised who would have been at least deferred.

It was but natural that from the Sunday Schools we should expect some of the best of fruits, nor were we disappointed. Catherine Harding, a tall and slender girl of 16 or 17 years, of very interesting manners and appearance, sought for baptism repeatedly, but owing to her extreme timidity could give no satisfactory account of herself. Either no reply at all, or a whispered 'Yes!' or 'No!' were all that resulted from attempted conversations with her, and with the lapse of time she made no progress. Her mother was a member of the Church, and Catherine had long been in the school. It was to the no small grief and surprise of the leader that such an exemplary girl should so often be 'put back.' Expressing his disappointment, he said, 'Minister, some of dem dat no hab one word to say for demself is better nor many as can tell you *eberry ting!*' Living as she did very near to us, we cultivated her acquaintance until she acquired sufficient confidence to tell us plainly of her 'repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Ultimately she was baptised and admitted to the Church. Daily she came to my dear wife for more of Scriptural instruction; but it was not long ere with her rapid growth there were signs of pulmonary consumption setting in. Feeling a very anxious concern for her, we removed her to our little cottage on the nearest hill, hoping by care and medical attendance to arrest the disease. Months passed.

The spoiler came, yet paused, as though
 So meek a victim checked his arm;
 Half gave, and half withheld the blow,
 As forced to strike, yet loath to harm.

All that could be done availed nothing. She but ripened for a fairer world. The Bible and hymn-book were her constant companions, and she never wearied of them. With these on her lap she was usually found seated under the shady tree, and enjoying the reviving breeze. There her eye commanded the view of the town and harbour of Montego Bay. Many green islets added beauty to the scene. The wide ocean and spreading shore were spread out before her, while not far away were the lofty hills she was no more to ascend. Surely if health were to be regained from favouring circumstances it had been there! But instead of this she

continued to decline, and her mother finally received her to her own home. The dear girl's cheerfulness seemed never to fail, and nothing indicated that she thought death was near. Not willing to sadden her, I refrained from telling her all I knew until I could no longer withhold the truth. With all the **land** gentleness I could command, and yet with all plainness, she was assured that she had not many days, perhaps hours, to live. For this she was more prepared than I had thought. No tear came to her eye. No shadow passed o'er her face. She listened as if absorbed in thought, without a sign of emotion. I therefore enquired how she felt on such a subject, and whether she was happy in the prospect.

'Oh, yes, minister,' she answered. 'I am going home now. I am going to see my Saviour. He will show me all the glories of heaven. I know I shall be happy there. Oh, so many good people. And many that I used to know, that have gone before! And so many ministers that preached the Gospel all over the world. And teachers, that tried to do good in the world, and show the young people the way to God! I feel it will be happy to be in such a place.' 'But, Catherine, do you never have any fear?' I asked. 'Are you never afraid to die?'

Looking fixedly on me, as if not knowing what was said, she exclaimed, '*What*, minister?' I repeated my question, 'Do you feel no alarm - no anxiety? Are you never afraid at all?'

She looked bewildered and astonished. Her bright, beautiful eyes were fixed full on mine. Then, as if at a loss for words, she looked from one to another standing round the bed, and paused a moment. Turning again to me she said joyfully, 'What! minister. Afraid of Jesus? Can I be afraid of Jesus? Jesus, who died for me? Who loves me. Afraid, to see Jesus!'

The scene was indescribable. Her look, her tones, the manifest emotion, the expressive shake of the head can hardly be imagined. Those sunken cheeks so flushed with life - the lips so bright with the smile of joy - the flicker of new life which seemed to fill the wasted form, propped up with pillows - the poor little room in the negro's humble cottage, at once so changed to a very 'gate of heaven,' words cannot picture. On the instant all around were melted to tears, but there were no tears of grief. They were rather the fast flowing tears of wondering sympathy and grateful joy.

After resting a little she said, 'Minister, I thank God that you ever come to Montego Bay.' In reply I enquired the reason: 'and if her soul was profited by what she had heard?'

She answered, 'Oh, yes! I feel it, I feel the change. And it was you baptized me. I know that didn't wash my sin away; but you talked to me,

and told me how I must remember Jesus, and think upon Him, and pray to Him. Then you look after me, and take care of me, and I thank God you come here. And my Saviour know it was *you* that did it. Oh, minister, you preach till you strain your throat, and make yourself ill, to tell us the way to God. But it *worth* straining your throat for! Go! Do it again, my minister! Tell them they *must* leave their sins and turn to God; and if you drop down dead on the spot, you won't die on the ground - you shall die in the arms of the Lord Jesus. Oh, yes, tell them, tell them:

None but Jesus—none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.

Oh, minister! I feel for the young people. The young people only should *fill* the house of God.'

Having rested a little, she asked for her brothers. When they came, she took each one by the hand, and keeping her hold she said, 'Oh, my brothers; perhaps I don't die to night. Perhaps I don't die this week. But I *shall* die, and I shall die soon. So I call you, to tell you what I feel. My brothers, I feel for your souls; and you don't care. Look! What is your going to church one Sunday, then stop one Sunday? Mother, did I ever miss, wet or dry?'

The sobbing mother said, 'No, my child.' Catherine continued (pressing her hands to her bosom), 'Oh, my brothers, I want you to feel that sweetness I feel *here*. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name." I beg of you to think upon your souls while you can, for as soon as you're cut down you will be drive away from God and go to hell. Minister, I beg you to see after my brothers. *Do*, minister. I beg you for their souls' sake.'

This excitement and strain was far too much. She was fearfully overcome, and wept and mourned aloud, everyone present weeping with her. Bye-and-by, when a little composed, she took her mother's hand, and said, 'My mother! You've been a *kind* mother to me. You nurse me so - you care for me so - but you like Rachel, who weep for her children and wouldn't be comforted. But you mustn't be so. You mustn't fret for me. Oh, promise me you won't fret for me. Remember, mother, what's the Lord's will must be done. Whatever the Lord put upon you, you must bear it. Eh, mother?' The mother replied, 'Yes, my child.'

Then again turning to me, and clasping my hand, she said, 'Minister, may the Lord bless you, and help you to bring many souls to Christ. But preach to them young people. I *fret* upon them young people. Tell them from me, I beg you, that they *must* turn from their sins, and come to God. Tell them *I say so*. Do, minister.'

But now, as she began to pray for 'the kind sweet lady' who had taken such pains with her, a fit of coughing came on which completed her exhaustion, and she said no more. We joined with much weeping in commending her to the Lord, and I went home to commit to writing our last conversation as here given. At the dawn of the next morning I found her still breathing, but not insensible. She knew me, but could not speak. Having prayed with her for the last time, I had scarcely passed the outer gate when, quickly following me, one came to say, 'She's gone! She's gone!'

Now the sad conflict's past - 'tis o'er;
That gentle bosom throbs no more.
The spirit's freed;—through realms of light
Faith's eagle glance pursues her flight
To other worlds, to happier skies!
Hope dries the tear which sorrow weepeth;
No mortal sound the voice which cries,
'The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.'

P.H. Cornford