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Preaching Prosperity: Christian Missions to Jamaica in the Early to Mid-19th Century

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Preaching Prosperity: Christian Missions to Jamaica in the Early to Mid-19th Century

by Shalea A. del Villar

a Senior Project submitted to,

the Division of Historical Studies at Bard College

Annandale-on-Husdon, NY

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In loving memory of Hannah Long

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Abstract

The Hampden Estate is one of the oldest sugar estates in Jamaica and to this day the rum that comes from its distilleries is still well known throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Perhaps a little more obscure is that circa 1824 a Presbyterian chapel was established on the estate. This event is unremarkable enough except that one may not expect to find that, although many of the mostly Scottish staff of the surrounding estates including overseers and bookeepers came, many were not able to find seats. This was because the enslaved of the plantation were occupying the pews. This was just one example of the way that the Christian missions to Jamaica, beginning with the Moravian sect, whose missionaries first arrived in 1754, was a challenge to the delicate social hierarchy that existed in Jamaica at the end of the 18th century.

The purpose of this work was to investigate the social hierarchies in Jamaica in relation to race and class taking into account the involvement of the various Christian sects initiated by African American pastors as well as dissenting missionaries in Jamaica. The opinions and thoughts of the white missionaries are of course much easier to find today than those of the black population during this time, however, there is still evidence of their desire to form their own vision of post-slavery Jamaica. This work is also concerned with exactly in what ways they attempted to assert their influence and the multiple reasons they had for following the doctrines preached by the missionaries at all.

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Introduction

Background on Jamaican Sugar Plantations

The English first conquered Jamaica in part as a result of the failure to successfully infiltrate Santo Domingo in April of 1665. The English Armada then turned towards Spanish Town Jamaica and invaded in May 1655 where they quickly overwhelmed the Spanish forces there. Spain never re-conquered Jamaica and the Treaty of Madrid in 1670 eliminated the constant need to defend against the Spanish, creating favourable conditions for the rise of a plantation economy.[1] In 1662 Lord Winsor arrived on the island and stayed for ten weeks, but more importantly he brought with him a proclamation that gave the unenslaved population on the colony the rights of British citizens. This set the precedent of crown appointed governors acting with the advice of a nominated council in the legislature. Also in the mid-17th century the Dutch brought sugar cane to the British West Indies and urged local growers to switch their main crop from cotton and tobacco to sugar cane, which they did, leading to a boom in the Caribbean economies. It was in large part because of this that although in 1680s the enslaved population of the island never exceeded 10,000, by the end of the century slave imports increased the population of the enslaved to almost five times that of the white population of 10,000. The trend continued with the population of the enslaved increasing from 45,000 at the beginning of the 18th century to 300,000 by the year 1800.[2]

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[1] Francis R. Hart, *Admirals of the Caribbean* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1922), p. 44.
[2] William J. Gardner, *The History of* Jamaica (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1873), ch. 3.

Religious Life in Jamaica In the Early 19th Century

Until the arrival of the missionaries in the mid-18th century there was no concerted effort to Christianize the population on the part of the Anglican Church which was considered the main church of the island. The Anglican Church was the church that most of the planters of English descent considered themselves a part of and it seemed to find little use for concerning itself with the enslaved population. It was not until the impetus of the missionary work of the dissenting churches (Christian groups that were considered apart from the Anglican Church) began proselytizing to the enslaved in Jamaica, that the Anglican Church followed suit. This meant that until the arrival of the Dissenter groups the enslaved population was mainly left to its own devices when it came to beliefs about the supernatural.[3] The exception to this was the Native Baptists, a Christian sect formed in Jamaica as a result of the preaching of an African American slave, George Leile, who arrived in Jamaica in 1783.[4]

Left over from the worship of a much more complex pantheon of West African gods that has more retention in places like Haiti, the religious practices of the enslaved on the island of Jamaica were usually referred to simply as "obeah". This belief system mainly focused on medicine, attempting to cause supernatural events, and ancestor worship. It also had its counterpart "myal", said to be the "good witchcraft" that countered the sabotaging effects of obeah, which supposedly was mostly used in order to harm others. This dichotomous view of the two is a bit problematic since, in this belief system at least, good and evil are not always so

[3] Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony 1830-1865*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 158.
[4] C.S. Reid. (1983). "Early Baptist Beginnings". *Jamaica Journal 16(2)*, p. 4

clearly defined. Particularly in Jamaica, for instance, "magic" used against the plantocracy and those slaves loyal to it definitely occupied a more nebulous and changing moral ground. It is also argued that obeah referred to the supernatural power that could be accessed through "spirit possession" also referred to as myal.[5]

As for other religious groups that comprised the spiritual life of the island there were mostly Sephardic Jews who by the 1830s were well established mostly in the mercantile class. There were also French Catholic creoles that came as refugees from Saint Domingue and mostly grew provisions for the Kingston market with only a few slaves. There were also a few Quakers; however, their numbers had dwindled to almost nothing by the mid-18th century.[6] Although Taínos were severely decimated by time of the arrival of the British on the island some are thought to have escaped to the mountains and there is evidence of the retention of Taíno spiritual beliefs and other cultural practices.[7] This more or less comprised the spiritual world that the missionaries faced when they arrived in Jamaica with their task of conversion.

Christian Missions to Jamaica and the Missionaries

Of course the idea to send Christian missions to Jamaica did not spring up out of nowhere and can be traced back to the beginnings of the antislavery movement. The defense of the planters to this movement included proslavery propaganda that was backed up, on paper at least, by adjustment of slave codes. There is evidence of this in the fact that the Jamaican House of Assembly, which represented the largest slave owners, passed a formal remonstrance against the abolition of the slave trade and yet approved the Slave Trade Regulation Act. There was not

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[5] Patrick Taylor, *The Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013) pp. 643-646.
[6] Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, p. 88.
[7] Taylor, *Caribbean Religions*, p. 1014.

strategy or provisions put in place to administer the revision of the slave code. However, reforming the system of slavery on paper constantly undermined parliamentary criticism. One of the tenets of antislavery propaganda was the need for the religious instruction of slaves. With this impetus behind him around the time of these political battles over the slave trade, a Wesleyan preacher, Thomas Coke, was sent to and began preaching in Kingston in 1789. His success encouraged the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) in 1792. Although Church organizations were wary of missionary work, fearing the cost and doubting its usefulness (the B.M.S. was perhaps tellingly not financially dependent on the church), still news of converted "heathens" made excellent church propaganda.[8]

All good intentions aside the missionaries still had to operate at the pleasure of the planter class which for the most part remained very hostile to them. Being barely ten percent of the population and facing an uprising of some sort every five years they were very wary of any innovations that threatened to upset the tenuous hold they had on their enslaved subjects.[9] This was compounded by the inability of the missionaries to break into their social ranks; having been recruited from the sons of small traders, skilled workers, and farmers, they came from a decidedly lower class of society than the wealthy planters. Missionary life was still then supposed to be an upwardly mobile step although one that backfired somewhat because of the taint of "negrophilia" that came from working with the enslaved population of the island.[10] All of this considered, it was difficult for the planters to appear to be paternal benefactors to the

[8] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society* (Barbados: The University Press of the West Indies, 1998), pp. 6-8.
[9] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 8.
[10] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 66.

enslaved and also rebuff attempts at their religious instruction so the closest they came to welcoming the missionaries was playing the part of an aristocratic patron.[11]

It was easy to see then why the missionaries sought to distance themselves from the antislavery movement and be, in the words of Wesley, "a friend to all and an enemy of none". This was not as easy as it sounds especially considering that the patrons of the missionaries who dispensed their licenses were focused primarily on limiting their access to the slaves and making sure that they did not engage with any who criticized slavery. The missionaries were only allowed to visit the planter estates in two-hour breaks, Sunday services were limited during crop season, and "candlelight services" held after dark were illegal for fear they would encourage plotting. These were the prohibitions that accompanied the dispensation of the licenses and the Wesleyan missionaries especially were advised at their quarterly meeting that these limitations must be accepted and that proper conduct toward authority was the best path towards having the limitations removed.[12] The missionaries were also held to these standards by the favors that were done for them by the ruling elite in order to keep them in a constant state of gratitude. An example of this can be found in an article in the missionary newspaper *The Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa* dated October 26, 1842. The Baptist Missionary William Knibb is recorded as having given ample thanks to planters for providing cocoa nut branches to form the roof of the tent for a meeting, water to drink, and cattle pens for the horses.[13]

Helpful to the cause of creating a Christian yet obedient enslaved population were the numerous examples in the Bible of faithful servants. A particular one held up as worthy of

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[11] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 26.
[12] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 24-27.
[13] *The Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa 3(42)*, p. 321.

emulation was the story of the slave Onesimus. This runaway slave went to Rome, heard St. Paul preach and was so moved he confessed to Paul that he had run away from his master and was told to return and ask and for his master's forgiveness. This story is recounted in a sermon delivered in a Wesleyan Chapel in Stony-Hill, Jamaica, a recording of which was published in 1824. Since this predated emancipation in Jamaica on August 1, 1838 this helps give an understanding of the position that the missionaries, especially the Wesleyan ones, were expected to take in regards to slavery. The one page of advertisement exists seemingly only to announce that the teachings of the Wesleyan missionaries are not "calculated to produce insubordination among slaves".[14] Robert Young dismisses any possibility that Onesimus may have runaway as a result of ill-treatment since the story is in the bible and Christianity prohibits this form of mistreatment of slaves. Young concludes that the issue must therefore have been that Onesimus was "reproved" by his master, which his proud nature "could not brook". Other possible explanations were that Onesimus may have run into people who were bad influences or that he simply a lazy servant, an accusation that was hurled at the enslaved population on innumerable occasions.[15] Young further asserts that slavery must not be wrong because if so, when interceding on behalf of Onesimus to his master, the Apostle Paul would not have hesitated in arguing for his manumission. It is then concluded also that if Christianity was not an affront to God then the enslaved had no right to be dissatisfied with their lives.[16]

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[14] Robert Young, *A View of Christianity in Connection with Christianity*, (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1825), p. A3.
[15] Robert Young, *A View of Christianity*, p. 8.
[16] Robert Young, *A View of Christianity*, p. 18.

The missionaries were not only invested in fostering subservience in the native population[17]; their goal was also to aid in creating respectability and patriotism in the enslaved as subjects of the British Empire. This was as much for the enslaved as it was for the missionaries themselves who were branded as Dissenters and who, particularly for the Wesleyan Methodists, were looked down on as practicing an inferior form of Anglicanism only suited for the lower orders of society.[18] Perhaps it was for this reason the Wesleyan Methodists tended to appeal for the most part to the free colored population who were seen as inhabiting a more "respectable" role in society and were more invested in social mobility. As will be seen later on this view gave rise to its own unique form of color prejudice within the Methodist missionary church causing tensions with regards to education and interracial marriage. This discrimination caused many schisms in the Methodist Church when it came to its brethren of color even outside of Jamaica. For instance, in Philadelphia the African Methodist Episcopal Church formed as a breakaway from the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church due to color prejudice. This lends credence and scope to the claims of prejudice by the free colored members of Wesleyan Methodist churches in Jamaica.[19]

<u>Further Information About the Arrival of the Various Missionary Sects in Jamaica</u>

The formation of the this socially distinct class of "free colored" citizens had its origin in a system on concubinage that existed not only in Jamaica but many parts of the Western Hemisphere where slavery existed. The overseer Thistlewood whose diaries are informative as to

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[17] Native population is a term that surfaced frequently in secondary as well as primary sources that I read for this project. It is a blanket term used to describe the black population of the island of Jamaica regardless of whether they also had European ancestry or were free or enslaved.
[18] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 28.
[19] Carolyn S. Beck. (1988). *Our Own Vine and Fig Tree, Review of Religious Research 29(4)*, p. 372.

the daily life an overseer in Jamaica had an enslaved woman with whom he lived in concubinage. The place that men like Thistlewood occupied in the plantation economy is also apparent in that Phibbah's master often summoned her for his own purposes and Thistlewood was not allowed to take issue with this although it is clear that it bothered him immensely. Unlike other islands in the British West Indies like Barbados, Jamaica never developed a permanent, self-sustaining underclass of poor white people.[20] In Jamaica marriage was considered a privilege of the white elite in part because it required the consent of white women who were not numerous on the island. This led to the development of the "housekeeper" system where white men who had no hope of marrying white women would through some manner procure a woman of color. This woman could be an enslaved woman, a free colored woman, or a free black woman; however, her status as free or enslaved and her racial pedigree did have an effect on her prospects. This system gave rise to an ever-growing population of free colored people that interacted in a unique way with the Christian missionary sects that came to Jamaica.[21]

An interesting consequence was the appeal that the Methodists had for them. One of the primary preoccupations of the missionaries was "respectability" and "propriety" which became interwoven with ideas of European customs, particularly English ones. This was compatible with the characteristic striving of the free colored population that was very proud of European heritage to emulate European manners and taste while suppressing anything deemed African in origin.[22] It is important to know about this system of concubinage so common in Jamaica since it was so contrary to the central missionary doctrine of monogamous marriage. It was a cause of

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[20] Cecilia A. Green. (2006). "Hierarchies of Whiteness in the Geography of Empire: Thomas Thistlewood and the Barretts of Jamaica", *New West Indian Guide, 80(1)*, pp. 5-43, p. 9.
[21] Green, Hierarchies of Whiteness, p. 20-21.
[22] Shirley C. Gordon, *God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica* (Indianapolis: Indiana Universtiy Press, 1996), p. 31.

deep distress to the missionaries that, partially owing to their fewer numbers in proportion to men on the island the women of Jamaica tended to be open to Christian marriage only when it suited them and for their own reasons.

The different missionary societies, usually based in the metropole, for the most part had similar aims but occupied different stations in society and went about their work in subtly different ways. The first British Baptists were invited by the Native Baptists already established in Jamaica by George Leile out of concern that African religious practices were becoming too mixed with the teachings of the Baptists. The first of this group arrived in 1814 on the heels of this invitation.[23] As for the Methodist mission the assistant of John Wesley, the founder of Wesleyan Methodism, Thomas Coke, arrived in Jamaica in 1789 and is considered the founder of Methodism there. The Methodists were conspicuous from the beginning as they early acquired much property and became well known in urban centers. That they normally came from a higher class of society, as did their members that allowed them to see themselves as the rivals of the Anglican Church. [24] The Presbyterian mission arrived in 1814 and was associated with the small number of Scottish sugar workers in Jamaica on the island. The extent of their influence was small, mostly confined to the estates own by the Scottish. These also drew little opposition from the white population of Jamaica and was not looked down on as lower class since the Presbyterians were considered to be closely affiliated with the Anglican Church.[25] The Church Missionary Society was a direct project of the Anglican Church and began with the arrival of the first Bishop of Jamacia, Bishop Lipscombe in 1825. He brought with him curates and the practice of sending out evangelical missionaries to work with slaves was soon adopted. There

[23] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 6.
[24] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 3.
[25] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 6.

was also a missionary society that was interdenominational named the London Missionary Society. This society sent six missionaries who arrived in December 1834.[26] The Moravians were also a part of the missionary effort, arriving in 1754, but they did not make a large impact on the enslaved population, instead coming to be seen by them as part of the white estate management since they operated only on the estates.[27]

Propaganda for the missionary effort of Christianizing the black race is also helpful to understanding exactly how the missionaries viewed themselves and their converts. The following image is from an article published in London titled “Freedom in Jamaica: the First August, 1838” that described the grateful and above all peaceful reactions of the newly freed population to emancipation.[28]

[26] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 13.
[27] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 29.
[28] “Freedom in Jamaica: The First of August, 1838”, (London: G. Whitman, 1838).

The symbolism in the illustration is self-explanatory and meant to convey Great Britain's honourable task of bestowing knowledge and civilization on the black race represented by the shirtless, barefoot black man in the picture. The shield bearing the British flag is obviously meant to represent that Great Britain is the bearer of this great gift. That the black man is carrying what looks like a hoe or a scythe could suggest that although he is the proud new receiver of the wisdom of the British Empire he is still a de facto member of the peasantry and there is no expected threat of him rising above that position.

In this work I sought to explore the extent to which the missionary societies and the practices of their missions were influenced by slavery and the racial imagery that was a product of it. When I first learned that there were white British men in the beginning of the 19th century giving up their home country in order to proselytize to the enslaved in Jamaica honestly my first reaction was to try to find their ulterior motive. I was surprised to find the extent to which the missionaries were motivated by their own personal faith and their sincere desire to help their fellow man who in this case was in a particularly dire situation. Their ideas and the extent of their zeal were also greatly influenced by the Second Great Awakening during the years 1798-1820 that also reached other parts of North America besides the Caribbean like Southern part of the United States along the Mississippi Valley. Clyde Binfield asserts that in this time "movements became churches". [29] The formation of the missionary societies and in particular those associated with the Baptists and Methodists like the BMS and WMMS were a part of this process. These newly formed groups carried the aspirations of a newly mobile part of society who almost inevitably became Dissenters because their values could not perfectly align with

[29] Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780-1920* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), p. 8.

traditional ones.[30] Part of this newly inspired system of belief, as was espoused by one minister preaching in Northamptonshire, was that they must spread the Gospel across the world.[31] Apart from religious beliefs something else that very interesting to research was the way that the in some ways similar socioeconomic circumstances of the missionaries and the black population aided an understanding of one another's respective situations that transcended racial lines.

In the first chapter I discuss mainly the writings of James Ramsay and the lectures of Herman Merivale and attempt to find the incentive for the plantocracy to tolerate at all a potentially threatening foreign influence among what was their human legal property.

In the second chapter I elaborate on the reactions of the black population of the island to the missionaries and the doctrines the values that the missionaries tried to instill in their converts. Again the economic and class influences that encouraged this conversion are also taken into account.

[30] Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, p. 8.
[31] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 87.

Chapter 1 - The Abolition Movement and Free Labor Ideology

In 1788 over one hundred petitions came before the House of Commons, bringing the question of abolition to the foreground of British politics.[32] There were a number of components that led up to this stunning display of distaste with the slave trade, among the most important of them being the first industrial revolution which completely changed agriculture in Britain from the years 1700-1850. New crops and rotations were utilized while open fields were replaced by enclosures more frequently, but more importantly industrialization helped introduce an increasingly popular system of wage labor. As the dissenting Christian sects to whom most of the missionaries in Jamaica with whom this work is concerned can be seen as the "child of the industrial revolution" this detail is important.[33] In May of 1823 a Bill was introduced to Parliament that attacked slavery on a constitutional and philosophical basis. The West India Lobby surprised everyone with its willingness to go along with the project of amelioration. This caused great outrage among the white population in the colonies including Jamaica, after all it was becoming more and more difficult for people in the colonies to project the image of affluence portrayed in the 1771 play, *The West Indian*.[34] Considering the congregations of the dissenting churches were largely made up of wage workers from the industrial north of Britain it

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[32] Dr John Oldfield. (2011, February 17). British Anti-slavery. Retrieved March 11, 2016 from http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/antislavery_01.shtml
[33] Robert Wearmouth, *Methodism and Working Class Movements of England* (London: The Epworth Press, 1947), p 13.
[34] Horace Russell. "The Emergence of the Christian Black: the Making of a Stereotype". Jamaica Journal 16, no. 1 (February 1983) pp 51-53.

makes sense that the most enthusiastic support for abolition came from this portion of the population.

The Industrial Revolution and Free Labor Ideology

It is also not surprising that the people tasked with amelioration were the same ones for whom the wage labor system had already been a success, these being again the members of the dissenting churches. It was these same products of a newly emerging English middle class who were the ones sent to carry out the project of amelioration. In large part the task was to be headed by the missionaries of various dissenting Christian sects sent to the British West Indies and other parts of the British colonies. It is not coincidental that two of the most prolific Baptist ministers arrived in Jamaica on the heels of the decisive 1823 Parliamentary debates; James Phillippo in 1823 and William Knibb in November of 1824.[35]

Wearmouth gives further support to the idea that the dissenting churches were the children of the industrial revolution by noting that it was "slow in decades when industrial endeavor was sluggish".[36] These circumstances contributed to the development of an increasingly leisured middle class with humanitarian sentiments and more importantly a desire for a voice in religious and political life. The distinct class that the members of the Dissenting churches came from also had a large affect on the formation of their principles, as they often did not come from anyone far above their station in life. For instance, the professions of the creators of the Primitive Methodist Church, Hugh Bourne and William Clowes were carpenter and potter respectively.[37] It is also perhaps in part because of this that the cultural values of the missionaries

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[35] Marriott, L. (2014, December 17). William Knibb. Retrieved March 12, 2016, from http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20141217/william-knibb
[36] Wearmouth, *Methodism*, p 13.
[37] Wearmouth, *Methodism*,p 14.

contrasted as sharply as they did with those of the planter class in Jamaica. The missionaries subscribed to a simplistic and modest style of dress that was above all never ostentatious in any regard. This was in juxtaposition to the ornate lifestyle of the West Indian planter whose aim was often to display the wealth and power of the plantation system.[38]

In their inception, one of the most pivotal points of the newfound humanitarian sentiments of this middle class was the ideology of free labor, also referred to as wage labor, and a belief in its superiority to the use of slave labor. Something like a timeline can be established leading up to the year 1788 regarding the role of free labor ideology in the abolition of the slave trade. Adam Smith published *Wealth of Nations* which clearly outlined various reasons why he believed free labor to be superior to slave labor, not the least of which being that free labor gave more motivation to be productive to the worker. In 1784 this same work is casually referenced in James Ramsay's *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves* although the principle that free labor makes more productive workers is repeated almost incessantly.[39]

James Ramsay was the first polemicist to attack Caribbean slavery and his 1784 essay was considered one of the most important events in the nexus of the antislavery campaign as it was at the time the only firsthand account of slavery from a mainstream Anglican writer. It was published by James Phillips, official printer for the Quakers and the printer of the highest number of abolitionist works printed or sold in London during the height of the abolition debate.[40] Ramsay was the son of a ship's carpenter and apprenticed to a surgeon and later attended King's

[38] Zacek, Natalie. (2014). "Unsettled Houses The Material Culture of Jamaica in the Era of Emancipation." *Slavery & Abolition*, *35(3),* p.501

[39] James Ramsay, *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (London: James Phillips, 1784), p 2.

[40] Judith Jennings, *The Business of Abolishing the Slave Trade, 1738-1807* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p 13.

College where his professor of moral philosophy, Dr. Thomas Reid, had a large influence on him. In 1757 Ramsay entered the navy and served aboard the Arundel under Sir Charles Middleton. While serving his ship intercepted a slave ship, the Swift, and on boarding he found 100 slaves wallowing in deplorable conditions. It had such an effect on him that on attempting to return to his ship he slipped and fractured his thighbone and remained lame for the rest of his life. The occurrence can also be seen to have had an effect on his later actions in life.

Partly as a result of no longer being able to serve in the navy, Ramsay was ordained a clergyman and left almost immediately to serve in the West Indies and preach among the enslaved. He also worked as a surgeon on many different plantations at this time, which allowed him to see the conditions under which the enslaved lived. In 1777 Ramsay returned to England and was received into the home of the Middletons; Lady Middleton in particular quickly warmed to abolitionist cause and encouraged him to publish his first essay. After its publication Ramsay bore alone the brunt of the wrath of the absentee planters in England until William Wilberforce and William Pitt, Prime Minister, whom he met in 1783 along with Thomas Clarkson, Wilberforce's curate, also joined in the campaign. In preparation for the first Commons debate on abolition in 1789, partly in response to the petitions encouraged by Ramsay's books, Ramsay prepared briefs for Wilberforce and other politicians that provided much of the moral argument and evidence for their speeches.[41]

It is notable that in his *Essay for the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves*, Ramsay refers to the Church of England as "the great stay of the constitution" and what is more, "by all sober

[41] J. Watt, 'Ramsay, James (1733–1789)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23086, accessed 11 March 2016.

people".[42] This viewpoint of Ramsay's seems to have influenced his ideas for the use of church doctrine in establishing and ideal order. In the second chapter where Ramsay argues the social importance of the slaves he asserts that as a result of free labor they would produce more and also "open a new traffic in every branch of trade".[43] Here it is clear that there is a desire to create a free labor society as well as a desire to pull them into the British economy as consumers. The entire third chapter of this work is dedicated to driving home the necessity for religious instruction to accompany any British plans for the enslaved in the colonies. The author describes how society and religion are meant to support each other because religion fits everyone into a particular station within their community and gives it "an indissoluble claim to our service and assistance".[44] This is arguably further convincing evidence of the viewpoint at this time of religion being part and parcel of the export of British culture that was intended to convert the slaves not only into Christians but into a happy peasantry.

It is also striking to contrast the initially very neutral stance of the missionary societies with the virulent abuse that Ramsay unapologetically gives planters for the treatment of their slaves. Ramsay argues that "malnourished, ill-treated" people do not make good workers and blames British capriciousness for sinking human nature "down to the lowest depth of wretchedness".[45] Much of the essay is vitriolic in its description of the cruelty of the masters and uses very colorful language to drive home how deplorable the author found the condition of the slaves to be. He laments even that horses and cows have more protection under the law than slaves.[46] Also according to Ramsay his "own countrymen" were left "each to be guided by his own changeable

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[42] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 107.
[43] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 114.
[44] Ramsay. *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 150.
[45] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 119.
[46] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 63.

temper" - a direct attack on the planter class that invokes the idea that absolute power corrupts absolutely. [47]

An issue that Ramsay anticipated in his essay was the question of the enslaved population continuing to work and behave to the benefit of the mother country after being emancipated. This was imaginably what prompted Ramsay to argue for the possibility of their conversion; to make them Christian would be to make them an asset to Britain of their own free will. Later on in the third chapter of the essay it becomes clear that an important component of this was the ability of Christianity to encourage the social ostracization of those who did not conform to certain social norms. For instance, baptism was supposedly the only way to free a slave from the power of "the negroe conjurer". When it came to burials it is suggested "it would have an excellent effect on them if only tractable, well-disposed persons were buried with their families and every *worthless fellow* buried in a place apart".[48] Here we see an echo of the dichotomy in the missionary James Phillippo's view of the native population, mainly that they consisted either of reformed Christians or African heathens.[49]

The pressure that was felt to make religious conversion and the amelioration of the slave trade fit around the all-important goal of productivity is also apparent in the measures that the essay proposes. The suggestion is made that a chaplain should attempt to instruct the slaves while they were in the hospital so that the preaching would not interfere with their work.[50] Suggestions were also made to have the children recite a "short general precept" while they

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[47] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 64.
[48] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 184.
[49] Robert Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post- Emancipation Jamaica* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 90.
[50] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 185.

delivered grass for the cattle to eat.[51] Great care is also taken to present any possible loss of time or extra expense as an investment that would yield a priceless return. For instance, since Sunday would have to be given up to church service the slaves would need to be given at least Saturday afternoon to attend to their provision grounds and other personal necessities. The loss of time could be made up for by the purchase of thirty new young slaves although Ramsay assures that their increasing industry would make up for it.[52] A few pages later Ramsay at least pretends to understand the concerns of the planters and acknowledges that it is difficult to eagerly accept a scheme that promises so little immediate reward in the way of profit.[53]

Besides attempting to anticipate the rebuttals that were surely expected from the planter class and preemptively attempt to counter and assuage them, much attention is also paid to specifying the different ways that conversion could change the enslaved for the better. The methods for ingraining religious practice into daily life and reaping its rewards mostly hinge on the belief stated in the essay, that "to carry form and method into private life is the true secret to impart firmness both to law and empire".[54] It is not hard to imagine this would have sounded very appealing to a planter in the British sugar colonies who were managing any number of human property. Again, whether or not Ramsay was sincere in the statement of his concerns for them it was the masters who had to be convinced that they would be benefited by conversion. Ramsay assures that "nothing could hinder their masters from reaping the happiest fruits of their humanity".[55] This phrase, taken with a slightly earlier part of the essay in which Christianity is lauded for its ability to "humanize" them, denotes a singular use of the use of the word human. In

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[51] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 186.
[52] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 190.
[53] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 191.
[54] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion,* p. 194.
[55] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 191.

this essay it seems to denote not something that a person is but something that one aspires to and that can be exploited just like any other tool of production.[56]

It is apparent that some of the proposed methods in the essay for accomplishing this goal were actually paid attention to if not by the missionaries at least by those in the metropole who headed the societies. One of the suggestions that was paid attention to was that each gang should "marshaled by families" and be put into the care of one individual who would be their leader. This person would be made responsible for every person under them and would be in charge of feasting and giving accounts of health, clothing, and their property. [57] This is very similar to the ticket and leader system in which leaders, usually called "Daddy", were put in charge of congregations of followers which gave them immense sway that allowed them even to vie for the missionaries for influence over followers.[58]

In the fifth chapter of Ramsay's essay titled Plan for Improvement and Conversion of African Slaves, suggestions for the kind of work that the missionaries, or ministers, as they are called here, would ideally perform in Jamaica is outlined. Ramsay suggests that the minister would travel from plantation to plantation and inquire about behavior and improvement of slaves and these slaves should appear before him well dressed to show respect.[59] As there were only twelve Wesleyan ministers in Jamaica in 1824, the year that the *Statement of Object, Plan, and Effects of the Wesleyan Missions* was written, it was only practical that they had to travel from place to place on horseback. Appearance was also an issue of serious concern as there were cases

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[56] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 284.
[57] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 187.
[58] Robert J. Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p 135.
[59] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 269-270

of congregation members being turned out who did not appear to be "decently dressed" in eyes of the missionaries. It is clear that another suggestion for the instruction of children was also paid attention to or at least coincidentally followed since various types of schooling in the form of day schools, Sunday schools, and later middle schools took shape. The proposal for the use of schools as a method of improving the condition of the enslaved and increasing their capacity for production lends support to Shirley Gordon's argument about them in *Our Cause for His Glory*. In this book that focuses on evangelization and emancipation in Jamaica, Gordon asserts that the socioeconomic purpose for religious education among the enslaved population in Jamaica was the very same as the one developing simultaneously among the British working classes. The prime objective, particularly of elementary education, was the maintenance of an acquiescent labor force.[60] Ramsay further proves this point by going on in section two of chapter five that the yoke of slavery needed to be made to fit more equally around their necks and to do this religious education was a "tool in the hands of magistrates".[61]

As much as Ramsay's essay attempted to describe an ideal world where the conversion of slaves and free labor were a cure-all for all the ills of slavery, everyone was not so easily convinced and this could not be ignored. The formidable industrial complex of sugar production faced anyone who had even the most sincere desire to reform the slave system. The British colonies in the West Indies continued to be a very valuable element in the world market. From 1770 to 1787 for 35 percent of the sugar in the North Atlantic this number only continued to dramatically rise from 1805-1806 to 55 percent.[62] Confronted with these realities the

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[60] Shirley Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica* (Barbadoes: The Press University of the West Indies, 1995), p 13.
[61] Ramsay, *Essay on Treatment and Conversion*, p. 277
[62] Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p 35.

abolitionists, as Ramsay already laid the foundation for, shifted their attention to the economic benefits of increased reproduction that it was argued once again, religion was prepared to provide.

It was some time before this concern with increasing the size of the black population in the British West Indies became a serious one, especially in the time before the abolition of the slave trade. Before questions about the demographics and the sustainability of the slave trade seemed irrelevant even to members of Parliament. An attempt to change this was made by Thomas Cooper of Manchester and a pioneer in the abolition movement. In his *Letters on the African Slave Trade* published in 1787 Cooper estimated that 180 million Africans had died as a result of the slave trade up to that point in time. To achieve this number Cooper first took a census of the black population in the Americas, going region to region from the Chesapeake Bay to the Rio de la Plata. Afterwards Cooper calculated the net excess of slave deaths over births from those areas where he was able to obtain this information. Going from these published figures he extrapolated to the much larger areas where they were not available to him. After adding to this an estimate for the average mortality each year as a result of the transatlantic slave voyage he also added an estimate for collateral loss of life in Africa that came as a result of moving slave cargo from the point of capture to embarkation on the coast. Using these figures only from the previous generation Cooper estimated a loss of 510,000 Africans.[63]

Anticipating the incredulity that could follow these enormous figures Cooper set out to prove that Africa could sustain such a huge ongoing population loss. Cooper calculated that within the 3 million square miles between sub-Saharan "Negroland" to the north and Benguela to

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[63] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, 39.

the South, the area with the heaviest slave trade activity, the “slave trade reservoir”, contained about 54 million people. Cooper then turned to a teacher of mathematics and philosophy at Manchester College of Arts and Sciences to help calculate the annual rate of births. Working with the ratio of births to deaths in twenty-two cities and villages in Britain and Europe Clarke calculated that for every forty-eight inhabitants there would be one additional annual increase. Therefore, Cooper was able to determine with some certainty that the “slave trade reservoir” could produce 1.25 million infants annually. Weighing this figure against European infant mortality rates Cooper supposed that about 625,000 people could be provided for the slave trade each year without depleting the population.[64] Cooper was uneasy about what his conclusions implicated for friends of the slave trade and asserted that the continent must be less populous than it was in the year 1600. Along with this he claimed that there must be a “defalcation of the sum of terrestrial happiness”. In this way Cooper ended up reinforcing the prevalent idea of “tropical superfecundity” and that Africa was not harmed by the slave trade at least from a population standpoint. [65]

In 1798 the economist, Thomas Malthus, managed to push the idea of the natural reproduction of the labor for of the British West Indies further from parliamentary debate when he published his *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Malthus was not principally concerned with the slave trade but rather with the numerous poor of Europe. In the second version, however, Malthus did admit that slavery unfavorable to natural increase of population. The fact that slaves needed to be constantly imported and on such a huge scale was proof of this and was an indication on the part of the masters of a disinterest in natural increase. Malthus theory of

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[64] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 40.
[65] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 40.

political economy operated on the idea that societal institutions that delayed marriage and kept the population of a group of people within their means of subsistence were ideal. If these institutions were not in place then other "positive checks" like disease and war would take their place. Malthus used a spectrum in order to describe two types of societies; the first was used to describe those in which there were no social institutions to give incentive to prudent decision making. The result was near chaos and "rude" state of being. The second group on the spectrum was not very different from the first except that they possessed the necessary economic and social conditions to, if they solved their problems of war, to improve their standard of living beyond subsistence.[66] As might be surmised, moving beyond the first two groups on the spectrum, social institutions make "positive checks" less and less necessary to controlling population size.[67]

In Malthus' view the despotic system of slavery in the British West Indies where only "vice and misery" could check population size caused it to belong to the first group in Malthus' view. The pastoral nations of Africa however were thought by Malthus to belong to the second group which caused his further criticism of the slave trade. This was on the basis that it helped occasion the necessary conditions for war in West Africa and prevented it from rising beyond its current status on Malthus' spectrum.[68] In the footnotes of the third chapter of his second book Malthus theorizes that:

[66] Ross B. Emmett. (2014, June 11). "Malthus, the Slave Trade, and the Civilizing Effect of the Preventive Checks". http://poseidon01.ssrn.com/ Accessed: May 3, 2016, p. 7.
[67] Emmett, *Malthus*, p. 8.
[68] Emmett, *Malthus*, p. 11.

> "If by the abolition of the trade to Africa the slaves in the West Indies were placed only in a *tolerable* situation, if their civil condition and moral habits were only made to *approach* to those which prevail among the mass of the human race in the worst-governed countries of the world, it is contrary to the general laws of nature to suppose that they would not be able by procreation fully to supply the effective demand for labour; and it is difficult to conceive that a population so raised would not be in every point of view preferable to that which exists at present."[69]

Wilberforce had already presented evidence during his first debate over the abolition of the slave trade of positive demographic growth in the British West Indies. The demographic deficit of Jamaica had fallen from 3.5 percent in 1698-1730 to 2.5 percent in 1730-1755 and finally to one percent from 1768-1788.[70] Prime Minister William Pitt separated the deaths of Creoles from those of Africans and predicted that the remaining 1 percent decrease would immediately stop with the cessation of importation of slaves. This was a meaningful conclusion since only the deficit of population justified the slave trade.[71] On the Second Reading of the abolition bill in the House of Commons, Lord Howick added updated information that the rapid natural increase of slaves in the United States showed that they were able to reproduce their numbers very effectively under slavery. This shows some reluctance to jump to the conclusion that emancipation was the only alternative method for stopping the annual deficit in the slave population without the slave trade. Abolition was instead a way to encourage amelioration of the

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[69] Robert Malthus, *An Essay On the Principle of Population*, (London: John Murray, 1826), p. 509.
[70] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 44.
[71] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 45.

slave trade since the stopping of imports of slaves the planters would naturally become interested in making their living conditions more humane.[72]

Completely contrary to expectations put forward by the abolitionists, in the year following abolition of the slave trade, 1808, registration numbers showed that the slave populations began to decline immediately after imports ended. This fact, although in opposition to the predictions that helped to put a stop to the slave trade, still became a favorite tool in the hands of abolitionists who after 1807 began to bring attention to the inherent evil of the slave trade. They accused the planters of overworking and underfeeding their laborers, acting out of desperation as a result of the falling prices of sugar and the diminishing labor supply. If Jamaica, for instance, had treated their slaves according to the American model its current population of 345,000 should have reached 900,000 by 1820.[73] It was obvious that if this task was going to be accomplished there would have to be some form of intervention to encourage the growth of the native population.[74]

The Population Size of Jamaica, the Missionaries, and Free Labor Ideology

Herman Merivale helped to draw a more clear connection between population density, availability of fertile land, and the free labor ideology. After graduating from Oxford in 1827 he was elected Professor of Political Economy at Oxford University where he delivered a series of influential lectures on economy and colonization first published in 1841.[75] In Lecture XI Merivale argues that wage labor was only more profitable than slave labor in areas where the

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[72] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 45
[73] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 48.
[74] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 47
[75] Sidney Lee. "Merivale, Herman". Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894) pp. 280–1

population density and value of the soil were high enough to make it so. Where population is dense enough to induce a free person to offer their labor at a price at or not very far above the "natural minimum or wages" that labor would of course be more profitable than that of an enslaved individual whose care is the charge of their master.[76] Merivale makes mention of the predicament of the slave holder in places like Virginia where the profit of cultivation was diminishing gradually but the cost of maintaining slaves was the same.[77] The situation of Jamaica, according to Merivale, was of the type where all of the most fertile and advantageously situated soil had been cultivated. Still there remained some less valuable land although the population was not dense enough in proportion to the island surface to favor the cultivation of sugar through wage labor.[78]

As might be concluded from Merivale's lecture, the colonists suffered as a result of emancipation as it was difficult to get the native population to work for them when they had their own provision grounds and other means of providing for themselves. To demonstrate the effect, perhaps not just of emancipation, but the decline of the sugar industry as a whole he mentioned that Estates that produced 2900 hogsheads of sugar in 1825 in the year 1840 produced 280.[79] It is no surprise that the lecture concludes with highlighting the urgency of finding a way to stimulate the native population to labor as well as reduce the cost of production. [80] One of the methods of doing this was the employment of immigrant workers in order to undercut the wages of those already residing there. It is no surprise that since this usually meant undercutting the wages of

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[76] Herman Merivale. *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p 297.
[77] Merivale, *Lectures*, p. 300.
[78] Merivale, *Lectures*, p. 306.
[79] Merivale, *Lectures*, p. 307.
[80] Merivale, *Lectures*, p. 327

the native population the Dissenter missionaries were not in favor of plans to hire immigrant workers. These were doubly harmful since to their congregations since their entire existence relied heavily on the monetary contributions of their members.[81]

As a result of the rather non-influential class of society that the missionaries came from, however, it was not well within their power to dictate this sort of economic decision making. The House of Assembly which did have the power to make these decisions excluded in discreet ways the candidates for entry who were of the class of society that most of the missionaries belonged to. For instance, qualification for candidacy required an annual income of £180 from land or real property worth £1800 or both real and personal property worth £300. These stipulations excluded even William Knibb, one of the most influential Baptist missionaries.[82] The only recourse available to them in regards to creating a respectable, Christian peasantry was more hands on and involved attempting to convince the slaves to work hard because it was the *right* thing to do. The issue with this was that it was much harder for them to vocalize any wish for change that involved the masters and could have even further aided their cause.

In the period that preceded emancipation on August 1, 1838 the task of imparting the ideals of Protestant work ethic to the native population of Jamaica was especially difficult. It faced assault on nearly all sides not only from planters but from the white population in general. The pioneer Baptist preacher George Leile was one of the first to find a middle ground between spreading the message of his beliefs and at the same time acquiescing to the rights of the planters over what was legally their human property. Leile insisted that any slave who wanted to be baptized at his church needed to have written permission from their master so he could not be

[81] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 30.
[82] Stewart, *Religions and Society*, p. 20.

accused of subverting slaves although he still faced much harassment from hostile parties. As further precaution Leile also made sure that his Church Covenant was printed and on openly displayed so that everyone could see they were in accordance with the scripture. In more recent years Leile has been accused of conducting a 'Master Church' by people like Noel Erskine in *Decolonising Theology* because of these actions.[83] However, it is important to consider that he faced a difficult task preaching in a place where anyone who took a personal interest in the slaves, especially when it came to teaching them to read and write was looked upon with much suspicion. [84]

The harassment and obstacles placed before those who attempted to proselytize to slaves and the native population in general was indicative of differing opinions about how to transition Jamaica out of a system of slavery. Joseph Gurney, a Quaker leader of the Antislavery Society said in an 1840 letter addressed to Jamaican planters that it was "of primary importance that Jamaica should prosper… prosper pecuniarly". The purpose for this was that "we must prove…that free labor is more economical and productive than slave labor and that the just and equal liberty of all citizens of a state, has an unfailing tendency to increase is wealth".[85] Again it was not very easy to convince everyone of this ideal and that it was in everyone's interest as can be seen in a letter written in 1791 from the Baptist Stephen Cooke to the Reverend John Rippon. He vents frustration with the planter class, writing "Alas! How much is it to be lamented

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[83] Noel Erskine, *Decolonizing Theology: A Caribbean Perspective* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1998), p. 44.
[84] C.S. Reid. "Early Baptist Beginnings". Jamaica Journal 16, no. 2 (1983), p 5.
[85] Philip Curtin. *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony 1830-1865* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p 105

that…masters should be so blind to *their own self-interest* as to not know the difference between obedience enforced by lash of the whip and that which flows from religious principles".[86]

Legal precautions against missionary preaching were also taken especially in times of increased political tension that increased suspicion of outsiders. For instance, in 1802 a large French fleet was sent to St. Domingue and the Assembly took advantage of the fear of the threat of invasion to pass a law to curtail mission work. Sir Simon Taylor, a powerful planter who was particularly hostile to the missionaries instigated an act to be passed that prevented preaching by people "not duly qualified by law" but did not make specifications as to what this meant.[87] This struck at the use by Wesleyans and Baptists of lay preachers recruited mainly from the free colored and black population. Prior to this 1802 act, the Jamaican magistrates had acted in accordance with the Toleration Acts of 1711 and 1779. This meant that the missionaries had appeared before them, took oaths of allegiance, and subscribed to a scriptural declaration that was accepted as being equivalent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. The 1802 act however made this void and did not determine what by law qualified a person to teach.[88]

The imperial government disallowed the act on the grounds that it infringed on religious toleration. Still, in 1807 in the wake of the abolition of the slave trade the Assembly met in October and passed a new slave code that made missionary work illegal but tried to gloss over this by promoting Anglican instruction for the slaves. Again, the imperial government disallowed the code and what was more sent instructions to the governor to not give assent to any laws

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[86] Thomas Swigle. (1916) "Letters Showing Rise and Progress of Early Negro Churches". *The Journal of Negro History 1*, p. 75.
[87] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 17.
[88] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 15

regarding religion without them first being transmitted to the imperial government.[89] The conditions for missionary work became more favorable in the second decade of the nineteenth century, notably on the tails of the devaluation of sugar. During and after the Napoleonic wars the planters became “increasingly the clients of the imperial government” as other sources of cheap sugar became available in developing markets in Brazil, Cuba, and the East Indies.[90] This caused the West Indian planters to rely more heavily on the protection granted them by the British government. The effects of this situation for the missionary work were apparent in the passing of laws like the 1812 Toleration Act which became known as the Grand Charter of the Dissenters. This act granted any person who swore the oaths of supremacy and the scriptural declaration before a magistrate the right to be a preacher. This set a standard that helped curtail attempts to deny ministers sent out from their missionary societies the right to preach.[91]

In *Civilising Subjects,* Catherine Hall describes how the planter elite in Jamaica was as reluctant to allow slaves to learn how to read as conservatives in England were to allow working class people the same privilege. Reverend Bridges, one of the most adamant opponents of the missionary cause exemplified this concern that religious freedom would lead to demands for other forms of freedom.[92] To combat this the missionaries used in Jamaica the same tactics of political neutrality that were used, or rather enforced, on the practitioners of the members of Dissenting churches in metropolitan Britain. Even if the missionaries had as much vitriol as James Ramsay did in his essay on arrival in Jamaica the reality of the situation did not permit any expression of this. The need on the part of the missionaries of planter patrons for funds and

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[89] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, pp. 14-15.
[90] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 18.
[91] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p 69.
[92] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) p 104.

their almost complete reliance on their good will also made them reluctant to be so openly critical. Whatever might be said about the West Indian planter while one was in the metropole, the missionaries were severely discouraged from doing or saying anything that could even appear to indicate antislavery sentiment.[93]

This policy of neutrality on the part of the Dissenting at least was not confined to the colonies. On February 6, 1817 the London members of the Committee for Guarding Privileges of the People Called Methodists under the chairmanship of Joseph Entwisle adopted an address and ordered it sent to all Methodist societies. It expressed a desire "to prevent every member of the Methodist Society from being misled by the delusive acts of designing men and to guard them in the most solemn manner against attending tumultuous assemblies…or any projects contrary to the duties of true Christians and loyal subjects".[94] Since the large part of the Methodist membership was comprised to industrial workers it could be surmised that the "designing men" mentioned were those who dared to advocate for the better conditions of these workers. In an 1819 Conference the assembled preachers made reference to the political agitation of the period. They expressed sympathy for the "dear Brethren who from the pressure of the time and suspension of active commerce, are, in common with thousands of your country men involved in various and deep afflictions". After this note of compassion they went on to admonish those who "render the privations of the poor as the instrument of their own designs against the peace and the government of our beloved country".[95]

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[93] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 70.
[94] Wearmouth, *Methodism*, p. 177.
[95] Wearmouth, *Methodism*, p. 178.

This attitude of neutrality carried over in the attitude of the Methodists when working in Jamaica as the missionaries were instructed to keep a political distinction between themselves and antislavery propagandists. In dealing with their congregations their only endeavor was to be that of bestowing Christian values and ideally an elementary school education on the slaves. They were not alone in this plan of action, for instance the Presbyterians were obligated to detach themselves from social circumstances: "Study to view them as matters of history…never converse with the natives on political subjects. Such conversation, you may be almost certain, will be misrepresented and turned as an engine against you."[96] This translated into a reluctance to ask for greater privileges even with the blessings of the planter aristocracy even when those who were in a position to do so openly offered them. When Stephen Drew, a planter and champion of Dissenters' rights proposed to argue a case for the removal of the restrictions on preaching hours in terms of the English Toleration Act of 1812 the missionaries expressed that "it would be very ungrateful and unbecoming…under the present circumstances, to make even the slightest attempt to gain greater privileges".[97]

In spite of any personal ideals or plans the missionaries were in a practical sense constrained to the role of a using the Christian doctrine to look after the interests of land and slave owning proprietors.[98] This notion is well supported by *The Statement of the Plan, Object, and Effects of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies* published in 1824. The statement announces with joy that there are fewer punishments "where religious instruction has

[96] *Letter of Instructions from the Directors of the Scottish Missionary Society; to their Missionaries Among the Heathen*, (Edinburgh: A. Balfour and Company, 1827), p. 66.
[97] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 26.
[98] Turner, *Slaves and Missioanries*, p 27.

prevailed".[99] The fear of the planters that religious instruction would encourage rebellion is indirectly referenced by the assertion that "his [the slave's] duty to his master, instead of having been shaken or seduced is confirmed upon a much better assurance than ever".[100] Again, religion as a humane substitute for corporal punishment is highlighted in the assurance the obedience of the slave is now based "upon a principle of obedience inculcated by the Scripture, not the authority of the driver".[101] In the words of the Baptist missionary James Phillippo the missionaries "travelled to one estate to another for no other purpose than to stimulate the peasantry and cultivate feelings of kindness and goodwill toward their employers".[102]

This occasionally dissonant attempt to proselytize both in the interests of their mostly black congregation members as well as in the interest of the plantocracy comes through in the particular religious values that were given particular importance. In *The Statement of Plan, Object, and Effect* the problem of a population not dense enough to support the plantation system with wage labor is addressed mostly in the form of attempting to make the slave monogamous. One of the most important motives for marriage was its ability to increase the population since the slaves who were married were thought to be more prolific and the children that came from these unions were more likely to survive to adulthood. One proprietor in a letter to a Member of the Committee that was included in the *Statement of Plan, Object, and Effect*, dated July 20, 1818 extrapolated, "and to the point, the great point, the *primum mobile*, an increasing capital, in an increasing gang to the proprietor".[103]

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[99] Statement of Plan, Object, and Effect of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies (London: The Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1824), p 28
[100] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 33.
[101] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 33.
[102] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 38.
[103] *Statement of Object, Plan, and Effect*, p 35.

Conclusion

When seen through a more cynical lense the actions and duties of the missionaries do not seem to have anything to do with the benefit of the slaves and religious instruction appears to be only a means to the end of ensuring monetary gain. It is hard not to come to this conclusion, especially when those who wrote about missionary work during its height cannot seem to help framing religious instruction as a tool of production itself. However, when one considers the audience that the stated efforts of the missionary societies had to appeal to and that the plantocracy were largely responsible for dictating what constituted success for the missionary societies their language becomes more clear. It is important also to note that the export of Christianity was also seen as the export of an essential piece of British culture as can be taken away from Ramsay's reference to the Anglican church as the "great stay of the constitution". Shirley Gordon in *God Almighty Make Me Free* touches on this idea when she clarifies that "not only was religious instruction designed to create a hard-working peasantry, but also a hard-working *British* peasantry".

Chapter 2 – The Quest for Respectability and British Patriotism in Postemancipation Jamaica

It is simple to perceive how the British missionaries on arrival in Jamaica would have expected the grateful black population to lay down all the engrained aspects of their culture in order to comply with what the missionaries saw as a far superior way of life. Ironically, in this way the opinions of the missionaries were of accord with the planters who believed in control through a process of deculturation where the eradication of all forms of African cultural practices was essential.[104] However, for the missionaries, this was not necessary in order to coerce the native population into a system of slave labor, but rather a system of wage labor where they had to look and act the part of a British citizenry. Although the missionaries might not have been advocates of biological racism or the slave system and the methods of control it employed, the prejudice against non-European culture was evidently still deeply engrained in them.[105] The consequences of this manifested themselves multiple disagreements with the native population that viewed the missionary effort as something that would naturally fall under their direction in eventuality.

Philip Curtin addresses the problematic idea previously held by "optimistic theorists" that has since fallen out of fashion among scholars that the subject peoples in European colonies would eventually accept European "civilization" and throw off their native "barbarism". Curtin

[104] Steeve O. Buckridge, *The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica 1760-1890* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), p. 17.
[105] Buckridge, *The Language of Dress*, p. 17.

argues that contrary to this theory native peoples have taken the offerings of European societies in a piecemeal fashion according to which parts are most beneficial to them.[106] The likelihood of this happening was increased further in Jamaica where inflexible ideas were being implemented about free labor that were designed to help Britain, a temperate country with four distinct seasons in a period of political democracy and economic growth.[107] The new conditions that needed to be contended with were for one a sweltering climate that did and does affect the quality of life of the inhabitants and the ever present racial divide not nearly so visible in Great Britain. European Jamaican missionaries were tasked with explaining the proper order of a free labor society under these new circumstances and innovating as they went along. Another aspect of Afro-Creole culture that the missionaries had to contend with were the practices of Obeah and Myal. These were not simply aberrations of human behavior as the white population saw them but also an alternative for those who did not have as much hope of taking advantage of the chance for social mobility offered by the missionary societies and conversion. These were typically those still enslaved and who, due in large part to low personal security, were not able to invest as substantially in their futures as other population groups such as the mixed-race free colored.

For those who were able to take on the considerable task of strict adherence to missionary doctrine in order to reap the social benefits, “respectability” was a widely sought after aspiration. To a large extent this was an attempt to project to the outside world, not in the least part through physical appearance, the value of living a chaste, pious life. It was an outward sign of a moral lifestyle and particularly when it came to free people of color appearing respectable was an important part of seeking equal status with whites. There are frequent occurrences of services

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[106] Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in Tropical Colony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955) p. viii
[107] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, p. 103.

and religious functions being referred to as being a “large respectable gathering” or having the attendance of “the respectable classes”.[108] This is well demonstrated by what Thomas Burchell wrote about the opening of his day school in Montego Bay in September 1836. Although the building was to accommodate 220 pupils, the opening was attended by the 3,170 Sunday school pupils who traveled from the Baptist stations affiliated with the Montego Bay Chapel. They even endured the task of walking through the night, sleeping by the roadside in order to reach the ceremony on time. The ceremony itself seems to have been very patriotic; the students marched from the day school to the chapel to the refrains of “God Save the King” and “Rule Britannia”. Burchell recorded that “great propriety and decorum prevailed” as could be expected from pupils who showed so much determination to parade as loyal members of the chapel and the British colonies.[109]

The Twin Missionary Doctrines of Respectability and Domesticity

It cannot be stated enough how important a role physical appearance, particularly in the case of clothing was supposed to play in the formation and structure of a respectable free labor society. Steeve O. Buckridge makes a helpful distinction between the words assimilation and accommodation *in The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica*. Accommodation, he argues, as opposed to assimilation, returns agency to those who felt pressure to conform to the norms of their dominant culture, in this case the British Empire. In this way the word accommodation can be used interchangeably with acculturation in that it was a conscious decision on the part of the black population of Jamaica to adopt certain customs as their own.

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[108] Shirley Gordon, *God Almighty Make Me Free* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996) p. 76.
[109] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 79.

Creolization in this way did not only mean the mingling of African and European elements. In many ways the battle to influence the political and economic life of the island became a battle to influence the cultural life of the island as well. Buckridge also draws attention to the fact that the period after abolition in 1807 to the end of the nineteenth century was a time of expanding consumerism with an ever-increasing value placed on material acquisition. There were also a greater variety of commodities to acquire with greater access for everyone who wanted to participate in this consumerist culture. Perhaps in part responding to this new emphasis on materialism and the pressure to conform to the culture that the missionaries represented at this time the more African plantation styles of dressing went out of fashion.[110]

There existed an interesting dichotomy in the missionary standards for living a decent life in that they were meant to project a sensible, austere nature that did not crave excess and at the same time economic security and even opulence to a very modest extent. Part of the pressure to convey economic security and industriousness came from the need to compete with the Anglican clergy. This was usually composed of university graduates who joined the church as a result of not having land to inherit in spite of coming from wealthy families.[111] The status of these clergymen is reflected in the fact that the amount that they were paid was much higher than what the societies for the dissenting missionaries were able to give. A Wesleyan missionary, for instance, could expect to receive between £100 and £800 per year depending on the number of dependents which was difficult to live on especially in a tropical climate that incurred costs in medical bills.[112] It was a strain for the home societies even to pay missionaries what they did and

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[110] Buckridge, pp. 13-14

[111] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society 1787-1834* (Kingston: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998), p 10.

[112] Statement of Plan, Object, and Effect of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies (London: The Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1824), p 28

many encouraged the missionaries to become as financially independent as possible and live off of private subscriptions. Even the money for the schools had to be scraped together from sources such as English charities, the pupils who could pay fees, and sympathetic patrons. These financial straits were another factor that pushed the missionaries to make at least cordial if not advantageous relationships with the planter class.[113]

This need to compete on equal terms with the Anglican church for status and converts also manifested itself in other ways such as the Wesleyan Methodist custom of officiating in gowns and bands that were clearly supposed to be the equivalent of a clergyman's cassock. This practice went on unquestioned until a district chairman from Antigua took over the mission and put a stop to it saying that in all his years of service he had never seen anything like it. In the same vein the Wesleyans also overspent on a chapel with the obvious aim that it would compete with those of the Established Church even though the never-ending debt and embarrassing demands from creditors of color proved that it was a mistake. As much as they may have been seen as rivals it is also clear that the Anglican clergy were well esteemed in the missionary circles as they were always welcome to speak and to be in attendance at official ceremonies.[114]

Although the home societies often tried to castigate the missionaries for what they saw as vanity it can be argued that it was very astute on the part of the Jamaican missionaries to play into the hyper-materialistic West Indian culture to gain respect. There were even some West Indian cultural markers of social status that the missionaries were completely unable to ignore. To attempt to be taken seriously as a 'walk-foot buckra' (white person) for instance was

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[113] Robert Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post-emancipation Jamaica* (Knoxville: University Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 41.
[114] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 41.

completely useless since being seen walking on foot from place to place would have completely declassed them and made them the object of ridicule.[115] It was even necessary, in spite of further complaints from the London authorities of needless expense for the mission stations to employ two-horse chaises. Of course, transportation was not the only arena where prestige needed to be demonstrated. Walter Dendy, a Baptist minister in Jamaica during the 1840s described how "missionaries cannot dig in the ground, their wives stand at the wash-tub, or, cook their provisions for their respective meals".[116] This was in response to the danger of causing the social distance to collapse that stood between the missionaries and their flock. The London Wesleyan missionary committee was adamant that no missionary family had use for more than one domestic servant at a time. Still, the need to keep up appearances demanded that missionaries on average spend three times as much on domestic servants in order to employ cooks, housekeepers, and gardeners as their colleagues in London.[117]

The importance of being "respectable" is stressed by *The Baptist Record* published in 1847 and edited by the Rev. Edward Bean Underhill in which respectability is referred to as "the great idol of England". Edward Bean Underhill founded the Hanserd Knolly's Society for the publication of works by early Baptist writers, eventually compiling ten volumes of which he edited seven. When the magazine ceased publication in 1849 he became joint secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society and sole secretary from 1869-76. He also presented the typical

[115] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 26.
[116] Natalie Zacek (2014). "Unsettled Houses: The Material Culture of the Missionary Project in Jamaica in the Era of Emancipation". *Slavery & Abolition, Vol. 5 (3)*, pp. 493-507, p. 497.
[117] Zacek. "Unsettled Houses", p. 497.

picture of the Dissenter coming from very humble middle class beginnings having been the son of a grocer and grocer himself for many years.[118]

The fourth volume of the Baptist record, under the section titled “The Church and the Dissenters” also accuses Dissenters of wanting “faith and courage” because they supposedly allowed themselves to be influenced by social pretentions. These “social pretentions” are characterized as a preoccupation with the “wealth and rank” that are “conferred” by respectability. The near obsession with regards to social appearances described earlier lends itself as evidence of this. This section of the Baptist Record goes on to describe how the Dissenting ministry is “sneered at as vulgar, despised as poor”. As for those who were able to achieve some sort of social standing “they are too often ready to ape the upper classes by treating their own laborious pastors with contempt”. The article goes on to surmise that only the separation of Church and State can cure these circumstances for which the Anti-State-Church Association had been formed. This association was designed, through press and lectures, to condition the minds of the people demand the separation of the church from the state.[119]

This desire on the part of the dissenters plays out in an interesting way when it came to the institution of marriage. This is because marriage was obviously so heavily associated with the church but also considered an ideal to which every good Christian and subject should aspire. That it was considered a move in the right direction when it came to climbing the social ladder was not the least of the reasons for this. To deal with this conundrum the section following the one that just finished preaching the virtues of the separation of church and state spends quite a

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[118] W. B. Owen, ‘Underhill, Edward Bean (1813–1901)’, rev. Brian Stanley, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36611, accessed 4 May 2016]
[119] *The Baptist Record and Biblical Repository IV* (London: Aylott and Jones, 1847) pp. 100-101

few words trying to at once insist that marriage is a sacred institution and also that it is a governmental institution. Essentially, the section titled "The Christian Household" attempts to assert in a roundabout way that marriage is the only governmental institution that is sacred. This seems to imply marriage was one of the practices associated with the Anglican Church that was still beneficial economically and socially in a capitalist society for reasons neatly outlined for one by Herman Merivale and cited in the previous chapter. Perhaps it is for this reason that the article dances around this issue calling marriage "a constitution resembling neither the world nor the church, neither the civil nor the sacred character".[120]

It is also notable how often the article refers to marriage as a "constitution" or "constitution of things" especially when one considers the word in the same way Ramsay did when he referred to the Anglican Church as the "great stay of the constitution". It could simply be a coincidental use of the term, however, it could also indicate how pivotal monogamous, Christian marriage was considered to be to the functioning of a society like the on the dissenting church members were used to, a wage labor society. It appears that marriage was even considered to be a sort of defensive strategy against the despotism of the ruling classes, a partnership that made each member stronger; a concept that the missionaries definitely would have tried to implement among their slave converts. In so many words the article laments, "the government is despotic", hope remains however since, "the people will not depressed; on the contrary where the domestic circle is broken and its holy tendencies are unknown…true liberty and prosperity will be alike unknown." Equally foreboding as it is reassuring this quote demonstrates the immense faith that the Dissenters put into this divine "constitution".[121]

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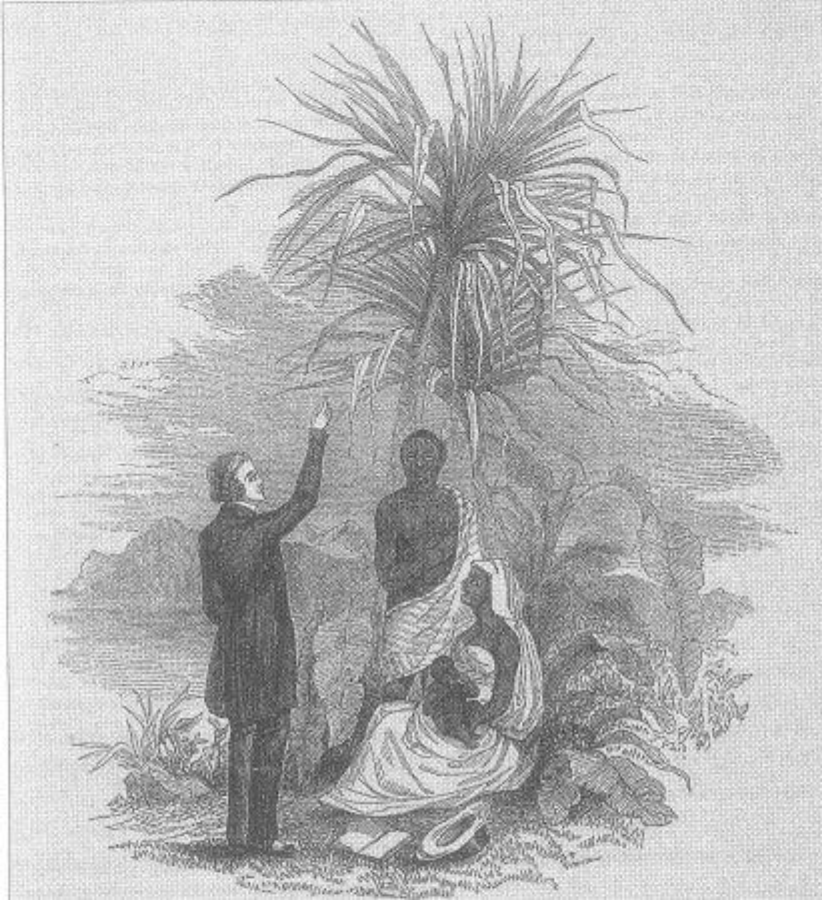
[120] *The Baptist Record*, p. 103.
[121] *The Baptist Record*, p. 104.

It is useless to learn about the role that marriage was supposed to play hypothetically in a society defined by the ideals of the Dissenters without understanding what exactly was demanded by a proper Christian marriage. It is also important to understand even further what the dissenting missionaries and their converts believed it was that monogamous Christian marriage would do not only for their personal betterment but also that of their society. This is well outlined in a section immediately following "The Church and the Dissenters" titled "The Christian Household" which describes the ideal Christian marriage and how crucial it was to the functioning of a healthy, and above all god-fearing and moral society. In order to do this the author of the section apparently deemed it most effective to describe what it was marriage was not intended to be. The article laments that the "transatlantic brethren" are becoming more "gregarious" and less domestic in their habits, causing both their sacred and civil relation to deteriorate as a result. In a sort of chastising way, however, it is admitted that situation is not as perilous as it is in France, a place that was supposedly a "significant instance of the powerful and pernicious effects of the want of domesticity".[122]

[122] *The Baptist Record*, p. 104.



In the illustration in the introduction the benefactor of the black race was a metaphorical, unrealistic portrayal of Great Britain, perhaps as the goddess Athena conveying wisdom since the representation is of a woman dressed in armor. Here the influence of Great Britain is characterized with the more humble image of the missionary. He is officiating what appears to be some sort of ceremony, paternalistically conferring favor on a black couple whose loose robes contrast sharply with his clean cut black suit. It is interesting here also to see portrayed the at once elegant but modest clothing of the missionary. This clothing was the mark not of the upper but the *middle* class which was what made it worth going through such lengths to attain and care for on the part of the missionaries and their converts.

Granted, considering that the Baptists were led by men in the early 19th century it is unsurprising that the opinions of women, particularly opinions that went against the heads of households were not very highly valued. Still it becomes even clearer the specific reasons why when one considers what is described in the article as the ideal family as it very blatantly and unapologetically confers all authority on the male head. According to the article the male head was supposed to be a king that reigned "in sovereign and undisputed authority", still this authority was supposed to be used in a tender way for the benefit of all. Children were of course not left out of the equation, they were supposed to be raised by their mothers under the direction of their fathers and only in this way would the "edifice of religion gently settle down". This was essential in order to ensure that the child should learn to be a good subject, which would in turn provide valuable subjects to both the church and the state.

In this context "both the church and the world meet, and it is the only spot on earth where it is at once lawful and incumbent on them so to do".[123] Again this is supporting evidence that marriage was a special case in that it was a vestige of the church that was also beneficial to the state and therefore was very carefully preserved even while the "enormously endowed and privileged church" continued to "sink in estimation".[124] The beneficial contribution that women were expected to make to this church sanctioned union is clarified somewhat by the fact that teachers who were with the United Brethren of Jamaica were rewarded with extra funds if they provided instructions in sewing. The magazines published by several missionary societies at the time also help one to gain scope on the subject such as *Jamaican Moravian: A Christian Monthly Magazine* as well as the *Moravian Messenger*. Both of these praised the virtues of being an

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[123] *The Baptist Record*, p. 105.
[124] *The Baptist Record*, p. 101.

obedient wife and also offered domestic advice on domestic pursuits, sewing included. Outreach centers established by the missionary societies such as Upward and Onward Society of the Women of Jamaica, also founded by the Moravians, sought to uplift the free population by teaching domestic skills. These included lessons in doing laundry, hat making, Victorian dressmaking, and needlework. As philanthropy became more and more a distinguishing mark of the upper classes influential elite white women also contributed to this trend of attempting to uplift freed women. Lady Musgrave, the wife of the governor of Jamaica helped set this sort of example by establishing the Women's Self-Help Society for Afro-Jamaican women for teaching shell crafts, needlework, and decorum.[125]

Of course, the vision of what would engender their success was just as important as the formation of these societies and this was to foster moral, marriageable women who would then help uplift the freed population. In this way the black women in the West Indies, despite their systematic degradation, were born with the inherent value of being seen as the 'womb' that would birth the new and transformed black population. In Jamaica this was even more so as there was a dearth of women in relation to men since they had formed only about one-sixth of the of the ratio of imports to the estates. Of course this led to the development of a domestic situation completely contrary to what the missionaries hoped to achieve on the island and that was a firmly engrained system of prostitution. This was to the chagrin of almost every person on the island except for those who were living in concubinage, and even then the cases must have been very rare where coercion, either physical or out of economic necessity for the women, was not a factor. This was also a double edged sword because the inclination that particularly mixed race women had towards concubinage with white men as opposed to marriage or any sort of other

[125] Buckridge, *Language of Dress*, p. 128.

relationship with men of their own race was seen as insulting by the black population.[126] It was often complained of that the mixed race women of the island in particular viewed concubinage with a white man as more honorable than marriage with a black man. [127]In contrast those women who appeared in immaculate, elegant clothing, and who were free of "avaricious motives" epitomized ascension from the pit of slavery in the eyes of the missionaries and mostly likely conformists to white British culture in general.

It would make sense then that the ruling classes saw some form of personal merit to be had from this attempt on the part of missionaries to enfranchise the newly freed population, certainly the "lower orders" in this case.[128] For this reason the missionary Phillipo observed astutely if rather abrasively that the work of the missionaries consisted of "convincing these simple-minded people that their own prosperity…depended on their willingness to work for moderate wages".[129] This is part of what the education system provided for the native population was meant to foster; Jamaican legislators argued that it would "imbue them [the native population] with new wants and desires that could only be satisfied by constant and steady employment".[130] This is evidence for Shirley Gordon's assertion that the popularity of the dissenting missions arose from the concordance between missionary objectives (like the formation of an educational system) and the social aspirations of the newly freed population.[131]

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[126] Horace Russell (1983). "The Emergence of the Christian Black: the Making of a Stereotype".*Jamaica Journal Vol. 16 (1)*, 51-70, p. 53-54.
[127] James Mursell Phillippo, *Jamaica: its past and present state* (London: John Snow, 1843), p. 149.
[128] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 39.
[129] James Phillippo, *Jamaica: its past and present state* (London: John Snow, Paternoster Row, 1843) p. 431.
[130] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 42.
[131] Shirley Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica* (Jamaica: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998) p. 10.

Simply being a member of a chapel went conferred status and there was considerable authority in holding the office of a leader, deacon, or catechist.[132] The slaves who attended chapel services were usually the same who were saving their money in preparation for freedom. These were a select group amongst the slaves which can be gathered from observing that chapel membership rose with the number of slaves hired out as skilled workers. In this way, although it did nothing to help the prejudicial views of the white British in Jamaica, Euro-Christian values coincided with the aspirations of the native population to be free British citizens with personal prospects.[133]

The material culture of respectability so essential to social mobility during the missionary heyday not only went beyond new clothing but was also influenced by a changing economy. Contributing to missionary ideals paradoxically constructed around appearance and material acquisition was the urbanization that came with the rise of wage labor and the fall of the sugar estates. This created a greater demand on the part of the emerging middle class that wanted more access, in particular to British goods and clothing, to which the merchant class responded.[134] Although it was slow in coming and the economic situation was much more bleak following emancipation as will be described later, a visitor in 1899, W.P. Livingstone shows the end result towards which this consumerist trend was heading:

> "There was now springing up everywhere stores stocked with the common necessaries of life. Many provincial merchants began to import their own goods and open up small

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[132] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 64.
[133] Gordon, *God Almighty*, p. 66.
[134] Buckridge, *Language of Dress*, pp. 128-129.

> branches wherever the opportunity occurred. This process went on until the entire country was dotted over with sources of supply."[135]

Although Livingstone also worried about this new predilection of the freed person towards "higher habits" which encouraged them to "spend a large part of their money on dress" this preoccupation was not only based in avarice. Clothing also served the practical purpose of raising one's social status and also served as a tangible object that denoted status for those for whom other kinds such as owning property remained inaccessible.[136] This also meant a growing interest in European styles of clothing while African dress characteristics like women's headwraps, dyed fabrics, and beads or necklaces of coral fell out of favor especially by freed women who did not want to be associated with "slave dress". This Europhilia was of course present during slavery as well as is described by John Stewart, another visitor, who reported that "all who can afford it appear in very gay apparel…the women in white or fancy muslin gowns, beaver or silk hats and a variety of expensive jewelry."[137] John Stewart seems to have been interested in the prospects of Jamaica since he wrote at least two books with Jamaica as their subject matter including *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica* as well as *An Account of Jamaica and Its Inhabitants*. His viewpoint above is corroborated by the observations of another Englishman, Theodore Foulks who in describing his arrival at Port Royal commented that the free colored population in general was a body completely distinct from the slaves and this was reflected in their dress. Foulks described that the "brown women", referring to the free colored women, wore muslin gowns and "Panama" hats (large hats made out of straw)

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[135] William Pringle Livingston, *Black Jamaica: A Study in Evolution* (London: S. Low, Marston and Co., 1900), p. 105.
[136] Buckridge, *Language of Dress*, p. 134.
[137] John Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica: With Remarks on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Slaves* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1823), p. 269.

along with expensive jewelry and large earrings. Although Foulks called this mode of dress "completely foreign" the influence of European fashion is evident today especially as he went on to say that in the evenings "their dress is splendid, and worn with a grace that would not discredit a Spanish Donna".[138]

Both fabric and color of clothing were of particular concern to those who wanted to use the churchyard as a performance space in which to display their hats and European-style dress. Underhill describes in *The West Indies: their social and religious condition* that contrary to popular opinion there was a "general absence of gay colours and flaunting attire of which we had heard so much as characteristic of the negro taste". Instead men were clothed like "artisans in England and the women for the most part, in cotton of various simple patterns and hats".[139] This conformity to more ascetic tastes was important since fashion norms of the era tended to "darken men as they blanched women" and to the missionaries dark suits came to be symbolic of the virtues of "self-effacement and discipline".[140] Since the missionaries had to rely mainly on donations raised in the metropole and these donors were reluctant to pay for anything that seemed excessive, the challenge of keeping up a decent standard of living was a struggle even for them. George Henderson, the son of a missionary describes well this kind of struggle to keep up appearances while living under the effects of genteel poverty.

When Sunday suits became shabby with no funds to replace them, they were carefully unpicked by our loving Mother, and her boys gathered logwood chips and boiled dye, mixing it with copperas to turn it black, and then fixed the colour with alum. The pieces were then

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[138] Foulks, *Eighteen Months in Jamaica,* p. 27
[139] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies: their social and religious condition* (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 1862) p. 209.
[140] Zacek, "Unsettled Houses", p. 497.

skillfully pressed and put together by the Mother of our love; and on Sunday we entered the chapel as proud of our renovated garments as if the had just arrived from Bond Street.[141]

The challenges presented by the attempt to maintain a respectable lifestyle are also evident in the mixture of articles new and old of clothing made of silk, cotton, and flannel left behind by the Reverend Charles Wilcox who died in Jamaica. About one-third of the articles he left behind were clothing related and included among them 4 silk and 18 cotton handkerchiefs, 5 pairs of cotton gloves and 1 of silk as well as 1 good suit and hat with 1 "very old hat".[142] These instances make apparent the striving for respectability that could be seen visibly by not only the newly freed population of Jamaica but the people who attempted to convert them to a new faith and lifestyle as well. Part of the fixation on personal appearance could have also stemmed from the fact that in public decent clothing was one of the most effective ways to make poverty invisible, perhaps a lesson that the lower middle class missionary families had already learned in England. It was also a way to validate ones own self-worth. As one woman, Masie Walker, responded to the author, Buckridge, when asked why she put so much time and effort into dressing up for church, "It mek me feel so good".[143]

Although presenting a respectable image was pivotal to rising in the ranks of the missionary societies or even to being allowed to be a member ones habitation was also object of much scrutiny. The homes of the missionaries and their converts were expected to embody the twin values of thrift and simplicity, often referred to as 'neat'. Philip Henry Crawford, a fellow Baptist missionary who visited Knibb in 1841 once described Knibb's house in Falmouth. He

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[141] Zacek, "Unsettled Houses", p. 496.
[142] Zacek, " Unsettled Houses", p. 497.
[143]Buckridge, *Language of Dress*, p. 170.

praised that it could ‘boast no decorations or superfluities’ and had only polished bare floors and plain walls, as well as chairs ‘of common appearance and without cushions’ (although they were made of expensive mahogany).[144] The Baptist Herald, founded by Knibb in 1839 provided much advice on the topic of proper furnishing. One columnist for the Herald urged that each family should have:

> “a neat white-pine or cedar table, with a few good chairs…so that you and your family may be comfortably seated at meals; have a clean table-cloth, plates, knives and forks on your table, and accustom your children to come to the table with their hands and faces clean.”[145]

It is clear the way material acquisitions were meant to compliment the missionary values of domesticity, particularly in the way that they were meant to instill good habits in the children of the congregation members. In spite of how material acquisitions and chapel membership provided opportunities for the newly freed, it is also clearly seen how the extent to which good standing in one’s congregation depended on them created its own form of race-based hierarchy. As determined as the missionaries were to “reinstate” the enslaved into the human race in this way they were also unable to keep from perpetuating a system that made the British West Indies “sites for acting out white visions of how black people should live.”[146]

The Quest for Native Agency

It is plainly seen then how the missionary culture that was well established by the time of true emancipation in 1838 had the aim of conversion but perhaps also the more significant aim of leading its members into a middle class life in free Jamaica. An important avenue for this also

[144] Zacek, “Unsettled Houses”, p. 498.
[145] Zacek, “Unsettled Houses”, p. 503.
[146] Zacek, “Unsettled Houses”, p. 505.

essential to the missionary cause was that of schooling and there existed opportunity for mobility not only as a student but as a teacher that the schools were in dire need of. Along with running day schools the native converts with leadership positions also conducted popular Sunday and evening classes. One instance of religious education that shows a similar striving for this patriotic vision of respectability in both the native population of Jamaica and the working class in the United Kingdom was the Clarendon school enterprise. This was set up in 1862 and was supposed be a school of "higher education" for promising pupils of the day schools or those who belonged to well-off families that considered their children above them.[147] In this way it was an exact parallel to the middle-class schools springing up at the same time in the United Kingdom.[148]

There was another form of stratification, that of color prejudice, that emerged in Jamaica's school system at this time that was observed for one by the L.M.S. missionary W.G. Barrett. He became aware of the strict allegiances based on color in particular when one black man warned him in 1836 that "Mass minister was too near Busha". This meant that he could not hope to gain the trust of the native population if he continued to associate too frequently with the members of the plantocracy. In spite of becoming intimately aware of the color prejudice that existed in Jamaica or more likely because of it he chose to focus more on the "brown" students in his school at Four Paths in Clarendon. Of the sixty-four regular attendees there were fourteen brown students who according to Barrett constituted a distinct class. It was his opinion that "These would on account of their parentage occupy a more respectable and influential station in life, and in hope that influence might be directed in a proper channel I have devoted my attention

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[147] Shirley C. Gordon, *Our Cause For His Glory* (Barbados: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998) p. 24.
[148] Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory*, p. 24.

more especially to them". There was also another more immediate reason for teaching them separately from the children of those who were at this time living under the apprenticeship system. Otherwise their fathers, who were mostly overseers, would not have sent their children to school for fear that they would learn "filthy habits" from the black children.[149]

This prejudice also affected chapel membership as the free colored tended to prefer to attend the better socially respected Methodist church although in a twist of irony the color prejudice they encountered there also in turn began to have serious consequences. The free colored population attended the mission services of the Wesleyan Methodists in Kingston, Spanish Town, and Montego Bay by an overwhelming margin. The free colored people in particular were able to conduct themselves with the norms of respectability so lauded by the missionaries in a way that the enslaved could not and that for the most part the rest of the white population had no interest in.[150] As Foulks also observed in *Eighteen Months* the free colored population had an education "which puts them on a level with the middle ranks in England".[151] In other words on par with the missionaries, which helped enable effective communication. This no doubt contributed to the willingness of the missionaries to rely on them as deacons and catechists. The issue arose from this same practice however since, although the native members were allowed in positions subordinate to that of the missionaries, there were tensions over ownership of the chapels and personal advancement.

An early example that shows that issues with discrimination in the dissenting churches in Jamaica were there almost from their founding took place in the years from 1802 to 1810. The

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[149] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, pp. 72-73
[150] Gordon, *God Almighty*, pp. 70-71.
[151] Foulks, *Eighteen Months*, p. 27.

missionary Isaac Bradnock for example provoked the ire of his stewards as result of his forming two separate classes of colored girls to teach himself. When Bradnock lost his temper and the leading steward, William Carver, along with others were suspended they wrote a written protest to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London. Along with taking issue with the spending habits of the missionaries they also complained that the missionaries had altered the seating arrangements so that the "fairer" ladies were separated from the darker and seated closer to the missionaries. The other complaints that arose as result of this disagreement show a desire on the part of the stewards to have authority and participate in an influential way in decision-making concerning the chapel. These included accusations that the missionaries had tried to delay the manumission of Edward Horne, a colored slave who was also a chapel leader and that they kept insisting on having a brick staircase built from the street to the pulpit when the Society was in debt. In a similar vein a free colored deacon once remarked that he had not raised funds for a chapel in Jamaica in order for it to belong to the Baptist Missionary Society in London. Although in this case it was a Baptist deacon there remains the same desire on the part of the colored population in particular to at least eventually steer the course of the native ministries they took such a great part in forming.[152]

For those for whom acquiescing to the restrictive demands of the missionary chapels in exchange for greater social mobility was not a viable option there was a tendency to seek out other ways to help themselves. If they could find nothing else critics of the Baptist Missionary Society, and to an extent the Wesleyan Methodists, could denounce the ticket-and-leader system as despotic and harmful to the spread "true Christianity". As the leader or "Daddy" that was put in charge of the congregation these people oftentimes had to translate the sermons or wishes of

[152] Foulks, *Eighteen Months*, pp. 72-73.

the white preachers to the creole-speaking population. This at times allowed for unique, individualistic interpretations. Even the practice of baptism, to the dismay of the missionaries, had parallels with traditional West African traditions, especially in the case of the rituals of Dahomey river cults where immersion was practiced. This led to the perpetuation of what were “old and hurtful superstitions” in the eyes of disapproving observers. The Presbyterian missionary Hope Waddell claimed that the black Baptist preacher, Moses Baker, apprentice of George Leile, had “initiated them [the slaves] into a strange system of mingled truth and error”. The situation was no doubt further aggravated in his eyes by the Baptist Thomas Burchell accepting these “Baker Baptists” into his congregation thus causing “permanent injury” to the Baptist mission in Jamaica.[153]

Of course those who retained their African cultural beliefs and practices, mainly called Native Baptists, did not do so out of spite, but rather because it fostered a “soul force” as Leonard E. Barrett described it. This “soul force” arguably enhanced the quality of the lives of Africans in Jamaica in its own way and helped them to cope with the horrors of enslavement. This was the appeal that the missionaries, whether consciously or unconsciously, had to contend with by convincingly demonstrating that chapel membership could outdo the benefits of this “soul force”, also called “kumina”.[154] That the Native Baptist sect acted as a sort of safety valve for those who felt too much pressure to adhere strictly to the demanding code of missionary doctrine is evidenced in that the members of Baptist sect were rarely disciplined for “backsliding”. This is in contrast to members of the Wesleyan Methodists whose women members could be turned out or suspended simply for their “love of ornament”. [155] There was an

[153] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 128.
[154] Buckridge, *Language and Dress*, p. 17.
[155] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 83.

unintended but perhaps not unanticipated backlash for this compromise the Baptists made in the interest of retaining members in that it put an enormous amount of power in the hands of native leaders. The consequences of this manifested themselves in the occasionally subversive messages that the native leaders conveyed to their congregations including that the European missionaries final allegiance was to their home country and not them. The most disastrous result of this kind of sermonizing by the native leaders, at least for the white Jamaican, was the Christmas Rebellion started by the slave Samuel Sharpe. In the two-year absence of his Baptist minister, Thomas Burchell, Sharpe managed to convince his congregation that he had gone to get their "free paper" and that he supported their independent actions towards securing their freedom.[156]

Conclusion

From a present-day standpoint one might expect for an attempt to transfer a system of free, wage labor meant for industrial workers in Britain to the slave colony of Jamaica to be met with obstacle after obstacle. Still for those who could take advantage of the opportunities put in place by the missionaries and the native members who helped them the new material culture of the industrial era was within reach. Another social dynamic that surfaces is that, as Curtin theorized, the individual social position of the native population determined the way that they minced which parts of the missionary culture were beneficial to them. For instance, although the unique situation of Jamaican women made them more reluctant to adhere to the strict domestic lifestyle preached by the missionaries it was economically and socially more practical than concubinage for some.

[156] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, p. 151.

The more elite of the native population faced a unique dilemma the way that they seemed to feel that they were not receiving in return for their conscientious piety the social mobility they had effectively been promised which later fostered negative issues of its own. It was also this population that felt that Jamaica was theirs to rule as hard-working and respectable British subjects. Given this, perhaps it was those who used missionary culture to achieve more independent minded goals, such as the Native Baptists, who carried the greater part of the burden of creating a more patriotic vision of Jamaica. A vision that began to exist apart from the one pictured by those in the metropole.

Conclusion

The mid-1840s in Jamaica, marked by the death of the "notorious" Baptist missionary William Knibb, began the slow but certain decline of missionary Christianity in Jamaica. From the beginning the missionary project had attempted to introduce wage labor and moral righteousness, but perhaps the most important goal was making these two remunerative as a necessary incentive. For various reasons, those economic and social influencing one another, this did not turn out to be the case. Although the fall of the fortunes of British West Indies, in particular Jamaica, had many causes those in power in the metropole tended to blame emancipation and the free labor experiment. One issue that contributed to the increasing economic straits on the island at this time was that in the early 19th century, as mentioned by Herman Merivale earlier, some sugar estates had been planted on land that was costly to maintain. With the fall of sugar prices after the Napoleonic Wars obviously this became a great issue and these marginal producers were the first to fall into ruin.[157] Apart from the decline of sugar production there were environmental issues that were particularly harmful, namely a series of droughts in the 1850s and a cholera epidemic from 1850-51 that did away with a large number of sugar workers.[158] Perhaps most harmful of all to the missionary effort was the rise of free trade

[157] Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony 1830-1865*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 109.
[158] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, p. 109.

doctrine which ultimately represented the decision of the British government to give up on the "mighty experiment" of free labor and by proxy the native population of Jamaica.

Contributing to this sentiment was the example of Cuba, an island that was seen to be flourishing at this time with 800 miles of railway attesting to this and all under the system of slavery.[159] Free trade was supposed to rectify this as was predicted by the *Economist* journal when it argued on January 25, 1846 that putting an end to discriminating duties to protect the prices of British sugar would encourage Brazil and Cuba to incorporate a more skilled labor system than slavery could provide. This turned out not to be the case as the journal reflected one year after the start of free trade with an article titled "The Prostrate Sugar Colonies".[160] The British government had not predicted that companies with slaves in Cuba could compete with free labor and free trade as was also proven by the fact that the British ended up selling their latest technological advancements in Cuba at bankruptcy prices.[161] Considering all of this, members of Parliament such as Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, would instead invest in keeping wages to a minimum largely through the equalizing power of free trade doctrine and the aid of immigrant workers.[162]

This is not the place to theorize about what measures could have been taken in order to save the British sugar colonies from ruin. Still, the measures that were not taken and the reasons why reflect on the social status of the missionaries and the newly

[159] Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 185.
[160] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 179.
[161] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 186.
[162] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 338

emancipated population of Jamaica in the eyes of the government in the metropole as well as the one in Jamaica. From the start of the free labor movement until well after emancipation the policies of the British government towards the sugar colonies operated on the assumption that their welfare depended the plantation system. Antigua was held up as the shining example of success by emancipationists in the 1830s, however, going back to Merivale's lectures this island also had the ideal proportion of arable land to population size suitable to growing sugar with free labor.[163] Legislators at the time ignored that from the start of apprenticeship the black population had begun to go into the mountains where they could work the land independently. Where the old plantation estates fell into ruin the small settlers created a prosperous system that included a complex array of crops such as many types of fruit, yams, plantains, breadfruit, and even sugar, and these only for local consumption. For the export market ginger, pimento, and coffee were also grown.[164] This system of growing crops for the Sunday market had been firmly established for a long time on the island since the plantation owners had come rely on the food grown on the provision grounds of the enslaved. It was for this reason that Brother Knibb had to explain away the supposed "wealth of the negroes" to a Select Committee on the West India colonies held in 1842.[165] Yet the "Quashee" image popular at the time persisted of the lazy black man who would not work for the profit of his master or himself without the coercion of slavery. Its existence was not without reason according to the Methodist missionary

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[163] Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies Delivered Before the University of Oxford,* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, 1841), pp. 304-305.
[164] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, p. 111.
[165] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 123.

who, breaking form with his society's policy of not criticizing the plantocracy, insisted that this image was manufactured by the "Planting interest" in favor of immigrant labor.[166]

In a sense the sharp downturn in the fortunes of the Jamaica in the middle of the missionary effort caused them to fight a battle on two fronts. It was not only lack of financial incentive that discouraged investment in Jamaican industry, but also the negative racial imagery that spoke against the faith the missionaries espoused that the native population of Jamaica could rule a corner of the British empire. As will be demonstrated this also caused a severe underestimation of not only the amount of effort and monetary aid that needed to be put into creating an intelligent peasantry but also the profits that this could yield. The result was frustration with a project that was truly left half undone. Contributing to these circumstances was the reality that the House of Assembly did not represent the interests of the people of Jamaica. According to the Reverend Underhill even the colored members were elected for the interests of planters and merchants. This was not aided by the registration costs faced by voters that confined representation to those parties who had class interests. Candidates were also able to gain votes by paying the registration fees of a sufficient number of voters in order to win the election.[167] This seriously undermined in many ways the missionary vision of a land-owning, Christianized, native agency ruling Jamaica because of the harmful legislative measures it imposed as a result.

Political Policies Detrimental to the Missionary Effort in the 1860s

[166] Stewart, *Religion and Society*, p. 30.
[167] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition*, (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 1862), pp. 215-216.

The free village system for one was attacked directly by the Ejectment Act which gave planters the right to evict the enfranchised peasantry from their homes only a week in advance, root up their provision grounds, and cut down fruit trees. This was all to give them leverage in order to force the black population to work on their terms.[168] The free villages were a system established by the missionaries in which they bought large swathes of land left unused by planters since the economic downturn and turned into villages for their converts. These were places where the native population could live pious lives under the direction of their ministers and also be self-sufficient. For example, the Reverend Robert Jones at the request of his members borrowed enough money to buy and sell 180 acres of land and named the settlement Mount Providence. The high aspirations the missionaries had for these projects were reflected in that Jones rejoiced the newly acquired property was now "garden of the Lord".[169] The enthusiasm of the converts is also evident from the names that they gave these villages and their cottages such as Tis-well, Jane's Delight, Long-looked-for-and-come-at-last, Happy Hut, Save-Rents, and A Little of Me Own.[170]

The attempt on the part of the black population to live industrious, domestic lives was also threatened by taxes levied on the peasantry and fees charged to the missionaries in order to perform marriages. For instance, Underhill criticizes in *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition*, published in 1862, that when the free laborers tried to build cottages of their own "immediately the customs on shingles for the roof…were more than

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[168] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, pp. 216-217.
[169] Shirley Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica*, (Kingston: The University Press of West Indies, 1998), p. 28.
[170] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 340.

doubled". Besides this the houses when built were assessed at a rate that led to their abandonment in favor of "shanties" made of mud. Underhill explains further that in order to keep the labor of the black population on the estates tax on sugar and coffee produced for consumption within the country was imposed while there was no tax on same products when they were exported.[171] The taxes that were imposed on the tools the small settlers used, again perhaps to discourage self-employment, also negatively affected industry on the island. For instance, the small settlers had to pay a tax on carts that had been 4 shillings two pennies in the past and was now raised to 18 shillings while planters had to pay no taxes on these. The result was the number of carts in one sugar parish had fallen from 500 to 197, having a distressing effect on the ability of the people to supply their markets with provisions over long distances.[172] The House of Assembly also tried to retroactively fine the dissenting missionaries for the marriages that they had performed; Baptist minister Thomas Burchell would have had to pay £400 if the enactment had not been disallowed. Still, the sentiment was obvious and encouraged the complete reverse of the aspirations the missionaries had for their converts.[173]

As it has been demonstrated, personal appearance in particular with regards to dress was very important to the missionaries, therefore the effects of rising taxes on clothing were nothing short of devastating. Possibly one of the worst consequences was the fall in attendance at churches on Sunday as a direct result of the members not having decent clothes to appear in. The residents of Jamaica in 1865 were paying an incredible 38% in taxes on clothing when before 12.5% was considered oppressive. The result was

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[171] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, pp. 217-218.
[172] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, p. 220.
[173] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, p. 219.

that "a disgusting state of nudity exhibited itself in some parts of the country" that was a direct result of the reduction of wages for the laboring classes during a time when all clothing rose in value.[174] This of course affected the missionary value of outward "respectability", however, the entire picture of domesticity presented by the missionaries was eroded by the new economic conditions and detrimental legislation. At a Spanish Town Public Meeting in 1865, held to confer about the distressing situation of the island, it was lamented that many tradespeople were forced to leave their homes in order to find work which definitely would not have been conducive to forming strong family ties. Furthermore, most likely resulting from troubled circumstances it is also mentioned that along with "people being less well clad" the "young refuse to submit from parental control".[175] Instead they desired to break away from constraints driving down the rate of marriage and instead living in open concubinage. This situation was aggravated by the absolute refusal on the part of the Jamaican House of Assembly to pass bastardy laws that would favor the illegitimate children of these unions. That there was also a rise in unnecessary waste of "infantile life" also shows the abandonment of plans to increase the Jamaican population by natural means in favor of schemes that offered more immediate financial rewards like the importation of immigrants.[176]

Domestic life was one pillar that was supposed to prop the patriotic vision of Jamaica shared by the missionaries and their converts. It was a near impossibility for this to be feasible without the support of industry and education. In spite of the near

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[174] Edward Bean Underhill, *Dr. Underhill's Leter: a letter addressed to the Rt. Honorable E. Cardwell, with illustrative documents on the condition of Jamaica and an explanatory statement*, (London: Arthur Miall, 1865), p. 16.
[175] Edward Bean Underhill, *Dr. Underhill's Letter*, p. 27.
[176] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, p. 222.

desperation for these necessities on the part of the native population there was simply not enough effort invested in helping them to secure these on the part of the British government and definitely not the House of Assembly. Stewart asserts that the idea that the best way to control the black population was through coercion was an idea that was a holdover from slavery and was never really given up. This would help explain why there was so much more spent on police and prisons than education and the church.[177] Underhill notes realistically that the grant given for education of £2500 could not truly be expected to help make the necessary strides towards forming a well-educated population.[178] In providing a way for the native population to move upwards and attain greater education through the church even the British missionaries, especially the Methodist ones, were at times not the most helpful and even a hindrance themselves.

Effects of 'Color Prejudice' Among the Missionaries Themselves

Given the term 'native agency' as stated previously in chapter two this desire on the part of the native population to move up in the ranks of their churches was a source of much contention. In April 1837 John Duff and his colleague George Lyon wrote to Secretary Dyer of the Baptist Missionary Society on behalf of a group of seven black men working together to service seventeen stations. It had been suggested more than once that these should be sent out as helpers to the missionaries but this idea had been rejected by the missionaries. Duff and Lyon argued that it was ridiculous that while they were idle, men should come from 4,000 miles to preach the Gospel, especially when the missionaries were stationed only in towns and country places that were easy to access. Although the

[177] Robert J. Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 43.
[178] Edward Bean Underhill, *The West Indies*, p. 222.

justification for these decisions was a lack of classical education, Duff and Lyon argued this could hardly have been considered immediately necessary for the native population living in the remote areas of Jamaica. They concluded that since lack of classical education could not truly be the issue with allowing for native agents to rise in the ranks of their church membership it must instead be prejudice.[179]

Henry Venn helped to shed light on the consequences of a lack of trained native pastors to take over the job Christianizing Jamaica. Venn who was born in 1796 spent almost his entire life in close contact with the missionary effort. His father presided over the organizing meeting of the Church Missionary Society and Venn served as Honorary Clerical Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841-1872.[180] Venn writings on the need for "a large well organized supply of negro pastors" can be found in the third volume of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer: A Monthly Journal of Missionary Information*, published in 1872. The Baptist Theological Institution at Calabar is mentioned and Venn speaks with disappointment that although the college had been established for some time, since 1843, only twenty native pastors had been supplied. This was due to the lack of students who were sufficiently educated enough to be able to take the courses. Venn also advocates for the promotion of native members of the dissenting churches saying it would be the easiest way to improve their educational attainment and that they should be allowed to be "promoted from one grade to another".[181] The worries that the native ministry would not be sufficiently prepared to head congregations in the name of the missionary societies

[179] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, pp. 142-143.
[180] Wilbert R. Shenk. (1985). "The Contribution of Henry Venn to Mission Thought". *Anvil, 2(1)*, p. 25.
[181] Henry Venn, *The Church Missionary Intelligencer: A Monthly Journal of Missionary Information, Vol. 3* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1867), p. 124.

are also addressed as Venn argues that their standard of educational attainment would be sure to gradually rise. The use of scholarships for keeping students that showed promise in school is also proposed along with the suggestion that select students should become boarders near where the missionaries lived. Venn was of the opinion that there were enough funds to provide for all of this, but practicalities aside the fact that very little attempt to carry out anything like this plan of action speaks for itself.[182]

The prejudice of the missionaries was often blamed on the assumption that missionaries “imbibed” the spirit of slavery on arrival in Jamaica. Although living in Jamaica and observing the effects of slavery almost definitely had their hand in forming missionary opinions of their flock a hierarchical view of the world with regards to race had long since become a discussion between the British colonies and the metropole. The missionaries with the willing aid of their converts had to counteract the harmful Quashee image for whom coercion was a necessary part of the civilizing process and getting the black population to work. The issue was that the converts to the dissenting churches had limited ability to control the reinvention of their image and the one put forward by the missionaries retained the childlike qualities of Quashee. This new Christianized image of the black race that was advertised was also childlike but in its readiness to be guided and have Euro-Christian values imposed on top of the African cultural retentions constantly erased and discredited.[183] The missionaries may also have felt that those in the metropole and in the colonies, especially with the Haitian Revolution fresh in everyone’s mind, were not ready to face the idea of a black population with its own agenda.

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[182] Henry Venn, *The Church Missionary Intelligencer*, p. 126.
[183] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, pp. 108-109.

The more immediate concern was to convince those in power in Parliament and the Jamaican House of Assembly that the new Christian black man could be made to work for wages and not only this but also that wages needed to kept at a rate that would aid their advancement. John Ballie, for instance, a planter in Jamaica from 1788 to 1815 insisted that the black population was contented with its lot and would not work without force.[184] The Reverend Peter Duncan of the Baptists made the common argument on the part of the missionaries that the enslaved once free would work in order to consume and buy clothes and furniture.[185] At the same time the need to keep wages at level favorable to wage workers was under attack by free trade advocates who like Earl Grey mentioned earlier believed that wages were unreasonably high which encouraged idleness and obstructed the progress of civilization. Following this argument it is not surprising he would also support the combination of the abolition of duties protecting West Indian sugar with the encouragement of European immigration.[186] It was no longer so easy for the missionaries advocate the doctrine of free labor now that the native population, with drastic downturn in the economic circumstances of the sugar colonies and the adoption of free trade, had become a test to the limits of British philanthropy.

Final Thoughts

In one uses the term success to mean the accomplishment of all the goals that one sets out to achieve then it is true the missionary effort in Jamaica can be seen as nothing more than an unfortunate failure. As can be seen from the first chapter, in the beginning of the missionary effort the missionary doctrines surrounding domesticity went hand in hand

[184] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, pp. 109.
[185] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 111.
[186] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 338.

with the need for a self-sustaining population that could work for moderate wages. The end of the system of slavery was on the horizon, however, hope had not yet been lost that Jamaica as well as the rest of the British sugar colonies could continue to be profitable. This was reflected in the enthusiasm with which both the new members of the dissenting churches and their ministers threw themselves into their endeavor of creating a Jamaica populated with visibly respectable British citizens. Still it was beyond their control to stop the fall of sugar prices which brought the gradual financial ruin of the island in the middle of the 19th century. It was also beyond their power to effectively combat the twin natural disasters of drought and cholera that detrimentally affected the island in the 1850s. Ultimately this all led to the adoption of free trade which unspokenly marked the native population that the missionaries had literally often dedicated their entire lives to converting no longer economically viable or as important to the fortunes of Great Britain.

In the end the economic incentive that had been there in the beginning of the missionary effort had disappeared into thin air and the once omnipotent planters were no longer in position to even grudgingly give their support. It is also apparent that the missionaries were not immune to the effects of racial prejudice as their reluctance to outright refusal to allow their Jamaican converts to determine their own destinies and rise in ranks of church membership denotes. An unexpected and at least partially beneficial consequence of this was that it forced into being a new brand of Jamaican patriotism. This was much aided by the Native Baptists and those free colored citizens who showed much determination to take political and economic control of the island.

It would take more research to determine how far further investment on the part of the British government in the native population of Jamaica and Jamaican industry could

have gone towards making it prosperous. This would also have to involve careful consideration of the economic changes at the times surrounding the fall of sugar prices and the major shift away from this product as a cash crop. It would also have to consider the forms of industry attainable and those already in use by the native population of Jamaica and how profitable they might have been or become. At the very least those who came to Jamaica in hopes of preaching the gospel and improving the lives of those on island helped to instill a regard for educational attainment and a unique creolized belief system that continues to exist in many forms.

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