

A Baptist Governor of Liberia.

WHEN the spirit, endeavours and achievements of Lott Carey are generally known and appreciated, he will take his place with the world's foremost Christian missionaries. The bases of this claim rest in his obscure and humble birth, the unusual obstacles he surmounted, and the actual contributions he made to the programme of Christian missions in foreign fields.

This interesting man was born a slave in 1780 in Charles City County, near Richmond, Virginia. His slave parents were of the devout kind, and so influenced their children. In 1804 Lott Carey was sent to the city to work in the Schockoe tobacco warehouse. It is stated that here he grew wicked, profane and intemperate. But on a certain occasion he heard a powerful sermon on "the New Birth," which awoke in him a deep conviction of his sin and was followed by a genuine conversion to Christ. In 1807 he was baptised by the Rev. John Courtney, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richmond. Afterwards he was licensed as an "exhorter" by this Church, and soon gave evidence of his piety and his native ministerial gifts.

It is said that he was like most of his fellow-slaves in his longing to learn to read and write. This they often craved so they might write and issue permits or "passes" which slaves had to carry when making Sunday or night visits from one farm to another. But Carey desired knowledge to increase his religious usefulness. He therefore made a beginning by procuring a New Testament, and trying to learn his alphabet. Later he profited greatly by attendance at a night school. During this time he heard of Africa, its ethereal sunshine, amazing resources, and the dire needs of his forbears; and, Nehemiah-like, he determined that he would dedicate his life to the improvement of their condition. The revelation of the needs of his homeland was so striking and impressive, and so fired him, that he at one time exclaimed: "Some day I shall go to Africa and see for myself." This was not the declaration of a curious explorer or mercenary trader, but the courageous, unconditional surrender of a soul, and its commitment to a heaven-given and most difficult missionary task. It seems that the spirit which stirred Abraham Lincoln when first he viewed the horrors of American slavery and made him declare his future attitude thereto, now captured Carey. He was possessed of such a missionary passion as dominated the prophet Isaiah.

Carey was a man of deep faith and resolute determination. This is clear from the outset. Great hindrances had to be

overcome. He who longed for the freedom of Africa was himself the subject of a galling slavery. As the superintendent of the labourers on the tobacco plantation in which he worked, he was so industrious and faithful that, though he was a slave, his master rewarded him with a substantial sum of money. With this encouragement, and by constant thrift, he was able to amass \$850.00, and succeeded in purchasing his own freedom and that of two of his little children, some time in the year 1813.

Although Lott Carey had in 1815 fully decided to devote his life to the furtherance of African missions, it was not until 1821 that the way was opened up for him. About this time a group of American philanthropists founded the Republic of Liberia as a home for free negroes who desired to return to the continent of their origin. The American Colonisation Society aided or sent out the first group of freed men to make their home in Africa. How strikingly providential it was that Carey, who paid a portion of his own fare, was a member of this group!

We know but little of what happened immediately before Carey's departure for Liberia, but we should imagine that those were for him intense days. He preached his final farewell sermon in the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, where he had been baptised and licensed to preach. It is reported that the following words were a portion of his valedictory sermon:—

“I am about to leave you, and expect to see your faces no more. I long to preach to the poor Africans the way of life and salvation. I don't know what may befall me, whether I may find a grave in the Ocean, or among the savage men, or more savage wild beasts on the coast of Africa; nor am I anxious what may become of me. I feel it is my duty to go; and I very much fear that many of those who preach the Gospel in this country will blush when the Saviour calls them to give an account of their labours in His cause, and tells them, ‘I commanded you to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.’” With the utmost possible emphasis he added: “The Saviour may ask, ‘Where have you been? What have you been doing? Have you endeavoured to the utmost of your ability to fulfil the commands I gave you; or have you sought your own gratification and your own ease, regardless of my commands?’”

On January 23rd, 1821, at half-past six in the morning, Carey and his family with others embarked for Africa, and after forty days' sailing amid contrary winds, tempests, seasickness and other inconveniences and perils, landed in Africa about five o'clock in the afternoon of March 7th, 1821. During

the entire voyage Carey and his little band gave themselves over to much prayer, preaching and fasting. Concerning this he said: "We met you on Monday at the throne of grace in a concert prayer meeting, and we had a comfortable time; for we met together, agents and colonists, and united in prayer." (Extract from *Lott Carey's Journal*, 1821.) "We have come to a resolution to keep the nineteenth as a day of fasting and prayer, to ask forgiveness of our sins, and for direction and protection of the Lord, who ever waiteth to hear the prayers of His people." He also said, when reporting the landing: "To us it was a pleasant sight." (*American Baptist Magazine*, 1829.) His deep insight into his task is further exhibited in the first report he sent back to America after his arrival in Africa.

Lott Carey, as pioneer missionary, was by nature and training eminently fitted for his task. He possessed a strong physique, a well-ordered mind, and a keen sense of right. The hard school of American slavery had prepared him for the difficult duties of an evangelist in Africa. The things he had endured and conquered through faith in God gave him the background and reserves necessary for effective missionary work amid such conditions as confronted him. He first met and conquered the hostility of the natives, the people whom he wished to help. At the outset these made fierce attacks upon him and his fellow-colonists, and he had to serve as a warrior and a captain to preserve the lives of his companions. Climatic conditions were difficult. The rainy season initiated a period of sickness in which the fevers peculiar to the region prevailed. On March 12th, 1824, he wrote concerning these conditions: "The fever began about the 24th ult., and on the 28th we had thirty-seven cases; and by the 2nd inst. we had sixty-six under the operation of medicine; and at present I have about one hundred cases of fever to contend with, but we have been very much favoured, for they appear all to be on the recovery, and we have lost none saving three children. I have very little time to write you, myself being the only man that will venture to act in the capacity of a physician." (Extract from *Lott Carey's Journal*.)

During this time the little Baptist Church of Monrovia, of which Carey was pastor, witnessed a constant growth. It had a membership of about eighty, and was maintaining a healthy Sunday School for native children. Carey discovered that the children of the natives would prove the best means of overcoming their hostility; hence he established a school for their instruction, which grew rapidly and met with great success. Carey also perceived immediately the industrial possibilities of Africa and attempted to establish their proper connection with

successful missionary endeavours. As a pastor he was diligent and sympathetic and a tireless worker. It is said that he preached with fiery zeal and led many to Christ. He was a pioneer missionary to Africa, not only in time but in the programme he sought to execute. He led not merely in matters of education, industry, health and religion, but also in civic affairs. The people so strongly believed in his prudence, fidelity and courage, that he was cordially accepted when appointed Governor of Liberia. He believed in the power of conciliation, and thus won the co-operation of many of the hostile natives. Lott Carey was a patriot. His was a very trying position, for he loved both America, the land of his birth, and Africa, the land of his fathers, with a pure, simple devotion. He endured much in Africa, but without complaint. Touching this point his Board said of him :

“The interest of the colony and the cause of his countrymen, both in Africa and this country, are near his heart. For them he is willing to toil, and to make almost any sacrifice; and he has frequently declared that no possessions or honours in this country could induce him to return.”

He chose to suffer with and elevate his own people at any cost.

In 1825 a letter from Carey to Mr. William Crane, Richmond, Virginia, led the General Baptist Convention to make the following comments concerning his labours in Africa :

“It cannot fail to excite gratitude to the great Head of the Church to learn that the Lord is smiling upon Africa. Lott Carey, a descendant of this bewildered race, embarked with the first colonists sent out by the American Colonisation Society, under the patronage of the General Convention of the Baptist denomination. The mystery of Divine Providence in permitting his unhappy ancestors to be torn from their native land and brought into a country where they and their offspring were doomed to slavery, began to unfold itself. It was that he might receive existence in a country blessed with Gospel light, whence he should return, in the fullness of time, to bear the tidings of salvation to that of his progenitors; and the prospect of preaching Christ to his kinsmen according to the flesh, and in the land of his fathers, induced him to leave America.”

“That your Committee contemplate the labours and pious deportment of Lott Carey with entire satisfaction, and are happy to find that his virtuous deportment has secured to him the high approbation of the American Colonisation Society.”

“That Lott Carey has not only endeavoured to render himself useful as a minister of the Gospel of Christ, but has opened a small school for the instruction of the children of the natives

and has received ample demonstrations of their respect and attachment."

His was an unexpected death. "He perished by an accident, November 8th, 1828." (*Baptist Encyclopedia*.) The *American Baptist Magazine* says of him:

"It is a source of consolation to the friends of Mr. Carey that though his life was terminated at an unexpected moment, and in a most distressing manner, the unwearied diligence and fidelity with which he discharged the important trust confided to his care, his zeal for the honour of religion, and the purity and piety of his general conduct, have gained him a reputation which must live in grateful remembrance as long as the interesting Colony exists, in whose service he lived and died. . . ."

He passed away in the midst of unfinished plans, but his memory is yet a sweet benediction to his successors. The succeeding years have revealed the true worth of his tireless endeavours, for nothing human has united Negro Baptists and preserved their organised efforts like the life, labours and usefulness of Lott Carey.

J. H. BRANHAM.

DR. WILLIAMS'S LIBRARY has an acute head in Mr. Stephen Jones. He has found a duodecimo volume which has long been overlooked. It contains two little books by Philotheos, both printed in 1708. The one has 103 pages, and is a Catechism intended as a Guide for pious young men. Its existence was known, but no copy had been located. The other has 144 pages, and is "A Threefold Dialogue, concerning the three chief points in controversy amongst Protestants in our days, viz. 1. Whether the Holy Scriptures do prove the doctrine of Free Grace, or of Free Will? 2. Whether Believers, or Infants-Baptism, be the ordinance of Christ? 3. Whether the Seventh or First Day of the Week, be the Sabbath of the Lord? Deliver'd in a familiar Stile, easy for each Capacity to understand."

Mr. Jones thus identifies the books entered in the Baptist Bibliography as 11.708 and 7.728. And thus he proves that Philotheos is John Maulden, of whom Stinton wrote, and Crosby printed in iii. 140.

W. T. W.