

European Missionary Influence on African Nationalism: A Case Study of Edward W. Blyden

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“At any rate, it is better to be censured or even ridiculed for being yourself than applauded for trying to be somebody else.”

-Edward W. Blyden, 1908.

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Abstract.

This research project explores the influence of the activities of European missionaries, specifically missionary education, on the development of an early form of African nationalism through a case study of Edward Wilmot Blyden. Blyden was a West African intellectual during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries who influenced later nationalists, such as Leopold Sedar Senghor and his Negritude movement beginning in the 1930s. Drawing on Blyden's biography, relevant historiographical material, and, most importantly, Blyden's own written works and transcripts of his numerous speeches, I came to understand how interactions with missionaries throughout his life shaped Blyden's intellectual perspective. His views would lead him to encourage other Africans, in his native Liberia and throughout the continent, to adopt racial and national pride into their lives.

Introduction.

Called the most educated African man of his time,¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden's ambition drove him to become one of the most celebrated proponents of equality for African people in human history. The father of the conceptual "African Personality,"² he spent his life encouraging his fellow Africans to believe that they deserved more than what was offered to them by the white man. One group of white men received the majority of Blyden's attention during his lifetime of standing up for his race. Christian missionaries from various parts of Europe, whose goal to evangelize all of Africa in addition to their connection to the crushing hands of European colonizers gave Blyden cause to reexamine the way he had been raised and educated in the Western, Christian fashion. Over time he decided that this was something he did not wish for the youth of Africa.

Christian Missionary activity began as early as Europeans began settling in Africa and their efforts continue to this day. During Blyden's lifetime, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thousands of missionaries worked throughout Africa to bring God to what they often ignorantly considered the "Dark continent." As Blyden matured, his views towards Christianity, including these missionaries began to change. Despite having become an ordained Presbyterian minister in 1858,³ he eventually became an adversary to the Christians working in Africa. Blyden felt that the Christian religion, as well as education was not acceptable for Africans. In this paper, I will argue that Edward Blyden's belief that a westernized, Christian

¹ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), Preface.

² Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 54.

³ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, Biographical Outline.

education was not sufficient enough to engage the deep mental and emotional capacity of African people was due to his acute sense of African Nationalism and his belief in the “African Personality.” Blyden instead became focused on freeing Africa of its dependence on the Western world and making West Africa a leading example for the rest of Africa to follow.

Historiography I: Missionary Education in West Africa.

In his chapter “Christian Missions in Africa,” Edward Berman spends a great deal of time discussing missionary education in Africa, specifically West Africa. The way in which he describes the connection between missionaries and colonial governments makes them sound relatively interconnected. Despite this, he makes it abundantly clear that the two were not on the same page regarding how missionary education should be carried out. Colonial governments were overwhelmingly in favor of little or no education for Africans with a sole focus on manual labor, which they claimed would benefit both the Africans and themselves.⁴ George Reid, on the other hand, claims that missionaries propagating the gospel in Africa helped lead to European political domination as well as African nationalism.⁵ While missionary works aided in solidifying contact within Africa, it provided Africans with a common language, English, which made them more united and determined to push back against colonizers.⁶

Richard Gray goes so far as to say that an essential feature of missionary education was their separation from the works of colonial governments; allowing missions to successfully

⁴ Edward H. Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa.” in *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, ed. Edward H. Berman (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1975), 9.

⁵ George Reid, “Missionaries and West African Nationalism,” *Phylon* 39 no. 3 (1978): 225.

⁶ Reid, “Missionaries and West African Nationalism,” 225.

become what he called the “Achilles’ heel of colonialism.”⁷ In his book, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, Gray devotes a section to discussing the importance of literacy to missionary educators, primarily Protestants, painting a picture of a more dedicated group of individuals than Berman. Gray notes that Protestant missionaries often required the ability to read and write as a prerequisite for baptism.⁸ He remarks that Catholics focused less on the bible and literacy and more on the catechism, which was learned chiefly through practice. Despite this, they aided greatly in the spread of literacy by publishing numerous books on saints, prayers, and devotions, which were all quickly translated into several African vernaculars.⁹ He goes on to say that missionaries felt committed to developing schools of all levels due to the desire that so many Africans had to learn.¹⁰

Contradictory to this, Berman states that education beyond the primary level was discouraged by both the government officials as well as the missionaries. According to Berman, missionaries worried that an over-educated native would no longer be able to connect with the masses, therefore making them less successful evangelists.¹¹ Along with this, the Europeans would often point to the common pseudo-scientific racism that was popular in the mid nineteenth century. The main feature of this ideology being that Africans had several physiological differences from Caucasians; the most notable being that they had supposedly smaller skulls and therefore less cranial capacity, meaning that they had smaller brains.¹² Berman adds that while

⁷ Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 97.

⁸ Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 95.

⁹ Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 96.

¹⁰ Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 97.

¹¹ Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa.”, 9.

¹² Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa.”, 10.

missionaries maintained primary level schools, the backbones of their curriculums relied on manual labor,¹³ which was favored by Colonial governments.

To many Africans, European missionaries became symbolic of economic uplift, Christian and western values, and technology. Their biblical message of love and equality was a major draw for many Africans as well, according to Reid.¹⁴ The bible and Christianity teach that all are loved and valued equally in god's eyes, however, colonialism and the treatment of natives by missionaries went against these values.¹⁵ Natives who had joined the Christian churches picked up on this discrepancy quickly and then used the Christian values they learned in their fight against colonialism.¹⁶ In addition, The love and equality taught in missionary schools was not practiced there¹⁷ causing schools to become a major source of conflict between Africans and Missionaries.¹⁸ This is exemplified by the story told by Thelma Awori in Berman's book. As a child, Awori was sent to a Lutheran missionary boarding school by her parents, who were both members of the church and had both received educations at the hands of missionaries. While at the school, Awori was subjected to hard labor while receiving very little sustenance.¹⁹ Awori recounted her mother crying when she picked her daughter up from the school and saw how malnourished she was.²⁰ While missionary schools provided thousands of children with an education, their intentions were not always of the holy nature they proclaimed to be.

¹³ Berman, "Christian Missions in Africa.", 9.

¹⁴ Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism," 225.

¹⁵ Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism," 226.

¹⁶ Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism," 226.

¹⁷ Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism," 226.

¹⁸ Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism," 227.

¹⁹ Thelma Awori, "The Revolt Against the "Civilizing Mission": Christian Education in Liberia," in *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, ed. Edward Berman (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1975), 121.

²⁰ Thelma Awori, "The Revolt Against the "Civilizing Mission," 121.

Historiography II: Blyden's Sense of Nationalism.

In his biography of Blyden, Hollis Lynch provides basic information about Blyden. Born on August 3, 1832 on St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands to African parents, his family lived in Venezuela for a time (1842-1844), before emigrating to Liberia in 1850.²¹ He became an ordained Presbyterian minister in 1856 after having been refused admission to Rutgers' Theological School in the United States because of his race.²² He then served as the Liberian Secretary of State from 1864-1866. In this timeline Lynch points out that Blyden visited the United States a total of eight times during his life. From other readings I know that he spent his time in the U.S. giving speeches in Washington, D.C., and working with the American Colonization Society.²³ Lynch also notes that Blyden was heavily influenced by prominent Presbyterian men from the United States. like John B. Pinney and William Coppinger, both of whom were involved with the American Colonization Society.²⁴ Additionally, Lynch claims that Blyden's works were designed to vindicate the African race and he cites four major themes among these writings and speeches. These themes are: 1. That Africans had many accomplishments to be proud of, 2. There were specific African characteristics that Africans should highlight in their "African Personality,"²⁵ 3. African culture is wholesome and should be preserved, 4. Christianity was a negative

²¹ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1.

²² Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot*, 3-4.

²³ The American Colonization Society was an organization that funded the trips of African Americans to Liberia to settle. They also aided in the creation of infrastructure within Liberia. They worked for decades claiming to help liberate African Americans from the racist values of the United States, though it is often thought that the ACS was itself a racist institution at heart.

²⁴ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot*, 5.

²⁵ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot*, 4.

influence on Africans, but Islam could be beneficial to them.²⁶ Blyden felt that Islam closer resembled the African Indigenous Religions (AIRs) than Christianity did.

In his article, M. Yu Frenkel compares Blyden to two other African intellectuals, Reverend Samuel A. Crowther and James A. Horton. He says that while these two men encouraged Africans to adopt European customs in order to try and gain equality, Blyden renounced this method and told Africans that they could be equal to Europeans while maintaining their own traditions and culture.²⁷ This is an important separation to make as there were many essential figures in African history, but of those in that station, Blyden's attitude was distinctly his own.

Robert July's article interprets Blyden's style of nationalism and how it connected to later nationalist movements in Africa. According to July, the two major aspects of Blyden's "Negritude"²⁸ were the concept of the African personality²⁹ and the superiority of African Indigenous Religions (AIRs) as well as Muslim culture over institutionalized Christianity.³⁰ July said that this complicated Blyden's personal life because he had grown up, and still was, a Christian.³¹ Along with Lynch, July also touches on Blyden's inconsistencies. He notes that Blyden often refers to Europeans as those who are more enlightened or intellectual despite his other claims that they were not superior to Africans.³²

²⁶ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot*, 4-5.

²⁷ M. Yu Frenkel, "Edward Blyden and the Concept of African Personality," *African Affairs* 73 no. 292 (1974): 288.

²⁸ "Negritude" is a concept coined in part by Leopold Sedar Senghor to describe the summation of the "African Personality" as expressed by Blyden and the deep attitude and features Senghor felt that Africans possessed.

²⁹ Robert W. July, "Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden," *The Journal of African History* 5 no. 1 (1964): 79.

³⁰ July, "Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden," 79.

³¹ July, "Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden," 79.

³² July, "Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden," 85.

Blyden on Missionary Presence and Missionary Education in West Africa.

Like many other young men growing up in the West Indies and West Africa, Blyden was educated in a westernized, Christian style. While he speaks little of his childhood experience in this education system, he has a lot to say about its presence in West Africa during his lifetime. Blyden says that the goal of missionaries to Christianize all of Africa is an impossible one.³³ Not only does he say that it is an impossible goal, but he argues that neither Africans nor Europeans had much to gain from it.³⁴ He does say that missionaries had done some good along the way, saying that many Africans became successful men because of missionary education, however, this benefit came with both geographical and cultural restrictions.

Missionary education, prior to and at the time of Blyden's life, often did not extend beyond the coastal cities of Africa. In addition to this it required the adoption of European culture such as style of dress and mannerisms.³⁵ In response to this, Blyden says that a person cannot have a new culture forced upon them. He uses the example of men who were sent from Africa to Europe to be educated only to return and readopt their traditional way of dress and traditional habits. He says that you wouldn't know much of human nature if you expected any different.³⁶ In a letter to a member of the Legislative Council of Sierra Leone Blyden states that African men who are educated in Europe often return with confused morals and "result-less energy."³⁷

³³ Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (Edinburgh, SCT: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 47.

³⁴ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 65.

³⁵ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 49.

³⁶ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 52.

³⁷ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The West African University," in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 223.

Blyden also claims that the African practices being condemned by Europeans could all be found somewhere in Europe's history both before and after the adoption of Christianity there. He cites, among other things, slavery and human sacrifice.³⁸ Though he does acknowledge that the customs of Western, Christian Universities would be able to aide in the creation of successful African education institutions. Blyden believed that the use of the Christian religion and Western culture would serve as a period of learning and transition only.³⁹ He maintained that as these new ideas reached into the interior of Africa, they would pick up the most valuable facets of each ethnic group they encountered and eventually the true "genius" of the African race would be found.⁴⁰

Another reason missionaries were not as successful as they had hoped to be, according to Blyden, was because they came to Africa with certain ideas about the African people and their sense of religion. He says they came with the idea that Africans practiced evil blood rituals and other uninformed beliefs they had picked up from books. This was increased by the uncomfortable conditions they found themselves in once they arrived in Africa, and they made no effort to learn about the authentic customs and traditions of Africans.⁴¹ Blyden says that Africans were met with "distrust, coldness, or indifference" by the "enlightened races,"⁴² which appears to be written in a sarcastic tone. Missionaries were taught that African minds were blank slates, and that everything they already believed just needed to be destroyed and replaced. This mindset of missionaries would be one of the many reasons Africans would come to distrust and dislike them.⁴³

³⁸ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 58.

³⁹ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 71.

⁴⁰ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 71.

⁴¹ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 55.

⁴² Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 46.

⁴³ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 56.

One quote that I think portrays Blyden's views regarding the influence of Christianity and of missionaries in the Christian schools better than I could describe them says: "The Christian World, trained for the last three hundred years to look upon the Negro as made for the service of superior races finds it difficult to shake off the notion of his absolute and permanent inferiority."⁴⁴ Blyden believed that Christianity was not fit to act as a spiritual creed for Africans; "naturally, the African is social, generous, confiding, and when brought under benign influence of Christianity, he exemplifies the beauty and consistency of his religion more than any other human being on the face of the earth."⁴⁵ In his opinion, the European muddling in African traditions and culture was detrimental to African advancement. He expressed specifically the idea that the Pagan religions of African dictated so much of what went on in everyday life there.⁴⁶ He used women as a specific example, saying that according to most African religions, the women take part in the state functions and religious practices.⁴⁷ He asserted that it was important for both male and female children to be taught the proper morals of their society in order for them to take part in these things later on.⁴⁸ As we will see, Blyden's anti-Christian beliefs went hand-in-hand with his nationalistic views.

⁴⁴ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 46.

⁴⁵ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 56.

⁴⁶ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "African Life and Customs," in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 181.

⁴⁷ Blyden, "African Life and Customs," 181.

⁴⁸ Blyden, "African Life and Customs," 181.

Blyden on Nationalism.

Blyden spent more than half of his life devoted to making West Africa, Liberia specifically, an example of an African nation independent of Western influence and control. On the concept of nationalism, he noted that nationalism was growing all over the world but that it was especially important for Liberians to embrace because Liberia needed to continue to be an example for the rest of Africa so that they might follow in Liberia's footsteps.⁴⁹ He said that the rest of Africa looked to Liberia because of their African run government; and that they should let this drive and encourage them to keep pushing forward despite setbacks, as they had already faced and overcome many of them.⁵⁰ Blyden used Liberia being an example to the rest of Africa as a way to motivate Liberians in several of his speeches.

He had a deep pride and confidence in Africa and especially in Liberia. In one Independence Day speech given in Monrovia in 1857 he stressed to his fellow Liberians that their nation is one supported entirely by foreigners.⁵¹ He went on to say he felt that Liberians cared more about looking wealthy like Europeans than they did about living in a truly free and just country, saying: "we attach more importance to display than to reality."⁵² He wanted Liberians to stop spending their money on foreign clothing and houses, and other luxuries that made them appear more western. He wanted them to save their money and invest it back into the country of Liberia, saying that they had everything they

⁴⁹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties: An Independence Day Address given at Monrovia, July 26th, 1865," in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 79.

⁵⁰ Blyden, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties," 79.

⁵¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Liberia as She is; and the Present Duty of her Citizens: An Independence Day Address given at Monrovia, July 27th, 1857," in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 63.

⁵² Blyden, "Liberia as She is; and the Present Duty of her Citizens," 64.

truly needed in Africa.⁵³ Blyden then ended this speech dramatically by saying that Liberia either needed to become independent of their reliance on westerners or they needed to just give up the status of being a free country.⁵⁴ He often used dramatic statements such as this to make his speeches more effective.

Blyden often discussed what he thought to be the most urgent concern of Africa. In a speech given to the American Colonization Society in 1890, Blyden discussed what he thought the major problems for Africa were. He started by saying that the first problem was “solved at Appomattox,”⁵⁵ the problem he is referring to being slavery. He goes on to say that the second problem is educating the freed slaves, and the third is getting them to emigrate back to Africa from the United States.⁵⁶ He then said that the U.S., Europe, and Africa are all unprepared for a mass exodus of former slaves back to Africa. He felt that Africa still needed time to prepare for such an influx of people, Europe needed to cease in believing that Africa could be of use to it, and that the United States was not economically prepared for the former enslaved population to leave.⁵⁷

Blyden did not leave the statement of this problem without suggesting a resolution. In a 1908 speech he laid out several steps that he felt would help to ensure a successful future for Liberia. The speech is from an event celebrating the 86th Anniversary of the founding of Monrovia.⁵⁸ Blyden says that the Republic has recently celebrated their Diamond Jubilee,⁵⁹ and despite this, foreigners still saw

⁵³ Blyden, “Liberia as She is; and the Present Duty of her Citizens,” 64.

⁵⁴ Blyden, “Liberia as She is; and the Present Duty of her Citizens,” 65.

⁵⁵ Edward Wilmot Blyden, “The African Problem and the Method of its Solution: A Discourse delivered at the 73rd Anniversary of the American Colonization Society Washington, D.C., January, 1890,” in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 46.

⁵⁶ Blyden, “The African Problem and the Method of its Solution,” 46.

⁵⁷ Blyden, “The African Problem and the Method of its Solution,” 46.

⁵⁸ Edward Wilmot Blyden, “The Three Needs of Liberia: A Lecture delivered at Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, January 26th, 1908,” in *Black Spokesman Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 119.

⁵⁹ A Diamond Jubilee is the celebration of a 60th anniversary.

them only as an experiment. He said that success would come to Africans when they looked to their ancestors instead of to westerners, that the past traditions needed to be preserved in order for them to understand the present, and to secure a hopeful future.⁶⁰ He believed that the three needs of Liberia were: Emancipation, Illumination, and Harmonization.⁶¹ Though he only discusses the first two in depth in his speech.

When discussing his concept of emancipation, Blyden says that even though the Africans enslaved in America had been freed from their physical bonds by President Lincoln, their souls were not yet free. Because of this, they and their descendants had not yet reached social, intellectual or religious freedom.⁶² Liberians had been trying to run Liberia the way that Americans run America and that they needed to stop doing this, he claimed.⁶³ Blyden was also against continuing the use of Liberia's current agricultural methods as they were the methods learned in the United states and did not work properly in Liberia. He said that this was why their agricultural system was not overly successful.⁶⁴

To Blyden, Illumination meant that Liberians needed to understand that the goals initially set up for the country were not the same goals that they needed to have now. Initially, American politicians wanted to send freed slaves to Liberia in order to decrease the population of African Americans in the United States, philanthropists wanted to create a better space for former slaves, and Christians saw the opportunity to create a center for evangelization in Africa. He goes on to say that these goals have changed as well, stating that now American politicians wanted African Americans to stay in the United States to pick their cotton and work on their farms, the philanthropists now felt that the African Americans should be happy with the life they had in the south, especially in the "black belt" because

⁶⁰ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 119-120.

⁶¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 120.

⁶² Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 120.

⁶³ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 121.

⁶⁴ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 121-122.

there was soon to be a higher population of African Americans than white people there. Regarding Christians, Blyden says that missionaries had come to realize how challenging evangelizing the entire continent of Africa was going to be and therefore felt that they should leave more responsibility in the hands of the already converted Africans, allowing them to spend less time and money there.⁶⁵ Blyden notes that other countries like England and France had begun to study African culture and customs and that Liberians needed to do the same thing and stop studying Western countries.⁶⁶ One quote at the end of the speech, in my opinion, really sums up Blyden's push for Africans to have a nationalistic view: "We must learn to occupy the standpoint of our aboriginal brother and to believe that in his place there is no man under the sun better than or equal to him."⁶⁷

In this Independence Day address, Blyden again took the opportunity to continue encouraging Liberians to be more confident in themselves and their ability to be a successful country. He wanted Liberians, and Africans in general, to be proud of their heritage and to be more confident in themselves to be as successful as westerners.⁶⁸ To show his confidence, he said that if any man who had lived in Liberia for two years or more and still did not have confidence in Africans to maintain an able and organized government they should just leave the country now.⁶⁹ This display of passion was common for Blyden.

⁶⁵ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 123.

⁶⁶ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 124-125.

⁶⁷ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Three Needs of Liberia," 125.

⁶⁸ Blyden, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties," 78.

⁶⁹ Blyden, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties," 78.

Conclusion.

A set of consistent themes are woven throughout the aggregate of Blyden's written and spoken words. It is my judgement that the most prominent of these is his undying devotion to the advancement of the African race. The entirety of his professional life was dedicated to righting the wrongs he felt had been done to Africans by Europeans, wrongs he grew to know after years as a devout Christian. Another theme is Blyden's desire to aide in the freeing of the people of Liberia, and all of Africa from their dependence on Western nation and their cultures. The last theme I will note was his ever-decreasing tolerance of Christianity in Africa. The hypocrisy of the Church's message of love and equality and its distance from the Pagan roots of African Indigenous Religions acting as the epicenter of this intolerance.

These themes would drive Blyden in all of his endeavors and would push him through his challenges. Blyden was often criticized for the way his views changed throughout his life; the once ordained Presbyterian minister turned opponent of Christianity often struggled to pin down exactly what his lasting beliefs were. I find criticism of this hard to support; as time goes on and the world around us changes, we too, tend to change our views. Another criticism he faced was his supposedly contradicting manner when he would call Europeans the "enlightened race" or something similar, however, in my reading of his works I felt that these phrases were used with a sarcastic tone. Blyden grew with the world around him and changed his beliefs as he saw fit. Unchanging was what guided his works; the betterment of life for Africans never left his sites.

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