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From the Rev. W. B. SPRAGUE, D.D. Sept. 1839.

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

# AFRICAN SCHOOL,

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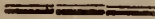
## THE SYNOD

OF

NEW-YORK AND NEW-JERSEY.



BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE INSTITUTION.



NEW-YORK :

PRINTED BY J. SEYMOUR, NO. 49 JOHN-STREET.

.....

1816.

## ADDRESS, &c.



THE Synod of New-York and New-Jersey, at their meeting in the city of New-York, October 1816, unanimously resolved to appoint a Board of Directors to establish and superintend an African School, for the purpose of educating young men of colour, to be teachers and preachers to people of colour within these States and elsewhere. The following persons were elected members of the Board for the present year.

### MINISTERS.

DR. JAS. RICHARDS,  
DR. EDW. D. GRIFFIN,  
DR. JOHN B. ROMEYN,  
MR. ROBERT FINLEY,  
MR. JOHN McDOWELL,  
MR. GARDINER SPRING.

### LAYMEN.

HON AARON OGDEN, L.L.D.  
SAML. BAYARD, Esq.  
JOSEPH C. HORNBLOWER, Esq.  
MR. JOHN E. CALDWELL,  
MR. ZECHARIAH LEWIS,  
MR. RENSSELAER HAVENS.

The Board thus appointed beg leave to submit to the public the following thoughts on the subject of preparing for the great negro-world teachers of their own race.

By computations founded on the latest information, there are in Africa and its islands twenty millions of the proper negro race, besides thirty millions who differ from them more or less in complexion and features. There are supposed to be a million and a half of the

same people in the United States ; and a million and a half more may be reckoned for the Floridas, Mexico, South America, and the West India Islands, to say nothing of New-Guinea. Here then is a vast world of twenty-three millions of souls, (besides the thirty millions before mentioned;) a population equal to that of the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, Sweden, and Denmark united.

Though we are fully persuaded that to the end of the world there will remain different orders in Society, it cannot be supposed that so considerable a portion of the human race, consisting of so many independent nations, and occupying the greater part of one of the four quarters of the globe, are always to be regarded as made only for slaves, or are to be excluded from the blessings of Christianity and civilization during the approaching period of the millennium. In those days which are yet to come, and which are even now at the door, the descendants of Ham, we are bound to believe, will attain to an elevation and dignity which will do away the memory of their past disgrace, and give them a rank among the polished nations of Europe and America. Africa will yet boast of her poets and orators. Eloquence will play on the tumid lips of her sons, and sable hands will strike the lyre, and weave the silken web. On the Niger as on the Thames, temples will arise to the living God ; and perhaps the arid sands will find the curse of barrenness repealed by the same Power that will turn Palestine into a fruitful field.

If Africa is to stand forth in the glory of Christianity and civilization, her own sons, and not the sons of



strangers, must be the instructors of her youth, and her ministers of religion. No nation will ever advance far in any improvement but by the instrumentality of her own children. Strangers may make a beginning, but strangers cannot continue to support her schools and her churches. To sustain such a weight at arm's length, would exhaust both patience and power. History presents no instance of the kind. Apostles and missionaries may pass over a country, but native teachers must finish the work. So it was in primitive times. So it was in every country of Europe when it received the Christian faith. So it is in India at the present day. The debilitated and jetty Hindoos prolong and extend the order which European missionaries have established.

To say that Africans are not competent to become teachers and preachers, is therefore to say that one quarter of the world is never to support a Christian Church. And why is this said? Are not the coloured people of these States as competent for such offices as Hottentots, many of whom are now proclaiming to their countrymen the unsearchable riches of Christ? We are not to judge of the power of the lion from what we see of him incaged and enchained. Let us not first debase and then libel. If we would judge of the sleeping energies of African minds, let us peruse some portions of modern history, over which for obvious reasons we must here cast a veil; let us look to the progress made in our Sunday Schools, and in the African Seminary recently established in one of our cities.

If Africa must have African teachers and preachers,

who shall prepare them but the Christian world? Africa has no science to communicate; Africa has no religion to impart. For the present, and for a considerable time to come, she must be a passive receiver, and Christian nations must convey to her the light and grace. If any of her children are taught, and made competent to instruct their countrymen, European or American benevolence must teach them. We must begin the series of a Gospel ministry that shall perpetuate itself among the tribes of that vast continent.

This work plainly devolves on America rather than Europe, for two reasons. First, the great mass of the transported Africans are here. Allowing that there are thirty thousand dispersed through the different nations of Europe, the number in the United States alone, compared to that in all Europe, is as fifty to one. Here this vast mass is concentrated; there the small number are thinly scattered over different countries, and lost in an overwhelming population. Our advantages to make selections are to those enjoyed by any nation in Europe as two or three hundred to one. And our chances to find proper subjects are still greater. Here special attentions may be easily directed to form the African character; there the attempt is almost impossible. Perhaps in no district of Europe could an African school or congregation be collected; either of these might be done in almost any neighbourhood South of New-England, and even in the large towns of that part of the Union. No spot on earth is so well fitted for the sublime and holy effort, as that on which we dwell. Secondly, no portion of the world is so deeply indebted to Africa as this Western conti-

ment and its islands. This is the prison which has received all her captive sons. America is the only civilized country in which slavery is allowed. Though some of the Christian nations of Europe tolerate it in their American colonies, not one of them, it is believed, admit it in the parent state. This land of freedom is the only enlightened land of slaves. On the principle of slavery we have nothing to say. We only affirm that America is the great receptacle which has received the streams that Africa has discharged. And for this we owe her large arrears.

The Board are aware of the many difficulties which attend this undertaking, and of the disappointments which they must expect to meet; but in the name of the Lord they will go forward. They are not unmindful of the existing state of things in their own country, and of the duties thence resulting. Should an opening be made for any of their young men within these States, and should this Board be authorized to send them forth, they will select only the most faithful and discreet, and give them peremptory instructions to inculcate subordination according to the apostolic example. The whole wisdom and dignity of the Synod, under whose direction the Board act, are a guarantee to the public for the caution and prudence of their proceedings.

The Board at present have no funds, and for these they cast themselves on the charity of a compassionate public, making their appeal especially to those whose hearts are penetrated with the love of Christ. The tears of Africa will not plead in vain. The injunctions of a Saviour will not be heard in vain. They only add,



that any donations conveyed to their Treasurer, Joseph C. Hornblower, Esq. of Newark, will be gratefully acknowledged.

The Board hope to be ready to receive applications from young men without delay, and will be thankful for notices of proper characters from any part of the Union. Applicants must possess respectable talents, sound discretion, undoubted piety, be able to read and write, and come well recommended. Correspondents will please to direct their letters, except those which contain donations, to the Secretary of the Board.

By order of the Board,

JAMES RICHARDS, *President.*

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, *Secretary.*

*Newark, (N. J.) Oct. 29, 1816.*

