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New York Miss Soc.

THE

ADDRESS

AND

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NEW-YORK

MISSIONARY SOCIETY.



NEW-YORK:

Printed by T. and J. SWORDS, No. 99 Pearl-street.

—1796.—

ADDRESS, &c.

The New-York Missionary Society

To all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ
in sincerity.

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

EVENTS have recently occurred which deeply interest every genuine Christian. We learn, from sources the most direct and authentic, that exertions of uncommon vigour are now making, beyond the Atlantic, for extending the kingdom of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. A spirit of jealousy for his name, not less decisive than universal, actuates our brethren in Britain. Its influence was first felt by the faithful around the metropolis; and the impulse hath vibrated to the extremes of the isle. While their nation is involved in the destructive war which convulses Europe, they are devoted to the advancement of that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Large societies, founded on evangelical principles, and embracing various denominations, have already been formed, and are rapidly forming, for the purpose of propagating the gospel among the unhappy Heathen. With a magnanimity worthy of Christians they have sacrificed the bigotries of party on the altar of Apostolic zeal. To the East, to the South, to the West, their ardent eye directs its attention. Unwilling to restrict their efforts to their own immediate connections,

tions, it is their noble design to produce, if possible; “ a general movement of the church upon earth.”

It was their generous piety which gave rise to THE NEW-YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY. It is to solicit your co-operation in the same glorious work, that the Society now addresses you; and surely, brethren, there are considerations which should prompt us to follow, without delay, their great example. That in Messial “ all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” is yet the subject of promise. True it is, that the effects which resulted from his “ appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” were a pledge of its final and illustrious accomplishment. When he ascended up on high, the wall of partition between the Gentile and the Jew was broken down: the river of life poured its streams among the nations; they watered the lot of our Pagan progenitors; they have descended unto us, their children; and we, at this hour, verify the gracious prediction, “ it shall come to pass that in the place where “ it was said unto them, *ye are not my people*, there it “ shall be said unto them, *ye are the sons of the living “ God.*”

But although splendid accessions have been made to the church of Christ, there is room for accessions yet more splendid. Though *we* enjoy the clearest light of his gospel, there are millions of our race on whom it never shone. There are hundreds of millions who never tasted his salvation, nor heard of his name. Of these, vast numbers are in our own land. They are without God, and without hope; destitute of the means of grace, and even insensible to their misery. Age after age hath elapsed, and they still sit in the region and shadow of death. Besides these, there are, on our frontiers, multitudes whose situation, notwithstanding occasional aid, entitles them to our deepest commiseration—without the stated preaching of the word—without the ordinances of the
gospel

gospel—without sanctified sabbaths, or regular religious instruction; many of them, though called Christians, are Heathen in reality.

If their hapless state should excite our sympathy, the duty of attempting their relief is too plain to be evaded, and is recommended by motives the most tender and forceful. The souls of these poor Pagans, and of others in circumstances not less afflicting, are as valuable as our own: they are as capable as ourselves of glorifying God, and of being glorified with him. They will be as bright ornaments, if saved, in the crown of JESUS; and, if lost, as certain heirs of the wrath to come.

In their forlorn condition we see an affecting picture of what *ourselves* once were. *We*, too, have sprung from an infidel stock. *We*, too, were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise:” And such would we have been at this day, had not some disciples, to whom we are everlasting debtors—men “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,” put their lives in their hands, and preached to our fathers the gospel of salvation. They felt the authority of the command which enjoins the church to evangelize the nations; and that command, in all its solemnity, is binding upon us. Freely we have received—freely we must give. The least acknowledgement which the loving kindness of God our Saviour can require at our hands, is to “take the cup of salvation;” to drink deeply for ourselves, and communicate of it to others. And yet, what have we done towards rescuing the Heathen from their ignorance and from their delusions? We have *prayed* indeed; we are in the *habit* of praying that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus may come. But what *means* have we used for attaining the blessing? Where are the monuments of our zeal, of our boldness, of our fortitude,

fortitude, of our patience? The zeal of others who have preceded us, is a striking reproof to our lukewarmness. The labours of the Mayhews, in the eastern states, in the last century—of the apostolic Elliot—of the indefatigable Brainerd—and the exertions of the Moravian Christians, and the success which they have obtained, at once speak shame to our apathy, and encouragement to our emulation. Verily we are guilty in this respect. We have not *realized* the deplorable state of millions of our species. We have been contented with wishes, when we were called to action. We have folded our arms in sloth, or have wasted ourselves in contests of inferior moment, when we should have consolidated our strength in the cause of the common salvation. Surely our friend, our brother, who delivered us from going down to the pit, “who, “his own self, bore our sins in his own body on the “tree,” merited a more grateful recompence. May not our backwardness in publishing abroad his praises be a cause of his controversy with us? May it not be, at least in part, to correct this iniquity, that vital godliness decays among ourselves, and the influences of his good Spirit are withheld from our devotional assemblies? Ah! the necessities of the Heathen have long implored our aid, but implored in vain: and if they be still disregarded, the cry of their blood, succeeding to the cry of their wretchedness, may bring upon us a calamity which shall make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle. Who knoweth but the Lord, to punish our insensibility, may, by a special providence, transfer our privileges to the inhabitant of the forest; may write upon our temple-doors, **THE GLORY IS DEPARTED!** and while he causes “the desert to rejoice and blossom “as the rose;” may abandon us to the desolating flood, and convert our goodly heritage into a barren waste!

Besides those considerations which address our sense
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of gratitude and of interest, there is another no less powerful, which arises from the peculiar circumstances of the times. Infidelity abounds. It hath assumed an imperious air, and glories in the expectation of a speedy extermination of the religion of JESUS. To confound its vain hopes, we are called upon to shew, by our activity in the cause of truth, that the Spirit of Christ continues to animate his body; that there is still life and energy in his church, and that the prospect is as distant as ever, of “the gates of hell prevailing against her.”

If then, dear brethren, the souls of men are precious in our eyes—if the honour of our Lord Jesus is an object of our desire, or his commandment of our reverence—if gratitude for his wondrous love hath not fled from our hearts—if the consciousness of former neglect excites one emotion of shame, let us rouse from our lethargy—let us strive to redeem, by future diligence, our lost opportunities. While other parts of the church are earnest and active, let us not be like a palsied limb in a living body. In order to second the efforts abroad, by strenuous efforts at home, let us, with cordial affection and mutual confidence, unite our supplications, our counsels, our resources. Should we even fail in our immediate expectations, we may aid those who shall have better success. And if sinners be brought to the Saviour, our object is gained. In the temple above it will make no difference whether they were gathered from the banks of the Mississippi, the Gambia, or the Ganges.

But, to effect any part of so vast a design, good wishes are not sufficient. The wisest and most benevolent plan must be defeated without encouragement of a different kind; we ask, therefore, brethren, a portion of your *worldly substance*—we ask it in the name of HIM whose you are, and whom you serve. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though
“ he

“ he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.” You have nothing but what you receive from his bounty. He poured out his soul for *you*; and is it a great matter, if, with a pittance of your carnal things, you minister to the interests of his kingdom? Let wealthy Christians remember, that “ the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.” Let the widow throw in her mite, be it ever so small. Her offering of love will neither be rejected of God, nor useless to man. As drops from heaven create the mighty torrent, so the feeblest powers, in combination, produce an astonishing result; and accomplish, with ease, what theory would have pronounced incredible, if not impossible.

Such, brethren, are our intentions, and such our requests. Shall we, in proposing them, incur the danger of repulse? Must we be disheartened by reluctance, or mortified by objection? Will any one slight our undertaking as romantic and chimerical? Will he point to us the perils of the wilderness—the savageness of the Heathen—their roving disposition—their diversified speech—their customs in every thing abhorrent from civilized life? Will he dwell on the improbability of obtaining suitable missionaries? On the disproportion of our means to the end we have in view? Will he recal the successful issue of some former attempts, and thence predict the disappointment of our hopes?

To all such objections we reply, “ IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD WE LIFT UP OUR BANNERS”—We know that the service is difficult—We have not amused ourselves with the dream of progress without obstacle, and victory without resistance. But we know also, that in difficult services the grace of Jesus, and the power of faith, are most conspicuous. When the honours of the cross, and the eternal welfare of men are at stake, we must not “ confer with flesh and blood,” It is criminal timidity
which

which whispers, "there is a lion in the way—I shall be slain in the streets." *We* cannot encounter more heart-breaking opposition than was encountered, in a similar enterprise, by the apostles of the LAMB, and by the blessed Reformers. Those apostles and reformers who always triumphed in CHRIST—triumphed when Persecution waved over their heads her scourge of blood, and kindled around them the fires of martyrdom. With less to dismay, we have as much to encourage. If in the might of HIM who hath "all power in heaven and in earth, *they* were more than conquerors;" in HIS might *we* can conquer too. Nay, there is nothing more formidable in the experiment which we contemplate, than in a believer's daily warfare "with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses." "God reigneth over the heathen. God is king of all the earth." The silver is *his*; the gold is *his*: The dispositions of men are under *his* controul: *His* grace can fix the wandering, and humanize the cruel; can quicken the sluggish, render the sordid generous, and embolden the fearful; can bestow an apostolic spirit for apostolic work; can make "worm Jacob thresh the mountains." Let our hearts, then, swell with resolution, and beat high with hope. "Glorious things are spoken of the city of God. For thus saith the LORD, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream. I will lift up mine hand to the gentiles, and set my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons on their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. Faithful is he who hath promised, who also will do it." And distinguished will be our honour, brethren, if he vouchsafe to employ us as instruments in the fulfilment of his word. Should he even, in his searchless wisdom, not permit our attempt to have the desired effect, the attempt itself shall turn to us for a testimony, and shall

come up, in memorial, before his throne; when the pageantries of the world pass into oblivion.

Finally, brethren, we intreat that our institution may not be misunderstood. Let not suspicion view it as a political combination. The kingdom of Christ, that kingdom which we have united to promote, is not of this world. We most solemnly disclaim all intention of associating for any political or party-purposes whatever. Neither let it be interpreted as a conspiracy against the outward distinctions that prevail among us. With equal solemnity we disclaim all intention of interfering, directly or indirectly, with the internal arrangements or other peculiarities of any Christian denomination. The only end of our association is that which, in singleness of heart, we have publicly avowed, the promulgation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this, all who love him will say, notwithstanding their smaller differences, God speed! Under so pleasing an impression, brethren, we commit ourselves and our undertaking to God and to you. Without the arrogance of dictating, we beg leave to recommend the immediate formation of similar societies throughout the continent. Your own acquaintance with your local situation qualifies you to judge how large a district each ought to include. Let agreement in the great doctrines of grace be the basis of association. While this will be a principle of energy in each society, it will be a strong tie of connection to the whole; and will enable them to concert and to conduct a plan of harmonious and efficient co-operation. The hearty concurrence of Christians of different denominations in a scheme so interesting to them all, will be a token for good, that the LORD is about to build up Zion, and to appear in his glory. AMEN. Even so: come LORD JESUS!

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NEW-YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Instituted November 1, 1796.



CONSTITUTION.

I. GENERAL DESIGN.

1. **T**HIS society shall be called, **THE NEW-YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY.**

2. The efforts of the society shall be exclusively directed to the propagation of the glorious gospel of Christ, in places which are destitute of it, and of the means of obtaining it: nor shall any business, not immediately relative to this object, be discussed at any of their meetings.

3. That the world may be satisfied as to the religious principles which they embrace for themselves, and resolve to propagate among others, their view of the great outlines of the doctrine of salvation is exhibited in the following propositions: **THAT** in **JEHOVAH**, the one only living and true God, there are three persons equal in all divine perfections, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—**THAT** Jehovah, who created all things for his own glory, made our first parents upright, and entered into covenant with them for themselves, and for their posterity—**THAT** in their fall, all mankind fell; that they are, by nature, children of wrath; are totally depraved, being dead in trespasses and sins; and, with respect to any created power, are without help and without hope—**THAT** in virtue of a covenant established, from everlasting, with him as the
federal

federal head of the election of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, was manifested in the flesh, by assuming the human, into a personal union with his divine, nature—THAT being, in one person, very God and very man, he, as the surety of his people, yielded perfect obedience to the precept of the divine law; and endured its penalty to the uttermost, in pouring out his soul unto death as a true and proper sacrifice and atonement for their sins—THAT his righteousness, consisting of both his obedience and sufferings, freely imputed to them, and received by faith, is the sole ground of their acceptance with God, and of their title to eternal life—THAT they are made alive unto God; are vitally united with the Lord Jesus; are sanctified, and rendered meet for heaven, by the efficacious and almighty energy of the Holy Spirit—THAT the word and ordinances are the great means which he employs in beginning, carrying on, and completing his work of grace in the heart—THAT there is an inseparable connection between free pardon and the practice of holiness—THAT all who are justified by the merit, and regenerated by the Spirit, of Christ, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation—AND THAT there will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust; and a final retribution by Jesus Christ, who will adjudge the righteous to endless life, and the wicked to endless punishment.

4. The society will cordially correspond and co-operate with other societies which now exist, or may hereafter exist, in any nation or part of the world; or with individuals, who, agreeing with them in these important truths, incline to aid the prosecution of their design.

II. OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.

I. The officers of the society to be chosen annually, by ballot, shall be,

A PRESIDENT,

A PRESIDENT, to preserve regularity and decorum in the proceedings of the society when met; and for that end to state questions; confine speakers to the subject under discussion; give the casting vote in all equal divisions; and generally, to enforce such rules, both of order and of business, as the society may enact.

A VICE-PRESIDENT, who, in the absence of the President, shall take his place, and perform his duties.

A TREASURER, to receive the monies, make the disbursements, and keep the accounts of the society; who shall give sufficient security to the Directors for the faithful discharge of his trust.

A SECRETARY, to conduct their correspondence, under the superintendance of the Directors; and

A CLERK, to record their proceedings.

2. There shall be chosen annually, by ballot, twelve persons, who, together with the officers, shall constitute a Board of Directors. Seven shall be a quorum.

3. It shall be the duty of the Directors to collect and prepare for the consideration of the society, all such information as, in their judgment, shall be necessary for forming any general arrangements; to inquire after, approve, instruct, send out, and watch over, missionaries; to apply, to the objects of the association, such of the regular income as shall not be reserved by the society for their own special disposal; to lay before the society, at every ordinary meeting, a concise summary of their proceedings: and the better to discharge the trust reposed in them, they shall be empowered either to act all together, or to subdivide themselves into different committees, subject to the direction of the whole, as they shall find most convenient and advantageous.

4. The Directors shall meet statedly, at least once a quarter; and shall always meet on or before the Monday immediately preceding the general meeting of the society. This meeting of the Directors may coincide with a quarterly meeting, if found convenient.

5. On

5. On the decease, or resignation of any of the officers, the Directors shall fill up the vacancy till the next meeting of the society.

III. GENERAL MEETINGS.

1. The society shall meet annually, at the city of New-York, on the first Tuesday in November; for the purpose of receiving the report of the Directors—examining the state of their finances—electing their officers, &c.—and concerting measures for prosecuting, to effect, the great interests of the association. Twenty-one members shall be a quorum.

2. At every annual meeting, one or more sermons shall be preached, by a minister or ministers of the association, appointed at the last annual meeting, and a collection made for the benefit of the society. Should any thing, during the recess of the society, frustrate their appointment, a new one shall be made by the Directors.

3. All publications, in the name of the society, shall be resolved upon in a general meeting; shall be signed by their Secretary; committed to the Directors to be printed at the society's expence, and disposed of on their account; and all monies arising from the sale thereof, shall be immediately paid into the treasury.

4. Besides the ordinary meetings of the society, the Directors, upon any urgent occasion, shall call a special meeting; of which the members shall be informed by a written intimation from the Secretary.

5. All meetings of the society shall be opened and closed with prayer.

IV. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS.

1. Persons may be admitted from all religious denominations indiscriminately.

2. Every person proposed for admission must be recommended

recommended, in writing, by at least two of the members, as friendly to the object and principles of the society, and as of Christian deportment.

3. The power of admitting members is lodged in the board of direction; but the votes of two-thirds of the Directors present, taken by ballot, shall be necessary to an election.

4. The society reserves to itself the power of electing honorary members.

5. Every member (honorary ones excepted) shall subscribe the constitution of the society, previously to his being admitted to a seat.

6. Every member (honorary ones excepted, with whom it shall be optional) shall pay into the treasury, on his election, a sum not less than two dollars and an half; and a further yearly sum of not less than two dollars.

7. Every congregation or association which favours the design of the society, shall be entitled to send one delegate for every sum equal to that required from individual members; and every such delegate, on complying with the second and fifth regulations under this head, shall enjoy all the privileges of a member without a formal election.

8. Members who shall be found hostile to the religious principles of the society, as set forth in this constitution, or immoral in their conduct, shall forfeit their membership.

V. MISSIONARIES AND OTHER TEACHERS.

1. Every missionary, or other teacher, shall be appointed by the Directors.

2. The Directors are to use their utmost diligence, in ascertaining the orthodoxy, piety, talents, zeal and prudence of missionaries; and on no account whatever to employ persons of a dubious character.

3. In cases where it is thought proper that a missionary be ordained, he shall be remitted, for ordination, to his particular religious connections; and at the same time shall be considered as sent out by the society at large; and shall equally enjoy their countenance and support.

4. Besides missionaries, the society will gladly, as their resources shall permit, embrace opportunities of establishing catechists, or other teachers of approved piety, and soundness in the faith.

5. Missionaries, or other teachers, who shall prove disorderly or unfaithful in the discharge of their duty, may be suspended by the Directors, from the service of the society till their next general meeting.

6. All missionaries and teachers shall receive such salaries as the Directors shall appoint: but their appointments shall be subject to the revision of the society.

VI. FUNDS.

1. The sources from which the revenue of the society is contemplated to arise, are the stated subscription of members—public collections—the sale of the society's publications—and the liberal benefactions of societies, and benevolent individuals.

2. If there be in the treasury a considerable surpluse unappropriated, and for which there is no prospect of a speedy appropriation, the Treasurer, by the advice of the Directors, shall loan it, in trust, at lawful interest, on good security; or dispose of it in some other manner equally safe and productive.

3. No monies shall be paid by the Treasurer without an order from the society, or from the Directors, to the amount to which they authorized to draw.

4. The society will consider themselves at liberty to apply immediately to the purposes of their institution, not only their ordinary funds, but all donations for the disposal of which the donors shall not otherwise direct.

VII. PRO-

VII. PROVISIONARY ARTICLES.

1. No alteration shall be made in this constitution unless it be previously submitted to the Board of Directors and by them laid before the society at their next stated meeting.

2. In those cases, however, in which a proposal for alteration shall be not be approved by the Directors, it may be brought by the proposer immediately before the society, but it shall lie over for consideration till the next ordinary meeting.

By order of the Society,

JOHN M. MASON, *Secretary.*

New-York, Nov. 1st, 1796.


Officers and other Directors for the ensuing year.

OFFICERS.

Rev. JOHN RODGERS, D. D. PRESIDENT.
Rev. JOHN H. LIVINGSTON, D. D. VICE-PRESIDENT.
ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, Esq. TREASURER.
Rev. JOHN M. MASON, SECRETARY.
Rev. JOHN N. ABEEL, CLERK.

OTHER DIRECTORS.

Rev. WILLIAM LINN, D. D.
Rev. JOHN M'KNIGHT, D. D.
Rev. BENJAMIN FOSTER, D. D.
Rev. GERARDUS A. KUYPERS.
Rev. SAMUEL MILLER.
LEONARD BLEECKER, Esq.
JOHN BROOME, Esq.
THOMAS MACKANESS, Esq.
Mr. THOMAS STORM.
Mr. EZEKIEL ROBINS.
Mr. GEORGE LINDSAY.
Mr. JOHN MURRAY.

 *Donations to the society will be thankfully received by their Treasurer, ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, Esq; No. 191 Pearl-street; OR BY ANY OTHER OF THE DIRECTORS.*

Communications, relative to the objects of the society, are to be addressed to the Secretary.