

AN ADDRESS
TO THE PEOPLE
OF
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY,
VIRGINIA.

AN
ADDRESS

OF THE
COMMITTEE,

*Appointed by the Bible Society of Lexington
Virginia,*

TO

The People of Rockbridge County,

SOLICITING

their patronage to said

SOCIETY.

HARRISONBURG :

Printed by *Lawrence Wartmann*, Rockingham County,
VIRGINIA.

1817.

AN
ADDRESS.



THE Committee appointed by the Bible Society of Lexington, Virginia, to prepare an Address to the People of Rockbridge, on behalf of said Society, feel peculiar pleasure in approaching their Brethren on a subject, so dear to the hearts of every child of Jesus, as that of distributing to the destitute and needy, the *Holy Book of God*.

Whatever separate interests, may, in other matters, divide the friends of Christianity; here, it is believed, all must agree. The Bible is the great repository of the mind and will of God to sinful man: and the more widely it is diffused, the more general will be the happy effects, which it is calculated to produce upon the hearts of men.

A new era seems to have commenced in the world. Prospects are opening to the view of the Christian, both astonishing and exhilarating.

arating. These prospects and this new face of things, have opened to the *lovers of Zion*, new fields for their useful exertions.

In obedience to these calls of duty, and in order to aid in carrying on the great work of extending a knowledge of God in the world, has been instituted the Society, which we have the honour to represent. Believing that this is the cause of the Redeemer, we, with the more boldness, approach you upon the subject and entreat you to cast in your mite into this Treasury of our God.

When we look through the Christian world and behold the very great exertions which have been made, in almost every Section of our Country, to dispense the word of life; we have reason to be filled with the deepest mortification, that *we* have so long withheld our assistance,

But although we are last, it is hoped we shall not be the least, in our endeavours to build up this Structure of the Most-High. We trust you will rejoice with us, in being afforded an opportunity of doing something

in order to promote the interests of Christ's Kingdom on earth. For our own parts, we feel a kind of enthusiasm, when we contemplate the subject of Bible Societies, which raises our minds, almost, above themselves. In our minds, is connected with Bible Societies, the *Millennium* with all its blessed effects !

We seem to ourselves to behold, a superstructure, whose summit is to reach to Heaven ! It combines and concentrates the exertions and prayers, of nearly the whole Christian world. The blessings it communicates are of the highest order and such as will be felt through eternity.

These views and these hopes encourage us to cast in our mite, to send the word of God to the destitute and needy. Our glorious Redeemer, is determined that his Name shall be known throughout the world. The glooms of ignorance and superstition are dissipating, and to nations hitherto enveloped in spiritual darkness, the *sun of righteousness* is rising with healing under his wings. Every obstacle to the dispersion of the true light of life seems now to be removing ;—

Every wall of separation is tottering, and pentecost blessings are once more pouring out upon the earth : for “ Parthians and Medes, and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and in the parts of Lycia, about Cyrene and Strangers of Rome, Jews & Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them reading in their own tongues, the *wonderful works of God.*”

Long has the world been distracted by the angry disputes of Sectarians and the conflicting exertions of proselyting parties, each labouring to build up their own respective Churches, while *Zion's wastes* are neglected. But this spirit of party is, now, in a great degree broken, and men of different Sects are brought to view each other with less jealousy, and induced to cooperate in designs to extend the borders of Christ's Kingdom.

Do you ask by what means, has this been effected ? We answer by means of Bible Societies. This oneness of design ;—this august and heavenly scheme, to bring hundreds and thousands of the human race to

that "fountain of life, which is opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness," has softened down and wore away those inequalities and jarring particles, which for so long a time have kept asunder Christians of different denominations.

The political world too, has long worn a portentous aspect. It is big with events, the most astonishing as well as the most alarming to the inhabitants of the Earth. Every new struggle and convulsion among the nations, however, tears, as it were, a fresh film from the eyes of the Christian and enables him to behold, more clearly, the glorious things, which God is about to do for his Church. It is fondly hoped, that in the midst of all the confusion and disorder which, for so many years have prevailed, the Deity has nevertheless been preparing the nations for the introduction of the *Millennium*.

A ray of the "latter-day glory," even now, seems to dart through the "clouds and darkness" which surround the moral world, to enliven the desponding believer. Whilst Antichrist and the legions of Hell, are labouring

to oppose the LAMB ; God is nevertheless carrying on the great work of Redemption, and establishing the Kingdom of his Son amidst the ruins of Satan's Empire.

The grand weapon of subduing the nations to himself, is his own word. With what ardour then, should we engage in dispensing this treasure of divine truth ! To be any wise instrumental in breaking down the strong holds of Satan and in preparing the way for the full blaze of Millennial glory ; will certainly be matter of everlasting rejoicing. Let this Spirit then, animate every bosom. Let this Book, the *Scriptures of divine truth*, be the allpowerful weapon, wielded against the enemies of the Cross.

Brethren, we ask your money for no sinister object. We have no end in view other, than the glory of our common Lord. Many thousands of immortal souls, in our own Country, are perishing for lack of knowledge. It hath pleased the Dispenser of all good, to favour you with the light of Revelation. Your lot has been cast in the midst of the gospel privileges. We entreat you then, that of the

light which you have received, you would communicate to others around you. But let not the circle of your acquaintance bound your charity. Lift up your eyes and behold the millions of Heathens perishing for the want of the knowledge contained in that Book, which too often lies neglected on your shelves. And although this Society may not produce all the good which might be wished; yet be not discouraged. If only one soul is rescued from the pit of Hell through the instrumentality of this Society, it will be of more importance than ten thousand times the sum we shall bestow. Mr. Hume, in his Essays, has well observed (and I am sure he will not be charged with enthusiasm on the subject of religion) "that the damnation of one man is, an infinitely greater evil in the universe, than the subversion of a thousand million of Kingdoms." Equally true is the corresponding observation of Dr. Doddridge. "The eternal salvation of one soul is of greater importance, and big with greater events, than the temporal salvation of an whole Kingdom, though it were for the space of ten thousand ages: because, there will come up a point,

an instant in eternity, when that one soul shall have existed as long as the individuals of a whole Kingdom, ranged in close succession, will on the whole, have existed in the space of ten thousand ages." Whoever will attend to such considerations as these, will hardly deny, that the conversion of one soul will be sufficient to repay us for all the trouble and expence, which we may be at, in carrying on this Institution.

Citizens of Rockbridge, we solicit your patronage! We ask your money not for ourselves; but for God and his poor. Plead not your poverty, 67 Cents will purchase a Bible, and this Bible, given with the blessing of its Author, may save a soul from Hell. Who could refuse such a mite when by it so much good may be done? But you can do more—one half of what you expend yearly, for trifles of luxury and pleasure, would constitute you Members of this Society and enable you to supply many of the destitute and needy with the word of life. Cast in then, of the first fruits of your labour into this treasury of God;—Take his Holy Book, go to the Cottages of the poor and wretched, read to

them the Gospel of Jesus, which invites them to come to *him* for the "bread of life."— This is the noblest exercise of man. Let Kings contend for fading crowns on earth; let the ambitious Conquerors of Nations, sigh that they have not other worlds to subdue: Be this your glory, that your victory is over sin, and your Crown is one, which fadeth not away!

COMMITTEE.

from the Grand of Love, which invites them
 to come to him for the "bread of life."
 This is the subject-matter of man. Let
 Kings contend for fading crowns on earth
 let the ambitious Conquerors of Nations
 fight that they have not other worlds to sub-
 due. Let the King of Kings, that your victory
 is over sin, and your Crown is one, which
 lasts not away!

COMMITTEE

THE
CONSTITUTION

OF THE
BIBLE SOCIETY

OF
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA.



WE whose names are here under written, sincerely believing a knowledge of the truth contained in the Holy Scriptures of the last importance to the happiness of mankind, both in this life and that which is to come, Do, for the purpose of promoting their distribution, more effectually and extensively among the multitudes whose circumstances make assistance in this way a most Solemn duty, form ourselves into an Association, as a collateral branch of the American Bible Society established at New-York ; and adopt the following primary and fundamental Articles for our Constitution.

Article 1st. This Association shall be denominated THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA.

Article 2nd. All Copies of the Scriptures, distributed by this Society, shall be without Notes and of the Version in common use among the Churches in the United States.

Article 3rd. After reserving a sufficiency, to supply the want of the Holy Scriptures in the Vicinage of Lexington and other places that come within the knowledge of the Society, the surplus funds shall be transmitted to the *American Bible Society* at New-York, as best calculated to promote the great object of this Association.

Article 4th. Every person becoming a member of this Society, shall at the time of Subscribing pay at least three dollars and the sum of three dollars annually afterwards—person Subscribing and paying thirty dollars and upwards shall be members for life.

Article 5th. The Society shall meet in Lexington or such other place in the County as may be agreed on from time to time, once

in twelve months;—Shall at the first meeting and annually afterwards elect Sixteen Managers who within three days thereafter shall meet and elect out of their own body, One President, one Vice-President, one Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary and Treasurer. And the said Managers so elected shall hold their offices for twelve Months and until their successors are elected,—Six of the Managers and the President or Vice President shall be sufficient to form a board for the transaction of any business, except the appropriation of money above the Sum of One Hundred Dollars, when Ten Members and the President or Vice-President shall be necessary to form a Board. They shall make bye laws for the Government of the Society, subject to the revision of the Society at their Annual Meeting; correspond with the *American Bible Society* and other institutions of a similar nature, keep an account of all receipts and disbursements of money, and lay them annually before the Society with a Report of the result of their labours for the promotion of its great object. And any vacancy in the Managers by death or otherwise may be filled at any called Meeting of the Society.

Article 6th. A Special Meeting may be called by the President, in case of his absence, by the Vice-President, or in case of the absence or refusal of both these Officers, then by any five of the Managers.

Article 7th. This Constitution shall not be altered, or, amended without the concurrence of two thirds of those members who may have (after a previous Public notice of two weeks) for the purpose of considering the meditated alteration. No member is bound to continue in this Society longer than he chuses, having paid what is already due from him.

The following Gentlemen were chosen Officers of the Society for the present year.

Rev. GEORGE A. BAXTER, *D. D.* President.
 Rev. ANDREW HERRON, Vice-President.
 Rev. A. B. DAVIDSON, Corresponding Secretary.
 Mr. VALENTINE M. MASON, Recording Sec.
 Major JOHN ALEXANDER, Treasurer.

Rev. SAMUEL HOUSTON,
 Col. JAMES M'DOWELL,
 Major JAMES LYLE,
 EDWARD GRAHAM, Esq.
 Dr. SAMUEL L. CAMPBELL,
 Capt. WILLIAM LYLE,
 Capt. WILLIAM WILSON,
 ANDREW ALEXANDER, Esq.
 Mr. JOHN BURGESS,
 Mr. JAMES LINDSAY,
 Mr. ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Managers.

