

Memorial
1757

The MEMORIAL AND REPRESENTATION of Mr CHARLES BEATTY,
minister at Nishaminy, in name and behalf of the synod of York
and Philadelphia, and of the corporation for the relief of poor and
distressed Presbyterian ministers in the province of Pennsylvania, the
counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Suffex upon Delaware;

To all pious and charitable Christians in Scotland;

Humbly sheweth,

THAT Pennsylvania, a province distinguished for civil and religious liberty, has
been peopled from Scotland and England, &c. That those in general who held
a parity amongst all gospel ministers, united and formed churches after the
Presbyterian plan, both in that and the neighbouring provinces, New York, New Jersey,
Maryland, &c. and at length their ministers agreed to hold a synodical meeting once a
year, in the city of Philadelphia.

As the first settlers were generally in low circumstances, and were obliged to lay out
a great part of their little *all* in making settlements on their frontiers, they were unable,
and many of them unwilling, to make any tolerable provision for the support of a gos-
pel-ministry: they were highly pleased with the prevailing principles, that ministers
should work for their livings, and preach for charity.

Many of the lower ranks who flocked there, were ignorant, disorderly and untract-
table, readier to learn the vices of their Indian neighbours, than to teach them the more
perfect ways of God. They were soon elated with the name of plantations, though
their greatest wealth was no more than the mere necessaries of life. Thinking too high-
ly of themselves, they were apt to despise the ambassadors of the meek and lowly
Jesus. Swayed by their unruly passions, they were not easily brought to the strict and
civilized conduct which his gospel requires. Many worthy Protestant ministers, who
left Europe with a truly catholic spirit, to promote the kingdom of Christ in that wil-
derness, and many educated in that country, had those and other great uncommon
difficulties to struggle with. They earned their bread, in a great measure, with the
sweat of their brows, freely preaching the gospel of the grace of God: but as their
stations prevented them from following the more gainful employments of life, their fa-
milies were frequently left forlorn and destitute. Often have surviving friends seen,
with the deepest sorrow and regret, the widows and children of these great and good
men, who had been examples of industry, of hospitality, of patience, of every good
work to their flocks, reduced to the most pinching straits, while they were unable to
afford them any suitable relief.

Such hardships and distresses were not peculiar to the servants of our Lord who
were first called to labour in that uncultivated part of his vineyard, but were, and still
are, sensibly felt by their successors; arising partly from the dispositions of too many
who resort to these places, partly from surrounding barbarians, and partly from the si-
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tuation or low circumstances of their respective congregations. Some congregations, even in the interior parts of the province, are not able, without assistance from others, to maintain their pastors, and yet are so situated, that unless they have settled ministers amongst them, they must either abandon their profession, after the example of, alas ! too many of their neighbours; or become a prey to the erroneous sects around them. What then must be the case of the more necessitous congregations, whose members live at so great distance from one another, scattered through the wide extended frontiers ? It is obvious, that the labour of their ministers, and the dangers to which they are exposed, must be great, while their livings are small, and, what is still worse, extremely precarious, because their people are continually shifting their habitations, either from a love of variety, or from the prospect of more commodious dwellings. What a minister enjoys to-day, he cannot flatter himself with to-morrow. The most promising settlement of Presbyterians may, in a few years or months, be intirely possessed by Moravians, or any other society, however heretical, if they call themselves Christians.

These things have been always great discouragements to pious and good men in the ministry. They have also been great hindrances to parents from educating their children for this necessary and honourable, but laborious office. They may soon bring the gospel-ministry into contempt, by its falling into weak hands ; and will, if a timely remedy is not applied, deprive many congregations, in that vast wilderness, of the ordinances of divine institution.

Great however, as these difficulties are, the Corporation and Synod would not have been burdensome to their brethren in this happy island, if a very afflicting dispensation of providence had not greatly increased their calamities. An Indian war broke forth ; a savage, barbarous enemy, prompted by the perfidious French, like prowling wolves, fell on the peaceful habitations of their frontier-inhabitants, and time after time plundered and robbed, murdered and scalped, without regard to age or sex. The innocent babes, torn from their mothers breasts, were dashed against the trees, or buried alive in presence of their almost distracted parents ; while the unhappy parents durst not vent one groan, or drop a single tear, over their slaughtered little ones, much less find fault, lest they should have shared in the same dreadful fate.

As the frontier-counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia were mostly settled by people of the Presbyterian persuasion, their ministers have felt the blow severely. Several of their congregations were entirely broken up, and numbers of their people led into captivity, many of whom are in bondage among the Heathen to this day, subjected to the cruelest tortures, and in danger every moment of the worst of deaths.

The ministers, thus bereaved of their flocks, were obliged to fly from place to place, reduced to the dilemma of seeking shelter in the innermost parts of the province, distressed with war, or to go forth to repel the enemy, with such of their people as had escaped his barbarous hands.

The memorialist thought it his duty and honour to take part in their affliction, and accompanied the Honourable Commissioners, employed by the Government, and other Gentlemen, who, animated with love to their country and zeal for their civil and religious privileges, exposed themselves to the inclemency of a severe winter, and to all the danger-

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ous incursions of the Indians, till they built forts for the defence of the frontiers. He also continued with the army of the Provincials till the French were forced to fly from Ohio, and until Fort Du Quesne (now Pittsburgh) was in his Majesty's possession. This he has mentioned, not out of vain-glory, or as pretending to any distinguished merit; but that the reader might know he does not speak from hearsay, does not retail vague uncertain stories, but narrates undoubted facts; facts no less true than melancholy, of which he had access to the most certain information, or was himself the mournful spectator.

The Honourable Gentlemen, proprietaries of the province, being well acquainted, and deeply affected with the calamitous circumstances of such of the inhabitants as are of the Presbyterian persuasion, and sensible that their reverend ministers had distinguished themselves by their loyalty to the best of kings; had been extremely useful in defending their country, and in promoting religion, virtue and industry among the people under their care; have, out of their great benevolence and humanity; erected a charitable Corporation, by letters patent, for the relief of distressed Presbyterian ministers; and for the support of their widows and children. In the letters patent such gentlemen and ministers were nominated to accept this important trust, as gave the greatest satisfaction to the united synod of York and Philadelphia; who, pursuant to the powers wherewith they are vested, propose to establish a fund for the support and relief of such ministers as are or may hereafter be called to preach the everlasting gospel among the benighted Indians, or to such congregations as cannot afford them sufficient maintenance.

Both the gentlemen and ministers of the province, who are able, have cheerfully set their shoulders to this burden, and will exert themselves to the utmost to promote such a great and good design: but finding that all they can do will go but a short way towards raising the sum which it necessarily requires, they did nominate and appoint the memorialist to apply, in their name, and in their behalf, to their Christian brethren in Scotland, with full powers to receive and transmit such sums and donations as they shall think meet to bestow for this pious, charitable purpose.

Though he has given only a few passing hints of the distressed situation of many worthy ministers, and the desolate circumstances of their respective flocks in the province of Pennsylvania, the counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Suffex upon Delaware, &c. which, if fully enumerated, would fill many volumes; he apprehends enough has been said to bespeak the compassionate regards of all the friends of religion and liberty.

To relieve such distresses, the Society in England for propagating the Christian religion yearly bestow a considerable sum on their missionaries; and the hardy frugal Germans were under a necessity to apply both to England and Holland for relief: they were assisted by charitable donations from the King, many of the nobility and others, and even by a general collection from the church of Scotland.

The memorialist may venture to say without offence, and with great truth, that no denomination of ministers on the vast continent are more painful and industrious, or have a juster claim to the charity of the ministers and people of Scotland, than those for whom he pleads. Many of them are their brethren by the ties of nature in the

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most literal sense, being descended of Scottish parents; many of them, they trust, by the more endearing ties of grace; and all of them the subjects of the same gracious sovereign; they are the servants of the same great Lord and Master, hold the same doctrines, and walk by the same rules: their number is great, their necessities still greater; they and their people are every day at the hazard of their lives, enlarging the bounds of Christ's kingdom, and extending, at the same time, the British empire. The far greater part, now in arms, contending for our happy constitution against French and Indians, are of that denomination: none have exerted themselves more, and none have suffered so much in the glorious contest: many of them, as above-mentioned, are still in bondage among the Heathen; and those who have escaped with their lives are stript of their All; their houses burnt, their fences destroyed, their plantations laid waste, and, to speak within bounds, their country for sixty or seventy miles, a few forts excepted, one continued ruin; and, what afflicts them still more, they are deprived of the means of grace. These are the objects that solicit your charity, not to relieve their bodily straits, however great and pressing; but to supply their spiritual wants, to enable them, by giving a little out of your abundance, to maintain those who are called to dispense amongst them the bread and the water of life, which has often refreshed your own souls, and which happy Scotland enjoys in such plenty and purity.

The Memorialist shall only add, that his constituents, the ministers and gentlemen of the Corporation and Synod, in whose name he speaks, beg that their Christian friends and brethren would regard them as guardians taking care of an infant church, a daughter of the church of Scotland, in great distress, amidst a vast wilderness. They plead for ability to spread the gospel of peace through the dark places of the earth, that have been long the habitations of cruelty. They plead for the faithful ministers of Christ, and zealous asserters of British liberty, who languish amidst misery and want. They plead for many congregations in danger of no more hearing the glad tidings of salvation. They plead also for vast numbers of the rising generation, who, without your friendly aid, may be for ever deprived of the most inestimable blessing, public instruction and gospel ordinances. Charity is a most exalted grace: it is highly beneficial to mankind; ~~will be loudly applauded,~~ and receive an ample reward in the great day of recompence. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what glory and felicity awaits those who, out of love to God, and concern for the Mediator's kingdom, shall contribute for promoting this Godlike design, of saving souls from death. Great, unspeakably great, shall be their reward in heaven, when they that have done good "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and "they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, held at Edinburgh May 15th 1760, having considered the above representation, together with the certificates produced by the memorialist, they did authorise and appoint a Collection to be made at the church doors of all the parishes in Scotland, upon the second Lord's day of February 1761, hoping that a Collection for such a pious charitable purpose will meet with that favourable reception which its importance and interesting nature plead for.

CHARLES BEATTY.

