

AN
ADDRESS,

PREPARED

AT THE DESIRE OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY

OF THE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

AT THEIR

FIRST MEETING,

AT

WASHINGTON, ON THE 17th OF APRIL, 1814.

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BY JAMES MUIR, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

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ADDRESS, &c.

O Thou ! whose word from solid darkness struck
That spark, the sun, strike wisdom from my soul !

YOUNG.

THE scriptures are the great means used by God for the reformation of the world. Whence their origin, or how they came into our possession, are inquiries of the first importance. When Messiah appeared on earth, the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand ; but before it could commence it was necessary that he should die, and rising again from the dead, should sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Things were then in a train to introduce changes in the church advantageous, in a high degree, to men of that and of every succeeding age. John the Baptist roused the nation to repentance and to amendment of life ; his ministry was followed by the ministry of Jesus, who spoke as no man had ever spoken, who wrought astonishing miracles, particularly, who from among his disciples selected *twelve*, whom he ordained, "*that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.*" When the selection now made—their present preparation—and future work are known, the evidence may with more effect be produced, that the scriptures which they were inspired to write, contain an unerring rule of faith and manners.

In the selection now made *Simon*, called also *Peter*, a rock, expressive of his possessing a firm and resolute

mind, is *first* mentioned with his brother Andrew. Let it not be supposed because Peter is first mentioned, that he was destined to be chief. This was not intimated by our Lord, it was never claimed by Peter, nor acknowledged by any of the twelve. Contentions about superiority they often had, which their Lord always silenced, declaring that they *were brethren*, on an equality, having one master only, their master in heaven.

James and *John*, the sons of Zebedee, were men of ardent minds, which was the occasion of their being called Boanerges, or sons of thunder. These were the disciples who wished to call for fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans; who prevailed with their mother to intercede that they might sit, the one on the right hand the other on the left, in Christ's Kingdom. John was peculiarly susceptible of friendship; he loved his Lord with a glowing affection, and the affection was mutual, a circumstance which attaches to his name unfading honour. James, by the warmth of his testimony to the risen Saviour, incurred the resentment of Herod, whom, when just entering on the duties of the Apostolic office, he slew with the sword.

Philip was associated with *Bartholomew*, who also, as is generally supposed, had the name of Nathaniel, that Israelite, indeed, in whom was no guile.

Thomas was sent out with *Matthæw* the publican, the writer of one of the gospels.

In the list of the Apostles we find three sons of Alpheus, who is called Cleopas, to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection in the way to Emmaus, and to whom he was known in the breaking of bread; the wife of Alpheus was sister to the Virgin Mary, which is the reason that their sons were designated *Christ's*

brethren. They were of the same name with some others in this list, but are easily discriminated from them, being of different families, and receiving additional appropriate surnames.

James, one of the sons of *Alpheus*, was associated with his brother *Judas*. This is that James who presided at the assembly which met at Jerusalem, to decide whether obedience to the Mosaic law was to be exacted of converts from among the Gentiles: he was of great reputation among the brethren, and wrote the epistle which bears his name. *Jude* or *Judas*, had also the name of *Lebbeus*, which characterizes his sincerity, very unlike the other *Judas*, whose conduct has rendered the name, even to a proverb, a term of reproach.

Their brother, *Simon Zelotes*, a burning and shining light, was joined with *Judas Iscariot*, who betrayed Christ, and by that act became a fallen star, which *once* shone, but *now* shines no more.

Most of those found in this list had been fishermen: none of them were men of learning: they had no weight in society from birth, or rank, or peculiar natural endowments; but they were sincere, honest men, whose minds were exercised with religion: some of them had been the disciples of John the Baptist; they had all attended our Lord from his entering on his public ministrations. They believed him to be the Messiah, but, like their countrymen, they supposed that the kingdom which he was about to erect was of this world. Their prejudices were deeply rooted. For the high office to which they were called, they were at present all totally unqualified; but *a preparatory state* immediately commenced. "He ordained them that they *might be with him*."

As his witnesses to the world to which they were

now called, it became necessary that they should be intimately acquainted with his private and public life. From this moment they were his family : they subsisted on a common stock ; they went where he went, and lodged where he lodged : he was among them as a father among his children. They were the companions of his retirement, and by his unreserved conduct encouraged to be perfectly at ease in his presence. He concealed nothing from them. They knew his views, and beheld his conduct at those moments, when, withdrawn from the world, the real character appears in its native beauty, or native deformity. The human character cannot bear such inspection. The infirmity, even of the best, is then too apparent ; hence the proverb, founded on experience, that familiarity breeds contempt. But to Christ's character no blemish could be attached ; it was free from spot. He alone, of all who ever dwelt on earth, was without sin. In their hearing, he taught the people ; and they could accurately examine every circumstance attending the miracles which he wrought. They were about him when his enemies intruded upon his retirement in the garden of Gethsemane. Peter was present at his trial before Caiaphas, the high priest. John stood by the cross when he expired. It was well known to them all, that he had been buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. He was seen by them frequently after his resurrection, sometimes apart, and sometimes together ; and meeting them for the last time at Jerusalem, he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them ; and whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Nothing, in his appearance or private conversation, in his public instruction or public conduct, favoured

the dream of *temporal dominion*. He was more destitute than the foxes which have holes, and the birds of the air which have nests. Far from courting the favour of the great, by severe though just reproof, he made them his enemies. The multitude would have raised him to the throne, but he escaped from them. He declared that his kingdom was not of this world, and was ever urging it upon his disciples to deny themselves and to take up the cross. Let them rise by becoming servants of all. They must suffer that they may triumph; die that they may live; give up possessions on earth that they may enjoy possessions in heaven. For the moment, all was inexplicable to the Apostles—beyond their comprehension—a worm at the root of their worldly advancement. When he died they were in despair. When he rose again they were in hopes that now he would take into his hand the reins of government. But he bore with them, well knowing that the means used to correct their prejudices would soon be effectual. The axe, by repeated strokes, had destroyed one root after another; one stroke more, the tree shall fall, and no shoot remain to endanger its pernicious growth.

The apostles were ordained, not only that they might be *with him*, but also that “*he might send them forth to preach.*” This, like the other, was a *preparatory step* to qualify them for their future work.

They were sent out to call the nation to repentance and amendment; to baptize those who were penitent; and to publish the glad tidings that Messiah, whose appearance was expected, and to whom they were indebted for pardon and acceptance, would immediately be revealed. The commission which they now received was similar to the commission under which John the

Baptist acted. They occupied the ground from which John by his confinement had been withdrawn. It was a continuance of the voice from the wilderness—*prepare the way of the Lord*. Be humble and penitent, that you may welcome Messiah when he comes, and participate in the privileges enjoyed by his subjects. Executing this commission, how must the scheme of worldly grandeur have appeared? Had a temporal kingdom been intended, would they not have been commissioned to rouse the nation to arms, to erect military standards, to offer great honours, extensive possessions, the spoil of conquered foes? Is it the policy of earthly potentates to proclaim the malignity of sin, the beauty of holiness, the reign of peace? Slow as the apostles were of heart to believe, it must often have occurred to them, this mission does not favour our views, nor does it form men to bloodshed and to spoil. If their hearts be broken, and spirits brought low, as guilty, rebellious, perishing creatures, the pageantry of power, of honour, and wealth, must lose its importance, and appear the vainest and most empty things imaginable. Such can be cheered by the voice of mercy only, promising pardon, regenerating influences, the restoration of life and immortality, forfeited by disobedience.

We know not that the apostles were sent out more than once, whilst their Lord continued among them on earth. It was a first essay in public speaking, and in the exercise of those miraculous powers with which they were invested. It was also one among many means used to destroy the false expectation which they, in common with their countrymen, entertained of Messiah's character and government.

It was among the last acts of Christ, after his resurrection, before he ascended to heaven, to give his apos-

ties that commission for the execution of which so much pains had been taken to prepare them. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and *teach* all nations;" *convert* them; let the disciple of Moses become the disciple of Christ; let idolators renounce their false gods and false mediators; and acknowledge one God and one Mediator. Being converted, "*Baptize* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" initiating them by this rite into the christian church. Being baptized, "*Teach* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Let no difficulty and no danger deter you. Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—Such their commission; but it was not meant that it should be immediately acted upon; before they could convert the nations, powers to effect this purpose must first be communicated from above: let them wait at Jerusalem, until these powers were communicated.

Until now, and, indeed, at this moment, and for a short period after, they were influenced by *the dream of secular dominion*; as is evident from the inquiry, "Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He waved all discussion on a subject which they could not yet bear, well knowing that they should immediately awake from their dream, and be no longer deceived. Their present duty was to wait; any step under existing circumstances was likely to be a false step. Such, according to some, was the choice of an apostle in the place of Judas; which act, they suppose, our Lord himself set aside, supplying the deficiency by calling Saul of Tarsus to the apostleship.

The period approached when no mistake of any

kind, in executing their office, was possible; but they became the unerring guides of faith and manners to men of that and of every succeeding age. On the day of Pentecost "they were all, with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance."

It is not easy to explain, or even to conceive, of the change now effected in the minds of the apostles. Dark before—all was now light. Day succeeded night. Their capacities were improved; and powers, not possessed before, began to be exerted. Their knowledge of divine subjects was perfect; and on these subjects they could speak fluently, and in any tongue known among men.

Adam was called into existence in a state of maturity, with such discernment and knowledge as few of his descendants attain after a life of experience and study. As the birds and beasts passed in review before him, immediately he perceived their distinguishing qualities, and gave each an appropriate name, descriptive of its character. Ancient prophets were conversant with what then took place at a distance, or should take place in the remotest ages, although vastly different from what was known to them, either from experience or information. These instances show the power of God, who can at any time give his creatures any degree of discernment on any subject, and in an instant capacitate them for any service. This power he was pleased, at this eventful period, to

exert. The apostles were no longer ignorant, and slow of heart to believe; erring, and attached to worldly schemes. In a moment, they were fully instructed, and rooted in the faith. They could neither err, nor lead others into an error. From being carnal, they became spiritual. They had a clear discernment of the mysteries contained in the scriptures; what they had seen, and what they had heard, when attending Christ, were remembered and understood; the design of John's ministry, and of the ministry which they had hitherto executed, was no longer mistaken; they were made fully acquainted with the person and character, the offices and government of their once crucified, but now exalted Lord. They were perfectly prepared to execute the work to which they had been called; and they did execute it with resolution and success—laying the foundation of a spiritual kingdom which has prevailed ever since, against incessant attacks of hostile powers from earth and hell; and shall prevail to the end of time.

The *selection of the apostles* was the result of infinite wisdom; what in this, at first view, appears most exceptionable, ceases to be so when better understood.

Twelve was the number; but why twelve? Even this was significant; it reminds us of the twelve tribes of Israel, forcing on the mind a conviction, that a plan had early been formed, to execute which, the former dispensation had only been preparatory; and assuring us, that the issue shall present a work, in which the perfections of the Godhead shall be gloriously displayed.

But why was *Judas* one of the twelve—a *deceitful, worldly, false-hearted* man? His appearance was in his favour. He professed for Christ the same attachment as the rest did; and having been with him from

the beginning, was every way capable to bear testimony of what he had seen and heard. I see no reason to question his belief that Jesus was the Messiah. Nay, this belief urged him to the step, which has marked his name with infamy. In common with his brethren, he expected that Christ would soon declare himself to be a *temporal prince*; he became impatient at the delay, and by this act meant to extort that declaration which he knew would reconcile him to the rulers of the nation; when, he imagined, it would be no difficult matter to make his peace with his master, and to seize those honours after which he so ardently panted. Finding that Christ was determined to yield himself to his enemies, and to die, his scheme failed. In agony of mind he gave a testimony to the innocence of Christ; at a moment, too, when, could he have discovered any deceit, it would have eased his own mind, and conciliated the favour of his countrymen. But he had no discoveries of that kind to make; all he had seen, and all he had heard, excited veneration. His testimony was the same as the testimony of the rest; and being now the testimony of an enemy, leaves an impression in favour of Christ, which has always been, and still is, strongly felt.

But when the apostles had just entered on their work, why should *James*, than whom none was more attached to his master, nor did any of them possess a more ardent mind—why should he be slain by the sword of Herod? In the death of James, the apostles were made sensible that their office did not exempt them from death; let them brave suffering and death; it will give additional weight to their testimony. They were, indeed, choice spirits, whom attachment to their master's cause rendered regardless of ease, of liberty, or

life. Such a spirit, excited and strengthened by the Spirit of the Living God, pressed through opposition, and triumphed even in death itself.

An objection lies against all the apostles, which has often been urged; they possessed nothing acknowledged by men to be wise or noble. They were destitute of power, or weight of character. They were held in contempt as the dregs of society, and offscouring of all things. This very circumstance was so overruled as to promote the success of the gospel, and to display its intrinsic value. They were not sent to teach the things of men, nor to prevail through human policy. These were the servants of God, wise through his wisdom, and strong through his strength. Such instruments, carrying such a work into complete effect, discover the doing of the Lord, which is wondrous in our eyes.

An *apostle* was an *extraordinary officer* in the church. The office commenced and ended with the individual. He had no successor, and could have none. He was commissioned to lay the foundation of the christian church, and to leave a complete system of faith and manners binding, through every succeeding age, upon the consciences of all men.

The testimony which the apostles bore, the doctrines which they taught, and the precepts which they inculcated, are of the utmost importance to be known. Man is a guilty, ignorant, rebellious creature. But the blood of Christ expiates human guilt; his doctrine dispels the clouds of ignorance; his precepts reduce the rebellious to submissive conduct. To a creature capable of knowing, serving, and enjoying God; but who, through his own folly, has lost both the inclination and capacity for that in which his safety and happiness

consist; a system which restores him to his original standing must, to him, be every thing. It is eyes to the blind, and ears to the deaf. It is a tongue to the dumb, and feet to the lame. It is health to the sick, and life to the dead.

But how are we made acquainted with the testimony which the apostles bore, with what they taught, and with what they commanded? By *tradition*? This is an impure source, receiving many polluted streams, which soon renders the waters flowing in this channel unfit for use. God, foreseeing this, directed the apostles to commit to writing a complete system, the pure water of life, which they offer men of every age, and of every nation, for their refreshment. From the *Four Gospels*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*; from *their Epistles*, private and public, directed to individual churches, or to the church in general; and from the *Revelation of John*, we may learn all that is necessary for us to know, or for us to practise. These, with the *writings of Moses and the prophets*, are a treasure of more value than tongue can tell, or heart conceive. These writings are parts of one whole; they throw light upon one another, and together are able to make men wise unto salvation.

The moment these guides forsake us, we find ourselves on the dark mountains, where we stumble and fall; all is uncertainty and danger. But in reading the scriptures, meridian light falls upon our path; the heart rejoices, and the eyes are enlightened; men learn to fear God, and to keep his commandments; they become sensible of their errors, and are afraid of secret sins; they are warned, and sin has no dominion over them. From the benefit which they derive from the scripture, it is of more value to them than gold, yea,

much fine gold; it is sweeter than honey, and the honey comb.

Instances might be multiplied to show how effectually the word of God has purified the hearts and lives of men, and fortified them against change, against danger, against the attacks of even the king of terrors himself. Two I shall select.

Mrs. TOOLY, of London, was bred up in the lap of ease and affluence. Her education, and the example continually before her eyes, either concealed the truth, or placed it in a light calculated to excite disgust. At an early period she was left in full possession of a great estate. Her appearance was gay and brilliant. She frequented all places of amusement, and was twirled round in a giddy circle. Soon she exhausted all the sources of worldly pleasure, but she was not happy. She sought happiness, but happiness fled from her. At Bath, being indisposed, she sent for a physician, who was not only skilled in his profession, but a man of piety. He discovered the seat of her disease to be in *the mind*, not in *the body*. He recommended her to read. She had read all the plays, and romances, and books of taste then in vogue;—but there was a book which she had not yet read, which never fails to arrest attention, and to please while it instructs. But what book? This the physician did not always choose to mention; and if he did mention it, it must be considered as a mark of particular regard. Can it be procured? It can. Do favour me with the perusal. The physician, after several visits, did not produce the book. The desire of seeing it could no longer be restrained; she must see it. The physician assured her that this was a favour which he did not confer upon every one; but upon her promise to read it with care,

and should she not discover all its beauties on a first reading, to read it a second and third time, she might be gratified. The promise was given, and solemnly confirmed. On his next visit, the physician presented her with a splendid copy of the New Testament. She laid it down. That book I have often seen: I could not have supposed that you would raise my curiosity merely to disappoint me. But have you ever read it? No, never. Well, I have your promise to read it carefully. She entered upon the work as a task; but in the progress of reading her feelings were aroused; she saw with new eyes, and felt with a new heart. She had sought happiness where happiness was not to be found; she now sought it in God, and found rest to her soul. From that period she was distinguished for the simplicity of her manners, the piety of her worship, and her extensive usefulness.

Doctor LEECHMAN, of Glasgow, was raised, by his merit, to the head of the university in that place. He was familiar with the literature of Greece and Rome. His taste was thereby improved; but for purity and hope he was indebted to a better Teacher. I invite your attention to his dying moments. The son of a nobleman, then in town, who had resided with him when attending the university, and had been under his immediate care, came to visit him. His eyes, nearly closed in death, brightened; his countenance was placid, and his voice rose as he spoke. He welcomed his young pupil; I am always glad to see you; and never more so than at present; I am dying, but you see me *happy*—*gay, triumphant*; for this I am indebted to that *neglected book*, pointing at a *bible* on a table near the bed—*it assures me of immortality*. The scene was uncommonly impressive. He survived only a short time, and then died in peace.

Appreciating the scripture, why go far for witnesses of its value?—I appeal to multitudes among ourselves. Has not the scripture enlightened your minds and directed your conduct? Has it not supplied a rod and staff, for your help and comfort, in your passage through this the valley and shadow of death; where all around you die; where you have the sentence of death in yourselves, and may die any day, any hour, any moment. Taught by the oracles of God that the goodness and mercy which have attended you hitherto, shall attend you all your days, and that although you die, you shall live again; you lead a life, engage in worship, and participate of joys, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—neither hath it entered into the heart to conceive.

It is matter of deep regret, that families who have bibles, or may have them if they please, put no value upon them: they are neither read, nor believed, nor acted upon; they are thrown aside as trash. Ah! the dust of them shall witness against such at the great day; it shall testify they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of his counsel, and despised his reproof; they accounted themselves unworthy of eternal life.

Existing circumstances recall such to a sense of their duty, and to appreciate a privilege which, through ignorance or neglect, they overlook; societies are everywhere forming, and a society has been formed among ourselves to give circulation to the scriptures. But charity begins at home; partake of the bread with which you supply others; drink of the stream which flows in the channel which you assist in opening. It would be a miserable thing to die with famine in the midst of abundance. Take up a determined

resolution to search the scriptures; let them dwell in you richly; meditate on them day and night. Pray, whilst you read, and whilst you meditate, that the spirit who inspired these writings may render them intelligible and impressive. These steps will awaken an appetite for the heavenly manna, a thirst for the water of life. You will not be able to subsist without such spiritual nourishment. You will even long to retire, that in reading the scriptures you may converse with God. In this holy book he speaks to you; his words are melody to the ear, and a cordial to the heart. Let your families partake of the benefit; read the scriptures daily in their hearing, and by your whole influence, precept, example, and authority, attended with prayer, urge them to believe what God says, and to obey what he commands.

Associations of different kinds are formed, some to relieve the necessities of men considered as *mortals*, others to relieve their necessities considered as *immortals*. They are the friends of men, who, in their individual or social capacity, afford them information of advantage in time; how much more are they their friends who afford them information of advantage to them in eternity. They do well who supply the bread which perisheth to the famished body; but they do better who supply the bread which gives life, and perpetuates it forever, to the famished soul. Crowns of laurel encircle them who rescue a fellow creature from the jaws of death, or set the captive free; but their crown shall be unfading, a crown of glory, who are instrumental in rescuing immortals from an *undying* death, or setting the captive of sin free from a captivity which is found oppressive and ruinous through the ages of eternity. Attempts of this kind are noble; it

is their attempt who give circulation to the scripture, that vital blood on which life depends; God will accept their work, and find more pleasure therein than in burnt offerings and calves of a year old, than in thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil.

The scriptures have at all times been preserved by the church with great care. Dark ages followed the overthrow of the Roman empire; few could read or write; books fled to the cloister. During these ages, corruptions, both in doctrine and practice, deformed christianity, and tarnished its lustre. But the scriptures were in existence, which, at the reformation, were sought after, and copies thereof, printing having now been discovered, were greatly multiplied. It was yet twilight; for two centuries the clouds which darkened the christian world were only dispersing; Europe, during the obscure dawn, vibrated between truth and falsehood, the belief and disbelief of the gospel. The enemy, finding his time to be short, discovered great rage. Under his influence, *infidelity* gathered strength, and for a moment seemed to triumph. It burst all bounds, and deluged Europe; nay, reaching America, the flood pressed on, with a violence which swept all before it. But the voice of Omnipotence stopt its progress—"Thus far shalt thou come and no farther; here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Feeble attempts have never ceased to give circulation to the scriptures; but of late a bold spirit has been roused. It has been determined to enlighten the earth by sending the messengers of peace to every part of the known world. Societies for this purpose were formed, and met encouragement. From missionary, bible societies originated. They repeat the command; it is the command of God, and must be effectual, "Let

there be light; and there was light." The bible has been translated into all the languages of Europe; into many of the languages spoken in Asia; even the African tribes have not been overlooked. The cry is loud; it reverberates from east to west, from north to south, "*Give us the bible.*"

There are regions of the earth, immensely large, and full of inhabitants, who have no sabbaths, no churches, no bibles; where myriads, in imitation of their deluded ancestors, bow before senseless idols, and practise superstitions, in the extreme, cruel, obscene, and irrational. Of *one thousand millions* who people the earth, *six hundred millions* are enveloped in *pagan darkness*; *two hundred millions* in the *delusions of Mahomet*; *three millions of Jews* dispersed among the nations, obstinately reject the Messiah; *not even one hundred millions* profess the christian faith in its purity, but only as it is debased with the *gross superstitions of the Greek and Roman churches*. The church has hitherto mispent her strength in disgraceful contests among her members, without one effectual attempt to save a perishing world from ruin, by the light of the truth. But she is now aroused; she has girded her loins, and is gone forth to fight the battles of the Lord. She begins to look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

The establishment of bible societies is a new era in the christian church. Christendom was in a languishing state, if not in a deathlike sleep; whilst the enemy was active, setting a host of infidels, in theory and practice, in array against her. The alarm was given—*the Philistines be upon thee Sampson*. The champion awoke in his strength; he has burst his fetters, and set the enemy at defiance. The full effort of christians

of all denominations has been brought into operation; they feel that they are brethren, and, blushing at the petty feuds which caused the enemy to triumph, with one heart and one hand, they unite to bear witness to the truth, and to subject the nations to the doctrine of the cross.

Nine years have elapsed since the commencement of societies in Britain to give circulation to the bible in foreign countries. The zeal of these societies has been fervent, and their success almost incredible. Their example has set Europe on fire, and the flame has spread to America. To the bible society in Philadelphia belongs the honour, in our own country, of having taken the lead in this labour of piety, whereby similar exertions, in almost every state in the union, have been excited.

In our day, nation riseth against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. What rage and conflict! what noise and tumult! what darkness and tempest! what artifice and cruelty! The sea roars and is troubled, and the mountains shake by the swelling thereof. The church raises her peaceful head amidst the storm. She looks with compassion on a rebellious race. She speaks to men of the Maker and Governor of the world; let them acknowledge his authority, and submit to his will. He has been offended; let them hasten with the blood of atonement to his throne. His sword is unsheathed, but fury is not in him. Return to God, and he will return to you. A fire is kindled in his wrath to purify the earth. Be purified, the fire will go out. Acknowledge him who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He will break the bow, and cut the spear asunder, and burn the chariot in the fire. Wars shall then

cease, order be restored, and safety prevail. For their learning and reproof, for their correction and instruction in righteousness, the church offers the nations the word of life. Let it be received; let it be believed; let it be acted upon. The kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. The glory of the latter day shall illumine the world; a happier state than has yet been experienced shall be experienced; all a christian can desire shall be realized. This happiness has, indeed, begun; the stream already flows which shall refresh and fertilize the earth.

Let the bible be circulated; it is the great mean used by God for the reformation of mankind. What else is wanting for their peace and safety in this world, or in that which is to come? Give them the bible—you give bread to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty. Give them the bible—you give health to the sick, and life to the dead. Give them the bible—it cheers the wretched, purifies the defiled; it seals to the guilty the pardon of sins. You thereby bless the earth, and exalt its inhabitants from the terrestrial to the celestial state.

Such the object of the bible society lately formed among us. It is a charitable institution; the highest act of charity; nay, charities of all kinds are here concentrated in one point. Is there any individual who can withhold from us his good wishes and prayers? No; there can be but one wish—may God give you success. There can be but one offer—"our hand, our substance, is at your call to aid your attempt! May God grant your wish, and reward the offer you make with his blessing, enriching in life and death; in time and eternity." Amen.