

**PASTORAL LETTER**

**FROM THE**

**PRESBYTERY**

**OF**

**NEW-BRUNSWICK,**

**TO**

**THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.**

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**"The liberal soul shall be made fat ; and he that watereth  
shall be watered also himself."—Prov. XI. 25.**

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**NEW-BRUNSWICK, (N. J.)**

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**1807.**

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*At a meeting of the presbytery of New-Brunswick,  
in Maidenhead, on the 10th day of  
June, A. D. 1807.*

The presbytery resolved, that the following pastoral letter be printed, together with a table containing a list of the names of the members of the presbytery ; of the congregations under its care ; the collections received from each ; and reports of the number of communicants and persons baptised in the year past. And farther, that so much of the letter, as refers to raising money for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry, be read in publick from the pulpit by every settled minister, and that the money that may be collected for this purpose, be brought forward to the presbytery at their next stated meeting.

*A true extract from the minutes.*

GEORGE S. WOODHULL,  
*Stated Clerk.*

The following table exhibits the names of the members of the Presbytery of New Brunswick—the congregations of which they have the pastoral charge—the collections made by each in the past year for supporting missionaries appointed by the General Assembly, and for defraying the expenses of commissioners to the assembly who come from the more distant parts of the country,—together with a statement of the whole number of communicants, in each congregation—new members added—and adults and infants baptised, during the last year, ending April 28, 1807.

\* \* Black lines denote that reports have not been received.

| Names of Ministers. | Congregations.                     | Collections     |                | Comm.                         |      | Bap-     |      |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------|----------|------|
|                     |                                    | For gen. assem. | For dist. com. | nicants. tot. in last com ye. | rec. | Ad- ults | Inf. |
|                     |                                    | D. C.           | D. C.          | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
| J. Woodhull, D.D.   | Freehold,                          | 20              | 12             | 276                           | 14   | 9        | 62   |
| S. S. Smith, D. D.  | Pres. of N. J. College,            |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| Jam. F. Armstrong,  | Trenton,                           | 8               | —              | 68                            | —    | 6        | 17   |
| Andrew Hunter,      | Prof. Mat. & Astro. N. J. College, |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| Joseph Rue,         | Penn. & Trenton town-ship,         | 16              | —              | 162                           | 5    | 1        | 9    |
| Joseph Clark,       | New-Brunswick,                     | 16              | 6 40           | 88                            | 5    | —        | 7    |
| Thomas Grant,       | Amwell & Flemington,               | 16              | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
| Garner A. Hunt,     | Without a charge,                  |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| John Boyd,          | Newton & Hardwick,                 | 17 23           | 3 2            | 137                           | 13   | 3        | 11   |
| Nathaniel Harris,   | Without a charge,                  |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| C. Guildersleeves,  | Midway, (Georgia,)                 | —               | —              | 216                           | 29   | —        | —    |
| David Barclay,      | Oxf. Nolton, & Mount Bethel,       | —               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
| Robert Finley,      | Baskingridge,                      | 18              | —              | 232                           | 2    | —        | 24   |
| Holloway W. Hunt,   | Kingwood, Bethlehem, & Alexandria, | 16              | —              | 183                           | 11   | —        | 25   |
| Jacob Rickhow,      | Without a charge,                  |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| William B. Sloan,   | Greenwich & Mansfield              | 22              | —              | 81                            | 3    | —        | 27   |
| G. S. Woodhull,     | Cranbury,                          | 20              | 12             | 198                           | 10   | 1        | 49   |
| David Comfort,      | Kingston,                          | 12              | 5              | 109                           | 10   | 6        | 5    |
| John Cornell,       | Allentown & Nottingham,            | 10              | —              | 67                            | 1    | 1        | 5    |
| H. Kollock, D. D.   | Savannah, (Georgia)                |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
| Isaac V. Brown,     | Maidenhead,                        | 8               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
|                     | VACANT CONGREGATIONS.              |                 |                |                               |      |          |      |
|                     | Lamington,*                        | —               | —              | 105                           | 10   | 5        | 12   |
|                     | Boundbrook,                        | —               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
|                     | Princeton,                         | 16              | 13             | 70                            | 5    | 2        | 4    |
|                     | Hacketstown,                       | —               | 4              | 25                            | 1    | —        | 5    |
|                     | Shrewsbury,                        | —               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
|                     | Shark River,                       | —               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |
|                     | Middletown Point,                  | —               | —              | —                             | —    | —        | —    |

215 23 155 42 20 17 119 34 269

\* The Rev. William Boyd, late pastor of the congregation of Lamington, died May 17, 1807.

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## PASTORAL LETTER. &amp;c.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

**Y**OUR pastors and elders, being assembled in presbytery, and taking into their most serious consideration the present state, necessities, and prospects of the church, have thought it their duty to address you on an occasion so important to the interests of our common Christianity. On the ordinary duties of Christians we have nothing to add to the pious exhortations which you so often hear in the house of God, except it be unitedly to recommend what, as individuals, we have never been able too earnestly to inculcate, or too frequently to reiterate, the necessity of constant and fervent prayer to the Great Head of the Church for the effusions of his Holy Spirit to quicken the graces of his people, and to awaken in their hearts that ardent and publick spirited zeal for the prosperity of Zion, which the present indications of divine providence, and the circumstance of our country, and of this period, seem peculiarly to require. Permit us to invite your attention to these

circumstances, and to the duties they impose, which call for the most vigorous and disinterested exertions ; for some portion of the spirit of the primitive disciples, that we may become *workers together with God* in accomplishing the great events, the dawn of which appears to be opening on the church, and on the world.

If we turn our view, in the first place, to our own country, we behold the boundaries of our American Zion extending with unexampled rapidity. Our brethren emigrating to the uncultivated recesses of the wilderness, have, at the same time become separated from the stated ordinances of religion, and have left far behind them that precious word by which they, and their children should have been nourished to eternal life. They resemble the first families after the deluge, who spread themselves abroad upon the face of the earth into different and distant regions. And, like them, they are liable to lose, in their dispersions, the first principles of truth, and to deviate into all the errors of ignorance and superstition, if not ultimately of pagan idolatry, unless our Christian sympathy and charity prepare the means of following them with the light, and the inestimable blessings of the gospel. In what mo-

ving accents, then, do the spiritual wants of your countrymen, and the still more deplorable dangers of their posterity, address themselves to your Christian benevolence !

But dear brethren, *God who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe*, is opening another door to your pious charity, and graciously affording you another opportunity, so desirable to every sincere believer, of extending the kingdom of the ever blessed Redeemer. Many of the aboriginal tribes of the country residing within the limits of the United States, convinced, at length, of the superior advantages of civilized life over the savage state, and of the Christian religion over their gloomy and degrading superstitions, are now earnestly soliciting your charitable aids to convey among them the blessings of both. Each of these most valuable and important ends is the more likely to be attained by being associated with the other. Formerly, our efforts have been rendered abortive by dividing them ; but lately these efforts promise a more successful issue, by pursuing these ends together, and endeavouring to impart to **these children of nature**, civilization and religion **at the same time**. Christians ! the untutored savage, amidst all his

ignorance and wretchedness, is now extending a supplicating hand to you for relief. That hand, so often stained with the blood of your brethren, solicits to be *washed in the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Disciples of the compassionate Redeemer! listen to the cry from the wilderness; and hasten to make *waters break out there, and streams in the desert,* which shall cause their waste and desolate places *to rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

It is with the most lively pleasure we have it in our power farther to inform you, that divine providence seems to be opening the way for the extensive diffusion of the gospel over the East. From those regions of the globe the light of divine truth first dawned upon the West; and from the West it is again returning to re-illumine the birth place of religion, and the human race. Is not the period then fast approaching when, according to the prayers, and long continued hopes of the church, the Sun of Righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. Missionaries have been found who, with a truly primitive and apostolic zeal, have consecrated themselves to the holy and the arduous service of carrying the glad tidings of salvation, to those remote nations who have been so long sitting *in the region and shadow of*

*death.* Forsaking all the endearments of coun- and friends, they have put their lives in their hands for the sake of Christ, and braved the dangers of almost boundless oceans and of distant and unhealthful climes. No labour have they declined ; but, amidst incessant toils in preaching the gospel, and the innumerable avocations and duties incident to their arduous and hazardous situation, they have set themselves to acquire the languages of so many nations, and with infinite attention, to translate into them the sacred scriptures, that the various people of Asia may say, with the astonished multitude at Jerusalem,----*how is it that we hear, every one in our own tongue, the wonderful works of God ?*---An undertaking so vast, but which promises such triumphs to the gospel, cannot be carried into complete effect without proportionable revenues. Societies have been formed in different parts of Europe, who, with a disinterested zeal, and a noble liberality, worthy of the best age of the church, have endeavoured to create adequate funds for the accomplishment of this great object. Tartary, the vast region of India, and the islands of the Great South Sea, have already felt the happy influence of European charity. But we also, Christian brethren, are called, in divine providence, to lend our aid to a work so



glorious. Imitate the example of the primitive believers, who, though poor, could yet enable their apostolic missionaries to carry the glorious gospel of our salvation to every nation under heaven.

God, who has abundantly blessed you *in your basket and your store*, justly requires of you a portion of his own gifts, for the happiness of mankind, who are your brethren. Nor is it a barren and unprofitable sacrifice which he demands. For your good works will encompass you in the great day of his judgment with the blessings of nations enlightened and saved by you. And, in the exercise of these amiable deeds of charity, you may rely securely on his gracious promise, that those who have been the means of *turning many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, in the kingdom of their Father.*

But, dear brethren, let us recall your attention more particularly to the state of our own country, in which you see the harvest widely extended, and daily becoming more extensive, while the labourers employed to gather it bear no proportion to its increase. The very enlargement of the boundaries and population of our country affords some ground for melancholy reflection to a pious

mind, when it is considered how many portions of it are likely to be destitute of the means of grace---when it is considered how many of the aged, and most useful servants of Christ are daily leaving their work below for their reward above. *Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.* But prayer alone is not the whole extent of our duty. It is necessary, with diligence and fidelity, to employ every mean which wisdom can suggest, or charity accomplish, to augment their number. When we have done all that divine providence has graciously put it in our power to do, we may prudently and safely rely on the blessing of God for the success of your efforts. But seldom does he appear to perform any extraordinary work for his church till he has first awakened her pious zeal to prepare the means that naturally lead to the end which has previously been the object of fervent and believing prayer. Much are labourers wanted to cultivate the extensive and growing vineyard of the Lord. We need a great increase of faithful pastors to oversee, and feed the flock of Christ;-----men, not only of that warm, and elevated piety which will prompt them to make the greatest sacrifices to the glory of the Redeemer; but men of those abilities and at-

tainments in both divine and human knowledge, which will enable them *rightly to divide the word of truth*; men who will be able to defend the church which they edify; and, while they excite and nourish the graces of the believer, shall be able also, in *the day of rebuke, and of blasphemy*, to repel the attacks of the scorner, and the infidel. Never were the united influences of talents and piety more necessary in the church. But whither shall we look for help? Those who have been *set as watchmen on the walls of Zion*, to watch for her safety, have long turned a solicitous attention to this subject, and they would now lay before you the result of their reflections.

They see with concern that, in this period of luke-warmness, few in the higher classes of fortune, even among those who are most favourably disposed towards religion, and who possess the means of commanding the most enlarged and liberal advantages of education, are voluntarily offering themselves to undertake the arduous and self-denying functions of the sanctuary. With not less concern they see the growing wealth of the country, either dissipated in luxury, or exhausted in avaricious enterprise, as yet but little turned to forming establishments in favour of science and re-

ligion. Learning is obliged to provide for its own support by the heavy charges laid upon education, a circumstance which has placed its best advantages beyond the reach of the greater part of those who are in the humbler ranks of fortune, among whom, chiefly, we expect to find that ardent and disinterested zeal which the present state of the church requires. Retired and obscure, they need to be sought out, and drawn forth, by those who have the interests of religion most deeply at heart. Diffident, they need encouragement. With a very narrow patrimony, or entirely without patrimony, they need support. Not possessing the means of frequenting the first places of learning, even genius and piety have not dared to look up to the service of the church, as being too far above them.

After the most careful inquiries, therefore, to learn in what way adequate supplies for the churches in these American lands, may be most effectually created, none has occurred which promises so much success as that of seeking for poor, ingenious, and pious youth, drawing them from their retirements, and, at common expense, educating them for the service of Christ in the Gospel.

In these ideas, the Supreme Judicatory

of the presbyterian church in the United States has warmly and earnestly concurred, recommending to the several presbyteries, subject to its jurisdiction, the adoption of such vigorous and prudent measures as will be likely to give them the most speedy and complete effect. But, brethren, while this wise and pious design will require the utmost circumspection in selecting proper candidates for the patronage, and the service of the church, it is evident also, that it will require, on your part, the most liberal and charitable aids. Religion, among us, neither demands nor receives any civil provision, but depends, as in the first age of Christianity, on the voluntary bounty of its disciples. Hence you are the more frequently called to exercise that spirit of charity which is the distinguishing ornament of the Christian character, and it is an exercise which serves to make the disciples of our common Saviour feel, in a higher degree, their relation to him, and to one another. God hath committed to our benevolence and zeal the support and extension of his kingdom upon earth, that we may have his glory ever before us as our end, while we are contributing to promote it; that we may be united to our brethren in a purer and stronger affection, while, by our sacrifices, we are advancing their high-

est and everlasting interests ; and that we may be the more sensible of our own infinite obligations to our Redeemer's love, while we are extending its precious benefits to them. In order then, that we may raise up *labourers for the vineyard of Christ*, pastors for the flock of the great *Shepherd and Bishop of souls*, in this period of extraordinary necessity, beloved and christian brethren, we must renew, and most strenuously urge our appeal to your piety and charity ; to your compassion for souls which are *perishing for lack of knowledge* ; and to your regard for the glory of God, who condescends to place his principal glory in the salvation of men.--- Is it much to bestow a pittance of your earthly goods on him *who though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor* ? For what you give to his disciples, he graciously considers as done to himself. Remember what prodigies were accomplished even by the poverty of the first Christians, in carrying the glorious gospel of our salvation throughout the earth. In what other way could you employ to so much advantage, or with so much pleasure to a benevolent heart, a portion of that fortune, whether great or small, with which God has blessed you ? Your alms you would cheerfully bestow on the temporal necessities of your poor brethren ; but here you bestow a benevolence, most

acceptable to God, on the necessities of the soul. An individual would not solicit your charity in vain; but here you are preparing *the bread of life* for thousands, who will convey it down to thousands more who are to come after them to the end of time. All the able and faithful ministers of Christ, whom you may be the means of educating, and bringing into the church, are blessings conferred, not only on the individual congregations in which they may hereafter be placed, but on your country, and on mankind, which may descend from generation to generation when you shall have long finished your course, and shall, we trust, be resting in heaven. And will not every soul that shall ascend thither after you, from the long succession of the heirs of your munificence, add a new ray to the glory of your heavenly crown?

In the conclusion of this latter, dear brethren, permit us to renew our exhortations and entreaties to you. Let not the flock of Christ continue to languish for want of pastors.---Let not the pure light of the gospel, which now shines upon the churches, be lost, and give place to the gloom of superstition or the wild disorders of enthusiasm.---Let not our brethren, who are settling on the vast frontiers of our country,

sink into ignorance and irreligion; and while they gain a miserable portion of the earth, lose an immortal inheritance.

As all the ordinary means of raising up a pious and able ministry for the church seems to be inadequate to her necessities and her wishes, if the measure now proposed by the assembly, and pursuing by the respective presbyteries, should fail of success, the prospect before us will be dark indeed. Brethren, the success is in your hands. You are witnesses, and it is with pleasure and with confidence we can make this appeal, that we are not seeking any personal interest; we are not pleading for any extraordinary emoluments for the priesthood; but if you truly love the Redeemer, and the prosperity of Zion, we are pleading the cause of your own hearts. If a gospel ministry is necessary to the existence, and the due administration of the ordinances of religion; if it is necessary to the preservation of divine knowledge in the world; and if it is of the highest importance to the promotion of order and good morals in society, to which facts scripture experience, reason, and your own conviction, bear ample testimony, then we are pleading the cause, not of God only, but of yourselves and your posterity, of your country and of



human nature. Your liberality alone, and that repeated from time to time, can enable the presbytery to comply with the pious intentions of the assembly, and fulfil almost the last hopes, as far as they depend on human aid, of the friends of pure and evangelic piety. In the name of your Redeemer, therefore, so dear to every sincere disciple of Christ; in the name of society and of posterity; and in the name of so many immortal souls who are ready to perish, we appeal to your benevolence. Cast your offerings into the treasury of God's temple; bring your sacrifices to his altar; however small they may be, if they are offered with a pure heart, and a disinterested zeal for his glory, he will multiply them an hundred fold in blessings to his church, and to you.

*Signed by order of the Presbytery.*

**ROBERT FINLEY,**  
*Moderator.*

**DAVID COMFORT,**  
*Clerk.*

**Maidenhead, June 10, 1807.**