

*Rev. John Williams 12.*  
TIDINGS *From Mr. Proud*  
8907/12

OF

# GREAT JOY

FOR ALL PEOPLE :

## A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE WASHINGTON BIBLE SOCIETY,

GRANVILLE, JANUARY 31, 1816.

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BY ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D. D.

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*The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.....John 4. 14.*

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PUBLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOCIETY.

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SALEM :

PRINTED BY BODD AND STEVENSON, AT THE SALEM BOOK-STORE.

1816.

*January 31st, 1816;*

**AN BIBLE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY,**

***RESOLVED***, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Dr. PROUDFIT, for his able and impressive sermon, delivered this day : and that a copy be requested for publication.

*A Copy from the Minutes.*

**Z. B. SHIPHERD**, *Secretary pro. tem.*



# SERMON.

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LUKE II. 10, 11.

*And the angel said unto them, fear not ; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people : For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR which is Christ the Lord.*

THESE verses contain the message which was delivered by an angel to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. The messenger was indeed illustrious, but the personage, whose nativity he came to announce, infinitely surpassed him both in lustre and excellence. Sometimes the messenger reflects honour on the message which he is employed to communicate, but in the present instance all the glory was reflected from the message upon the messenger. Indeed, neither man, nor angel, nor arch-angel, nor any created intelligence, however lofty his nature or high his destiny, can disclose any thing relative to the person, or undertaking, or offices, or salvation of Messiah without receiving an honour altogether above his rank ; because there cannot be even a comparison between the dignity of a created being, and of that God who is Uncreated ; between the loftiest seraph, or cherub, and the eternal Son, who is, both in nature and office, *over all, God blessed for ever : King of kings and Lord of lords.* When the angels draw near him to behold his glory they first *cover their faces with their wings* : when they engage in exercises of immediate homage, they *cast their crowns at his feet*, and if emotions of envy were ever felt in the bosoms

of these unrevolting spirits, they must have been felt by the other angels when Gabriel, although their chief, was honoured to be the first intelligencer of the Saviour's appearance on earth.

There is something unusually impressive and interesting in the very manner in which this message was delivered, and although the preacher's eloquence was the eloquence of Heaven, yet it is obvious that he laboured for language to express the mighty theme. *Behold*, he declares, *I bring you tidings, good tidings, good tidings of joy, good tidings of great joy*, and his bosom appears to expand while he adds, *which shall be unto all people*. "The message which I am commissioned to bear does not interest the offspring of Abraham only, but of Adam; it is not intended merely for the scattered tribes of Jacob, but for the unnumbered millions of the family of man.—The babe now lying in the manger of Bethlehem, is given to be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." And who that has felt the pang of remorse, or *the powers of the world to come*, is not ready to re-echo to the seraph's voice, "yes, verily, the message which thou art now communicating is good tidings of great joy; more reviving infinitely to the disquieted conscience, or the drooping spirit than bread to the man who is ready to perish with hunger, or the light of day to him who has been long languishing in the horrors of a dungeon, or the prospect of emancipation to the wretch who is tortured with the iron chain."

It is always with sensations of more than ordinary pleasure that I rise up to address either a tract, or missionary, or bible society; any association which is formed for diffusing, by the word either printed or preached, these good tidings of great joy; because as it is incomparably the most honourable work in which mortals can be

occupied, it is also the most benevolent office which man can perform to man : and now were I possessed of the angel's eloquence or ardour, I would cheerfully employ them in urging and animating you all to the exercise of every talent for promoting the universal extension of the Gospel of salvation ; for giving not merely to the destitute among us, but in sending to the remotest inhabitants of our globe that *Bible* which declares, *unto man is born a Saviour, even Christ the Lord.* "Gratitude impels, humanity implores, justice commands, honor invites, and conscience approves" the sacred enterprize.

Why may the knowledge of a Saviour be pronounced *good tidings of great joy* ? and, for whom is a dispensation of the gospel designed ? These are interrogatories which naturally arise from our text, and their discussion cannot be considered inappropriate on the present interesting occasion. And may a portion of that ardour which Gabriel felt, when he first proclaimed Messiah's advent to the world, inflame your hearts, and mine, while we are now deliberating on the means of diffusing his gospel among ALL people.

1. The knowledge of a Saviour may be pronounced *good tidings*, because it discloses a scheme by which the sinner may obtain reconciliation with his offended Sovereign. That man has apostatized, and forfeited the friendship of his Creator, has been acknowledged by persons of all distinctions and ages. The untaught, equally with the most learned and enlightened, have been impelled, from their own convictions, and from observation, to adopt the humiliating concession, *all have sinned ; the whole world is become guilty before God* ; but whether there is any possibility of reconciliation, or by what method a reconciliation may be affected, are questions which reason

of itself could never have satisfactorily solved.—  
*These* to heathen sages have been the subject of frequent, and anxious research, but their researches have not been more anxious than unsuccessful. After the most patient and painful enquiry, relative to the remission of sin, the mind of the proud philosopher has sometimes doubted, sometimes denied. The displays of divine goodness, which occasionally beam forth in the administration of the world, inspired his labouring breast with hope ; and the marks of vengeance, which were again awfully visible, drove him back to despair. Every thing relating to the possibility, or particular method of pardon, was thus involved in the most gloomy uncertainty. Some of the pagan philosophers supposed that the Majesty of heaven, once offended, could never be appeased, and that it was presumption even to ask forgiveness : \* others, again, who acknowledged the possibility of restoration to the favour of their divinities, doubted as to the manner by which this object might be effected, and therefore every new system of heathen theology proposed a new scheme of restoring man to the friendship of his God. Some in their sacrifices offered birds, others presented beasts, others gave libations of oil, and some had recourse to the unnatural practice of offering *the fruit of their body* as an expiation for *the sin of their souls*, conjecturing that the more costly the oblation the more acceptable it would prove to their Deities. Thus uncertain and unsatisfying were all the speculations of unenlightened reason relative to the doctrine of pardon ; a doctrine in which all the hopes of man for both worlds are most intimately involved. The gospel, therefore, appears to be a *joyful sound*, because it announces a free and full remis-

\* Halyburton's Insufficiency. 66, 67.

sion for human crimes. *There* not merely the possibility of our reconciliation is disclosed, but the very manner is most luminously unfolded. *There* a plan is revealed worthy of God ; answerable to the dignity of his law, to the demands of his justice, and securing the eternal remission of all who acquiesce. *There* the Father is exhibited as consecrating his own Son to be *the Saviour of the world*, and offering with him all the blessings of grace and glory. *Him he hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.* This interesting doctrine has been taught either by vision, or type, or immediate revelation of the Almighty, from the beginning of the world. Abel, early after the commencement of time, and the introduction of sin, *offered an acceptable sacrifice* in anticipation of that atonement which the Saviour was afterwards to make : Through the faith of that same satisfaction *Enoch walked with God*, and, after a course of extraordinary devotion, was translated to the heavenly state, *without seeing death.* Through a reliance on the same propitiatory sacrifice, millions, before the Saviour's birth, and since his advent, have enjoyed the most satisfactory assurances of pardon, and exchanged worlds with a full prospect of future glory. The royal David, ages before Messiah was born, could sing in joyful anticipation, *there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. With Jehovah there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*— Another, shortly after his resurrection and ascension, exclaimed in strains equally confident and rapturous, *where sin abounded, grace did much abound : As sin reigned unto death, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord :* And it is a consideration which

Ought not to be forgotten, as affording a rich display of Jehovah's concern for our consolation, that, although in the scriptures there are other doctrines *hard to be understood* ; doctrines in the discussion of which men equally distinguished for genius and learning and piety have disagreed ; the method of a sinner's restoration to the favour of his God is taught in language which none can misunderstand ; is taught with a fulness of evidence which may convince the most doubting understanding ; soothes the agitated conscience, and raises the drooping heart. Jesus is clearly set forth as *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ; as a propitiation through faith in his blood ; as delivered for our offences and rising again for our justification.*

Again, the gospel may be pronounced *good tidings of great joy*, because it opens to the eye of faith the prospect of glory in the world to come. It is not probable that this earth was ever designed as the eternal residence of man : From intimations of scripture we are warranted in believing that Adam, having remained faithful to his Creator during his state of probation, would have been translated to a more exalted region, brought to the more immediate vision of his God, introduced to the society of those orders of angels who *kept their first estate*, and admitted, as a reward for his fidelity, to a more profound acquaintance with the plans of the infinite Mind. But by combining with rebel angels, in opposition to the authority of Heaven, all his prospects of future exaltation were instantly and everlastingly forfeited. The Lord God *drove out the man*, and his expulsion from the earthly paradise was a virtual exclusion from the heavenly ; and the same Cherubim with the flaming sword guarded every avenue of admission to both. But the gospel exhibits the *second Ad-*

am as restoring all the privileges which had been forfeited by the first ; yea, as *coming that we might have life, and have it more abundantly* than could have been enjoyed by innocent Adam. The union of the human nature to the Divine is inconceivably more intimate in consequence of its assumption by the eternal Son, and the perfections of Deity are presented to our contemplation through a medium altogether new. The most refined and elevated pleasures of man are intellectual, and consist in the vision of his God ; and as this vision is rendered much clearer by the mediation of Jesus Christ, the source of his happiness is much more enlarged. Formerly he might have contemplated the Divine Being in the character of a Creator and Sovereign, and as such adored him, but through the medium of redeeming love the relation has become inconceivably more intimate ; he can now behold the living God in the endearing relation of a Friend and Father ; he can exult in the prospect of being for ever lost in the admiration of his excellencies and the fruition of his love. In the heavenly world the redeemed from among men will see their Father *face to face* ; they will *sit with him upon his throne* ; they will *know him even as they are known by him*, and be for ever filled *with all the fulness of God*. Although the intimations of celestial bliss were more obscure during the dispensation of Moses than at present, yet enough was then revealed to transport the souls of the faithful, and inspire them with ardent longings for the full enjoyment. Isaiah, with prophetic eye, foresaw the *ransomed of the Lord returning and coming to Zion with songs and everlasting joy*. Another prophet beheld them awaking from the sleep of death, and arising to *everlasting life, shining as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever*.

But for whom are these glad tidings intended? This is another inquiry naturally suggested in our text, and now demanding our consideration. *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto ALL people.* As the truth is animating in itself, it is undeniably established both by predictions and promises, that the gospel of the Son of God shall yet be promulged throughout the whole world, and that his religion shall become the religion of all nations. Daniel foresaw the kingdom of Messiah under the emblem of *a stone cut out without hands, smiting the image of iron and clay, grinding to powder every obstacle which resists its progress, filling the whole earth, and standing for ever*: And as the natural sun, which rises in the east, shines even unto the west irradiating and cheering in his course the inhabitants of the whole earth, so shall it be with the Sun of righteousness his illustrious Prototype: He has already risen upon our world, and must roll on in his word, as his orbit, until he has enlightened and gladden men of every kindred, and clime, and colour under heaven. *All kings shall fall down before Messiah our Prince, and all nations shall serve him.* We might as readily suppose that day and night should cease to revolve, or that *summer and winter, seed time and harvest* should cease to return in their season, as to suppose that these assurances of the universal extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom should fail of their accomplishment.—We have not only the word and promise, but, for the greater confirmation of our faith, we have the oath, the unalterable oath of Jehovah in covenant, that he *will beat down every foe before the face of Messiah his Son, and plague them that hate him*; that he *will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers*; that *his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before him*; that



*it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in the heavens.* When we lift up, and cast our eyes over this globe which we inhabit, it appears an immeasurable waste, a moral *chaos, without form* or beauty to delight the spiritual eye. The Jews in general remain obstinate in their rejection of Jesus as the Saviour of the world: Some nations are still sunk in papal superstition: Others are yet seduced by the impostures of the false prophet, and others are devoted to the absurdities of idol worship. Millions, yea, hundreds of millions of rational beings, who were created originally after the image of God, and destined for the most elevated pleasures in his presence, are reduced in point of intelligence nearly to a level with the beasts of the field, and in moral turpitude are degraded far below them. When we survey the world as it really is, covered with moral and intellectual darkness, and then contemplate what the promise assures us, that *it shall become enlightened with the knowledge of the Lord, filled with his glory, that the people shall be all righteous, and the planting of Jehovah that he may be glorified,* we are tempted to ask, *how can these things be?* We are ready to consider the design of evangelizing the nations as arduous, yea, altogether impracticable; but faith, resting on the truth, and promise, and power of the Lord God Almighty, exclaims, *with him nothing is impossible. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*—He who could create a world out of nothing can easily restore it from all the disorders and deformity which sin has introduced: He who beheld the earth lying *without form*, and instantaneously imparted beauty and order; who seeing it *void* could replenish it with innumerable ranks of being, and productions for their support, or beheld it covered with darkness, and caused various *lights to arise,*

and illumine it, can with equal ease impart light, and beauty, and glory to the moral *chaos*. And while the *zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform* this mighty change, it will be performed by means ; by the exertions of men, and the ordinances of his grace with the co-operating influences of the Holy Ghost. An angel unembodied made known these tidings to the shepherds, and by embodied angels, *the messengers of the church, and the glory of Jesus*, these same tidings shall in due time be promulged to ALL people. The gospel was never yet propagated by miracle, or when miracles have been wrought they have been wrought in co-operation with instituted means. The word read with attention, or preached in purity has been the powerful, I may add, the exclusive engine in all ages of extending the kingdom of God. When the gospel was to be diffused among the nations after the Saviour's ascension, apostles, the intended instruments of its propagation, were all filled *with the Holy Ghost*, and endowed with the gift of tongues, *that they might speak to every man in his own language the wonderful works of God.*—By the translation of the scriptures into the languages of the nations, and the preaching of men full of zeal and of power, the true light again shone forth and irradiated the general darkness at the reformation from popery ; and in like manner by exhibiting the living oracles in the languages of every kindred of men, and by sending forth the heralds of the cross into all parts of the world the glory of the latter day shall hereafter be consummated. *They shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the end come.* John, anticipating the enlargement of the spiritual kingdom, foresaw *an angel flying in the midst of heaven, that*

is, the ministers of religion, the ambassadors of Jesus, resembling angels in their personal purity, in the ardour of their zeal and the rapidity of their progress, *having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and people and tongue.* Such are the means by which the cause of Jesus has been advanced and shall yet be promoted, and he who prays, *thy kingdom come*, without occupying every talent for promoting the prosperity of that kingdom, is guilty of solemn mockery to a holy God: He is rebuked by that challenge of eternal truth, *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach unless they are sent forth* and supported? Or how shall the heathen search the scriptures unless they are translated into their language and circulated among them?

The consideration that the gospel is attended with little success where it is already enjoyed, or that missionaries experience so much opposition from the heathen among whom they labour, ought not to discourage our exertions. The purposes of God are usually accomplished by slow degrees and many disappointments occur for the greater trial of the fidelity and patience of his children.—How obscure, for instance, was that first promise of Messiah, the great Restorer of mankind, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, and nearly two thousand years revolved without either his actual appearance, or almost any other intimation of his coming. The church was left with this promise as the foundation of her hope from the period of its delivery in paradise until the calling of Abraham: Then, for the establishment of the faith of the real followers of God, this intimation of the Redeemer was renewed with additional evidence, *in thee and in thy seed, which is Christ*,

*shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* On this declaration with little other knowledge of his person, or offices, the faithful were again left nearly a thousand years until Isaiah and other prophets disclosed more fully the time, and circumstances, and design of his coming : And even after the intimation given by the angel of the nativity of the Son of God, what clouds darkened the horizon of the church, and obscured the hopes of the righteous. Instead of appearing in magnificent style, and occupying a palace for his residence, as might be expected in him who was to succeed to the throne of David, the Saviour of the world was wrapped in *swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.* Instead of participating in all the enjoyments of earth, as might be looked for in him who was the *Holy one of God* and favourite of heaven, he was pre-eminently *a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay his head.* Instead of leaving the world in triumph, as the conqueror of sin, and satan, and death, and hell, the Saviour is betrayed into the hands of his enemies and expires upon a cross.—Such were the trials of faith, which the disciples of Jesus in preceding generations have experienced, and shall we be disheartened if our exertions are not crowned with immediate and luminous success ? It is to be expected that our faith will be tried alternately by delays on the part of our Heavenly Father, and by the derangement of our most favourite plans. *Yet, against hope* let us believe in hope, and persevere in our exertions for spreading *the savour* of the Redeemer's name.—While the *sure word of prophesy* asserts *that men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed,* every movement in the political, and literary, and religious world is calculated to inspire a hope that this prophesy is shortly to be fulfilled. When the sovereign Ruler of the universe intends

the execution of any important purpose he usually prepares the way in the outward administration of his providence, and thus when the time decreed in his own mind for its accomplishment arrives, his purpose is effected with ease. Before the church was enlarged by the accession of the nations in the apostolic age, learning eminently flourished in Greece, and the language of that people became in a great measure the court language of the countries around Judea; this was the language in which the New-Testament was originally written, and into which the Old Testament scriptures were early translated, and thus the oracles of divine truth came immediately into the possession of the learned. Also our Saviour was born in the Augustine age, which was distinguished as a period of general peace; a period also of great literary research, and the world was prepared for investigating the new religion. Again, previous to the dawn of the memorable reformation what preparations were made in the providence of God for that interesting event?—The art of printing was invented, and books, through the increase of their number, and the reduction of their price, became accessible to people of every class. Through the improvements of navigation, and the daring enterprize of Columbus this continent was discovered, and an asylum provided for the faithful from the persecutions of the old world. May we not therefore confidently hope that important events are shortly to occur in favour of the christian church? After the great God in a manner unusually awful had been *shaking the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land*, a general calm has suddenly succeeded: The arts and the sciences are attaining a degree of perfection unparalleled in former ages: Owing to recent improvements in printing, the scriptures are pub-

lished with facility in different languages ; also by late improvements in teaching, the mass of mankind may with little expense be instructed in the common elements of learning and rendered capable of reading and examining for themselves ; as wars have generally ceased throughout the world, the ocean, “the high way of nations,” now lies unobstructed, and the scriptures of truth and the heralds of the cross may be wafted with little inconvenience to the shores of every country. And all the arts and sciences, thus improved, are now consecrated to the service of Jesus in the spread of his gospel. *Kings have become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church* by employing their wealth, and influence, and example for the promotion of her interests. Brethren, we are really lost in astonishment while we survey the events which have passed in succession under our own eyes. *What hath Jehovah wrought ?* Although little comparatively has yet been done towards the stupendous design of *teaching all nations* and *baptising* them into the christian faith, yet the narrative of that *little* would appear fabulous had we not actually witnessed it. Had it been announced to us twenty years since, that on this day societies should exist for evangelizing the heathen ; societies comprehending not merely one denomination, but the combined wisdom and wealth of all denominations ; societies for giving the means of salvation not merely to a few heathen residing in our own borders, but to nations the most rude and remote upon our globe ; that their messengers should this moment be *sounding the word of life* on the burning sands of Africa, on the immense plains of Asia, and on various Islands which chequer the southern ocean, and that some precious youth from our own country, *having left father and mother, houses and lands*, were

swelling the ranks of this spiritual soldiery ; had a prophecy to that effect been delivered to us twenty years since, and an angel from heaven been the messenger, we could scarcely have believed it. Had it been declared twelve years since that on this day bible-societies should be organized in every christian country, societies with princes and potentates, lords temporal and spiritual at their head ; that the treasures of persons in all conditions of life, and all communions of the church should be rolling in one stream for their support ; that through their instrumentality the scriptures should already be read in almost every language, and circulated through almost every region, had a prediction to that effect been delivered, and an angel from heaven proclaimed it we could scarcely have credited his message : and yet with each revolving year we see the magnificent design of sending the *gospel to every creature* rolling on with an accelerating motion. *The cloud which at first appeared small as a man's hand is spreading over the whole heavens*, and refreshing with its showers some of all colours and all climes. And which of you, most beloved hearers, would not cheerfully co-operate in carrying on a work thus grand and benevolent ? Who that feels the generous impulse of love to fellow-mortals would not aim at diffusing that gospel which is the great means of elevating their character, and promoting their felicity in both worlds ? Did the angel come down from heaven to earth for the communication of these *good tidings* to man ; to man to whose nature he sustained no intimate relation ; in whose redemption he had no immediate concern, and shall we feel no solicitude for promoting this knowledge among those who belong to the same family with ourselves ; who are by nature our kinsmen, our brethren, bone of our bone, and flesh of

*our flesh* ? He proclaimed this event the very day on which it took place ; he proclaimed it as interesting to *all* people, and shall we permit age to roll on after age without an effort to make it universally known ? Besides, that same gospel which announces *peace on earth and good will towards men*, is the instrument of bringing *glory in the highest to God*. By every exertion, therefore, which you make with your prayers, your tears, or the devotion of your wealth for spreading the knowledge of Jesus, you increase that revenue of glory which arises from earth to its Creator and Sovereign. What an astonishing display of condescension is it in the great God that he should even permit man to be instrumental in advancing his honour ; man who as a creature is altogether dependent and insignificant, and as a sinner is infinitely undeserving, and hell-deserving ? We are sometimes almost tempted to envy the station of Gabriel when he appeared on the plains of Bethlehem announcing to our world that a *Saviour was born*, and yet this honour may be participated in some degree by all who hear me. Are there not on this globe immortal beings without number as ignorant of the Saviour as the shepherds were before they received the *tidings* from the heavenly herald ? They have not to this hour seen a *ray of his glory*, nor heard an intimation of *his fame* : And he who subserves the diffusion of this knowledge by the word, either preached or printed, occupies the very office of the angel, and secures a participation in his reward. Is any of you utterly excluded from instrumentality in this work ? Which of you cannot throw into the treasury of our God a little silver or gold for translating the scriptures into another language, or supporting a missionary in some pagan land ? Which of you does not possess some influence over a brother,



or sister, or parent, or neighbour, which, if prudently exerted, might excite them to co-operate in this *labour of love* ? Which of you might not press before the mercy-seat that ancient supplication, *thy way be known upon the earth, and thy saving health among all nations ; let the people praise thee, O Lord, let all the people praise thee ;* and by thus *wrestling with the Redeeming Angel* you might prevail in behalf of a perishing world ?

While our duty is obvious, while our obligation is irresistible, while obedience is practicable, there is much to inspire with a full confidence of success. Periods of prosperity and glory are promised to Zion which have not yet been realized. *The fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in ; all Israel shall be saved : The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven fold as the light of seven days : All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him : The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;* every hostile feeling of man towards man shall be softened by the peaceful influence of the cross, and the *sword* and the *spear*, formerly employed as engines of human destruction, shall be changed into the *plough share and pruning hook*, and be rendered subservient to his support : *The idols of the heathen*, to which a blinded devotion is now offered, shall fall prostrate before the ark of the covenant, the everlasting gospel, in its triumphant march over the world : *The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth*, every cloud of superstition shall be dissipated by the radiance of evangelic truth, *and from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the name of Jesus shall be great among the Gentiles.*

True it is, little comparatively has yet been

effected for ushering in these days of bliss and glory, because little has been either attempted or expected. Inconsiderable efforts will always be accompanied with inconsiderable success.—The dimensions of effects in the moral, as in the natural world, are usually in proportion to the dimensions of the causes employed to produce them. The waters in the stream cannot reasonably be expected to rise higher than in the fountain from which they flow. All the time, and attention, and wealth which have been devoted to the purpose of converting the nations are really *nothing*: They are *nothing*, I mean, to what they *ought* to have been, to what they *might* have been, and, I may add, to what they *must* be before this most benignant and magnificent design is accomplished. There is not a duty enjoined in christianity more generally misunderstood, or, if understood, more deplorably neglected than that of *abounding* disinterestedly *in the work of the Lord*; and *spending freely* of our earthly substance for the advancement of his glory. I appeal to almost universal observation, do not the professors of religion conduct as if “their chief end” was to accumulate wealth; to aggrandize their families, and lay up independent fortunes for their offspring or connexions after them? Ask them for a little pecuniary aid in the execution of any benevolent scheme, and they appear as reluctant in giving, and as sparing in the measure of their gift as if they were under no obligation to that Jesus who died to redeem them, or had no interest in the advancement of his fame. They congratulate themselves not according to the portion of service which they render to their God or their generation, but according to their acquisition of the wealth, or their elevation to the honours of the world. Other professors, again, unwilling to ex-

ercise that self-denial which the genius of the gospel requires, or the example of our Master enforces, have nothing to spare : By conforming to a fashionable world, and indulging themselves in all the elegancies and luxuries of life they live to the utmost extent of their income, and reply to him who makes an appeal to their charity "that they must be just before they are generous." *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,* the Master for our sakes became poor in the extreme, and yet we the servants must roll in the abundance of worldly wealth. *He had not where to lay his head,* and yet our lives must be occupied in adding *house to house,* and inheritance to inheritance : Jesus the Lord stooped to endure hunger, and thirst, and cold, and nakedness, and yet we his professed disciples must be *clothed in purple and fine linen,* must *lie upon beds of ivory,* stretch ourselves upon *couches,* eat the lambs out of the flocks, drink wine in *bowls,* and fare sumptuously every day. In God's name I call upon you to read the history of the Saviour who *went about doing good* ; the history of apostles who *left all and followed him* ; the history of martyrs who *were in jeopardy every hour,* and *loved not their lives unto the death* ; the history of confessors who *wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, in dens and caves of the earth* for the sake of Jesus and his gospel ; read the history of *this cloud of witnesses,* and as you profess to have imbibed their spirit arise to an imitation of their lofty example. Verily, brethren, *it is high time to awake out of sleep.* I am free to declare that were I now summoned to give *account of my stewardship* I could not, as a man, as a member of the christian church, as a minister of the New-Testament, answer for my own indifference and sloth. Should the Saviour, who is to appear as my judge, point from the throne to the bosom of his

Father which he had voluntarily left, or to the manger where he had patiently lain, or to the cross where he had painfully hung as a *propitiation for my sins*, and then ask whether I had loved with an ardour, or prayed, for the prosperity of his kingdom, with a fervour, or served with a disinterestedness, or exercised self-denial with a severity, or communicated with a liberality becoming one redeemed by such a Saviour at such an expense, I must stand speechless through a consciousness of infinite failures. Should the heathen, having *perished without vision* and doomed to the left hand of the judge, charge us as accessory to their destruction, should they point to the doleful regions of despair and say, "these we might have escaped," or to the mansions of glory and say, "these we might have attained through a nobler zeal on the part of christians," could you or I plead guiltless to the charge? Have we wrestled with the *God of all grace* for their eternal welfare as we ought? Have we *provoked one another to the good work of sending* them the means of salvation as we ought? Have we denied ourselves some temporal enjoyments to give them the consolations of religion, or have we spared our *corruptible silver or gold* to extend to them the knowledge of *durable riches and righteousness*? Ah, my fellow christians, like the *Levite in the parable* unfeeling and unfaithful, unfeeling towards the miseries of our brethren, and unfaithful to our Master, we *have passed by on the other side* and left them to languish in their diseases.

I ask you on this interesting occasion must that cry of poor, perishing pagans, *come over and help us*, always reach our ears unregarded, or regarded with an apathy which only aggravates our shame and insults their wretchedness? Although they are *heathen*, are they not *men*? Yea, are they not

our fellow men ? Besides, *who hath made us to differ* from them in elevation of present privileges or future prospects ? Why did the gospel of salvation pour its radiance on the eastern, rather than on the western shores of this continent ? Why have the *feet of him that publisheth peace trodden the mountains* along the Atlantic, and not along the Pacific ocean ? Are not the savage inhabitants *there* and the civilized inhabitants *here* the offspring of the same Father, equally exalted in their origin, equally enlarged in their capacities, equally susceptible of improvement under the means of instruction in this world, and of happiness and glory in the world to come ? Why then this almost infinite distinction ? Why does one child of the same family bask under the full blaze of the sun, irradiating and cheering, while the other is covered *with a darkness which may be felt* ? This discrimination arises exclusively from searchless, adorable sovereignty, and distinguishing love. From them the absolute Disposer has withheld the offers of life without the least impeachment of his justice ; to us he has extended them in the riches of his exceeding, adundant, ever to be adored mercy. And is there no tribute of gratitude due to a beneficent God for this profusion of his blessing ? Are there no sympathies to be cherished for the heathen who are still sunk in the depths of degradation and misery ? Whatever schemes for their relief your hearts are meditating let your hands execute without a moment's delay. The authority of our Lord, the forlorn condition of the heathen, some of whom even while I speak to you, are perhapssinking irrecoverably into the prison of despair, the uncertainty of our own lives, the shortness of our season for working, all forbid procrastination ; they all unite in demanding the most prompt, liberal, and persevering exertions. I ad-

jure you, *men, fathers and brethren*, I adjure you *by the mercies of God*, by the agonies and blood of an expiring Saviour ; by the imperiousness of his command, *teach all nations*, which, although delivered first to apostles, is addressed to your consciences and mine ; by the example of zeal which he exhibited in his own life ; by the self denial which he exercised ; by the joys which his religion imparts in the present world, and the glories which it secures in the future ; by all these considerations I adjure you to arise and act with a magnanimity corresponding to the importance of the work for which we are associated. Excuse a younger and inferior brother for the importunity, and apparent impertinence with which he ventures to address you. The honour of Jesus in the triumphs of his cross, and the salvation of fellow immortals, their salvation through that eternity which knows no end, these are my only apology. *If my mouth is open, and my heart enlarged* ; if, like the apostle, I am seemingly even *beside myself*, it is *the love of a Saviour which constrains*, and carries me irresistibly along ; it is the contemplation of the misery of perishing millions which melts my compassions. Besides I know that I am not alone the “prisoner” of these transports. The hosts of heaven are now waiting with solicitude to see the result of our present meeting : They are looking down from their thrones, or rather, they have come down from their thrones to notice with what emotions we convene, and converse, and resolve, and act ; to see whether we separate and go home, some to their trades, others *to their farms*, others to *their merchandize*, and others to the duties of their professional calling, *every one seeking his gain from his quarter*, or whether while we deliberate the *fire burns*, even zeal for our God, and the eternal welfare of men. And shall that Prince

of angels who announced to our world the appearance of a Saviour ; shall that multitude of the *heavenly army* which thronged the plains of Bethlehem, singing *glory to God in the highest*, shall these ascend from this house to their native skies amazed, and if it be possible, mortified at our lethargy ; at the coldness of our deliberations, and the contractedness of our plans, and the feebleness of our operations ? Forbid it, thou Lord of angels, but cause thy Spirit *as a mighty rushing wind* to breathe on this assembly ; then we will *devise liberal things for the enlargement of thy kingdom*.

Let us in this county aim at offering an example worthy of their imitation in other counties.— Let the ministers of religion, and the friends of Zion among the laity convene occasionally and converse ; with their counsels let them mingle their prayers to Him at whose control are the gifts of the learned and the treasures of the affluent : In addition to our design of giving the scriptures to the destitute among ourselves, let us inquire for pious, promising youth ; youth upon whose hearts the Spirit of light and holiness *has wrought mightily* ; who are tender with love to the souls of men, warm with zeal for their Master's honour, and are willing to *forsake all and follow him in the regeneration* : Let us raise collections for affording them an education, literary and theological, answerable to the station which they are intended to occupy. Let all this be done without the least unnecessary delay. *Now is the accepted time*.— Should we be removed from the stage without an honourable attempt to give the gospel to the destitute, the next generation may follow our example of sloth, and the heathen remain from age to age *without God, and without Jesus, and without hope*. I cannot cease to argue and expostulate with you on this subject until I see the holy flame

kindled and communicated from bosom to bosom: Until I see you of *one accord as were the apostles* when they were all baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Ascend the chariot of the everlasting gospel, thou lovely, loving Prince of peace, and *ride forth conquering and to conquer*: Let them that are in the wilderness bow before the energies of thy victorious grace: Yea, let all kings fall down before thee in voluntary homage, and let all the nations serve thee as the willing subjects of thy reign: of the increase of thy government and peace may there be no limits, but the boundaries of the inhabited earth, and no end but the consummation of time. May this earth which has long been the theatre of crime, and confusion, and misery, be henceforth consecrated by the influence of that *Kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

Salvation to him which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. AMEN.



THE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY BIBLE SOCIETY  
FOR 1815.

Read before the Society, at their Annual Meeting, in Granville, January 31st, 1816, and published by order of the Society.

*Your Directors Respectfully Report,*

That, during the three years which have intervened since the society was formed, they have procured for distribution *eleven hundred* copies of the Bible, and *seven hundred and twenty-five* copies of the New-Testament. These they have circulated, where application has been made, among the destitute in this county: They have also given a very considerable number to missionaries appointed to itinerate in the county of Warren, particularly in the neighborhood of Lakes George and Scroon, where many of the inhabitants are destitute of the sacred scriptures, and unable to procure copies for themselves: Your committee has also embraced opportunities of sending by faithful persons a supply of Bibles to the counties of Essex and Clinton in the northern parts of this state: During the last summer favourable opportunities were frequently enjoyed of sending the scriptures to the state of Ohio by emigrants to that country on whose fidelity they could rely for their distribution. They also ordered one hundred copies of the New-Testament for those who suffered during the war in the county of Niagara.

The Bible Society in the city of New-York un-

dertook to publish an edition of the scriptures in the French language for circulation among the inhabitants of New-Orleans, and Louisiana, and also for the French in Canada, and issued a circular soliciting the co-operation of the other Bible Societies to aid them in the work. Impressed with the importance of this undertaking your committee forwarded to the treasurer of the New-York Society \$ 100 towards that purpose. The contemplated edition in French, consisting of six thousand, is now completed ; and two hundred and seventy copies have been sent on to us for distribution among the French in Canada.

The Board of Directors feel constrained to state, for the encouragement of the Society, that the bibles have in general been very thankfully received, and we believe that your labour of love in bestowing them has not been in vain in the Lord. In giving copies of the scriptures we frequently select particular passages in the Old and New-Testaments for youth to learn, as a condition upon which they are received, and, upon examination afterwards, have found that such parts were carefully committed to memory. Although our efforts appear inconsiderable, when compared with the exertions of other similar institutions in our own country, and particularly when compared with the "British and Foreign Bible Society," which stands the glory of our age, and the admiration of the christian world, yet we have ample encouragement to persevere. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, and the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." From the repeated applications for bibles which are made by the indigent among ourselves, and the destitute in places more remote, the great God is obviously calling upon us to abound more and more in this labour of love, and by the grate-

ful manner in which the scriptures are received, we must hope that the offering has come up as a memorial before him.

Christian brethren, in lifting up our eyes, and surveying the nations in general, while we see much to astonish, we also see much to admonish and animate to the utmost disinterestedness in well doing. Although, through the ambition of worldly men, and the collision of worldly interests, the potsherds of the earth are dashed against each other, yet that Jesus who has power over all flesh is obviously making preparation for gathering in his elect out "of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Although the signs of the times are in some respects awful, they are also in many respects peculiarly encouraging and cheering. The missionary spirit and the spirit for translating and diffusing the word of life has not been a momentary impulse, but a zeal founded on a conviction of duty, and fanned by a sacred ardour for the glory of Jesus in the extension of his kingdom; it appears therefore to spread more generally, and to burn with a flame more ardent and inextinguishable. Who, in former ages, hath heard such things? Who hath seen such things? Christians of all countries and all communions are combining their wisdom and wealth for diffusing abroad a knowledge of the common salvation. That sacred artillery, which one party of the followers of Jesus had too long marshaled against another party, is now occupied by the spiritual soldiery in extending the boundaries of his kingdom among nations which had neither seen his glory, nor heard his fame.

It is about eleven years since the first bible society on this side the Atlantic was formed in the city of Philadelphia, and there are now in the U. States one hundred and two; two in New-Hamp-

shire; seven in Massachusetts; two in Rhode-Island; ten in Vermont; two in Connecticut; twenty-five in New-York; five in New-Jersey; eleven in Pennsylvania; two in Delaware; four in Maryland; one in the district of Columbia; eleven in Virginia; one in North Carolina; two in South Carolina; one in Georgia; six in Ohio—one in Kentucky; one in Tennessee; one in Mississippi Territory; four in Indiana Territory; one in Illinois Territory; and one in Louisiana. Associations founded on similar principles, and for similar purposes, are established in almost every country in Europe, and particularly in Russia the most honourable exertions for translating and distributing the living oracles are made.—The Bible Society of St. Petersburg, aided by different auxiliaries throughout the nation, is publishing an edition of the scriptures, consisting of ninety two thousand copies, in the various languages and dialects which are read in that vast empire. They have also undertaken to publish in the Persian language a translation of the New-Testament by the late Rev. Henry Martyn: And as this work has received the approbation of the Persian monarch, there is the prospect that it will obtain an extensive circulation through that nation.

Through the iustrumentality of the Rev. Leander Van Ess, the scriptures are generally received by the Catholics of Germany, and, being introduced as a common school book, are read by the children throughout that populous country.—The following extract from a letter, addressed by that indefatigable servant of our Lord Jesus, to the London Bible Society, cannot fail to interest and gratify our readers. “How can I sufficiently thank you, not in my own name only, but in the name of thousands, for your repeated dona-

tions. The first donation of 300 pounds sterling I applied to the printing and distributing of seven hundred copies of the New-Testament, on large type and 9182 copies on a small type, among the Catholics, and 140 copies among the protestants. A widow, who could not read, learned in her old age for the purpose of reading the word of life. After having perused the whole New-Testament, she exclaimed on a day of public assembly, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." In some villages meetings are held on the Sabbath, and other festivals, during which the New-Testament is used with much edification. Wherever it is introduced into schools a cheering dawn of the approaching day in the kingdom of God may be perceived."

The following fact also must be highly gratifying to all who feel interested in the general diffusion of the living oracles. Haliy Beigh, a native of Poland, was sold when young by the Tartars to the Greeks, and educated in their religion.—He translated the whole scriptures into the Turkish language, about the year 1666, and this translation is now in the press at the expense of the British Bible Society. It is also said that this work is often demanded by the Turks, and therefore when printed will probably have an extensive circulation among the long deluded followers of Mahomed.

Mr. Morrison, a missionary residing in the vicinity of Canton, through his indefatigable labours, has translated the New-Testament into the Chinese language; "a language which is read by hundreds of millions, perhaps by *more than one third of the human race*." This same zealous missionary is now occupied in circulating the sacred volume through the immense population of the Chinese empire.

Upon the frozen regions of Norway also "the Sun of righteousness appears to rise with healing under his wings." An ardent desire is expressed by many in that country for attaining the word of salvation. A farmer, eager to possess the living oracles for himself, is said to have offered a cow in the next market town for a copy of the scriptures.

There is also some reason to hope that notwithstanding the long and obstinate rejection of the Messiah on the part of the Jews the gospel is shortly to be received by them. In 1808 a society for promoting christianity among them was instituted in the city of London, and a chapel has been erected where lectures are regularly delivered to them. About 140 Jewish children are receiving a christian education in the schools of the society, and 51 adults have embraced the christian religion. Nearly the whole of the New-Testament has been translated into the Hebrew, and various appropriate tracts have been printed in the Hebrew, English, and German languages, and circulated through England, on the continent of Europe, in the Mediterranean, and in the East Indies.

Thus in whatever direction we cast our eyes *the harvest is great, and the fields* in many parts of the world are becoming *white*. The Bramin is in some instances leaving his shasters and the Mahomedan his coran, and receiving with rapture that word of truth "which makes wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

But on the prospect which is exhibited of enlargement to the Redeemer's Kingdom we cannot address you in language more appropriate or impressive than by presenting the following extract from a late report of the London Missionary Society. "The great and glorious work in which all our hearts are engaged, is proceeding in an encouraging manner. In the Islands of the south sea the darkness we believe is past, and the true light begins to shine. In China and the neighbouring countries many are now reading in the tongue wherein they were born that holy book which is able to make wise unto salvation. In India multitudes are listening to the voice from heaven and begin to dismiss their useless idols: And in South Africa a great number of the Hottentots and other natives have not only heard the joyful sound, but have found it to be the power of God to their salvation: A great revival has been experienced in four different places and about fifty in each place appear to have been converted to God. Savages, once ignorant and ferocious as the brutes around them, have been civilized, and instead of being wandering plunderers and cruel murderers they now live peaceably, comfortably and usefully in christian societies. Schools for the religious instruction of the heathen are in many places established with the most pleasing prospect of success. What shall we say to these things? Shall we not humbly and thankfully hope that the Lord of hosts is with us and the God of Jacob our refuge?"

How elevating to the heart, and cheering to the eye of the spiritual beholder is the prospect which is now opening on every side! The wilderness and the solitary places are made glad" through the sound of the gospel of reconciliation, and through the influence of the river of water of life the desert which had long remained barren is "becoming fruitful as a garden of the Lord."

Come, Lord Jesus, in the wider extension of thy kingdom, and the brighter displays of thy glory :—AMEN, even so, come quickly.

ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, *Chairman*.

SALEM, January 29, 1815.