

A

SERMON.

PREACHED 6 NOVEMBER, 1817.

IN CHURCH-PLACE CHURCH, BOSTON,

BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL

AMONG

THE INDIANS AND OTHERS

IN

NORTH AMERICA.

SERMON

BY JOHN FOSTER, D. D.

MINISTER OF BRIGHTON.

SERMON

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED BY BILLIARD AND METCALF.

1817.

AT a meeting of the *Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America*, 6 November, 1817—

Voted, That the SECRETARY, Rev. Dr. PORTER, and ELISHA TICKNOR, Esq. be a committee, to present the thanks of the Society to Rev. Dr. FOSTER for his Sermon, delivered before them this day, and to request a copy for the press.

A. HOLMES, *Secretary*.

SERMON.



JOHN i. 9.

That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

THE learned Doddridge, with some other expositors, before and since his time, gives the following construction to the passage now recited: “The true light was that, which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.” He, nevertheless, acknowledges “that our version may be consistent with the truth, and that it most exactly agrees with the order of the words in the original.”

It matters little to my present purpose, nor, as far as I can see, to any purpose, compatible with the spirit of the declaration, which reading is adopted. Both refer exclusively to Christ, and both virtually assert that the illumination of his doctrine extends, in a greater or less degree, to the whole human race.

Something analogous to this assertion, and tending directly to illustrate and confirm it, obviously resulted from the enactment and observance of the Mo-saick law;—that “shadow of good things to come,” of which “the body was Christ.”* Many rites of

* Coloss. ii. 17.

worship and maxims of life, which prevailed among the heathen, of most distant climes, bear such undeniable affinity to the Jewish theology, as to preclude every doubt of their derivation from that source. Meanwhile, the prophecies of the old testament, respecting the future advent of a Saviour, obtained so extensive a circulation and credit, that previously to his birth, a strong and general expectation of a mighty Deliverer had pervaded all the East, and prepared the way for his ministry, not only among “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,”* but throughout the inhabited earth. We cannot, therefore, be charged with absurdity, if we suppose the like to have happened, and to a still greater extent, under the gospel dispensation. Under the gospel dispensation, beside the more free and unrestrained commerce, association, and intermarriage of the subjects belonging to different kingdoms and states, no inconsiderable pains have been taken, in every age, to disseminate the principles of our holy faith. To this intent many have “run to and fro, and knowledge has increased.”† The standard of the cross has been actually planted, in every quarter of the globe; and it is more than possible that no nation, perhaps, that no adult individual now exists, without being directly or indirectly indebted to the bible for some views of God and duty, which are beyond the ken of unassisted reason. The Mahometans have manifestly borrowed the best precepts in their code from this sacred

* Matt. x. 6.

† Dan. xii. 4.

book : and to prove that the pagan world, however unconscious of the fact, may have received their most correct impressions of piety and virtue from the same repository of divine wisdom, we need only advert to the progress and influence of the christian revelation.

Pursuant to the predictions of “holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* the law went forth out of Zion,”† and “repentance and remission of sins were preached in the name of Christ, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”‡ Within thirty years from the ascension of our Lord, his religion “had spread itself throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, almost all the numerous districts of the lesser Asia, through Greece, and the islands of the Ægean sea, the sea-coast of Africa, and had extended itself to Rome, and into Italy. During all this time, Jerusalem continued the centre of the mission;”§ but after this time, the apostles and their successors enlarged the sphere of action, and more extensively proclaimed the “glad tidings of great joy,”¶ till the whole Roman empire became professedly christian, under the reign of Constantine the Great.

Nor has “the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”|| yet ceased to shine, nor will it cease to “shine more and more unto the perfect day :”** that day, when “the earth shall be full of

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

† Mic. iv. 2.

‡ Luke xxiv. 47.

§ See Paley’s Evidences, p. 295, 296. Boston edit. 1795.

¶ Luke ii. 10.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 6.

** Prov. iv. 18.

the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* At some times, and in some places, it has, indeed, been much obscured. Those ancient churches of the eastern hemisphere, whose "golden candlesticks,"† and brilliant "stars" once shed a benignant lustre all around them, have long been enveloped in clouds of ignorance and error. But notwithstanding this comparative darkness, it hardly admits a question, whether they have not continued to entertain conceptions of the nature, circumstances, and obligations of their existence, as intelligent, accountable, immortal creatures, and to impart a degree of information to others, upon these momentous subjects, of which both had been totally destitute, but for their acquaintance, imperfect as it has become, with Him, who has "the words of eternal life."‡

Similar observations are pertinent to the numberless converts made by subsequent missions, not to those remote regions only, but to the aborigines of our country, and to every other class and description of human beings. By these means, instruction is given, which, not confined to the immediate recipients, is inevitably communicated, with more or less precision, to all with whom they are conversant and connected; and by them again to others, till, in the literal acceptation of the term, "every man" is, in a measure, enlightened: till many peculiar principles of our holy religion, transferred, like the immemorial aphorisms and proverbs of common life, from one indi-

* Is. xi. 9.

† Rev. ii. 1.

‡ John vi. 68.

vidual and climate to another, are universally known, and rendered familiar even to those, who have no apprehension from whom or whence they proceeded. Thus the condition of the whole species is ameliorated: a vast variety of crimes and miseries is prevented; and an immense aggregate of enjoyment is produced. Ignorant, and profligate, and wretched, as the heathen of our day confessedly are, I do not think it a visionary conjecture,—I believe it a position capable of satisfactory proof, that, were it not for the gospel of Christ, they would have been still more ignorant, more vicious, and more wretched.

“Christianity,” says a justly celebrated writer,* “in every country, in which it is professed”—and, he might have added, in the world, to which it is announced,—“hath obtained a sensible, though not a complete influence upon the publick judgment of morals. In this way it is possible that many may be kept in order by christianity, who are not themselves christians. They may be guided by the rectitude which it communicates to publick opinion. Their consciences may suggest their duty truly, and they may ascribe these suggestions to a moral sense, or to the native capacity of the human intellect, when, in fact, they are nothing more than the publick opinion, reflected from their own minds: an opinion, in a considerable degree, modified by christianity.”

If the remarks contained in this extract be well founded, it is highly probable, to say the least, that

* Paley, *ut supra*, p. 371.

many, if not all, of the opinions and rules of conduct, so often advanced and quoted, as the spontaneous product of reason, and so triumphantly pronounced equal to any thing, which the sacred oracles exhibit, may have derived their only excellence from that inspired volume, with which they are insidiously put in competition. Not to insist on the repeated messages from heaven to men, during the lapse of ages between the creation and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, it is conceded, on all hands, that a large proportion of the Jewish scriptures were extant, long before any other people were furnished with written directions, for the government of their faith or practice.

We cannot, therefore, admit that all the boasted wisdom of ancient sages, much less of modern pretenders, has emanated from themselves. As they certainly might, so they undoubtedly did, receive assistance, either by tradition or inspection, from the sacred pages.

Those, who profess and feel a sincere attachment to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, can hardly realize how much they owe to that divine teacher for all their consistent views of the being, perfections, and government of the Most High; of the relation in which they stand to Him; the means of conciliating his favour, the design and result of the discipline under which they are placed. But the infidels of this generation add ingratitude to insensibility. They attribute the sentiments of religion and the correspondent perceptions of duty, with which they are furnished by

the word of God, to the inherent sagacity of their own minds ; and hence dare to infer the inutility and imposture of holy writ.

That this is neither gratuitous assertion, nor uncharitable crimination, but a statement, supported by incontestable facts, will be apparent, on a moment's impartial reflection. Previous to the coming of our blessed Master, idolatry and superstition universally abounded, except in Judea. The learned were perplexed about many points which lie at the foundation of all religion, whilst the illiterate multitudes lost sight of the unalterable distinction between right and wrong, and neither knew nor inquired for what end they were created. But since the publication of the gospel, this darkness is dispelled, and reason now distinctly sees a great number of truths, which were before covered with a vail, impervious to her acutest penetration. Among those, to whom the gospel is accessible, few, if any can be found, however limited their capacities or acquirements, who have not more just, and honourable, and adequate notions of God, and of his intentions and expectations concerning mankind, than the most renowned philosophers of antiquity could boast.

It were vain and futile to impute this palpable superiority to any improvements of latter times. No other cause can be assigned, but the irradiation of the "sun of righteousness," who, like the bright luminary of natural day, "rises on the evil and on the

good,* and beams intellectual light through the moral world. Human learning is well known to have been carried to such perfection in ancient Greece and Rome, that no succeeding age has presumed to dispute with them, the palm of literary glory. Many of their productions are, to this hour, considered models of elegant, sententious, and sublime composition; and, to this hour, are put into the hands of youth, destined to a liberal education, in all the higher seminaries of christendom. Nor is any one permitted to challenge and enjoy the reputation of an accomplished scholar, till he is versed in their literature: and not in their literature only, but in their science; for in science too, they were unquestionable proficient. The solar system, as taught by Newton, is but the amplification and proof of that which Pythagoras had described, more than two thousand years before: and the mathematical books of Euclid, who flourished not far from the same period, are still a standard work. Yet amidst all this mental enterprise, energy, and achievement, in the discussion and investigation of other subjects, how little was discovered of the duty and destination of man! How grossly ignorant of the many important truths, which “the first principles of the oracles of God”† disclose to all who are conversant with them, were the profoundest students of ancient Greece and Rome! Even Cicero, the unrivalled orator of the one, though he wished and laboured to confirm the doctrine, unequivocally confessed his doubts, of

* Matt. v. 45.

† Heb. v. 12.

the soul's immortality :* and Socrates, the most famous moralist of the other, superstitiously conformed to the impious practice of sacrificing to idols. Yes, this martyr, as he has been represented, to the worship of the only living and true God, could not die in peace, till he had charged his friends to fulfil a vow, by which he had engaged a ridiculous victim† to Æsculapius.

Unbelievers of the present age would indignantly spurn the charge of equal weakness. Those of them, who do not renounce all religion, natural as well as revealed, readily admit a future state of rewards and punishments, and clearly discern the folly and wickedness of paying homage to a multiplicity of imaginary divinities. Nor are they unapprized, however defective their practice may be, of the obligations imposed by the domestick, social, and civil relations of human life. Though a heathen emperour,‡ who had devoted much of his time to study and research, once

* Cicero begins his discourse upon this subject with a profession, that he intended to deliver nothing as fixed and certain ; but only as probable, and having some resemblance of truth. [*Tusc. Qu. l. i. n. 15, 16*] Having recounted the different sentiments of the philosophers about it, he concludes thus : *Which of these opinions is true, some God must tell us ; which is most like truth, is a great question.* [*Ibid. n. 20.*] And when he had confirmed, as much as he was able, the doctrine of the soul's immortality, he ingeniously confesses, *Ceteræ veniunt contradicentium,—That his opinion was contradicted, not only by whole troops of the sect of Epicurus ; but also by the most learned of the other sects.*" [*Ibid. n. 63.*—See Whitby's note on 2 Tim. i. 10 ; where it is made to appear that *Socrates, Aristotle, Sophocles, Euripides, Plutarch, Seneca, Caesar, and Pliny,* were among the many, who doubted or denied an existence beyond the grave.

† A dunghill cock !

‡ Alexander Severus.

declared “the author and finisher of our faith,”* worthy of a place among the gods of his country, for having produced that comprehensive precept, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,”† they seem to discover nothing in it, above what, in their estimation, they themselves might have originated.

Whence, then, have they gained this pre-eminent knowledge? and how came they to “understand more than the ancients?”‡ Can they pretend to greater talents, to keener discernment, to sounder judgment, than the distinguished personages, whom I have named as examples, and a host of others, recorded in history? Certainly not: it is, therefore, owing to their intimacy with that very gospel, which they endeavour to depreciate and discredit, that they are able to think and converse more correctly upon these topicks. By confounding the maxims of inspiration with the dictates of nature, they artfully arrogate the honour appropriately due to none but Him, who “spake as never man spake,”§ and whilst they “eat of his bread,” to use the bold and figurative language of the psalmist, they ungratefully “lift up the heel against him.”||

It were easy to enlarge; but the time requires me to conclude with a few reflections on what has been said.

1. We are presented with a distinct and valid argument in defence of the christian faith.

* Heb. xii. 2. † Matt. vii. 12. ‡ Ps. cxix. 100. § John vii. 46. || Ps. xli. 9.

The reasoning of Gamaliel, in the Jewish sanhedrim, was conclusive: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."* Not far from eighteen hundred years have now elapsed since these words were uttered; and, instead of falling into oblivion or contempt, like all coeval systems of theology and ethicks, christianity has not only commanded the attention, assent, and reverence of the wisest and purest minds, in each successive generation; but has invariably dissipated the mists of absurdity and delusion, and sanctified the hearts and lives of men, in proportion as it has been sincerely embraced, and correctly understood. The consequence irresistibly follows, that christianity is of heavenly origin, and that its founder is, indeed, "a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel."†—And what though we meet with some, who venture to deny these animating truths, and to counteract their salutary tendency and influence? Shall we imitate the disingenuous example, and acquiesce or concur in the subversion of an institution, which brings life and immortality clearly to light? an institution, which teaches us to approach the father of our spirits and former of our bodies, not with costly rites, but with filial affections; not with "the blood of bulls and goats,"‡ but in the name of "a great high priest, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from

* Acts. v. 39.

† Luke ii. 32.

‡ Heb. x. 4.

all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?"* Let us rather "show forth the praises of Him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light;"† and whilst we confide, without hesitation or distrust, in the method of salvation which he has prescribed, let us "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us."‡

2. The preceding discourse suggests a process, well adapted "to convince gainsayers;" or, at least, to "stop the mouths of those unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not."§

When the busy advocates for the sufficiency of natural reason obtrude their objections and cavils against revelation; and, at the same time, bring forward opinions, transcending any thing which natural reason has indicated to the best informed of those, who had no other acknowledged guide, we may pertinently demand, why and how it is, that, before Jesus of Nazareth taught in Jewry, none, no not the most studious and successful votaries of erudition, among the heathen, were acquainted with the many chastened principles of morality and religion, which have since become so common, as to be intimately incorporated with their thoughts, and to fall spontaneously from their lips? And till they can give a more satisfactory account of this phenomenon, than we

* Tit. ii. 14.

† 1 Pet. ii. 9.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 15.

§ Tit. i. 9, 10, 11.

have yet had from the tongue or pen of infidelity ; till they can either trace their exemption from the gross impieties of polytheism to the exclusive discipline of some other teacher, or prove themselves endowed with capacities absolutely unparalleled, at the period alluded to, we have a right to believe and affirm, that, had not Jesus of Nazareth taught in Jewry, notwithstanding all their affected superiority to vulgar prejudice and credulity, they might, at this instant, have appeared in the act of paying homage to stocks and stones : of “changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.”* We have a right too, to implicate their motives ; and to suspect, if no more, that they concede somewhat, which bears a resemblance to christian purity, as a law written upon the hearts of all, for no better purpose, than to give plausibility and currency to the idea, that all the peculiarities of the gospel were fabricated by designing men, independent of the appointment and co-operation of God. “Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness.”†

3. We are furnished with the most powerful incentives to a “patient continuance in well doing.”‡

Unless we “walk as children of the light,”§, it is, comparatively speaking, of little avail to us, that

* Rom. i. 23. † 2 Pet. iii. 17. ‡ Rom. ii. 7. § Eph. v. 8.

“the day-spring from on high hath visited”* our world, and spread a cheering radiance among its benighted inhabitants. True we may be, and I confidently maintain that we are, materially benefited in our secular concerns, by this wonderful interposition. It necessarily expels many enormities from domestick and social life; and, by inducing less noxious habits and feelings, mitigates the sufferings, and promotes the happiness of our pilgrimage on earth. Still, however, as “this is not our rest,”† and “we have no continuing city here:”‡ as we are candidates for eternity, and destined to a state of endless retribution, “it had been better for us not to have known the way of righteousness, then after we had known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to us.§ To whom much is given, of them shall much be required.”|| How exalted, then, are the attainments, which may reasonably be expected of us, who, “from our childhood, have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.”¶

Much as these holy scriptures have evidently accomplished, wherever they are published, or even rumoured: much as we have seen of their purifying energy within the limits of our personal observation, they have not yet produced their full effect. They have still many delusions to combat, and many vices to eradicate. A great majority of christians, not ex-

* Luke i. 78. † Mic. ii. 10. ‡ Heb. xiii. 14. § 2 Pet. ii. 21.
 || Luke xii 48. ¶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

cepting those, who have associated for the express purpose of making known the mystery of the gospel of peace, have yet to learn, that “wars and fightings,”* in every form, and for every object, of their ordinary existence; whether between contentious neighbours, or contentious nations; whether to secure aggrandizement by the discomfiture, or to gratify revenge by the destruction of others; whether to establish the tenets of a favourite sect, by fire and sword, or to arrest the progress of free inquiry by calumny and detraction, spring from passions totally repugnant to the spirit of Christ: that to be his disciples whilst we “bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us,”† we must “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”‡

Under these convictions, let us exert our utmost abilities more perfectly to apprehend, and more uniformly to obey the will of God. Thankful that “all things pertaining to life and godliness are given to us through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue:”§ that we have “exceeding great and precious promises, by which we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,”|| let us “be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.”¶

* James iv. 1. † Matt. v. 44. ‡ Eph. v. 11. § 2 Pet. i. 3.

|| 2 Pet. i. 4. ¶ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

4. The importance and obligation of unwearied efforts to enlarge the borders, and strengthen the stakes of Messiah's kingdom, are most impressively urged upon us.

If we seriously consider the nature and operation of christianity; the benign aspect which it bears on the temporal and eternal welfare of our degenerate race; the expanded coruscations even of its scattered and reflected rays; and, especially, the glorious result of its meridian splendour, when "the fullness of the gentiles shall come in;"* when "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;"† and when there shall be nothing to "hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain,"‡ we cannot but acknowledge its unlimited prevalence, and entire ascendancy, "a consummation most devoutly to be wished:" We cannot but welcome the inspired assurances of its final extension "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth:"§ We cannot but exult in the unexampled zeal of our times to transmit the word of life, and the congenial means of religious information and improvement to "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"|| of men.—And shall we remain inactive spectators of the eventful scene? Shall we take no part in the god-like enterprise? Shall we prefer no petitions to "the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest?"¶

* Rom. xi. 25. † Philip. ii. 10, 11. ‡ Is. xi. 9. § Zach. ix. 10.

¶ Rev. v. 9. † Matt. ix. 38.

Blessed be God, we are now convened to do what in us lies, both by our prayers and our alms, to “make glad the wilderness and the solitary place,” and to cause “the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.”* The Society, in whose name I speak, is among the first institutions of the kind, which have existed in our land: and though it makes no pretensions to the more dazzling honour of sending the good news of salvation to another hemisphere, it is not, therefore, useless, nor undeserving of the publick patronage. “To propagate the Gospel among the Indians and others, in North America,” is its object: an object recommended alike by the number and proximity of souls, who are perishing for lack of vision: an object no less accordant to the maxims of sound policy, than to the dictates of christian benevolence.

Those of our brethren, whose straitened circumstances, or dispersed situations, render them unable to provide teachers for themselves and their children, have strong and natural claims upon us for assistance. Considered as probationers for a future state, their everlasting all is at hazard. Considered as fellow citizens, rapidly peopling the widely extended forests of our territory, their personal improvement, and the religious education of their offspring, are visibly requisite to the welfare and safety of the nation: and no exertion or expense, in our power, can be an undue equivalent for the advantages connected with that beneficent achievement.

* Is. xxxv. 1.

So too, the barbarous tribes, who hover upon our borders, or mingle with our settlements, necessarily depend on us for instruction. Like us, they are subjects of moral government, and amenable at the tribunal of heaven for “the deeds done in the body.”* By a seasonable access and conformity to “the word of reconciliation,”† they may rise from their present debasement to a resemblance of immaculate perfection. They may subdue those malignant propensities, which now impel them to so many acts of violence and outrage. They may become harmless and useful to our unprotected frontiers. They may “serve their generation by the will of God.”‡ They may not only taste the sweets of mutual affection, tenderness, and sympathy, in this life; but inherit “a crown of glory that fadeth not away,”§ and make uninterrupted, ceaseless proficiency in knowledge and holiness, beyond the grave.

That the office of attempting this magnanimous work properly devolves upon us, is indubitably intimated by the providence of that God, who “hath made of one blood, all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”|| The bounds of our habitation, and the consequent facility and frequency of our intercourse with these deluded outcasts, prove the undertaking more convenient, and practicable, and beneficial to us, than to

* 2 Cor. v. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 19. ‡ Acts xiii. 36. § 1 Pet. v. 4.

|| Acts xvii. 27.

any other people : and for us to overlook, or neglect the ample means, with which we are furnished for the purpose, were to “withhold good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of our hands to do it.”*

Among the most efficacious of these means, a particular attention to the young, holds a conspicuous rank. Whether in civilized or in savage society, the rising generation presents a spectacle of the highest interest. In the rising generation, we behold those who are shortly to be “instead of their fathers,”† and to constitute the nation, or tribe, or district, of which they, hitherto, compose but an inefficient and subordinate part. Free from the dominion of inveterate prejudice and habit, they are peculiarly susceptible of impressions, favourable to the contemplated reformation : and, by inducing them to “approve the things that are excellent,”‡ we take the most infallible method to insure that effect. They have numerous avenues to the hearts of their parents, which are inaccessible to all others ; and as they advance in years and virtue, they may be instrumental of inclining these parents to lend a candid and teachable ear to lessons, which had else been treated with pertinacious derision and scorn. In any event, their own souls will be delivered ; and with them will commence an era, most propitious to themselves, and to their latest posterity.

In this connexion, it gives me pleasure to state,

* Prov. iii. 27. † Ps. xlv. 16. ‡ Philip. i. 10.

that the Society, now before God, with some others of a similar character, have adopted the practice of combining the establishment of schools with missionary labour; a practice, the happy fruits of which have exceeded our most sanguine expectations, and produced a determination to continue and increase it.

Pursuant to this determination, we have recently petitioned the national legislature for pecuniary aid: and we cannot but hope and believe, that the constituted guardians of the commonweal will eventually see, that, beside the incalculable amount of virtue and felicity to be anticipated from the measure, to appropriate a small part of the publick revenue, to the diffusion of useful knowledge and true religion, would do more to disarm the hostility and conciliate the friendship of the wandering, untutored hordes around us, than millions expended for their subjugation, by force of arms: more to perpetuate the allegiance and orderly conduct of our brethren, who, emigrating from its populous sections, are insulated in the wilds of our country, than all the coercion and terrour of penal laws.

But our petition, though preferred, has not yet been discussed or granted; and we, therefore, need and seek additional funds for immediate use. We do not, however, solicit your contribution, my hearers, as a sacrifice: we propose it to you, as a privilege. Occupied, as you are, by your respective callings, and unable to achieve the object by any other process, it must be a privilege, that you are permit-

ted, by “ casting in of your abundance unto the offerings of God,”* to gain the consolation and reward, without the toil and peril, of “ converting sinners from the error of their ways, and of saving souls from death,”† in places far removed from your personal agency and abode.

Do you allege the improbability of success? “ Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest.”‡ Behold countless labourers, going forth from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Mark the gratitude and joy, with which their approach is everywhere hailed. See the long obstructed beams of gospel light bursting into bright effulgence, in the darkest realms of paganism. Recollect that every new proselyte opens a wider door to them that are “ sent to preach good tidings, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;”§ and you will not fail to augment the sum consecrated to so noble a cause, by your bounty. God, let me tell you, may render your bounty the ultimate means of sustaining a weary herald of salvation, in his journey to some bewildered mortal, who, by that interview, shall be led to “ believe, with all his house,”|| and be made an inestimable blessing to the whole circle of his acquaintance; an honoured instrument of exciting numbers to “ flee from the wrath to come.”¶ By your bounty too, God may “ perfect praise out of the

* Luke xxi. 4. † James v. 20. ‡ John iv. 35. § Is. lxi. 2.
 † Acts xvi. 34. ¶ Matt. iii. 7.

mouths of babes and sucklings.”* The child, for whom it procures an instructive book, may imbibe devout and virtuous sentiments from the pages of that book, and artlessly lisp those sentiments to a heedless father or mother, or both, in accents which shall arouse them to consideration, and not only “constrain them to live henceforth, not to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again;”† but to exert endeavours for the amendment of those with whom they associate and converse,—the gracious influence of which, in all its bearings on the present and future generations, baffles description, and overwhelms imagination.

Resign yourselves, my brethren, to these delightful anticipations; and, if you have a becoming sense of the unspeakable benefits of the new and everlasting covenant; if you have made these benefits your own, by a cordial compliance with the overtures of mercy; if you have “tasted and seen that the Lord is good,”‡ you will never be indifferent to the progress of peace, and truth, and righteousness among your fellow beings. Whilst you cherish and display the spirit of godliness, in your daily walk, you will embrace this and every suitable opportunity to multiply the trophies and heighten the triumphs of redeeming love.

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.”§

* Math. xxi. 16. † 2 Cor. v. 14. ‡ Psal. xxxiv. 8. § Dan. xii. 3.

REPORT

OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY FOR PROPAGATING THE
GOSPEL AMONG THE INDIANS AND OTHERS IN NORTH AMERICA :

READ AND ACCEPTED VI NOVEMBER, MDCCCXVII.

Published by order of the Society.

DISTRICT OF MAINE.

THE Rev. Dr. NATHANIEL PORTER commenced a mission of two months at Fryeburg and the vicinity, September 1st, 1816, when he preached at Fryeburg “to a respectable and attentive, though not a large assembly,” and administered the Lord’s supper to about 40 persons. On the 4th, he preached a lecture in a district of the town where universalism prevailed, and some very zealous advocates for that doctrine were among the hearers. “My theme,” he writes, “was John v, 25; among other things brought to view the necessity of the sinner’s hearing the voice of the Son of God in the sense of the text, without which his salvation would be impossible.” After the lecture he visited a man of four score and five years of age, who had been in the assembly among his hearers, (formerly a member of the church, and now an advocate for the doctrine of the salvation of all men,) who told him, he thought he had delivered the truth, desired him to visit him again, and joined with others in requesting him to preach on the Sabbath, in that vicinity. He complied with the request. So good an acceptance, among those of a different denomination, indicates that union of plainness and fidelity, tempered with Christian prudence and the “meekness of wisdom,” which is worthy the imitation of other missionaries. On the 7th, he attended a school, which has obtained the name of Bible School, where a number of young

persons and children meet once in a week, to read in the Bible. On the 15th, he visited a district school, inspected by Miss P****, a young woman of good education. "I have never visited," he observes, "any district school, in which I have found this young woman's superior. A knowledge of Grammar and Reading, communicative talents and an excellent spirit of government, were, perhaps, never more happily united than they are in Miss P****." At another time he visited a Bible school, and preached a lecture to the pupils. On one Lord's day, he preached in Conway, admitted 3 persons into the church, and administered the Lord's supper. This service he performed on an exchange with a minister, at the desire both of the church and of the candidates for admission. At a public lecture "the preacher of universal salvation" was one of the hearers, and from him opposition was expected; but, after an interview, they parted amicably. "A few of those who joined the society of universalists have returned this summer, and are pretty constant attendants at the congregational sanctuary."

On this mission, Dr. Porter administered baptism 5 times, attended 4 communions, preached 10 lectures, attended 5 funerals, and visited all the schools, "which, at this time, were very few." A number of persons appearing to be under serious impressions, he continued with them three or four weeks afterwards, endeavouring, he writes, "to win them wholly to Christ, in the same manner, as when in the service of the Society; for he "could not leave them in this state." He employed much of his time in visiting. "Few men were disposed to leave the cares of their farms to attend lectures; and in five seasons in which he was on a mission, the success which crowned his endeavours in these visits, to awaken the careless sinner to serious consideration, and stimulate professors to double their diligence, has been more than that of public lectures. As God seemed to "own and bless such means," he "considered it as a duty to pursue them." It was his opinion, that the congregational society in Fryeburg would "not be able to continue preaching through the year; yet that a third month," from us, "would have been sufficient to prevent a vacancy in any part of it."

The Rev. ASA PIPER has performed a mission of two months, at Belfast and the vicinity. He first visited Thomaston, and preached on the Sabbath to a respectable assembly. The next Sabbath he preached at Camden; "a full assembly, and a very pleasing attention—a third exercise at a private house at some distance." He visited two schools here, and attended the catechetical exercise of both. At Belfast he was "received apparently with satisfaction;" visited in the course of the week, and preached on the Lord's day at the Academy to a crowded assembly. Beside repeated services here, he preached at Belmont, Dixmont, Unity, and a small plantation contiguous to Belfast, still owned by the Waldo heirs. "In Thomaston there are individuals well disposed towards religious purposes; and they possess such local privileges, that, were they a united people, the support of a minister would be no burden. Camden, although the bulk of the inhabitants are sectarians, the congregational society is respectable for property; and, unless I am mistaken, cherish more respect for the ministry, and are better indoctrinated, than neighbouring places; and here, I think, missionary labours may prove useful. Belfast possess commercial advantages above any town in the vicinity . . . the population is heterogeneous . . . but they are progressing toward a more favourable state of social and religious order."

The Rev. DANIEL LOVEJOY entered on a mission of three months at Robbinston and the vicinity, in September, 1816. Though "a stranger to the place and people," he was received with such respect and cordiality, and his labours were so apparently acceptable and useful, that he writes in his journal: "I think I had never more reason for thankfulness to the great head of the Church for any events of Providence, than for those which related to my mission to Robbinston." There is a small congregational church in this place, but had been destitute of preaching of this kind about six years. This church was organized with the assistance of one of our former missionaries [Mr. E. Abbot]; but the war, which commenced soon after, occasioned the total suspension of the mission. Notwithstanding the presence of a preacher of another denomination, whose services might have been continued there, "the people unanimous-

ly expressed a wish, that" our missionary "might not only occupy the pulpit during the time specified in his commission, but extend it as much longer at their expense." He could not, however, comply with the invitation to protract the term of his continuance. As a missionary, he preached in this town 10 Sabbaths, and lectures as often as it appeared to be proper, and spent considerable of his time in visiting from house to house. "During my stay in this place," he writes, "I was treated with the utmost kindness by the people, and had reason to believe, that my feeble attempts in the gospel of Christ were crowned with visible success. Six persons were added to the church of such as, we charitably hoped, would be saved, and their children dedicated to the Lord in baptism. Some attended meeting, who had not been seen there for many years, if ever." Though the inhabitants of the town were disposed to contribute in part to the support of the mission, it was thought most proper that the contribution should be made by individuals. The sum thus contributed was \$51.50. Beside this donation to the Society, a number of ladies in the town presented the missionary with clothing to the amount of \$40.87½, and three dollars were given him to aid him on his journey at his return. Mr. Lovejoy preached considerably and visited at No. I, a plantation adjoining Robbinston, containing about 50 or 60 families; where he received from an individual \$2 for the Society. "There is," he writes, "in this plantation a considerable settlement of Indians, whom I visited repeatedly and conversed with the governor. He seemed to be a man of some intelligence; but, in general they seemed to be in a wretched state." He preached several times at No. III, where there were about 20 families, "most of them well disposed towards the gospel;" also at No. II, about 15 miles from Robbinston, where are "considerable settlements." At Pennamaquan he preached 3 lectures, and received for the Society \$2.68. At Dennysville, where the people appeared very attentive, he preached 4 lectures and one Sabbath; and received for the Society \$17.14. There is a congregational church in this place, and the Lord's supper was now first administered here. "There were a number of persons who appeared anxious to enjoy the ordinances of the gospel." At

Orangetown, a plantation in that vicinity, he preached once, and was informed, it was the only sermon delivered in the place for six years. There was not a large number of families here, "but they seemed very desirous of hearing the Word of God, and able and willing to contribute of their substance for the support of the gospel." From two persons here he received \$3 for the Society; making, exclusively of his present from the ladies of Robbinston, the collective sum of \$76.32, contributed for the use of the Society. It is the opinion of Mr. Lovejoy, that a missionary may be as profitably employed in Robbinston and vicinity, "as at any place in the circle of his acquaintance." Beside the places already mentioned, he preached one Sabbath at Frankfort, on his way to Robbinston, and one at Unity, on his return. During the mission, he preached 56 times, made 194 family visits, attended 8 meetings for prayer and religious conversation, administered the Lord's supper 4 times, baptized 1 person of adult age, and 25 children, and visited 4 schools.

The Rev. JOSIAH PEET has performed the service assigned him at Norridgewock and the vicinity. In his mission, he spent 9 weeks in the service of the Society, and preached 43 times, attended 4 conferences, visited 8 sick, one school, and upwards of 40 families. "One week," he writes, "I have ventured to spend in Norridgewock, and one in Bloomfield; the rest I have spent abroad. With respect to the reception I have met with, I only say, my labours have been received with apparent cordiality and gratitude, and a repetition of them uniformly solicited. The Macedonian cry I frequently hear from places which I have not been able as yet to visit. I hope to be able to make still wider excursions; but in order to this, I shall need the assistance of your Society."

The Rev. JOHN SAWYER has been assiduously engaged during the year in the important duties of the minister and preceptor; 4 months of which services were by appointment of this Society at Brownville and the vicinity. He writes in his journal: "Excepting when I have gone some distance to preach on the Sabbath, I have kept my school six days in the week," during the last winter. His whole number of scholars was 39. They "make pleasing proficiency in every branch of study," taught

them, "and their behaviour is very commendable. I view the establishment of this Free School as one of the most important and interesting circumstances in this northern and eastern section of the District. Can this school be continued, I apprehend it will have the greatest effect of any thing upon the state of schooling generally in this vicinity. Two of the scholars I had last winter are keeping school this winter to very general acceptance." In a letter, of Nov. 15th, to the Secretary, he writes: "I have witnessed very pleasing effects from the Testaments you procured for me to distribute. We have about 70 children reading the Scriptures, and their attention and fondness for reading appear to increase. These children, since the middle of July, have read, I trust, equal to 7 or 8000 chapters in the New Testament. Some are now reading the Testament through the fourth time; and most of them last December could not read but by spelling. More Testaments will be very acceptable." Moses Greenleaf, Esq. writes, that "several persons, with large families, are now contemplating to change their residence for the purpose of affording their children the advantage of the school."

The Rev. HENRY TRUE, appointed at the last semiannual meeting of the Society to a mission of two months at Appleton and the vicinity, commenced his labours in January, and performed about one month's service; intending to perform the remainder in the summer. His labours were at Appleton, Searsmont, Putnam, and Montville. "Searsmont, at present, appears the most favourable to congregational ministers, as several families, from this [Union] and other places, friendly to them, have lately moved into that town. The people have been induced to raise a considerable sum for the purpose of employing a preacher. In Appleton, though divided by sectarists, "there are some remaining, who seek the good old way; among whom are a few who have been seriously impressed, and who give hopeful evidence of being converted to holiness. The attention to religion among all denominations has been of late greater than usual. The meetings, where I have been, were generally attended as well as could be expected. In most instances, thankful expressions were made for the services ren-

dered through the aids of your Society, and further assistance earnestly requested." Mr. True had made arrangements to preach lectures, visit, and attend conferences, in the vicinity, during the summer; "hoping in this way to be as serviceable and more acceptable than if he had spent all the days of the week abroad." Among other services, he visited schools, in which he "gave such exhortations and advice as appeared most important," and distributed a considerable number of the Society's books. [The remainder of Mr. True's journal has not been received.]

The Rev. Mr. NURSE continues his highly useful labours at Ellsworth and the vicinity. Although his impaired state of health has not permitted him to make so great exertions as in preceding years, and the success of his endeavours has not, in all respects, been equal to that which we have before recorded, yet he proceeds in his course, with that faith and hope, which the greatness of the cause, and a pious confidence in God, inspire. In his report he observes: "Although, the present season, we may reap no precious fruits from our labours, the next may be blest with an abundant harvest. This should animate our hope, and stimulate our exertions. It is our duty to go on patiently and cheerfully with our appointed work; to be diligent and faithful in planting and watering, trusting in God to give the increase at such time, and in such quantity, as he may see fit." The school under his care has been kept in operation about ten months of the year past. The same studies have been attended to as reported on former occasions, and much the same method has been pursued with a view to store the minds of our youth with religious knowledge, and to form them to the love and practice of moral goodness. "I have lately, however," he informs us, "introduced into my school a variety of valuable and interesting religious tracts. These are read on the Sabbath; and on Monday morning the scholars are required to give an account of their contents. I cherish the hope, that this new regulation will be productive of good."—"The influence of my school is extensively felt in this new part of our country. In it a goodly number have been qualified to be respectable and useful teachers.—In the course of the past year,

7 young men and 18 young women have had the charge of schools; some 3 months, some 4, some 5, some 6, and a few through the year. These have been spread over a tract of country more than 150 miles in length. From all the information I have been able to collect, they were, I believe, generally very useful in their employments, and very acceptable to their employers." After giving several testimonials in support of his belief of their merits and services, he adds: "These teachers are indebted, in part, to the liberality of your Society for their qualifications to be so acceptable and useful, and several of their schools have been, in part, supported by your charity. Many have desired me to express their gratitude to your Society for their kindness towards them."

The Rev. Dr. PORTER has performed a second mission to Fryeburg and the vicinity, to which he was appointed at the last annual meeting of the Society; and seldom has a mission been crowned with greater success. He spent 10 Sabbaths, preached several lectures, visited 60 families and 9 schools, baptized 9 children and 4 adults, and admitted 16 persons into the church in Fryeburg. The congregational society in that town employed him after the term of his mission was closed, and the divine blessing still attended his labours. Since the close of the mission he admitted 3 persons to church communion, and baptized 2 heads of families and 4 children. "There are," he writes, "eight persons who now stand propounded, and expect to be admitted to church fellowship next Lord's day. One of these, a head of a family, was never baptized. The number of children in these families, (which are six,) is 24, all to be presented to baptism; the whole number of adults, reckoning the candidates for admission, is 7. The number of children, including the 24 to be soon offered, amounts to 37. In forty four years of my ministerial labours, I have never seen so large a number of souls gathered into the kingdom of Christ in so short a time. The spirit of inquiry is still awake, and a hopeful number under serious impressions. The God of all grace perfect this, which, I believe, is his own work.—The whole number of communicants in this church is 106. It will be remembered that the Congregational Society in Fryeburg is

small. I hope it is increasing. The number added to this church since the 1st of May is 22; the candidates therefore make 30. This is certainly of the Lord. It is marvellous; it is pleasing. Praise ye the Lord, all ye his saints." This very interesting account of the missionary is confirmed by a paragraph in the report of Alden Bradford Esq, stating the result of his inquiries in the District of Maine. "Mr. Fletcher thinks Fryeburg, in Oxford county, is still deserving the attention of the Society. He says Dr. Porter has done much good there; that uncommon attention has been given to religion under Dr. Porter's preaching the last and present season; that the congregationalists are only about 40 or 50 families, who, though disposed to contribute something, are unable to afford full support to a minister." He informed Mr. Bradford of the numerous baptisms and accessions to the church in Fryeburg, and said, "that there was a prospect, if Dr. Porter should be continued there, that the congregational society would increase, and soon be able, without aid from abroad, to give an adequate compensation to a minister, and would have one settled among them."

The Committee, on receiving this information, appointed Dr. Porter to another mission of two months, to be commenced immediately.

INDIANS.

Stockbridge Indians.

THE state of the Indians under the care of Mr. SERGEANT appears by his journals to have been generally similar to what it was represented to be in our last Report. By a paragraph, however, at the close of his last journal, dated 29 June, there were favourable indications of considerable improvement in their moral and religious state. "With satisfaction and pleasure," he writes, "I will further note, that there appears a general reformation among my people, much more so than I have observ-

ed since they moved into this country. The Indians, who depend much on corn for their support, have been, and are now, very much distressed for bread, on account of the uncommon season; but they go among white people where it is to be obtained, and return and appear sober and diligent in their business. Their wheat, now on the ground, appears promising. Their corn, as the season has been, appears at present as if they would have none. This uncommon providence appears to be blessed to their spiritual and temporal good."

Senecas and Munsees.

THE REV. TIMOTHY ALDEN, (president of Alleghany College,) in pursuance of the appointment of the Society, has visited the Seneca and the Munsee Indians, and performed missionary service among the destitute white inhabitants of the South-western settlements. He set out on the mission on the 1st of August, and returned to Meadville early in September. In this period he preached 31 times, baptized 1 infant, attended 2 prayer meetings, called on many families, conversed and prayed with the sick wherever to be found in his route, and visited 3 Indian schools. On the Sabbath he officiated, "1. In a barn on the Broken-straw;* 2. in Cornplanter's house at Jen-ne-sa-da-ga; 3. at a publick house in the township of Eden; 4. at a schoolhouse in the Seneca village, near Buffalo; 5. at a schoolhouse in Jemestown, situated on the Rapids below Chaud-dank-wa lake; and 6. at Oil creek, 28 miles from Meadville, and in the evening, at the house of Joseph Armstrong of the Big Sugar Creek." He "made it a point to preach whenever and wherever an assembly could be collected; which sometimes scarcely amounted to 20, and seldom to more than 50 hearers, except upon the Sabbath, when he sometimes had nearly 200. At the white settlements, generally consisting of people from the eastern states," he writes, that "he was cordially received;" adding, that "in all places there was a readiness, and in most an eagerness, to hear the gospel; and frequent were the lamentations that this privilege is so rarely enjoyed in those out posts of Immanuel's kingdom." After a brief account of the establish-

* A stream emptying into the western side of the Alleghany.

ment of a mission by a Society in New York, at the Tuscarora village, containing 320 souls, and the expected ordination of Mr. James C. Crane as their resident missionary, and of the religious state of the country, westerly from Lake Ontario, he proceeds to give information of the more immediate objects of our charity—the Indians.

“ In Cornplanter’s* village, extending one mile along the banks of the Alleghany, are 48 persons, of different ages and both sexes. I preached twice on a Sabbath in the spacious house of that noble spirited chief, which was well filled, and mostly with Indians. Some of these were from Peter Krous’s neighbourhood and from Cold spring. Henry Obeel, Cornplanter’s eldest son, a major in the late war, officiated as my interpreter. He performed with promptitude and in such a manner as to arrest the attention of the aboriginal part of my auditory. He has often interpreted in councils on subjects of business, but never before for a clergyman. Few if any of the Senecas have ever had so great advantages for an education as the major. In early life he was at school nearly 6 years in Philadelphia. He is a man of a very strong mind. . . . At the close of each of my discourses, Cornplanter delivered an interesting address, in which he expressed his gratitude for the notice taken of him and his people. He said, ‘ I am always happy to see the ministers, and to have them preach at Jennesadaqua. We begin to understand something of the gospel. We have been in the dark, but we are beginning to see light. I have long been convinced that we are wrong. I have often told my people that we must be wrong, and that you must be right, because you have the words of the Great Spirit written in a book.’ ”†

* Ki-end-twoh-ke literally means *The Planter*. He is also known by the Indian name Nō-nūh, which signifies *The Contemplative*. His English name is John Obeel. Shin-nē-waú-nā, the common word for *Gentleman*, is the term, by which he is usually addressed by the Indians.

† For a more particular account of “ Cornplanter and the Indians in his little town,” Mr. Alden refers to a letter from himself to Rev. Dr. McKEAN, printed in the Alleghany Magazine, November 1816. From that letter we select an interesting paragraph: “ Last year, at a council of the tribe, Cornplanter made an eloquent speech of two hours’ length, in which he gave a lucid history of his life. He stated that his father was a white man from Ireland, and that his mother was a Seneca; that

Mr. Alden had informed him the day before, that he was going to see Red Jacket and the Indians of his village. In one of his addresses, Cornplanter said, "I have often talked to Red Jacket about worshipping the Great Spirit in your way, but he has constantly told me, that he was determined never to conform to your way, that he meant to hold on in the way which his fathers had taught him. As your object is good, it can do no hurt to visit him and his people, but I do not think that he will take hold of it. If I thought Red Jacket would take hold of it, I would go with you to see Red Jacket, and talk to him about it." . . . "On the following day," writes the missionary, "he obligingly accompanied us 14 miles, to Cold spring. In passing difficult and dangerous places, he kindly took the lead, shewing us the safest course, and whenever we came to a piece of tolerable road, with much civility he would fall back, and, pointing for me to go forward, say, in broken English, *good road, good road.*" Having taken notice of an Indian school, which he visited, under the care of Mr. Oldham, and of the salutary effect of his instructions and example; and of another at Cold spring, "diligently taught by Mr. Elkinton, at the expense of the Friends, who have long bestowed their benevolent atten-

he had always been attached to the tribe; that he had been zealous in their way of worship; but, that now he was convinced they were all wrong; that he was determined to devote himself to *the way, in which the ministers walk*, meaning the christian religion. *I know*, said he, *that we are wrong. I know that they are right. Their way of worshipping the Great Spirit is good. I see it; I feel it; I enjoy it.* In this happy and persuasive manner did he, with his imperfect knowledge, plead the cause of Christ. In one part of his animated address, when speaking of his former views and habits, his language seemed to be like that of Paul giving a representation of his pharisaick zeal in opposition to christianity; in another part, it was like that of Joshua stating his pious resolution to the tribes of Israel at Shechem. How much of the gospel plan of salvation this venerable sachem understands, it is difficult to ascertain; yet, from the speech already noticed; from his subsequent, as well as previous, occasional remarks, so far as collected and comprehended; from his discountenancing the annual sacrifices, to which most of his tribe are still attached; from the demolition of the idol, a few years since, which was long a conspicuous object of adoration in his village; and, especially from his late exertions for a preached gospel, is there not reason to conclude, that the Holy Comforter has so enlightened and prepared his mind, that he only needs an explanation of the religion of Jesus, to embrace it with all his heart?"

tions on this section of the Seneca tribe ;” he mentions his preaching at a private house in Big Valley, nigh the upper end of the Indian reserve, which lies upon the Alleghany. An-nēh'-yēsh,* a respectable chief, usually called Long John, and more than a dozen other Indians attended the meeting. Mr. McKay, a gentleman well versed in the Seneca language, acted the part of an interpreter with ability. The chief made a speech, in which he thanked me for coming to see the Indians and to preach to them, and wished me to express his grateful acknowledgments to the good people, who thought so much of the poor Indians as to send a preacher to them. Something was suggested on the importance of having their children instructed, and the question was asked, whether it would be agreeable to the Indians to have a school established at Squish-an-a-doh-toh,† the place of his residence, so called. He was understood to accede to the importance of such institutions, but said he could not make a reply till a council had decided. I intimated that in case the chiefs should communicate a wish to have a school in that part of the reserve which is remote from the one under the kind direction of the Friends, before noticed, there was no doubt but such a wish would be promptly gratified.” Passing through Big Valley, Mr. Alden came to the shore of Lake Erie, 14 miles from Buffalo, and called on Mr. Hyde, who has kept the Indian school in the Seneca village, on Buffalo creek, five years. From all that he had heard, he “had little expectation of being permitted to preach to the Indians in this, which is the most populous settlement of the Senecas ;” but he “met with a much more agreeable reception than he had anticipated. Accompanied by Mr. Hyde,” he observes, “we visited some of the natives, particularly Young King and Capt. Pollard, two of the most influential chiefs. The business of my mission was made known to them, and they expressed their approbation of the object. Pollard said he was glad I had called on the chiefs so as to inform them of my wishes, that they might have opportunity to communicate them to their people. It was their desire that the meeting might be on the Sabbath, to which I

* The Tallest, or The Tall One.

† Literally Bald Hill Flat.

cheerfully agreed. Young King and Pollard promised to give notice of the meeting, and Jacob Jamieson, who had resided among them two years, engaged to interpret." In the mean time our missionary made an excursion to Lewistown, passed in sight of the Niagara Falls,* and crossed over into Queenstown, where he "preached to a goodly number of his Britannic majesty's subjects, and again in the out skirts of Lewistown." Of the discourse to the Indians, at the time appointed, he gives the following interesting account. "We met at the school house in the Seneca village, and it was filled with the tawny inhabitants, while a considerable number stood without at the door and windows. Ten chiefs were present, of whom one was the noted Sō-gwē-ē-wau'-tau,† known by the name of Red Jacket, of whose shrewd remarks to missionaries, on some former occasions, you have probably been apprised.—I was happy to learn, that when Pollard informed him of my arrival and wishes to preach to the Indians, he expressed his unqualified approbation of the steps taken for that purpose, and offered nothing in the way of objection, as he had formerly done to my predecessors. Mr. Hyde was delighted to see such a full meeting, and especially so many chiefs giving a respectful attention to the word dispensed. In my address I spake of the past and present state of the Indians, lamented the bad example too often set them, and the injustice not unfrequently done them by the unprincipled among their white brethren. I spake of the excellence and infinite importance of the gospel, and the comfort, which many Indians had enjoyed on a death bed in trusting their souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. I descanted on the uncertainty of life, a judgment to come, and an eternity to follow, the awful state of all men by nature, and the only method of escape from the wrath which awaits the impenitent and unbelieving, representing that Jesus is the Son of God and the only Saviour of the world. I also spake of the wonderful exertions of the present day for spreading the gospel to the unenlightened parts of the earth, of the prophetick declarations of scrip-

* In the language of the Senecas, Yē-ūh'-gāu Kos-kongh'-shā-dī.

† Which literally means, Wide awake and keeps every one else awake.

ture relative to a happy period, which is fast approaching, when poor Indians, and millions of the human race, as ignorant as they, would be brought to behold and to rejoice in the glorious light of the gospel, when every wicked practice would come to an end, and all the tribes of men would form one vast band of brethren. I mentioned that the good people of Boston and the vicinity, a distant place on this island (adopting their language,) had sent me to preach to them, that they had no sinister motives for so doing, that they did not wish for their land, nor any thing they possessed; but, feeling the comforts of religion in their own hearts, they longed to see the Indians and all their fellow creatures blessed with the heart cheering hopes of the gospel of Jesus, and they considered it a duty to help those, who are unable to help themselves, as far as in their power, to a knowledge of such infinite moment to every human being; adding, that I should gladly hear any remarks they might see fit to make upon any thing I had offered.—After a short consultation, Capt. Pollard rose, and in a very graceful and eloquent manner delivered an address. I regret that I cannot present it to you in full. Never did I behold a more solemn and interesting countenance. Jameison said he could not interpret the whole, but would give me a sketch. It was nearly in these words: *‘ Brother, the chiefs have agreed that I should speak to you in their name. We are happy to see you among us. We are happy to hear about the Great Spirit. We are happy to hear the gospel. We have understood almost every thing you have told us. We like it very much. We thank you for coming to talk to us. We thank the good people who have thought of us, and have sent you to us. We should be glad to have ministers come to see us again.’* This is probably a very meagre as well as a greatly abridged version of a speech, in the pronouncing of which the chief was not less than 20 minutes, and displayed the talents of an orator absorbed in the magnitude of his subject. I made a short reply, expressing my hope, that in due time they would be blessed with the full orbed influence of the glorious sun of righteousness, that they would understand the truths of the gospel, and embrace them, to their greatest comfort in life and death, and that should we never meet to-

gether again to worship the Great Spirit upon earth, we might meet with joy at the tribunal of heaven, and spend an eternity in praising and blessing the great God and Redeemer. After shaking hands, according to custom on all such occasions, we parted, I trust, mutually pleased and gratified."

The result of his observations and experience deserves our regard. "The more I have attended," he observes, "to the situation of the aboriginal part of our extensive republick, the more I have been convinced, that to teach the Indians with effect the truths of the gospel, ministers must live with them, learn their language, and preach to them in their vernacular tongue. It is generally difficult to procure an interpreter of abilities, and still more so to preach in such a manner that justice may be done to many subjects, and a faithful translation be given. The fact is, the languages of our red brethren are barren of terms for conveying many truths to their understanding. Still, if a minister were fully acquainted with their language and mode of illustrating subjects, he would be able to convey his meaning in a way which would be comprehended."

Mr. Alden visited the Cataraugus village; but "many of the leading characters were absent." Johnson, the interpreter, said he was persuaded it would be very agreeable to the chiefs and their people to hear the gospel, if they had been at home. Mr. Taylor, of the denomination of Friends in their vicinity, expressed his regret, that our missionary could not have an opportunity to preach to the Cataraugus Indians. "These are all Senecas, except about 6 families, who are Munsees. At the Seneca village on Buffalo Creek are about 700 Senecas, 16 Munsees, some Onondagas, some Cayugas, and a few Squaukes. In the different reserves, the Senecas amount to something more than 2000. The language of the Munsees is radically different from that of the former. They are so called from the place where they formerly lived, on a branch of the Susquehannah, but are of the Delaware tribe."

Mr. Alden gives the following account of the state of the white inhabitants in his vicinity. "Within 16 miles of Meadville are seven places where there ought to be preaching; at four of these, churches have been gathered, but they very sel-

dom hear the gospel. I have preached in all these places, and I have reason to suppose it would be agreeable to the people to hear me more frequently than they do; and they would willingly contribute something toward the support of a missionary, who should visit them in rotation.”

The Rev. Mr. COE having declined a mission to the Indians at Charlestown (R. I.) the last year, and circumstances being the present year altogether unfavourable to its continuance, the Committee, in compliance with advice from the president of the Rhode Island Missionary Society, have employed no missionary there since their last Report, and are not yet prepared to recommend the appointment of one. They wait for further and more encouraging information.

A surplusage from the Alford fund enabled the Committee, agreeably to a vote of the Society, to make a small appropriation for the benefit of the Indians at Martha's Vineyard, not included in the provision already made by Harvard College. Mr. Frederick Baylies, well recommended to the Committee for his abilities and fidelity, and great acquaintance with the Indians, has been appointed to teach the Indian children and youth. He visited the Indians at Chabaquiddick about the last of May, and wrote to the Secretary: “The Natives appeared to be really pleased to think I was about to open the school. I calculate to have 25 scholars.”

The subject of petitioning the Government of the United States for aid in the education of Indian children, which was referred to your Committee, has been attended to. A Petition for that purpose was forwarded to one of our Representatives and presented to Congress at the last session in February. Although not then acted upon, the Hon. Mr. STEARNS, who presented it, observed, “the subject may be called up again next session, if it should be thought advisable. The historical sketch and the annual Report of the Society are enclosed and filed away with the memorial. I am inclined to believe the eventual success of this attempt probable.”

BOOKS.

The Books and Tracts of the Society have been distributed as usual. Those sent to Brownville and the vicinity were received with thankfulness and avidity. Of those sent to the care of Rev. Hezekiah Packard, this faithful agent writes: "Pleasing accounts have been received, from different places, of the manner in which the books were received and read. I have the impression, that numbers have become more thoughtful and religious, in consequence of the Society's pious charity in this neighbourhood. Doddridge has been, to my knowledge, read by several families with great interest."

By this view of the whole ground, the Society will be enabled to perceive the state of the missions, and to adopt measures accordingly. The Report of Alden Bradford Esq. on the District of Maine, while it, for the most part, confirms the propriety of our recent transactions, will greatly assist your Committee in the designation of stations and missionaries, to be proposed to you at the annual meeting.

In the review of the last year we see much to afford us pleasure and encouragement. Some of our missions have been unusually successful. Thirty years have now elapsed since the incorporation of the Society. That its endeavours to promote the religious improvement and final salvation of those, who have stood in the most need of assistance, have been, in some degree, effectual, there seems no room to doubt. For this cause we bow our knees in devout thankfulness and praise to GOD, who hath "commanded the blessing." If the fruit of our labours be not now always visible, it may appear hereafter. The promise is sure. If we sow bountifully, we shall reap also bountifully. "Let us not," therefore, brethren, "be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

By order of the Select Committee.

A. HOLMES, *Secretary.*

Boston, 6 Nov. 1817.

STATEMENT OF FUNDS, 1817.

U. S. Six Per Cent. Stock, nominal \$7500 } real value 1st April 1817. }	783.75
Union Bank Stock - - - - -	6300.00
Massachusetts State Notes - - - - -	640.00
Bonds and Mortgages - - - - -	700.00
Seven Per Cent. Stack - - - - -	12744.00
Massachusetts Bank Stock - - - - -	2000.00
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	\$23167.75.

Cash on hand - - \$884.48.

Of the above capital, \$9000 are the donation of Hon. JOHN ALFORD, Esq. exclusively for the Indians.

His Honor, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, Esq. presented to the Society \$560 to be expended during the current year.

The Collection at the Church in Chauncy Place, 6 November, was \$207.84.

MISSIONARIES AND APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1817.

		Months.
Rev. John Sawyer	Brownville and vicinity	4
“ Daniel Lovejoy	Robbinston and vicinity	4
“ Nathaniel Porter D. D.	Fryeburg and vicinity	4
“ Asa Piper	Camden and vicinity	2
“ Josiah Peet	Norridgewock and vicinity	2
“ Nathan Douglas	Alfred and vicinity	2
“ John Dutton	Great Is. and I. of Shoals	1
“ Peter Nurse	Filsworth grant	\$100
To Do.	for Schools	100
To the Schools in Williamsburgh and vicinity under direction of Rev. J. Sawyer and M. Greenleaf, Esq. for the past and present year		} 200

		Months.
Rev. Freeman Parker	Dresden and vicinity	2
“ Jonathan Fisher	Sedgwick - - - - -	1
To Limerick (conditionally)	- - - - -	\$50
For the purchase of books	- - - - -	100

From Alford Fund.

To Rev. John Sergeant . . . Salary - - -	220
To Do. Indian Schools - - -	50
For the Narraganset Indians . . . and at } the disposal of the Select Committee }	38.48
Rev. Timothy Alden—a mission of 6 weeks among the Senecas and Munsees.	

OFFICERS ELECTED, XXIX MAY, MDCCXXVII.

His Honor WILLIAM PHILLIPS, Esq. President.
 Rev. ELIPHALET PORTER, D. D. Vice President.
 Rev. ABIEL HOLMES, D. D. Secretary.
 Rev. WILLIAM E. CHANNING, Assist. Secretary.
 Mr. SAMUEL H. WALLEY, Treasurer.
 Mr. JOSIAH SALISBURY, Vice Treasurer.

SELECT COMMITTEE.—SAMUEL SALISBURY, Esq. Rev. JEDIDIAH MORSE, D. D. ALDEN BRADFORD, Esq. Mr. JAMES WHITE, Rev. CHARLES LOWELL, with the PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, and TREASURER.

PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER.

Rev. Joshua Bates.	Samuel Parkman, Esq.
Alden Bradford, Esq.	Rev. Eliphalet Pearson, LL. D.
Benjamin Bussey, Esq.	His Honor William Phillips, Esq.
Rev. William E. Channing.	Jonathan Phillips, Esq.
Hon. John Davis.	Rev. John Pierce.
Hon. Thomas Daves.	Eliphalet Porter, D. D.
Samuel Eliot, Esq.	Daniel D. Rogers, Esq.
Nathanael Emmons, D. D.	Samuel Salisbury, Esq.
John Foster, D. D.	Mr. Josiah Salisbury.
Caleb Gannett, Esq.	Mr. Elisha Ticknor.
Rev. Samuel Gile.	Mr. Edward Tuckerman jun.
David S. Greenough, Esq.	Hon. Dudley A. Tyng.
Rev. William Greenough.	Mr. Samuel H. Walley.
Levi Hedge, Esq.	Henry Ware, D. D. S. T. P.
Abiel Holmes, D. D.	Hon. Oliver Wendell.
Edward A. Holyoke, M. D.	James White, Esq.
Rev. Joshua Huntington.	Ebenezer Wight, Esq.
Mr. David Hyslop.	Mr. William Woodbridge.
Rev. James Kendall.	
John T. Kirkland, D. D. LL. D.	
Rev. Charles Lowell.	
Rev. Joseph McKean, LL. D.	
Jedidiah Morse, D. D.	
Elijah Parish, D. D.	

MEMBERS DECEASED SINCE 1814.

John Lathrop, D. D.
 Hon. Cotton Tufts, M. D.
 Samuel Williams, LL. D.

FORM OF A BEQUEST, OR LEGACY.

Item : I give and bequeath the sum of _____ to the Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America ; to be applied either to the general objects of the Institution, or to such particular purposes, consistent with those objects, as the donor may think proper.