



A C T S

AND

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

IN THE

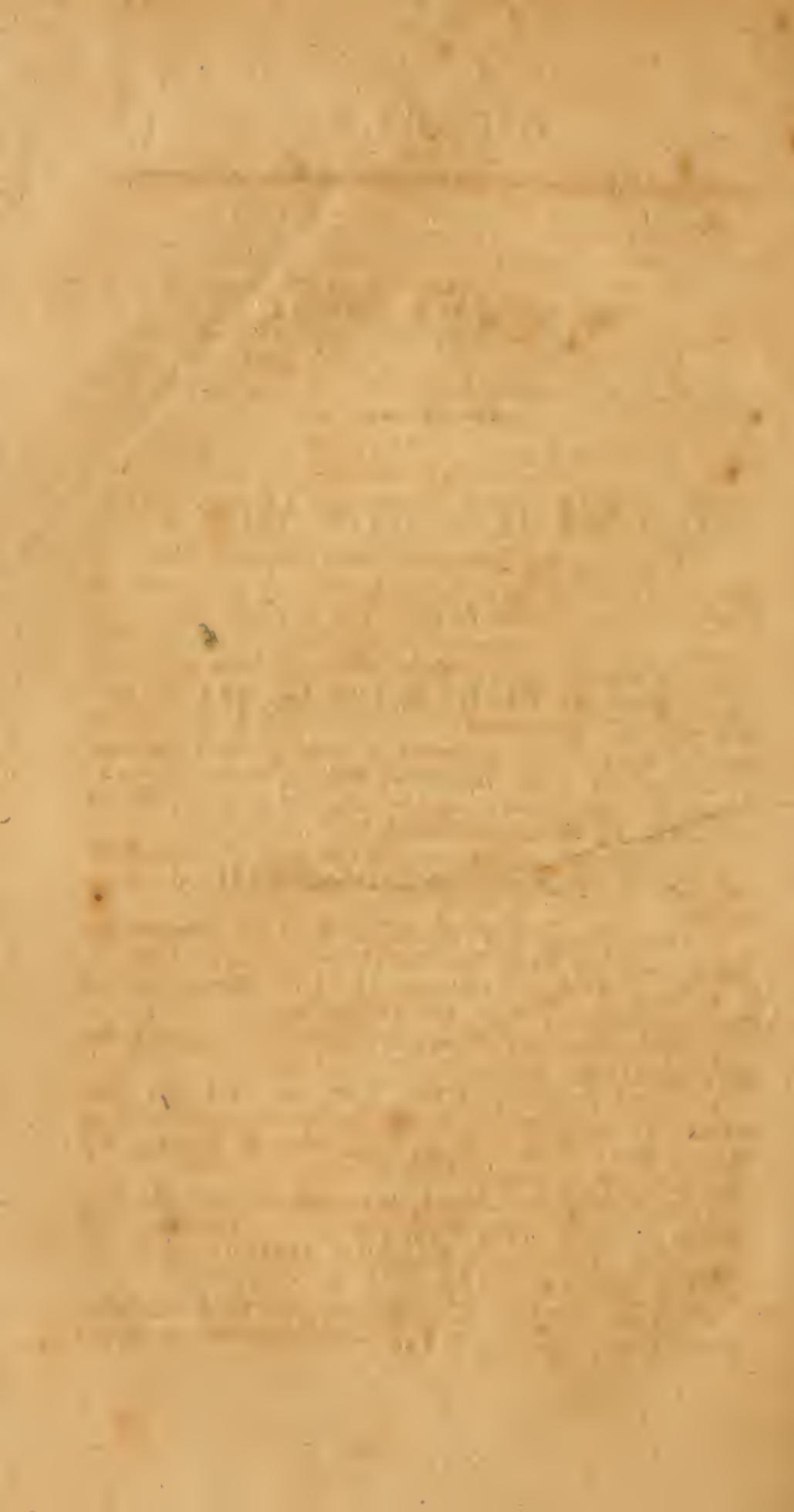
United States of America.

IN THE YEAR 1801.

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—•—
1801.



ACTS, &c.

May 21st, 1801.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, met agreeably to appointment, in the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia, at 11 o'clock A. M. and was opened with a sermon by the Revd. Joseph Clark, the Moderator of the last Assembly, from Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*

After prayer the commissions were read, when it appeared that the following persons were duly appointed commissioners to this Assembly, viz.

1. Of the Presbytery of Albany, the Revd. Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the Revd. Peter Fish, and Mr. Isaac Hutton, Elder.

2. Of the Presbytery of Hudson, the Revd. Nathan Kerr, and Jonathan Freeman; Elder, Dr. Jonathan Sweezy.

3. Of the Presbytery of Long Island, the Rev. David S. Bogart, and Herman Dagget.

4. Of the Presbytery of New York, the Revd. Dr. John M'Knight, Samuel Miller, Asa Hillyer, and Amzi Armstrong; Elders, Messrs. Preserve Riggs, Ephraim Sayre, Benjamin Egbert, and John Bingham.

5. Of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, the Revd. Dr. John Woodhull, Joseph Clark, William Boyd, and Joseph Rue; Elders, Messrs. John Bayard, Thomas Henderson, David Bishop, and John Muirhead.

6. Of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the Revd. Nathanael Irwin, James Boyd, Dr. Ashbel Green, and William Latta;

Elders, Messrs. Hugh Henry, Ebenezer Hazard, David Cloyd, and Joseph Brewster.

7. Of the Presbytery of New Castle, the Revd. John E. Latta, John Collins, and William Arthur; Elders, Messrs. Ebenezer Rothwell, and George M'Ilwaine.

8. Of the Presbytery of Carlisle, the Revd. Robert Cathcart, Nathanael R. Snowden, John Linn, and Dr. Robert Cooper; Elder, Mr. Moses Gilmore.

9. Of the Presbytery of Lewis, the Revd. John B. Slemons; Elder, Mr. John Moore.

10. Of the Presbytery of Baltimore, the Revd. Dr. Patrick Allifon; Elder, Mr. Andrew Jameson.

11. Of the Presbytery of Huntingdon, the Revd. John B. Patterfson.

12. Of the Presbytery of Winchester, the Revd. Nash Le Grand.

13. Of the Presbytery of Redstone, the Revd. Joseph Henderson, and John Black.

14. Of the Presbytery of Ohio, the Revd. John M'Millan, John Brice, John Watfson, and William Wood.

15. Of the Presbytery of Lexington, the Revd. Robert Logan.

16. Of the Presbytery of Hanover, the Revd. Archibald Alexander.

17. Of the first Presbytery of South Carolina, the Revd. James White Stevenson.

The Revd. Samuel Blatchford, pastor of the church of Stratfield, in the State of Connecticut, exhibited a certificate of his appointment, as a delegate from the General Association of Connecticut to this Assembly; which being read and approved, he took his seat accordingly.

The Assembly proceeded to the choice of a Moderator and Clerks; when the Revd. Nathanael Irwin was chosen Moderator, and the Revd. Robert Cathcart and Samuel Miller were chosen Clerks.

The Revd. Benjamin Grigsby of the Presbytery of Lexington, the Revd. Moses Hoge, of the Presbytery of Winchester, and Mr. William Montgomery, a ruling Elder of the Presbytery of Huntingdon, produced their commissions respectively as delegates to this Assembly; which being read were approved, and they took their seats accordingly.

The delegates appointed by the last Assembly to attend the General Association of the State of Connecticut, made their report, which was read as follows, viz.

“ The delegates from the General Assembly to the General Association of Connecticut, report, that they have attended according to appointment through the whole course of the sessions of the General Association. That besides the business peculiar to the churches of Connecticut, the General Association appointed a committee to confer with a committee that may be appointed by the General Assembly, on measures which may promote union among the inhabitants of the new settlements and the missionaries to those settlements, as appears by the inclosed paper. The General Association also voted that instructions be given by the trustees of the Missionary Society, to their missionaries, to avoid every thing that may interrupt peace in the new settlements among those that are attached to the presbyterian and congregational forms of government.

The Association established the following regulations respecting the reception of foreign ministers into their churches: That said ministers shall exhibit proper credentials of their good character and authority to preach the gospel, before they are permitted to preach in their pulpits—That they be examined as to their orthodoxy and literature, before they are introduced into vacancies—That they shall continue for a year under the care of one of their Associations, or somebody in connection with the General Association, and then go through the usual trials before they be installed or ordained.

The General Association have appointed the Revd. Seth Williston as a stated missionary, to be employed one half of his time at Union, in the State of New York, and the other half as an itinerant preacher in the adjacent parts.

In consequence of an enquiry, very agreeable accounts were received of the revival of religion in various parts of the State, and of the general peace of the churches.

They appointed as delegates to the next General Assembly, the Revd. John Smally, Levi Hart, and Samuel Blatchford.

The next General Association is to meet at Litchfield, at the house of the Revd. Daniel Huntington, on the third Tuesday of June next, at 11 o'clock A. M.

Your delegates farther report, that they were received and treated with exceeding great cordiality and christian friendship, and that the association expressed high satisfaction with the connection subsisting between themselves and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, and believed that it would have a happy tendency to promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom.

JONATHAN EDWARDS,
ASA HILLYER,
JONATHAN FREEMAN.”

A communication was read from the General Association of the State of Connecticut, appointing a committee to confer with a committee of the Presbyterian Church, to consider the measures proper to be adopted by the General Association and the General Assembly, for establishing an uniform system of church government, between the inhabitants of the new settlements who are attached to the Presbyterian form of government and those who prefer the congregational form.

Ordered that the said communication lie on the table.

The Revd. Doctors Edwards, McKnight and Woodhull, the Revd. Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Hutton were appointed a committee, to consider and digest a plan of government for the churches in the new settlements, agreeably to the proposal of the General Association of Connecticut, and report the same as soon as convenient.

The report of the committee appointed to consider and digest a plan of government for the churches in the new settlements, was taken up and considered, and after mature deliberation on the same, approved, as follows:

“ Regulations adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and by the General Association of the State of Connecticut (provided said Association agree to them) with a view to prevent alienation and promote union and harmony, in those new settlements which are composed of inhabitants from these bodies.

1st. It is strictly enjoined on all their missionaries to the new settlements, to endeavour, by all proper means, to promote mutual forbearance and accommodation, between those inhabitants of the new settlements who hold the presbyterian and those who hold the congregational form of church government.

2d. If in the new settlements, any church of the congregational order shall settle a minister of the presbyterian order, that church may, if they choose, still conduct their discipline according to congregational principles, settling their difficulties among themselves, or by a council mutually agreed upon for that purpose: But if any difficulty shall exist between the minister and the church or any member of it, it shall be referred to the Presbytery to which the minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it, if not, to a council consisting of an equal number of presbyterians and congregationalists, agreed upon by both parties.

3d. If a presbyterian church shall settle a minister of congregational principles, that church may still conduct their discipline according to presbyterian principles, excepting that if a difficulty arise between him and his church, or any member of it, the cause shall be tried by the Association, to which the said minister shall

belong, provided both parties agree to it, otherwise by a council, one half congregationalists and the other half presbyterians, mutually agreed on by the parties.

4th. If any congregation consist partly of those who hold the congregational form of discipline and partly of those who hold the presbyterian form; we recommend to both parties, that this be no obstruction, to their uniting in one church and settling a minister: and that in this case, the church choose a standing committee from the communicants of said church, whose business it shall be, to call to account every member of the church, who shall conduct himself inconsistently with the laws of christianity, and to give judgment on such conduct: and if the person condemned by their judgment, be a presbyterian, he shall have liberty, to appeal to the Presbytery; if a congregationalist, he shall have liberty to appeal to the body of the male communicants of the church; in the former case the determination of the Presbytery shall be final, unless the church consent to a further appeal to the Synod or to the General Assembly; and in the latter case, if the party condemned shall wish for a trial by a mutual council, the cause shall be referred to such council. And provided the said standing committee of any church, shall depute one of themselves to attend the Presbytery, he may have the same right to sit and act in the Presbytery, as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church.

On motion resolved, that an attested copy of the above plan be made by the stated clerk, and put into the hands of the delegates of this Assembly to the General Association, to be by them laid before that body for their consideration, and that if it should be approved by them, it go into immediate operation.

The Assembly proceeded to make choice of delegates from this body, to the General Association of Connecticut to meet at Litchfield, on the third Tuesday of January, when the Revd. Doct. M^r Knight, the Revd. Archibald Alexander and John B. Linn, were duly chosen, and the stated clerk was directed to furnish them with an attested copy of this minute, which shall be their commission for attending on the duties of said appointment.

A letter was read from the Revd. Ira Condit, President, and the Revd. Isaac Labagh and Wilhelmus Etinge, Clerks of the General Synod of the reformed Dutch church, inclosing an extract from the proceedings of that body respecting the plan of intercourse and correspondence between the General Assembly, the Associate reformed Synod, and the said General Synod of the Dutch church, in which said Synod expresses a resolution not to concur in the abovementioned plan.

The Presbyteries of Winchester, Hanover and Lexington, agreeably to order reported their opinion, respecting the constitu-

tional alteration proposed by the Assembly, which opinion was, that the said alteration ought to be made.

The Presbytery of Newcastle reported as their opinion that the said alteration ought not to be made.

The Presbyteries of New Brunswick and Ohio reported, that, agreeably to order, they had drawn up histories of their respective Presbyteries, which were produced and laid on the table.

Several other Presbyteries reported that they had made considerable progress in compliance with said order—

Ordered, That they proceed to complete the same as soon as convenient; and that all the Presbyteries who have not attended to said order be careful to forward the histories which they were directed to prepare, to the next General Assembly.

On motion, resolved, That the Assembly will proceed on Wednesday morning next to enter into a full and free conversation on the state of religion within their bounds.

The Assembly entered into a free conversation on the state of religion, when after having gone through the same, Dr. Woodhull, Mr. M'Millan, and Mr. Archibald Alexander, were appointed a committee to draw up a general statement on this subject—who, the following day made report, which was read and approved, and is as follows:

The Assembly having heard a circumstantial narrative from almost every one of its members, on the state of religion in his own charge and in other places to which his observation had extended, are of opinion, that in general the cause of religion has been progressive, and in some places eminently so. In some places infidelity does not assume that bold and threatening aspect which it did for some years past, but seems to be in some measure abashed and disposed to retire into its former state of concealment. In some instances avowed and inveterate enemies to christianity have been remarkably converted, and have become to all appearance, sincere and lively christians.

From many of their churches the General Assembly have heard the most pleasing accounts of the state of vital piety. Revivals of a more or less general nature, have taken place in many parts, and multitudes have been added to the church. In the northern and eastern Presbyteries, there appears in several congregations, a serious attention to the great things of religion; and its interests appear evidently to be advancing. In several of their churches "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" have been experienced. Sinners have been brought to repentance, and saints have been comforted and edified. And these pleasing appearances in some instances still continue. From the west the Assembly have received intelligence of the most interesting nature. On

the borders of Kentucky and Tennessee, the influences of the Spirit of God seem to have been manifested in a very extraordinary manner. Many circumstances attending this work are unusual: And though it is probable that some irregularities may have taken place; yet, from the information which the Assembly have received, they cannot but exceedingly rejoice in the abundant evidence given them that God has visited that people, and poured out his Spirit remarkably upon them.

In the middle and southern Presbyteries appearances are not so encouraging. For though in some of their churches religion flourishes, yet in many others, the wise and foolish virgins are slumbering together; iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold. Ignorance, vice and infidelity, do, in many parts of our country, still prevail.

The new settlements on our frontiers appear very desirous to have the gospel preached amongst them, and our missionaries who have visited them do not appear to have laboured without success. Good impressions have, not unfrequently, been made, and churches are rapidly forming, which will soon need settled pastors.

The intelligence which the Assembly have received from the heathen tribes is very pleasing, viz.

That there is amongst them a willingness, yea an ardent desire, to have the gospel preached to them: their prejudices seem to be removed, and many important obstacles are surmounted. Some of their chief men have offered to commit their sons to Presbyteries and Missionary Societies, in order that they may be instructed, not only in the arts of civilized life, but also in the principles of the christian religion.

The prospect of the conversion of the Indians is now more flattering than it has ever been before. The wilderness already begins to bud, and it is hoped will soon blossom like the rose. The solitary cottage of the wandering savage will, the Assembly trust, be soon gladdened by the reception of the glorious Redeemer, with whom there is no difference between the Jew and Greek, between the barbarous and refined; for he is the "Saviour of all men," and the "propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world."

The committee appointed to prepare a general statement as the result of the reports made by the agent of the Assembly for soliciting donations, made a report, which was read and approved as follows:

"The committee appointed to draught a general statement as the result of the reports of the agents for soliciting donations, and propose the proper compensation to be made to the agents employed in this business:

REPORT—

That they have examined the accounts of the agents, and discover no errors therein.

That the amount of subscriptions procured and reported, is,

	<i>Dls. Cts.</i>		<i>Dls. Cts.</i>
By Mr. Clark,	6869 47;	whereof is uncollected,	523 25
Dr. Green,	2124 70;	Do.	1024 80
Dr. Tennent,	1476 11½;	Do.	37
Mr. Cathcart,	1889 64;	} whereof the whole has been collected.	

Whole amount,	<u>12,359 92½</u>	Uncollected,	<u>1515 4</u>
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In addition to the above sum mentioned as being uncollected, Mr. Clark states that there are several sums (due from Springfield, Westfield, New Providence, Morristown, Mendham, Allentown and Boundbrook) which are uncollected, but as there has been no final settlement of their subscriptions and he is not in possession of the lists, the amount uncollected from those churches cannot now be ascertained.

The compensations to your agents are to be deducted from the subscriptions which have been collected. In considering these your committee took into their view the distance travelled by the agents respectively, the nature of the country through which they travelled, whereby their labour would be increased, or otherwise, the expence incident to different routs, and other circumstances; and upon the whole, are of opinion that the following allowances ought to be made to the agents, in full for their time, services and expences, viz.

	<i>Dls. Cts.</i>	<i>Dls. Cts.</i>
To Mr. Clark, - - -		250 0
Mr. Cathcart, - - -	150 0	
Deduct charged by him for his expences and deducted from his account of collections, - - -	65 63	
Balance to be paid Mr. Cathcart. ———		84 37
To Dr. Tennent, - - -	100 0	
Deduct his expences being deducted by him from his account of collections, - - -	35 0	
Balance to be paid Dr. Tennent. ———		65 0
To Dr. Green, - - -		50 0

Upon these principles the account will stand as follows, viz.

<i>Dr. The Trustees of the Assembly,</i>		<i>Cr.</i>	
<i>Dls.</i>	<i>Cts.</i>	<i>Dls.</i>	<i>Cts.</i>
To amount of compensations to the agents,	} 550 0	By amount of subscriptions,	} 12,359 92½
To amount of subscriptions uncollected as above,		By Ditto of Springfield &c.	
		Balance due the Trustees.	

The committee would do injustice both to the merits of the agents, and their own feelings, were they not to add, that from the accounts and reports laid before them, it appears evidently that the gentlemen to whom the business of procuring subscriptions was committed, have prosecuted it with such commendable attention, diligence and zeal as, besides the pecuniary allowance proposed, justly entitle them to a reward more grateful to generous minds—the thanks of this Assembly.”

June 1, 1801.

The report of the committee to prepare a statement from the agents of the last year and to settle the compensations of the same, was again taken up and reconsidered, two thirds of the Assembly agreeing to it; when the farther sum of one hundred dollars was added to the compensation of Mr. Clark.

On motion, resolved, That the stated Clerk and Treasurer of the Assembly, with Mr. Hazard, be a committee to add to the printed extracts such statements of the subscriptions lately received, as the materials in their hands may enable them to make, and they may judge proper.

A LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

For gospelizing the Indians, and for other pious uses, proposed by the General Assembly; so far as returns have been received.

	<i>Dolls.</i>	<i>Cts.</i>
New York,	2276	87
Newark,	642	31
Elizabethtown,	316	60
Orange Dale,	123	
Connecticut Farms,	114	74
Springfield,	120	60
Westfield,	68	75
New Providence,	27	
Morristown,	105	
Carried over.	—————	3,794 87

Brought forward,		Dolls.	Cts.	3,794 87
Mendum,		130		
Hanover,		17	75	
South Hanover,		109	14	
Raway,		22	25	
Woodbridge,		124		
Metuchen,		200		
Lamington,		261	50	
Balkenridge,		134	25	
Boundbrook,		145	5	
New Brunswick,		329	25	
Kingston,		132	50	
Princeton,		287	90	
Students of New Jersey College,		151		
Maidenhead,		75	25	
Trenton,		230	75	
Trenton 1st Church,		70	20	
Pennington,		111		
Nottingham,		73		
Allentown,		77	56	
Cranberry,		235	50	
Freehold,		107		
Shrewsbury,		49	50	
Middletown Point,		41	50	
Congregations under the care of the Revd. Dr. Tennent,	}	104	50	
Newton and Bensalem,		24	4	
Philadelphia,				
1st Presbyterian Church,	200			
2d Do.	Do. 1396			1896
3d Do.	Do. 300			
Lancaster,		161		
Donnegal,		34	50	
York and Hopewell,		114	25	
Carlisle,		111	20	
Sherman's Valley,		70		
Upper Connecocheague		67	20	
Marsh Creek,		65		
Lower Do.		46	62	
Big Spring,		41	50	
Monrohan and Silver Spring,		43		
pring,		42	50	
pring,		37	80	
ried over,				9,769 83

Brought forward,		9,769 83	
	Dolls.	Cts.	
Tuscarora, &c,	21		
Piny Creek,	17	98	
Harrisburgh,	16	50	
Chambersburgh,	15		
Lower Cannachochoy,	5		
Hanover,	10		
Wilmington, (Del.)			
1st Presbyterian Church,	100	} 138	
2d Do. Do.	38		
New Castle,	90		
Christiana Bridge,	56	37	
St George's,	113	50	
Pencader,	45	50	
Sundry places,	28		
Dover and its vicinity,	110	9	
Kent and Suffex,	31		
Somerfet and Do.	326	35	
Somerfet,	101	62½	
Worcester,	231	18	
St. George's Hundred,	20		
Other places in Delaware,	80		
Baltimore City,	536		
Annapolis,	109	75	
City of Washington,	109	6	
Alexandria,	103	50	
Frederick,	61	28	
Georgetown,	50		
A Gentleman from Cape May,	4	66	
A Gentleman of the Protestant			
Episcopal Church, in South	} 100		
Carolina,			
Donations from sundry individuals,	100		
			2,590 9½
			12,359 92½

The committee appointed to enquire of the Treasurer of the General Assembly what had been done with respect to certain copies of the Confessions of Faith ordered to be sent by him to the frontier settlements, reported, that it appears that said books have been disposed of agreeably to order, viz.—100 copies of the Confession of Faith, and 50 copies of the printed extracts of the Assembly's proceedings, were sent to James Hathaway, Esq. at Fort Stanwix: The same number of Confessions and extracts to Messrs.

Evans and Gordon, at Geneva: 50 copies of the Confession of Faith and 30 of the printed extracts, to Dr. John Hopkins, at Tioga Point: The same number of each to Matthias Hollenback, Esq. of Wilkesbarre: and 40 copies of the extracts to the Revd. Mr. Perine: That some of the said copies have been received by the persons to whom they were sent, and it is uncertain whether the others have been received or not.

The Assembly resumed the consideration of the communication from the Trustees of the General Assembly, and having gone through the same, thereupon resolved,

1. That the monies obtained in consequence of the system adopted by the Assembly of the last year, for soliciting contributions for the support of missionaries, and for other objects specified in their act, and all such monies as may be hereafter received for the same objects, (except the customary annual collections, which it is hoped will still continue to be made as usual) be regarded as a capital stock, which shall, at no time, be broken in upon or diminished; and that it be vested agreeably to a recommendation herein after made, in secure and permanent funds.

2. That the interest only arising from the capital, together with the annual collections, and other donations, made with the express design of their being expended within the year, be employed in supporting missionaries, in propagating the gospel among the Indians, instructing the black people, and in purchasing pious books to be distributed among the poor, or in maintaining, when the Assembly shall think themselves competent to the object, Theological Schools, and for such other pious and benevolent purposes as may hereafter be deemed expedient.

3. That for farther augmenting the funds of the corporation, a foundation for which is already so happily laid, it is hereby earnestly recommended to the several Presbyteries under the care of the Assembly, except where agents are appointed by the Assembly, to take effectual order, by appointing agents or otherwise as to them shall seem most expedient, for obtaining from all the congregations within their bounds, whether vacant or supplied with pastors, and as far as possible from each person belonging to our communion, as well as from persons belonging to other denominations who may be disposed to favour the objects contemplated, (except those who have already contributed) such voluntary contributions as God may put into their hearts to make; and of their fidelity and success herein to render an account to the next General Assembly. And in addition to the arrangement here specified, this Assembly determine to appoint an agent or agents to solicit donations in places where the order of our church is not fully established, or where there is a prospect of obtaining aid to funds appropriated

to objects so important to the interests of religion and good morals, as those to which the funds contemplated are destined. And that it be referred to the Synod of Virginia, and the Synod of the Carolinas, to consider whether it be most adviseable that the missionary business, as it has respect to the Synod of the Carolinas, and the Synod of Virginia, be conducted in future in the manner in which it has been for some time past, or whether it would not be more adviseable that their funds should be put into those of the General Assembly, and the missionary business in those parts wholly managed by them, and that the said Synods report on this subject to the next Assembly.

4. That, in order to encourage farther contributions for the pious ends heretofore mentioned, and to satisfy the public mind with regard to the wise and faithful application of the monies already obtained, the Assembly will publish yearly, along with their printed extracts, a full and particular account of all the contributions received, and of all appropriations made.

5. That there be made a purchase of as many cheap and pious books as a due regard to the other objects of the Assembly's funds will admit, with the view of distributing them not only along the frontiers of these States, but also among the poorer classes of people, and the blacks, or wherever it is thought useful: which books shall be given away, or lent, at the discretion of the distributor; and that there be received from Mr. Robert Aitken, towards the discharge of his debt, books to such amount as shall appear proper to the Trustees of the Assembly, who are hereby requested to take proper measures for the distribution of the same.

6. That the funds which are at present in the hands of the corporation be employed principally in increasing the number of missionaries, and extending the blessings of the gospel by their labours through a greater scope of country.

7. That in order to attain one important object of the contributions (the instruction of the blacks,) Mr. John Chavis a black man of prudence and piety, who has been educated and licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Lexington in Virginia, be employed as a missionary among people of his own colour, until the meeting of the next General Assembly; and that for his better direction in the discharge of duties which are attended with many circumstances of delicacy and difficulty, some prudential instructions be issued to him by the Assembly, governing himself by which, the knowledge of religion among that people may be made more and more to strengthen the order of society: And the Rev. Messrs. Hoge, Alexander, Logan, and Stephenson, were appointed a committee to draught instructions to said John Chavis, and prescribe his route.

8. That the General Assembly may be regularly, and as completely as possible, possessed of all the information requisite to direct their proceedings in the great work of extending religious instructions to the uninstructed parts of our country—Resolved, that, in place of all other reports required of Presbyteries respecting the articles herein after enumerated, it be enjoined, and it is hereby enjoined on all the Presbyteries under the care of this General Assembly, carefully to inform themselves, and to instruct their delegates to the next General Assembly to report to that body, on the following subjects :

(1.) Respecting the Indian tribes on our frontiers: their apparent disposition for civilization, and for receiving religious instruction—what means may have been used with them, and the success of those means from time to time.

(2) Respecting our frontier settlement of white people; giving every information of these settlements, which may be of use to direct in carrying on missionary labours amongst them, pointing out particularly those parts to which religious books should be sent, for gratuitous distribution, and the persons in or near to those parts, to whose care said books should be sent.

(3.) Respecting those parts in the interior of our country, that are in a great degree, or wholly destitute of the means of religious instruction—giving as familiar a view of such destitute portions of our country as may be of any use in directing the mode of giving them relief, and the extent of the relief required. Also pointing out to what parts, and to what persons, in or near those parts, religious books should be sent for gratuitous distribution.

(4.) Respecting the black people, designating particularly, the places where, and the manner in which it would be most advisable to attempt their instruction, by the aid of our public funds.

(5.) That the respective Presbyteries also report to the next Assembly all such persons under their care as are proper to be employed, and may be procured to serve as missionaries to the Indian tribes—to the frontier settlements—to the destitute portions of the interior: And that they be especially careful to report none for these services but those of whose meetness for the work they have entire satisfaction.

The report of the committee of missions was again taken up and considered, when the following statement and recommendations, as the result of the journals read by the missionaries, were received and adopted, viz.

That from their journals it appears that the missionaries proceeded on the respective routes prescribed to them by the last General Assembly, and that they have been diligent and laborious in discharging the duties of their missions—they have preached the gos-

pel in season and out of season, and often to solemn assemblies. They have in several instances, administered the Lord's supper, and baptized numbers of children and several adults. They have visited from house to house, and conversed with families and individuals on serious and religious subjects. There is a solemn and increasing attention to the great realities of religion, in many parts of the country through which they have travelled. Numbers, since the last year, have been added to the communion of the church. On the whole, your committee are of opinion that the prospect of usefulness in prosecuting the missionary business is still increasing. There are many towns on the frontiers which appear to be able to support the stated ministrations of the gospel, among which the following appear to demand particular attention—Wyoming, Newtown, Aurelius, Milton, Homer, Bloomfield, and Charlestown, each able to support a settled pastor; Bath and Post-town, united; Lackawack, in connection with Canaan and Cherry-Ridge; Hartford and Genessee, united; Romulus and Washington, united; Sachequin and Tioga Point, united.

The country of the Natchez appears to demand the particular attention of the Assembly. The missionary sent thither by the last Assembly, and those who were sent with him by the Synod of the Carolinas, performed the service to which they were appointed, with great judgment, diligence and success; and a door seems to be happily opened for publishing the true gospel in a country lately destitute of it.

The committee think it of high importance that the mission to the said country be continued.”*

The committee take the liberty to suggest the propriety of enjoining upon all the missionaries employed by the Assembly, to inculcate upon those settlements which they visit, the importance of settling the gospel ministry among them, and that they also urge upon all the frontier settlements, and especially upon those above mentioned, the necessity of contributing to the support of those ministers who are sent among them by the Assembly. The committee would farther recommend, that missionaries be instructed to enquire particularly after the small settlements which, on account of their obscurity or infancy, may have been hitherto overlooked and neglected by former missionaries, and that, unless otherwise directed by the stated missionary, they designate to themselves convenient circuits, comprehending several settlements, in which they may successively and repeatedly preach and perform other ministerial duties; and that, in all places where they travel, they shall spend as much time as possible in visiting from house to house, and

* See Appendix.

conversing with individuals on the most important subjects of practical religion."

The Revd. Peter Fish, of the Presbytery of Albany, was appointed a missionary for six months, in the country of Oneida and its vicinity. The Revd. Robert H Chapman was appointed a missionary, for two months, on the Susquehannah, from Salem to Sashequin, inclusive. And the Revd. Jonas Coes was appointed a missionary for six weeks, on the west side of Lake Champlain, and such other settlements as he may think proper to visit.

The Revd. Mr. Hillyer was appointed missionary on the frontiers, for two or three months; to take that route which Mr. Hillyer, by and with the advice of the stated missionary, shall judge most useful.

The Revd. Mr. Alexander was appointed a missionary for six months, in Virginia, and in the State of Georgia, at such time and in such a manner as the state of his health will admit; and he was also appointed to solicit donations for the use of the General Assembly.

The Revd. Messrs. Logan and Grigsby were appointed missionaries for two months, to itinerate through the lower part of Virginia, and also to solicit donations.

The Revd. Mr. Janeway was appointed a missionary for two months, in the Peninsula between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays, at discretion.

And the Assembly recommend to the Presbytery of New Castle, to send one or two more missionaries into the same district of country, for some months during the present year; and if possible, such missionaries as might be likely to settle as pastors of congregations.

The Assembly earnestly recommend it to the Synod of the Carolinas, to send one or more missionaries to the Natchez, the ensuing fall; and the Assembly did engage to assist in making compensation for the same, if the funds of the Synod should be inadequate for the purpose.

Resolved, that the compensation to missionaries for the present year be 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per month; and that they account for all the monies received by them.

The commission of the Synod of Virginia, on the west side of the Alleghany Mountains, reported, that during the last year, they sent out six missionaries, two to Detroit, who reported favourably of the disposition of the people there to receive the gospel. They have met with a young Indian, who express'd a great desire of obtaining learning, whom they brought with them on their return, and who now appears to be seriously exercised about the great concerns of his immortal soul.

Two others were sent to Cornplanter, chief of the Seneca's; he received them kindly, and it is expected that some of his young

people will come in during the ensuing summer, in order to be instructed.

Two others were sent to the settlements on the Muskingum. In the course of the last winter the commission opened a subscription, and have a prospect of obtaining something considerable for the support of missionaries to preach the gospel in the frontier settlements and among the Indians.

The Synod of the Carolinas reported, that they have sent two missionaries in company with the Revd. James Hall, to the Natchez; and that they have enjoined upon the respective Presbyteries under their care, to make every possible exertion to raise contributions for the support of these missionaries.

The Assembly proceeded to appoint agents for soliciting farther donations for aiding the funds of the corporation, when the Revd. Dr. Cooper and the Revd. Mr. Patterson were appointed to solicit donations in the bounds of the Presbytery of Huntington, and the Revd. Robert Smith was appointed to solicit donations for the same purpose in the State of Georgia.

The Revd. Mr. Bogart was appointed an agent to solicit donations for the General Assembly, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Long Island.

The Revd. Messrs. John B. Linn and Phillip Milledoler, were appointed agents in connection with Dr. Green, to solicit farther donations for the General Assembly in the city of Philadelphia and parts adjacent, and the Revd. Mr. Irwin to complete the business of soliciting donations in that part of Mr. Clarke's district which was not gone through by him, and in such other places as Mr. Irwin may judge proper.

A complaint and appeal of the Revd. Thomas Ledlie Birch, against certain proceedings of the Presbytery of Ohio, in the case of Mr. Birch, particularly for refusing to receive him as a member of their body, on the ground of a supposed want of acquaintance with experimental religion, together with a representation of the congregation of Washington in the bounds of said Presbytery, on the same subject, was brought in by the committee of bills and overtures. On motion, resolved, that the Assembly will proceed on Monday morning next, to hear said complaint and appeal.

The Assembly, according to the resolution of Friday last, proceeded to hear the complaint and appeal of the Revd. Mr. Birch, against the Presbytery of Ohio with respect to certain proceedings in his case, the parties being heard at full length withdrew.

The Assembly resumed the consideration of the complaint and appeal of Mr. Birch. when, after mature consideration of the subject, it was on motion resolved, That no evidence of censurable procedure in the Presbytery of Ohio, in the case of Mr. Birch,

has appeared to this house, inasmuch as there is a discretionary power necessarily lodged in every Presbytery to judge of the qualification of those whom they receive, especially with respect to experimental religion; but the Assembly, for the purpose of affording to Mr. Birch every relief which the nature of the case admits, did determine, if it is his desire, to proceed to his examination, agreeably to the rules of the Assembly in such cases made and provided. It was agreed that the said examination be deferred till a future session of the Assembly.

Mr. Birch having expressed a desire that the Assembly would undertake his examination, agreeably to the resolution of yesterday; the Assembly proceeded to examine Mr. Birch on his experimental acquaintance with religion, when, after a full and free conversation with him on this subject, the Assembly adjourned.

The consideration of Mr. Birch's examination was resumed, when after maturely deliberating on the subject it was resolved, that from the full and free conversation which the Assembly have had with Mr. Birch upon his experimental acquaintance with religion, they find no obstruction against any Presbytery to which he may apply taking him up and proceeding with him agreeably to the rules and regulations in this case made and provided.

Whereas it has too frequently happened, that members of this Assembly, neglecting their duty and inattentive to the rules of decorum, have abruptly left the Assembly and returned home without leave of absence.

RESOLVED—

That in all similar cases which shall occur in future, it shall be the duty of the clerk of this house to give notice thereof to the Presbyteries to which such delinquent members may belong And That it be recommended to the said Presbyteries, in their settlements with such delinquents, not to allow them any compensation for services as members of the Assembly.

RESOLVED—

That this General Assembly be dissolved, and that the next General Assembly be required to meet in the first Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, on the third Thursday of May, in the year of our Lord 1803, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

Whereupon the moderator dissolved the Assembly agreeably to the form prescribed by the constitution, and concluded with prayer.

APPENDIX.

[*THE* Committee appointed to publish the extracts from the minutes of the General Assembly for the present year, supposing that the readers of them would be much gratified by a sight of the very judicious and sensible Address made by the Missionaries to the Natchez, to the inhabitants of the Mississippi Territory, have thought proper to add it by way of Appendix. Should any think that evangelical motives have not been sufficiently suggested in it, they are informed, that the state of society in that country is such, that there are, comparatively, but few of the inhabitants who appear to have just ideas of the moral influence of the Gospel on the human heart, and therefore that such an address as the present, was better calculated than one of a different nature, to attract the attention of those to whom it was made, and thus pave the way for the more easy and effectual admission of gospel truth; and that this was assigned by the Missionaries themselves, as the reason why they thus constructed it.]



An Address

TO THE

Citizens of the Mississippi Territory,

BY THE

MISSIONARIES

FROM THE SOUTHERN STATES.



Friends and Fellow Citizens,

THE united principles of duty and gratitude conspire to bring forward this public expression of the obligations under which we feel ourselves to you for that cordial reception you have given us, and that friendly

and polite attention with which we have been uniformly treated since our arrival in this territory.

These obligations have been much enhanced by the number and respectability of your committee, lately convened in this place, and the energetic measures which they have adopted and recommended to their constituents, and which, we hope, under the divine auspices, will give energy to our ministrations.

Under these impressions, and confiding in your good opinion of our real desire to promote your best interests, we hope you will consider us as engaged in the discharge of our ministerial duty, when we suggest to you the following considerations, and recommend them to your serious perusal.

The experience of all ages has proved, that principles either of honour, patriotism or private interest, have been too capricious in their nature, as well as too feeble, effectually to promote public utility and social happiness. Those who have tried principles of philosophy have not been more successful. Hence all governments in civilized nations have made it their business to inculcate religion on their citizens, as well with a view to the interest of the public as to personal happiness.

It would be little better than an insult on the understanding of a people, who make such exertions as are now making in this territory for the propagation of revealed religion, to bring forward to their view proofs of its divine authority.

This, therefore, being granted as an acknowledged principle, we proceed to observe, that whatever is conducive to the happiness of the social state is inculcated in the sacred scriptures.

Let the most impartial reasoner take a view of the moral law, which contains an epitome of those duties which we owe to God and man, and he will acknowledge that if those precepts were made the unerring standard of conduct by every member of society, this would tend to

universal happiness and good order; and would entirely supercede the necessity of human laws; but let the opposite line of conduct be adopted, and the evident consequences would be disorder and misery. It will then follow, that to make the sacred scriptures the rule of conduct is a certain way to ensure social, as well as individual happiness.

This problem then requires a solution, Why is that system, obedience to which is so essentially connected with human happiness, not more generally observed as the rule of conduct? Probably no better reason can be assigned than want of reverence to its divine author. Were this divine principle duly felt and cultivated, we should love the Lord with all our hearts—and our neighbours as ourselves. Then would a sense of the divine presence, of our obligations and responsibility to God, be constant and powerful motives to deter us from the practice of those crimes which the word of God forbids, and to perform those duties which it enjoins. This is laying a solid and permanent foundation for our own happiness, and as far as the conduct of individuals can have influence, contributing to the public interest.

No fact has been more fully demonstrated, than that human laws are too feeble in their operations, notwithstanding all that terror which they hold out, to restrain the corrupt passions of men, and suppress those crimes against which they denounce even capital punishment.—For this various reasons may be assigned——want of ability in the rulers to detect crimes, want of power to punish offenders, the necessity which sometimes occurs of relaxing the rules of justice for political reasons, partiality towards culprits &c. by all of which many gross and aggravated crimes escape deserved punishment. But none of these can apply to Him whose throne is founded in judgment, and the sceptre of whose kingdoms is an untarnished sceptre of righteousness. None can elude his scrutiny or evade his power; for he searches the heart

and tries the reins, to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Hence it will follow, that it is only a realizing sense of the universality of God's government, our obligations to obey his laws and the inflexibility of his justice, which can give security for good morals, and ensure personal and social happiness. This sense is inseparably connected with the principles of religion, and will influence the heart and motives of action, as well as the external conduct.

Besides, the principles of religion will prevent many crimes which human laws cannot reach, such as ingratitude to benefactors, want of charity to the poor, disobedience and other breaches of filial duty to parents, luxury and prodigality in the consumption of property, many species of frauds, calumny, games of hazard, profaneness &c. together with intoxication, and many other crimes which cannot be made objects of legislative authority, and yet are equally destructive of personal and social happiness, with many of those which lie within the sphere of legislation.

When crimes of whatever species become general, they then become more formidable to society than when perpetrated only by solitary individuals; because union always gives strength to a party in proportion to its number, and among crimes of this description, few, if any have a worse influence on society than these three: The breach of God's holy sabbath, profane swearing, and the intemperate use of ardent spirits.

A few words on each of these will be sufficient to show their pernicious effects.

A disrespect to the duties of the sabbath is an indication of contempt of that authority which has commanded us to "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy."—And as this precept is specially directed to heads of families and other public persons, those in such departments who countenance a breach of that holy day, either by precept, example, or even connivance, must be most culpa-

ble. Hence appears the duty of ministers of the gospel and civil magistrates; as the former are set as examples for the flock, and the latter as a terror to evil doers and a praise to them who do well; and it would be equally preposterous to see the one or the other engaged in the profanation of that holy day. Besides, the weekly sabbath may be considered as one principal pillar of revealed religion: for we may venture to assert, that without such a periodical day, carrying in its institution the stamp of divine authority, social public worship could never have been kept up, and with that must have ceased the other ordinances of the gospel; for human authority, which is always changeable in its measures, would never have had energy enough either to establish a certain day, or a certain proportion of time for religious exercises. It will therefore follow, that those whose conduct militates against the force of the above precept, militates against the whole system of revealed religion; and we have reason to believe, that to this very source may be traced much of that infidelity which now prevails in the world.

Profane swearing carries in its front the most glaring evidences of an abandoned character, hardened in impiety; as it shows a total irreverence for the great and dreadful name of GOD, and contempt of his authority; and gives an indication that the swearer, in his own estimation, has, by some means, forfeited his right, in the view of his auditors, to credibility on his simple affirmation; therefore, in order to gain credit from them, he thinks it is necessary to call upon God to witness the truth of his assertions. Such a line of conduct, even independently of its criminality, must be equally degrading to the gentleman and the christian.

Besides, oaths being a part of that religious homage which God exclusively claims as his own, profane swearing tends to relax their obligation by destroying their solemnity, and weakening that confidence which one part of society ought to repose in another, and which is so in-

dispensably necessary, both in judicial testimony and the usual discharge of social duties. Moreover, it may be doubtful whether the profane swearer is more to be believed when he is called to take a judicial oath, than when he swears by the sacred name in common conversation.

Drunkenness is the parent of many evils both natural and moral. How many strong and healthful constitutions do we see broken down by it? How many useful, public characters, men of brilliant talents, improved by all the advantages of a liberal education and polite literature, who have spent many years to qualify themselves for useful and honorable departments, have, after all, debased themselves by that abominable vice below the inferior animals, become the objects of compassion to all around them who possess humane and manly feelings, of grief to their connections and derision to the rabble of the streets!

How much poverty, discord and misery, do we see in many families, arising from the intemperance of wretched fathers, in places where this crime predominates? How unhappy must the state of that family be, who, instead of meeting the fond embraces of a complacent husband and father, returning from abroad, are struck with terror at the approach of a savage monster. All must toy, soothe, flatter, until he be laid to sleep; then nothing above a whisper must be spoken, lest the tyrant be roused. This is but a faint picture of the natural evils which attend this crime.

No less numerous, and much more dreadful, are the moral evils with which it is attended.—Witness the quarrels and fightings, the volleys of oaths and fearful imprecations, together with the horrid profanations of the sabbath; yea, many cruel and aggravated murders and other enormous crimes, which may be traced back to the intemperate use of spiritous liquors as their origin.

The force of the foregoing observations, it is presumed, must be felt even by those who make no pretensions to religion; and such must acknowledge the truth of So-

lomon's observation, that "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people."

Were it possible for any of the human race so far to degrade themselves, by depraving the moral principle, as to imagine that they will drop into non existence at death, with their brute animals that carry them to their scenes of debauchery, even they must acknowledge, that the sober, temperate man, who has established such a character for veracity that his word is believed equally with his oath, not only lives the most happy life; but that his example, as far as its influence extends, has vastly the happiest effect on society. And those who will take time to reflect, that the day is coming "in which all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," must acknowledge, that those who have denied themselves to "all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and have lived soberly, righteously and godly in the present world," shall finally reap the advantage.

The above considerations, dear brethren, are affectionately submitted to your serious perusal, under the persuasion that they will be read with that spirit of candor and brotherly regard with which we are conscious they are now communicated; believing you will join with us in saying, that the ways of piety are ways of pleasantness and all its paths peace. Should a general experiment be made among you on this divine maxim, you may be assured that its happy effects will soon be felt both by individuals and societies.

Then will industry, frugality and sobriety, together with every moral and christian virtue abound among you. Gaming tables will not be known, taverns will have few unnecessary visitants. The Lord's day will be religiously observed, his churches frequented, and the gospel of the holy Jesus cordially embraced. The hearts of his ministers will be encouraged, and their hands strengthened.

'Then will our labours be comfortable to ourselves, and, we hope, profitable to you. We shall then be able to give a favourable report of the religious state of your territory, to our fathers and brethren, who have sent us on such an arduous mission; the friends of religion and good morals will be encouraged, votaries for vice will become ashamed of their crimes; and even should they continue in the practice of them, will retire with them into darkness. The minds of your children will not be poisoned, nor their morals corrupted, by such pests of society as we have already described; but piety and virtue will predominate, "judgment shall run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

That piety and good morals may abound among you, that you may long enjoy the blessings of peace, and be secured in the possession of your civil and religious rights, which are so dear to every American, is the unfeigned wish and ardent desire of

Dear Brethren, your affectionate friends,
and servants in the gospel,

JAMES HALL, Jun.
JAMES BOWMAN,
WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

Natchez, Feb. 20th, 1801.











