

XVI.

THE

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

Young Men's

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF SOUTH-CAROLINA.

Read and accepted May 28, 1821.



Charleston :

GOULD AND RILEY, PRINTERS, 20 BROAD-STREET.

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REPORT.

THE committee appointed by a resolution of the Board to draft a report of the proceedings of the Society, from its commencement to the present period, respectfully report:—

On the first of the year 1820, a number of pious persons were impressed with the necessity of sending the Gospel of salvation to the destitute parts of South-Carolina; and, believing that ample resources might be found, a meeting was called on the 20th Jan. of the same year. This meeting was respectably attended; and a committee appointed to draft a constitution, for the consideration of a subsequent meeting—to be held on the 27th. At this meeting, the constitution, under which we now act, was adopted; and officers elected to carry its provisions into effect.

On the 3d of February, the first Board of Managers assembled, and immediately entered on the duties of their election, by the adoption of suitable measures, for procuring additional support, both in members and donations; they authorized a correspondence with individuals in this State, and with similar associations, in other parts of the United States, on subjects best calculated to promote its welfare; and adopted a form of constitution for Auxiliary Societies.

On the 13th of April, the Society in general, and the Board in particular, were requested to wear the usual mark of mourning in consequence of the death

of NATHANIEL RUSSELL, Esq. an honorary member of the Board—and one whose whole life had been devoted to the cause of religion and humanity. He died full of years and full of glory;—and descended to the tomb, after a well spent life, in full belief of happiness in “another and a better world.”

On the 8th of May, the Society held their first anniversary, when the balance in the hands of the Treasurer was \$51 44. On the first of June, the first Committee of Missions was organized, and authorized by the Board, to procure two missionaries for the ensuing winter. Shortly afterwards, in conjunction with the FEMALE DOMESTIC MISSIONARY SOCIETY, measures were adopted for procuring a missionary to labour exclusively for the interest of Sabbath Schools, and such other purposes as were thought best calculated to promote the cause of religion in this city. This measure was, however, subsequently abandoned, as the Reverend Gentleman, (Mr. T. OSBORNE,) who had received the call, declined accepting it.

On the 2d of July, the first annual discourse was preached in Trinity Church, by the Rev. MR. BOIES, and \$111 collected in aid of the funds of the Institution.

On the 25th July, the Society and the Board suffered a severe loss, in the resignation of their worthy president, in consequence of his removal from this city. He had presided over their councils with the devotedness of a Christian, and had sedulously watched over them with the fondness of a father. He took with him the inseparable esteem and regard of the members, and their ardent prayers that he might be guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit, in his future preparations for the Gospel ministry.

On the 14th August, at the quarterly meeting of the Society, the funds amounted to \$ 186 32;—but there were, at that time, 63 members in arrears. This deficiency induced the Board to revoke their previous call for *two* missionaries, and to employ but *one*.

On the 16th Sept. a call was ordered to be made to the Rev. MR. NETTLETON, on a pledge having been given to the Board, (by two of its most active members) to raise the sum of \$ 400 for his support. He was intended to labour in this city, and particularly to forward the great object of Sabbath Schools. This call Mr. N. subsequently declined to accept. About this time the Board adopted very judicious measures to promote a reciprocity of interest and exertions with other similar Societies already established in Charleston.

On the 25th September, a letter was received from Professor PORTER, of Andover, (who had been previously written to to procure a missionary for the Society) informing the Board of the choice he had made, which met with their entire confidence and cordial approbation.

On the 27th November, an increase was made to the funds, by the liberal donation of \$ 100 76—this sum having been received from a benevolent source.

On the 3d December, a resolution was adopted authorizing a call to the Rev. JOSEPH BROWN, as the Society's missionary, which he accepted on the 3th; and measures were taken for procuring his ordination. As this could not be done until the first of January, he was directed, in the mean time, to proceed to Beaufort, and to preach the Gospel in the intermediate places, wherever congregations could be collected.

On the 1st of January the Recording Secretary, (an active and diligent young Gentleman, and who had the interest of the Society much at heart) resigned his office, in consequence of his removal from the city, to prepare himself, by a course of education, for the Gospel ministry.

On the 3d January, Mr. BROWN received his instructions to labour in Newberry and Edgefield Districts, and Beach Island; to take up collections, as well as solicit contributions, in aid of the Society; and to form Auxiliary Societies whenever practicable.

Nothing material appears to have occurred from this time, until the Anniversary of the Society, on the 14th inst. A letter had been received from the Corresponding Secretary of the YOUNG MEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF NEW-YORK, and other letters from the Society's missionary—but for the operations of the last, you are referred to the annexed Appendix.

At the Anniversary meeting on the 14th inst. the Treasurer reported that the cash received during the last year amounted to

	\$410 20
Cash paid during that period,	240 37

Leaving a balance in hands, of	\$ 169 83
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The above is a brief outline of the proceedings of the Society up to the close of the year. The committee lament that it is not more full and explicit; but the transactions of the Board, during the latter part of the year, are so very much in abstract, as to preclude them from going more into detail. This, no doubt originated from the resignation of the Society's active Recording Secretary, and from his place not being permanently filled until the late Anniversary. Your

committee now, however, congratulate the Board, on this important office being filled by a Gentleman who will spare no pains in giving a more detailed view of your proceedings. They cannot conclude their review of the transactions of the Board, without bearing testimony to the zeal which has been manifested by them to advance the Redeemer's kingdom. They appear to have laboured under many discouragements, yet they were not disheartened. Their resources, though small, were husbanded with frugality and economy, and applied with discretion and prudence. In the selection of their missionary they were fortunate in procuring one, whom they believe, has filled his office with the becoming character of a Christian minister; and, from all the information in the possession of your committee, it appears that his "praise is in all the churches" which he has visited in his itinerant journey. The Board, though composed of persons of different religious opinions, have wisely acted without regard to sectarian views—and have sought more to build up the Church of Christ, than to encourage any particular sect. The missionary, infusing the spirit of the Board, has acted on the same benevolent and charitable principle; and has found, in his travels, the minister of Christ a welcome guest, without reference to the particular church to which he might be attached.

A variety of considerations and reflections urge themselves upon the minds of your committee. In communicating them, if they should transcend their powers, they can only plead an excuse in their desire to subserve the interests of the Institution.

The funds of the Society are yet small, and its means quite limited; but, by the adoption of decisive

measures, its funds may be considerably enlarged—consequently its usefulness will be extended. There is ample wealth in South-Carolina to supply every destitute part of the State with a preached Gospel. It only requires to be brought into action. It certainly will not be withheld when its possessors are made acquainted with the wants of their fellow-citizens; they will not refuse their help when they are told that in the State of South-Carolina, there are thousands of individuals, every Sabbath, destitute of a preached Gospel. Will not the knowledge of these facts arouse our wealthy citizens to action? Will it not induce them to come forward, with their abundance, “to the help of the Lord against the mighty?” Let vigorous measures be adopted to call forth the resources of the State in this good work; and then we shall see that few will have the temerity or selfishness to refuse their mites. The Gospel may be preached in every benighted corner of the State, without taking a single cent from the pockets of the indigent, or depriving the rich of a solitary article of necessity. They have only to give a part of what they squander on baubles—or what is spent to the injury of their bodies and immortal souls—or what is spent *one night* in the *week* (we might say *month*) in an amusement, at all events, of a doubtful character—and they give enough to supply our whole State with the greatest blessing that can be conferred upon a nation or people. Whatever they bestow in this way, will not injure them here, and they will not be ashamed of it at the bar of God.

Your committee would also direct the attention of the Board to another subject which they deem of much importance. In the employment of missionaries, a

system of most rigid economy should be pursued ; but the funds of the Society should never lie idle. The former course will extend the number of missionaries ; and the wants of the destitute are too urgent to permit the latter. Similar Societies in the Northern States, have adopted, with much success, the plan of employing missionaries in places, or in vicinities, where they reside ; especially when they live in neighbourhoods wanting in either ability or inclination to employ them. While this plan is attended with but little expense, it answers every purpose intended. A measure of this nature is recommended to the future attention of the Board. In the present state of the funds, it would perhaps be impracticable to extend its beneficiaries to more than two or three ; and, of course, the plan recommended could not be immediately adopted ; but the public attention is evidently becoming directed towards this Institution ;—and its funds may, ere long, be so far increased, as to enable it to embrace, in the number of its beneficiaries, a variety of persons of different denominations. One objection may, however, be brought against this plan. The few ministers that are found dispersed over the country, in this State, are generally without a collegiate education ; but many of them are men of worth and sterling piety, with gifts of the first order, and minds highly cultivated with reading and study, which would enable them to adorn the missionary cause, and be useful labourers in the Lord's vineyard. But the question (involving in it an obstacle of much magnitude to some) presents itself—*Can such be employed by this Board?* The third article of the constitution expressly says, “that *regularly educated* evangelical ministers,” are to be

employed. It is true, it does not say that others shall not be employed ; but the captious, and even the conscientious, might be disposed to cavil, if any were proposed as missionaries who had not received a collegiate education. A revision of this article of the constitution might then seem to be necessary, before the proposed plan could be adopted. Should the Board, however, be disposed to put a liberal construction on the words "*regularly educated*," (which are very indefinite terms,) it would at once obviate the necessity of such a revision of the article in question.

The committee would also call the attention of the Board to the situation of the Indians scattered over our State, and on its borders. The Board are in possession of no precise information respecting them, and it seems to be desirable that something of this nature should be obtained, as the best means of governing the future operations of the Board, whenever it may be deemed advisable to send a missionary among them. This information might be obtained by opening a correspondence with the whites living among them or in their vicinity.

Your committee cannot conclude, without congratulating the Board, on the unanimity and brotherly love which pervades their body. Although composed of persons from the different evangelical sects in our city, no sectarian principles are known in their deliberations. This course of conduct will insure success. By unanimity we may do much for the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's kingdom. It is time for the friends of Christ and the Bible to unite in the great work of the Gospel. Not that there is any thing to fear from open infidelity ; but much is to be apprehend-

ed from insidious foes—some of whom, under the mask of friendship, are attempting to undermine the fairest fabric of the Christian religion, by withholding from the Saviour of mankind his chiefest attribute; while others, under another disguise, are industrious in their exertions to banish the revealed word of God from society. Relying, however, on the great Head of the Church for strength to resist the enemy of mankind, whether in his avowed character, or under the specious guise of friendship, we look forward to Him for help and support in all our undertakings, and humbly pray that his stately steppings may be manifest in our assemblies.

APPENDIX.

THE engagement of the Rev. Mr. JOSEPH BROWN commenced on the 1st of December, 1820. Previous to his departure for Edgefield, the permanent scene of his labours, it was resolved that he should receive ordination ; this necessarily causing a detention, MR. BROWN was requested, in the mean time, to visit Beaufort, and the intermediate places. The following particulars are from his journal during this period of service :—

STONY CREEK. Attached to the church here, there is a congregation and about 15 communicants ; also, a fund of \$ 8,000.

The neighbourhood is highly cultivated and respectable. Most of the inhabitants however, leave their plantations in the summer, and scatter exceedingly.

BEAUFORT. Here is four churches ;—2 for Baptists, 1 for Episcopalians, and 1 for Presbyterians. There is quite a good degree of liberality of sentiment.

MR. BROWN, after his return to Charleston, was ordained on the 3d of Jan., 1821, by the Congregational Association of South-Carolina, and immediately commenced his journey, and arrived at Edgefield on the 12th. The following is from his journal :—

EDGEFIELD. This District extends over a tract of country, something more than fifty miles square, containing 26,000 inhabitants ; 15,000 whites and 11,000 blacks.

At the Court-house, which is a very good brick building, is a village, containing between 30 and 40 houses.

There is an Academy, a very commodious brick building, and about 50 scholars. There is also a female school in a private family, into which 12 young ladies are admitted.

The village, situated on the height of land between the waters of Savannah, Saluda, and Edisto rivers, is a very healthy place, more so probably than any other in the State the same distance from the sea, which is 155 miles. Around the village the country is tolerably healthy, and the inhabitants considerably numerous. Both in the village and around it there is very considerable wealth, and an increasing spirit of enterprize.

There is no house for public worship in the village, but the inhabitants speak of building one soon. The Court house is at present occupied for that purpose. Eight miles above the Court-house is another Academy in a wealthy and respectable neighbourhood, called the Blocker Settlement, after the name of se-

veral of its principal inhabitants. The building of the Academy is not very good, but boarding is low, and the morals of the settlement good. Number of students about 60.

BEACH ISLAND, so called, is not an Island, but a part of Edgefield District, surrounded by a kind of swamp or bog. It lies six miles below Augusta and 30 from Edgefield Court-house. It is a large and wealthy settlement.

Here also is an Academy of about 50 scholars. There is a good building, which is also convenient, and used for public worship.

At a place called Red Bank, 20 miles from the Court-house, towards Columbia, it is contemplated to establish another Academy. Besides these, there are several schools in the District, but they are scarce. The want of good teachers, I think the greatest obstacle in the way of education.

Religious Institutions in the civil District, are 21 Baptist churches, with meeting-houses, and 6 Baptist preachers.

There are also 12 Methodist meeting-houses and societies, with 1 local preacher and 2 circuit riders.

The method in the Baptist connexion, is for a preacher to take charge of 3 or 4 churches, and preach to each of them once in four weeks. There is no Presbyterian or Episcopalian meeting-house, church, or preacher, in the District. There are a few members of each denomination.

When I arrived at Edgefield, I ascertained that there was a Presbyterian preacher at Newberry, and a Baptist preacher at Beach Island; and as there was so great a scarcity of preachers in Edgefield; I thought it would be wise to confine my labours principally to that District, I therefore concluded to preach one half of the Sabbaths at the Court-house and the remainder in the Baptist churches in different places. I also preached during the week, once, twice, and three times, as circumstances appeared to dictate.

The winter has been so wet and the roads so bad, that my congregations were often small, but there appeared to be a disposition in all denominations to attend; and in some cases, I hope there was a good degree of feeling.

On Sabbath evenings I uniformly preached to the blacks. Their owners wish to have them attend regular preaching. A large number generally attended, and most of them appeared to listen with seriousness. One has indulged a hope that she has passed from death to life during the winter. We must wait for fruits to manifest the evidence. The blacks in that region are generally well fed and clothed, and in all respects treated with kindness.

During the intervals of preaching, I have made it my business to visit from house to house. I have always been received with respect and kindness by all classes and all denominations. Let the preacher appear to be a servant of his Master and the friend

of his fellow-men, and he receives a hearty welcome in almost every house ; even the blacks are not wanting in acts of kindness.

If any considerable good has been effected by my labours, I believe it is principally seen in an increasing desire to enjoy the regular institutions of the Gospel, and an increasing willingness to support them. They have requested me to return and take up my abode with them, and have given me as much encouragement with regard to support as could be expected in their unorganized state.

There are many reasons why this is an important place to be occupied. It is the most healthy spot in all the middle country ; on this account the village will increase. If moral and religious institutions can be enjoyed, it will probably be a resort for some, and perhaps many from the low countries, for the summer.

BEACH ISLAND is also a promising field. If there be no preacher on it the next fall, perhaps it may claim attention. Dr. G. says, if an interesting preacher was stationed among them for one year, he has no doubt but they would be willing to support him in future. I should think with him, that if one was sent there, he should devote his whole time to them. The field is sufficiently large, and probably the effect would be far greater to have the labour constant. I think more is to be done in forming congregations by visiting than by preaching ; and a man cannot visit to the purpose if his field is too large.

Collections and Donations for the Society, by the Rev. MR. BROWN.

BEAUFORT.


Mr. R. G. LAWRENCE, for a life-subscription,	-	\$ 20 00
ROBERT MEANS, Esq. for a life-subscription,	-	20 00
Mrs. EDWARD BARNWELL, a donation,	-	5 00
Annual subscribers,	- - - -	4 00

EDGEFIELD.

Collection at Red Bank church,	- - - -	18 00
Collection at the Blocker settlement,	- - - -	13 50
Collection at the Court-house,	- - - -	78 75
Collection of the black people,	- - - -	7 30

\$ 166 55

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