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ADDRESS, ⁶⁵⁰⁻
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OF THE
NEW-JERSEY BIBLE SOCIETY

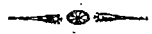
TO THE PUBLICK;

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING THE

CONSTITUTION
OF THE SAID SOCIETY.



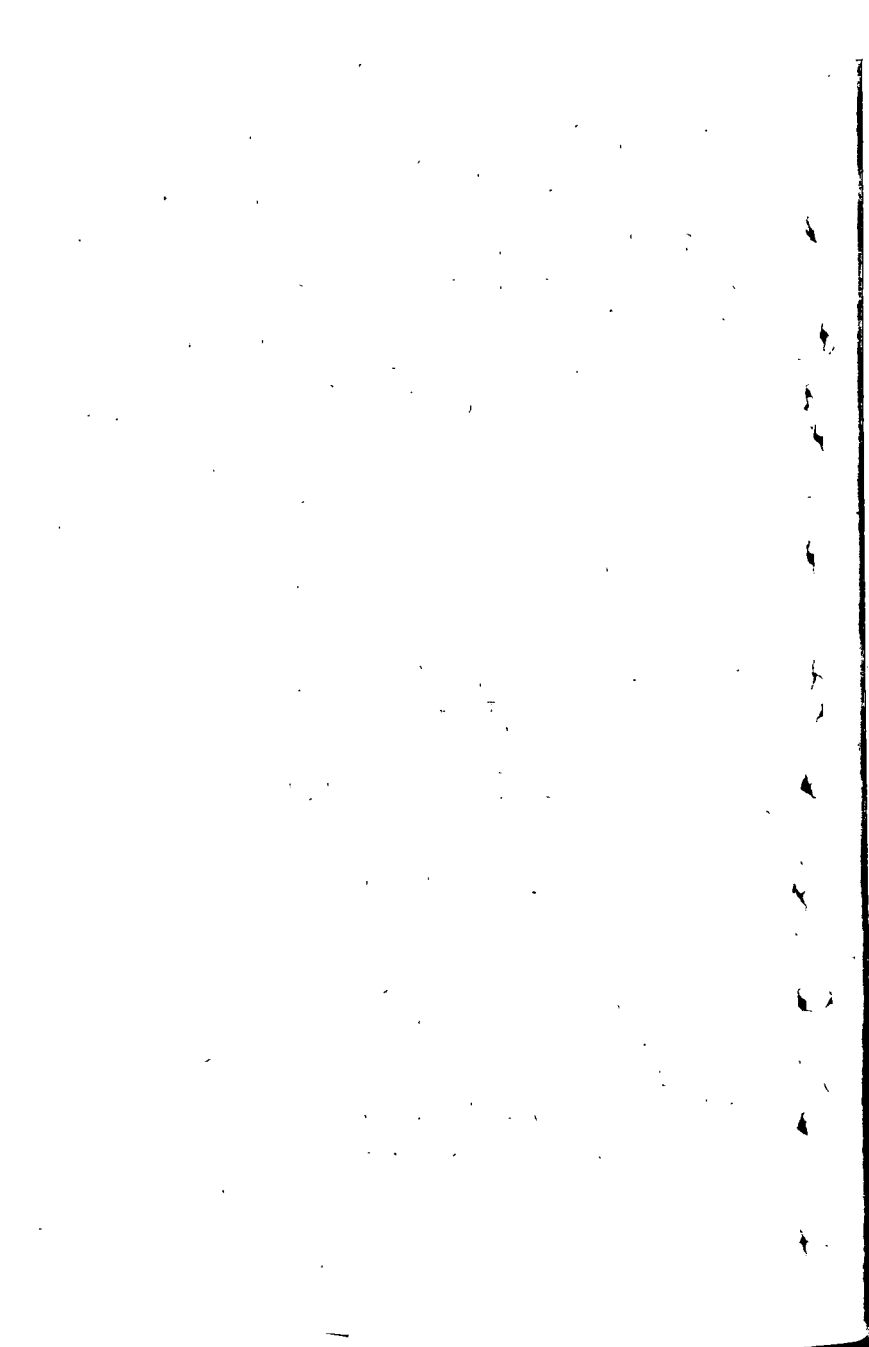
NEW-BRUNSWICK.

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A D D R E S S, &c.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE design of this address is to give information of the steps that led to the establishment of this society; the object it has in view; and to call upon the lovers of truth and righteousness of all denominations to aid them in the important undertaking.

To many in this country, it is well known that some years since, there was established a society in London, styled The British and foreign Bible Society. That society embraces, and from its origin, has been, and still is, generously countenanced by, men of different religious denominations and of the first rank and fortune in that kingdom. They soon procured ample funds; and by their exertions the holy scriptures have been distributed *gratis*, not only to the poor of that kingdom, but they have procured them to be printed in various languages, and distributed *gratis* in other countries, where there was an absolute want and a loud call for them. Their exertions have extended even to the East Indies, and to the distant islands in the Northern and Pacific Oceans. Through the blessings of God on their endeavours, the work is going on with a glorious success.

The extensive calls that have been made on that society for Bibles; the avidity with which they have been sought, the lively gratitude with which, in numerous instances they have been received; and the evident happy effects, which have already resulted from this species of pious benevolence, have awakened a general feeling among Christians, and called forth numbers, in different parts of the world, to take a lively interest in the work.

The history of the exertions and success of that society, and a deep conviction of the importance of such an institution in this country, prompted numbers of the pious and benevolent of various religious denominations in the city of Philadelphia, so that, within the last year, a Bible Society has been established in that city, for the purpose of procuring cheap editions of the Bible and of the New-Testament separately, and of distributing them *gratis* among the poorer classes of the people.

From the reports of that society, it appears that, on a careful enquiry, they find, that the number of families, in that city and its vicinity, *without Bibles*, exceeds, by far, what they had ever before conceived: that the furnishing bibles to *these alone* has afforded ample scope to the whole of their present funds, amounting to more than two thousand dollars; and that, if their funds were *tenfold* greater

than they are, the opportunities of distributing them in other places are so numerous, that they would be inadequate to satisfy the demand.

Information of the existence and exertions of this society, having reached the remote parts of the country, awakened there a spirit of devout thanksgiving to God, and called forth their fervent prayers for the divine blessing on the institution. They cheerfully offer their co-operation, and look forward with joy in the hope of seeing a supply of the *word of life* furnished to the necessitous thousands through our extensive frontiers.

While such were the exertions making, for the best interests of the poor, near to our own borders, and such the impressions awakened in more distant parts, a number of ministers of the gospel, with several other gentlemen, having seen the address and first report of the Philadelphia Society, and feeling deeply anxious to co-operate in furthering so important and benevolent a design, issued proposals for forming a Bible Society in this state, to act in concert with that of Philadelphia, and to be styled, the New-Jersey Bible Society.

To these proposals, a considerable number of persons, in various parts of the state, and of different religious denominations subscribed. And at a meeting of such of the sub-

scribers as could attend, at Princeton on the fifth instant, they proceeded to form a constitution for the society, (a copy of which is hereunto annexed) and to elect seventeen managers to transact the business of the society.

The objects which this society have in view, correspond entirely with those of the society in Philadelphia. They wish it may be said; and it shall be their endeavour, that it may be *truly* said, not only that, "To the poor the gospel is preached;" but that the holy scriptures are put into the hands of every poor family throughout the state, in which there is a single person capable of reading them. Should public benevolence put it in their power to diffuse more extensively the precious benefit, it is their earnest wish, to co-operate with other similar institutions in meeting the calls for the *word of God* from more distant parts. The hope is indulged that, when the great body of Christians in the state, take this subject into their serious consideration, they will view the work of so high importance as to feel a singular pleasure in contributing to its success.

If the knowledge of revealed truth tends to elevate the minds of men; to rescue them from depression and debasement. If, as has been justly remarked, by a celebrated writer,*

* Dr. Watson.

“Wherever the religion of the Bible has appeared and prevailed in its purity, *there* you have the best laws---the best government---liberty more perfect---property more secure---human nature in a higher degree of civilization, and man more happy and respectable,” then, what friend to his country, what lover of humankind, can hesitate, for a moment, to encourage the widest possible spread of the holy scriptures ?

The incomparable worth of the scriptures has been attested by thousands of the wisest and best men that ever adorned human nature. Many, the most distinguished for genius, learning and industry have read and studied the Bible with a child-like humility and pious delight ; and have recommended it to the attention and esteem of mankind as the **BOOK OF BOOKS**.

It has, for its *author God ; its design, the highest happiness of mankind*. It was given to man, to guide him in the way to everlasting life. And can Christians live contented, while thousands within their reach to relieve, are without a Bible to guide them, and left to wander in the paths of darkness and error that lead to destruction !

Is the word of God a spiritual treasure to the pious believer ? Does it contain the only solid consolation for the afflicted ? Is it from thence that the humble soul derives all its

hopes and its joys? Is it calculated to awaken the secure, and reclaim the vicious? Has the bare reading of it been the mean of the conversion of thousands? Then what Christian can consent that, any of his fellow men should want a Bible, while it is in his power to furnish it?

Believe it as a fact that, numbers of poor families are to be found in our cities, towns and villages, and in many parts of our country, in which a Bible is not to be seen. Christians, who have the means, it rests with you to supply this want. And may we not with confidence say, *The means are not wanting*, God has abundantly blessed and prospered our country. There are multitudes among us, in circumstances, not merely of decent *competency*, but of *affluence*; multitudes who could aid in the benevolent work without any sensible inconvenience to their business, or the means of their support. Let such, by becoming subscribing members of this society, infuse a vigor into the institution, and supply the sinews of its permanent and progressive operations; remembering that, as Christians, it is our duty to "Honour the Lord with our substance and the first fruits of our increase."

Our divine master spent his life on earth, in "*Going about doing good.*" He lived, he laboured, he suffered, he *died* for the salvation of men! Like him let our aims and endea-

vours be to *do good*, to promote the best interests of mankind. The most we can do is, indeed, but little; Ah, how little, in comparison with the debt of love and gratitude we owe to God, for his unspeakable gift! Let it be remembered, this is a work in which Christians of all denominations may safely and cordially unite. And the co-operation of Christians of all denominations is most earnestly solicited. Think Christians, with what motives Heaven is prompting us to benevolent exertions. Are we assured that, "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him again." Give then to the poor, the holy scriptures, that they may be made wise unto salvation. Such gifts, bestowed *cheerfully*, and their success *fervently prayed for*, shall redound abundantly to your account.

How truly noble; how worthy of them that name the name of Christ, are such benevolent efforts? While the *great ones of the earth* are struggling for empire, and panting after worldly dominion and fame; while nations, in the contests of ambition, are deluging the earth with human blood, and spreading devastation and misery over the fair inheritance of man, be it our benevolent work, to ameliorate the human condition, to enlighten and cheer the abodes of poverty, by dispensing to them, what is the richest gift in our power to bestow, *the Holy Scriptures*.

With heart felt joy and thanksgiving to God, we learn that, amidst all the shaking and overturning of nations, in the present day; and notwithstanding all the rage of the enemies of revealed religion, the light of Gospel truth is spreading rapidly among the long benighted nations. The ambassadors of Jesus, in obedience to his command, are gone, and going forth, into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature. The fields are whitening already to the harvest. The circumstances of the present time call upon Christians universally, to use their most strenuous exertions in promoting the same cause. Christians, the appeal is made to you! Is the object too great? Is the design too vast, for the Bible Societies that *now are*, and that *may yet* be instituted throughout Christendom, to attempt to carry the word of God into *all nations*, and in a language that they can understand; so that the reading may keep pace and be co-extensive with the preaching of the word? Who can say that the extraordinary efforts, lately made, and making, by Missionary and Bible Societies, and in training up pious youth for the work of the gospel ministry, are not designed, in providence, to prepare the way for, and finally to accomplish this desirable event?

Let Christians act their part, let them lend their zealous co-operation, and pour out their

fervent supplications to God, for his blessing on the work; and who can tell but that the day is near at hand, which the church has so long looked and prayed for, when,—"The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the seas?"

Then when the ransomed nations shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy, those who, by their pious benevolence and prayers, have aided in turning these nations to righteousness, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever. Reflect then, beloved brethren, once more let us intreat you to reflect on your own most precious interests, which are concerned in your becoming fellow-workers with God, in the salvation of mankind, by devoting to this most important object only a small portion of the bounties which his providence has bestowed upon you; you are laying up a treasure for eternity, a treasure which will add unspeakably to your happiness, when the property which you are now so anxious to accumulate, and preserve, shall have passed into other hands, and when your immortal spirit shall be unchangeably fixed in another, and, we trust, a happier state of being.

ELIAS BOUDINOT, *President.*

PRINCETON, December 20, 1809.

CONSTITUTION, &c.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED,

At Princeton, December 5, 1809.

1. **T**HIS society shall be distinguished by the name of the "*New-Jersey Bible-Society.*"

2. To constitute any person a member of this society it shall be necessary that, at the time of becoming such, he or she shall pay into the funds of this society the sum of *three dollars*, and agree to pay annually the sum of *one dollar*. Such persons as subscribe and pay the sum of *twenty-five dollars*, or more, shall be considered as members for life, without any further contribution.

3. That the members of this society will meet annually, on the first Tuesday in October, at such place as the managers, hereafter to be appointed, shall direct, when and where they will elect for the ensuing year *seventeen* managers, to conduct the business of this in-

stitution; who shall proceed, as soon after their election as they conveniently can, to choose from their own number, a *President*, two *Vice-Presidents*, and a *Corresponding Secretary*. They shall at the same time choose, but not from their own number, a *Treasurer* and a *Recording Secretary*; the latter of whom shall keep a regular record of the proceedings of the board of managers, and shall have the custody and charge of their books and papers.

4. That, for the transaction of business, *nine* managers shall be a *Board*. All orders for money on the treasurer, shall be signed by the president, or in case of his absence, then by the person on whom his duties shall devolve, which orders shall be carefully registered in a book kept for that purpose, by the recording secretary.

5. The board of managers shall meet, at least, once in every six months, but may be called together by the president whenever he shall think it expedient, or when requested to do so by any four of the managers. It shall be the duty of the board, to co-operate with other Bible Societies established in the United States, or elsewhere, to publish annually an account of their receipts and expenditures, together, with such other information relative to the general objects of the society, as they

may consider interesting and useful, and to make such by-laws as may be necessary for managing the concerns of said society.

6. That in case the office of president shall become vacant by death, or otherwise, or he shall be unable to attend the board of managers, the duties of his place shall devolve on the first vice president, and in case of his absence, on the second vice president, and in case of his absence also, on such president pro-tempore as the board may elect.

7. That no compensation is to be allowed, unless in extraordinary cases, to any manager, or to any officer employed by the board, for personal services---and where it is thought necessary to indemnify individuals for any time, skill or labour they may devote to the concerns of the institution, or for any expence incurred in behalf of the same, the utmost œconomy is enjoined and expected.

8. That no alteration shall be made in the foregoing constitution, unless by the vote of at least two thirds of the board of managers, and unless the same be afterwards approved by a majority of the members of this society present at the next annual meeting, after the said alteration shall have been voted by the board of managers.

Managers of the New-Jersey Bible Society.

The Rev. Samuel S. Smith, D. D.

John Woodhull, D. D.

Charles H. Wharton, D. D.

James F. Armstrong.

William Smith.

Joseph Clark, D. D.

Joseph Rue.

George S. Woodhull.

John Vredenburgh.

Isaac V. Browne.

Joseph Bloomfield, Esq. governor of the
state of New-Jersey.

Elias Boudinot, L. L. D.

Andrew Kirkpatrick, Esq. Chief Justice
of the state of N. Jersey.

Samuel Bayard, Esq.

Jasper Smith.

John Bayard.

Col. David Bishop.

Officers of the Society.

Elias Boudinot, L. L. D. *President.*

John Woodhull, D. D. *1st. Vice Pres.*

Hon. Andrew Kirkpatrick, *2d. Vice Pres.*

John Neilson, Esq. *Treasurer.*

Samuel Bayard, Esq. *Corresponding Sec.*

Charles D. Green, *Recording Sec.*

We the subscribers, as members of the "New-Jersey Bible Society" established under the constitution of the same, do hereby promise to pay to the treasurer of the said society, or to such persons as their board of managers shall appoint, the sums affixed to our names respectively.

Life subscribers.	_____
Dollars.	_____
Cents.	_____
Annual contributions.	_____
Dollars.	_____
Cents.	_____
Donations.	_____
Dollars.	_____
Cents.	_____