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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE

NEWARK BIBLE SOCIETY;

ON THE LAST SABBATH IN JUNE, 1817,

BEING ITS

THIRD ANNIVERSARY MEETING;


IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

NEWARK.

BY STEPHEN HAYS, JUN.



NEWARK, (N. J.)
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At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Newark
Bible Society, July 4, 1817,—

“Resolved, That the thanks of this Board be given to STEPHEN
HAYS, Jun. Esq. for his Address delivered before the Society, at
their last Anniversary Meeting; and that he be requested to fur-
nish a copy for publication.”

Extract from the Minutes.

WILLIAM TUTTLE, *Secretary.*

ADDRESS.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

THE celebration of the Anniversary of a BIBLE SOCIETY is an event important in itself, as it is giving a kind of public testimony of our belief in the truth of the Bible and the divinity of its Author. The exertions which have been made in almost every age and country to disprove the Bible, have been great.

If the cause of infidelity should at last fail, (and fail it will, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it,) it can never be said that it failed for the want of the aid men of learning, wealth, influence and power; for they have each contributed all in their might to overthrow the Oracles of God.

The cause of infidelity will not fail because its supporters and friends, have not been persevering and indefatigable in their labours. A zeal and engagedness has been manifested, worthy of a better cause; every mean has been used which promised the least success. The fire and the sword—the rack and the gibbet—death in its most horrid forms and frightful features, have been employed to convert the world to infidelity.

In the wide range of motives which influences and actuates the infidel, it is difficult to conceive of one which does not debase human nature. In this enlightened age, and from the doctrines which have been taught, and experiments made, it is in vain for infidelity to profess to be the friend of man. Allowing the Bible, for the sake of argument, to be what the infidel asserts it is, a book destitute of divine authority, still what evils can result to the world from its precepts and doctrines being received

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as coming from God, and containing the rules and principles by *which the destinies of men will at last be decided.*

The Bible requires every man to love his neighbour as he loves himself; and at all times, and in all circumstances, to do to his neighbour as he would wish his neighbour, in the same circumstances, to do to him.—It enjoins the most tender affection between husband and wife; it requires of children, love and obedience to parents; from parents, kindness and love to children; from masters, it requires kind treatment of their servants, knowing that they have also a master in heaven; from servants, it requires faithfulness, submission, and obedience. In all our dealings, it requires the strictest honesty and uprightness; in all our conversation, the most sacred regard to truth. In a word, it requires of every man love, good will, kindness, meekness, gentleness, humility, and forgiveness of enemies. It also requires repentance for sin, faith in Jesus Christ, and love to God. It inspires the believer with the joyful hope of an *immortal crown.*

If such be the principles contained in the Bible, again let me ask, what evils can result to the world from its being believed to be the word of God, and practising according to its requirements?—How does that love which embraces the family of man, and which stands ready at every moment to exert itself in promoting the happiness of every creature, injure the world?—What father ever complained that the obedience of an affectionate child, produced disorder and unhappiness in his family? Where is the neighbourhood, town, city or nation that can say, the spirit of genuine love ever sowed the seeds of discord and quarrels, contention and blood? How does it injure the world for men to believe in the existence, power, wisdom and goodness of God; in the divinity and incarnation of Christ, and the merit of his atoning blood? Will that man who lives in the expectation of a judgment to come, and who believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, be less likely

to be honest and upright, than he who believes that death is an *eternal sleep*? If the practice of the christian virtues, and the performance of the duties enjoined in the Bible has a tendency to promote and diffuse happiness,—then, that man who undertakes to destroy such a perfect system of morals as is contained in the Bible—attempts to sever the chain which binds society together—is the enemy of his fellow-man, and a disturber of the peace of the world. And what is the system of morals which infidelity has given to men? It takes from us the Bible; and what does it give us in exchange? One of the most candid of the infidel writers declares, that the indulgence of the most deadly passions, is no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by the dropsy—or the sleepiness produced by the lethargy. Many of them attempt to console their followers, (and miserable consolation it is, for that spirit which grasps at immortality,) that death is the end of man. Their motto seems to be,—eat, drink and be merry—disregard God and religion—indulge every sensual appetite to the full—throw the reins upon the neck of passion—riot in pleasures—let us live as we list, *for to-morrow we die.*

If under the influence of such principles, men should reject the Bible, and pursue a course of conduct naturally dictated by such principles, would that make a happy world? I appeal to the lives and deaths of infidels themselves, to answer the question. Of men professing such principles, and inculcating such doctrines, I would say, what Jacob said of Simeon and Levi: “Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united.”

But whether the Bible be true, to a candid unprejudiced mind, to a man who examines and decides according to evidence, is a question which cannot admit of a doubt. The word of God carries with it its own evidence, and challenges the belief of every rational being.—With all the light and testimony which has been collecting and

brightening for two thousand years, in favour of the scriptures being divinely inspired, and containing eternal truth, the man who doubts or disbelieves them, acts as irrational a part, as if he were to doubt whether a cloudless sun at noon day gave light to the world. Although "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work," yet we must have remained ignorant, in a great measure, of his moral character and designs, had it not been for the Bible. Here only we learn that he is infinite in goodness, inflexible in justice, and boundless in mercy. Here only we learn the feelings of his heart towards sin, and the only way in which it can be pardoned.

The attributes and perfections ascribed to God in the Bible, are just such as is desirable he should possess. Did he not possess them, no being in the universe would be safe;—should he cease to possess them, oppressed virtue and suffering innocence would soon from their abodes of misery, "give signs of woe that all is lost."

The Bible is the only book in which the character of man is drawn to the life; and every generation gives painful, yet clear and demonstrative evidence of its truth. To the interesting and anxious enquiries made by every thinking man—is there another world—a future state of happiness and misery?—am I an immortal being?—shall I live when suns and stars cease to rise and set, and their light is extinguished forever?—To these enquiries, the Bible is the only book which gives any satisfactory answer. There we see life and immortality brought to light. It points us to an eternal heaven, or to an eternal hell, as the place of our everlasting abode, according to the character we form in the present life. It teaches us that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a day of judgment, when the secrets of every heart will be laid open—and the motive which influenced every action be brought to light. It also teaches us that repentance for sin, faith in Jesus Christ, and love to God, are made the conditions of Salvation; and that without holi-

ness no man shall see the Lorn. To the question which has agitated the bosom of every son and daughter of Adam, where shall I find happiness? The Bible gives the most satisfactory answer, and settles the question forever. It leads us to God as the inexhaustible fountain of happiness and consummate bliss; assures us there is no such thing as real substantial enjoyment (such as will satisfy the vast desires of an immortal mind,) to be found any where else.

For the truth of this doctrine of the Bible, I think I can appeal with confidence to you, my respected hearers. To the man of the world, upon whose head the Almond tree blossoms, and whose whitened locks tell us that death is near,—I would put this question: Has the world, my aged father, which has promised you much, ever made you happy? Whilst standing upon life's highest summit, and taking an extended view of the scenes which are past, and from your own experience of the insufficiency of created good to make you happy, am you not ready to exclaim, "*Vanity of vanities all is vanity.*"

I would ask the man of honour and of fame, whether in all his schemes of ambition, he has not found some Mordecai sitting at the King's gate refusing him homage, and thereby disturbed the peace of his mind, and enkindled his resentment? I would ask the young man of pleasure and dissipated amusements, whether, in his sober reflecting moments, when alone, the *thought*, that death will soon put an end to all his pleasures, is not like plunging a dagger to his heart? Do not your fears and apprehensions, my young friends, of death and a judgment to come, more than overbalance all your vain amusements and sinful pleasures? Beware, my young friends, of the deceitful syren voice of pleasure, lest you be allured into the whirlpool of unrestrained passions, and you sink, to rise no more.

To the christian, I can appeal with confidence: Did you ever find happiness until you found it in the God of the Bible? Have you not experienced his presence to be

life, and his loving kindness better than life? Have you not oftentimes been ready to say, with the enraptured David,—“The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintainest my lot.” Has not that holy peace, which Christ has sometimes given you, placed you *far above the storms and tempests which agitate these lower skies*?—Do you not know what it is to be hid, as it were, in the secret of his presence from the pride of man—and kept secretly as in his pavilion from the strife of tongues?—Would you exchange those heavenly joys which you have experienced in your closet, when conversing with your Saviour and your God, for the joys of him *who holds in his hand the sceptre of empires*. At one of those favoured seasons, have you not been ready to adopt the language of the poet, and say—

Could I command the spacious land,
And the more boundless sea;
For one blest hour at thy right hand,
I'd give them both away.

The religion of the Bible has in every age supported its possessors under all the trials of life. Witness the unwavering confidence of Abraham, when called to offer up his son;—the calm and unruffled feelings of the Shunamitish woman, when enquired of by the Prophet about the welfare of her family, and whose only son then lay dead in the house, answered, “*It is well.*” Behold the submission of David, under his complicated trials, when driven from his beloved City, and the holy altars of God. See the constancy and perseverance of Daniel, in the path of duty, notwithstanding his life was threatened by the King. What was it but the religion of the Bible, which supported the Apostle, and raised him above the fears of an ignominious death? In the triumphant language of a conqueror, who had sheathed his sword, and who was just about to leave forever the field of conflict and of blood, he exclaimed, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*”

If the religion of the Bible gives such joys and such consolations ; if it inspires such hopes, and arms with such courage ; if it gives support in every trial ; if it will ease the pained heart, and sustain the fainting head ; if it will rob death of its sting—dispel the darkness of the tomb—open Heaven's gate—and raise the blood-washed sinner to an immortal throne ; if we possess this Bible and this religion, shall we not, as benevolent beings, wish to give it to those who are destitute ? You have heard, and you know, that one of the great and fundamental principles of the Bible is, to love our neighbour as we love ourselves ; that is, to do and give as much to promote the happiness and salvation of the wretched and the lost—as we should wish them to do for us, were we in their situation and circumstances, and they in ours.

There are thousands of families in our country destitute of the word of life. Do you enquire of me where they are ? They are to be found in every City, Town, and Village ; particularly in the new settlements. There are millions of souls in christendom, who never had a Bible, to say nothing of the almost total destitution of the whole heathen world. And, my friends, how are these souls, destitute of the means of salvation, sunk in pollution and misery, ever to be saved and made happy ? Can they be saved without ever enjoying the means of salvation ?

The work of evangelizing the nations and of giving the Bible to the world, is a great and mighty work. It demands the combined efforts and united exertions of the whole christian world. What can a few individuals, a few societies, or a few thousand dollars do, towards supplying the wants of several hundred millions ? Is not this an argument sufficient of itself to convince every man of the vast importance of coming up without delay, and putting his hand to this great and benevolent work ? The inestimable privileges and blessings we enjoy, lay us under the most solemn obligations.

That we might have the Bible and the precious means of grace, we have been permitted to be born in this land of light. That we might enjoy the privileges of the gospel and be trained up for glory, the Saviour shed his precious blood. And can we withhold when this same Jesus, who suffered so much for us, calls upon us as his friends, to contribute liberally, to carry the same blessings to others, which he has so freely given to us. His language to us this day is, freely ye have received, freely give. And shall this heavenly friend whose love to us has astonished every Angel of light, be denied this small request? Did he require us to forsake all the joys of social life—bid adieu to our kindred and our country—abandon our houses, our lands, and every object dear to us on earth, and go and carry the Gospel to the heathen, and there suffer every privation and hardship; this would be no more than he required of an Apostle: and should we do this, it would after all, be but a small return for his matchless love. But when he only asks us to give liberally of what he himself hath given us, shall it be withheld? Oh let it not be recorded in Heaven—let it never come to the ears of our perishing brethren, that we were intreated in their behalf, and that we refused to send them the Bible. Must we tell those benevolent men who are traversing Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, for the purpose of exploring the moral state of the world, that the pressing wants of the destitute, who are crying to them for Bibles, can never be supplied, because christians will not give.

I am aware, that of late, much has been done, compared with what was done in former years; and I do not despise the day of small things—but, sure I am, that much more must be done, before the earth can be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

I am persuaded, notwithstanding all that has been done for the salvation of the heathen, and for supplying the spiritual wants of the destitute, that the christian world is not yet half awake to the subject. There are more than fifty thousand souls from heathen lands, that are daily go-

ing into the eternal world—and it is a maxim of truth itself, that where there is no vision the people perish. Do we realize the vast amount of that loss, which he sustains who loses his soul? “Who can dwell with devouring fire, —who can inhabit everlasting burnings?” who can endure the vengeance of an incensed God? who can bear to see that blessed countenance which shone with such lustre on Tabor, and which fills Heaven with joy, *covered with frowns*? who can bear to hear that heavenly voice, more melodious than the music of the spheres, and sweeter than the harps of Angels—which once said to the “affrighted disciples in the sea of Galilee”—it is I, be not afraid—in sounds more terrific and dreadful than the noise of *ten thousand thunders*, pronouncing the final sentence of condemnation upon the wicked—*depart ye cursed!*

Of what use is money in this world, (except for the supply of our real wants which are few,) unless it be to promote the happiness of man, and build up the kingdom of Jesus Christ?

Ask that man expiring in the agonies of death, whose coffers are filled with gold, and whose ears have been deaf to the cries of distress—whether his thousands of gold and silver relieve one of his thousand pains. The unfaithful manner in which he has acted the part of a steward, now fills his soul with terror and dismay how he shall answer it to his Lord. In the midst of the group of his death bed attendants, I see no poor widow whose heart is wrung with anguish, weeping over him as her friend and benefactor—I see no poor orphan child, from whose eyes the tears of sorrow have been wiped by the hand of his munificence, crouding round his bed, and with broken accents exclaiming—My Father! My Father!

Not one of the many millions of Adam’s race, at the last day, when all the gold and silver of earth shall be consumed in that fire which will burn down the heavens, will rise up and call him blessed. To what purpose has he lived? He has lived to himself, and therefore does not deserve, nor will he have a friend in the universe. How

much more noble the conduct of a Brainard, who devoted all that he had, his property and his life to the instruction and salvation of his fellow men. When he came to die he said it was a great comfort to him to think he had done a little for God in the world—O says he, “it is but a very small matter, yet I have done a little.” I never yet heard of a man regretting or complaining on his dying bed, that he had done too much, or given too much for the cause of Christ.

Whether the common practice among professors of religion, of adding house to house, and field to field—of heaping up gold as the dust and raiment as the clay, and thus making provision for the gratification of either their own sinful appetites, or those of their children—of making presents to the rich, the honorable, and the great—of adorning the body with useless ornaments, while a world is perishing for the want of Bibles and Missionaries, is pleasing to Christ, or doing as he did when upon earth,—are serious questions, which must be answered by professors at another day.

Before the Millennial morning shall open upon the world, it is probable there will be a great revolution in the opinions and conduct of Christians; such a revolution as will shame the conduct of many Christians of the present day. Instead of giving a few dollars a year, many, very many, will be found imitating the conduct of the benevolent woman in our Saviour’s day, casting their all into the treasury of the Lord, relying with full confidence upon that promise, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

It is a dictate of reason itself, that in proportion to the importance of an object, ought to be our exertions to promote it. And can we conceive of an object more important than the kingdom of Christ?—It was purchased by the blood of him, who now sits as King upon the holy hill of Zion. Its object is the happiness of creatures, and the everlasting display of the uncreated glories of *the ever blessed God*. The subjects of this kingdom are to be made up of holy angels and sinners of Adam’s race, sanctified,

and redeemed from the miseries of the fall, and gathered out of every nation, kindred, tongue and people; its enjoyments, the vision of God and the Lamb;—the limit of its duration, will be eternal years;—the bond of union which will forever bind its subjects together by the most endearing ties of friendship, will be the *deepest humility*, and the most perfect love. Would we participate in its honors and its joys, we must be found among the number of its friends and supporters. None who live under the light of the Gospel, need be excluded from its enjoyments—and none but what may do something for its advancement. It is a cause, which interests the holy inhabitants of heaven, and for the promotion of which angels are ever on the wing. It is a cause for the complete success and triumph of which, all the divine perfections stand pledged. Other Kingdoms and Empires, notwithstanding the wisdom of statesmen, and the power of armies, will be swept away by the hand of time. It is said of Xerxes, that when, from an eminence, he took a view of his immense army of seventeen hundred thousand men, he burst into tears, when he reflected that in a single age they would all be dead. From the history of generations that are past, we may see to what the present and future are fast approaching—and that is, to the *grave*. But the cause for which I entreat your kind wishes, ask your prayers, and solicit your aid, is one which will survive the ruins of the *universe*. Although it is a kingdom which rests upon a foundation stronger than that which supports the *Earth*, yet as it is in the natural world, so it is in the moral, means and ends are inseparably connected. In the accomplishment of the grandest work ever made known to creatures, God has permitted and invited poor simple worms to become fellow labourers and co-workers with himself, promising them that they shall be sharers with him in its final joys. Are there any in this Assembly who will refuse to unite their efforts with the great and glorious God in the benevolent work of saving a world? —Men are apt to feel that what they possess is their own!

and they have a right to do with it what they please—not realizing that they stand precisely in the situation of him, who is entrusted with the property of another, with particular and specific directions to use it not merely for himself, but for the happiness and good of others. Property is a talent, for which every man who possesses it, will have to give an account in the day of judgment. Yes, my hearers, he who made the silver and the gold, will charge on one page of that book which will be opened at the last day, every dollar he gives you; and on the other, he will write in a legible hand the use you have made of it.

What account can that man render to his Judge, who, instead of giving liberally for the supply of the wants of the poor and the destitute, has devoted his property exclusively to himself? What can the professor of religion say, in the day of judgment, who indulges in “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life;” and who, if we judge from external appearances, has more of the spirit of the world than of Jesus Christ? Nor less criminal is he who from his unbounded covetousness and eagerness to gain the world, (thinking more of a dollar than the salvation of a soul) denies himself, as well as the poor around him, even the comforts of life. It is a matter of lamentation, that professors of religion deny themselves so little in their dress—their furniture—their manner of living—their pleasures, when the cause of humanity and the kingdom of Christ demand so much of them. Professors of religion ought, in their external appearance and conduct, as well as in their professions, to exhibit something of the spirit and self-denial of him, *whom they profess to follow*. To some, these observations may seem strange upon the present occasion; but, the wants of perishing millions who are sitting in the region and shadow of death—the sin which the Christian world is guilty of in relation to this subject—the honor it would do to Christ if his professing people would deny themselves of all extravagance, and devote that property to his cause which is now lavished upon their pleasures—the

vast difference it would make in the means which would be furnished for the building up of his cause—an increase of present enjoyment and future glory—and the solemn account I must soon render at the bar of Jesus Christ for the manner in which I have addressed you at this time, must furnish my apology for these remarks.

By the good Providence of God, my hearers, you have now another opportunity of doing something for the cause of our blessed Saviour; this may be the last you will ever enjoy. Before another sun shall illumine the East, you may open your eyes upon the uncovered majesty and glory of that Saviour, whom John saw in the Isle of Patmos, and who now calls upon you to send the joyful news of peace and salvation to the disconsolate and the dying. I entreat you to give in such a manner, that if you should be called before another morning to view that sacred temple, once crowned with thorns,—the prints of the nails and the spear, the everlasting memorials of his love for you, that the heavenly vision may not pain your sight.

The consideration, my christian friends, that we have recently received from our exalted Saviour the most affecting mercies, ought to enkindle our zeal, warm our love, and enlarge our hearts. Will not that father, who but a few weeks since saw in a beloved child, the dejected countenance—the falling tear,—who heard the midnight groan,—and with emotions unutterable, the morning song of praise to Jesus the deliverer,—will he not, in gratitude for that love which could stoop so low as to pardon a rebel child and make it an heir of glory, GIVE LIBERALLY, that the children of parents in destitute lands, may hear of Jesus, and unite their voices in the same song of praise to redeeming mercy?

And you, my dear young friends, who have lately espoused the cause of Emmanuel—who have still in remembrance the wormwood and the gall—who in an hour of extremity, when the last gleam of hope was about to expire, and you cried, I am undone forever,—who thought you saw the opening pit and the lake of fire,—and was

saying to yourself, as you looked downwards, there I must lie to Eternity; and whom at that awful moment, **JESUS** rescued and plucked as a brand from the burning, and put in your hand a title to heaven—will you not do so much for the honour of your heavenly friend as to contribute liberally to spread the savour of his name among the nations?

If the most affecting mercies that ever a people enjoyed under heaven—If the love of a Saviour and the kind influences of the Holy Ghost—If the rich displays of Divine Grace which have been made in our houses and in our temples—If the songs of new-born souls crying Hosanna to the Son of David, instead of the wailings of despair—If compassion for the miseries of a bleeding world—If the most solemn obligations to duty—If the coming scenes of the last day, when you will have to render an account to your Judge of how much you have done to promote his cause this evening, will not dispose you to give **LIBERALLY**, I despair of success; I can say no more. I have tried to discharge my duty according to the best of my feeble powers, and as in the presence of God. I hope you will now and at all times discharge yours,—that when we come to stand at the bar of Christ, and when enquiry shall be made by the Judge himself whether we have done all in our power to build up his kingdom upon earth, we may be able to answer in the affirmative—and each one receive the blessed sentence of the Judge, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”