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AMERICAN SOCIETY

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FOR PROMOTING

NATIONAL UNITY.

"GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTHIL"

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NEW YORK:

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1861.



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PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION.

AT a meeting held March 6th, 1861, in the city of New York, a number of gentlemen having conferred together respecting the present state of our country, unanimously agreed upon an organized effort, irrespective of all sectional or political action, for the purpose of removing the causes of difference, and producing unity of sentiment and fraternal affection throughout the nation. Their views are briefly indicated in the following

P R O G R A M M E.

The causes which have led to the divided and unhappy state of our country, are found in the neglect and abuse of our free institutions. Citizens of good intentions, but averse to politics and absorbed in their personal callings, have in a great measure left to visionary reformers the creation of that popular sentiment, by which, in a free government, ambitious and unsafe persons attain to places of power. While men have slept, the enemy has sowed tares. We have thus painfully learned by experience, that a government like ours must not be left to reformers and politicians, the

one incompetent to reconstruct what the other destroys, but demands the vigilant watch and care of its intelligent and loyal subjects.

The popular declaration that all men are created equal and entitled to liberty, intended to embody the sentiment of our ancestors respecting the doctrine of the divine right of kings and nobles, and perhaps also the more doubtful sentiment of the French school, may be understood to indicate both a sublime truth and a pernicious error. Men *are* created equally free to do the will of God, and will be equally rewarded by Him according to their deeds. But they are *not* created equal in personal endowments, nor in their relation to providential arrangements. Indeed, their inequality in these respects is one of the boldest and most stubborn facts on the records of all time; and moreover, the Scriptures declare, that it exists for wise and good ends *by the will of God*, as truly as the inequalities between the sands of earth and the stars of heaven. It is by confounding the providential with the moral, instead of regarding the former as means wisely employed for the latter, that men become infidel and radical in their schemes of reformation. Restive and impatient, they neglect the essential duties of submission—of love, trust, obedience, under all providential dispensations—and vainly strive to alter or amend the ways of Providence. Hence, their dreams of abolitionism, of woman's rights, of free-love, of spiritualism, of socialism, of agrarianism, and of all similar visionary schemes, in which they lose sight of their own moral and essential duties, in their zeal to do what God has reserved for Himself, and vainly think to inaugurate a millenium of bliss, by their imaginary reign of liberty and equality. It is not claimed that every person who espouses

one of these schemes actually embraces them all, but as they all belong to the same category, logical consistency must admit or reject them all alike.

Teachings of this sort, especially as related to abolitionism, have been extending and gaining favor among us for many years. They have been seldom rebuked, because deemed feeble and harmless. But they have increased by indulgence. They have been disseminated in books and pamphlets, taught in our schools, reiterated in the daily and weekly issues of the press, listened to and applauded in popular lectures; they have often entered the pulpit, and made the dogmas of human rights and liberties take precedence of repentance and faith as the staple of Gospel ministrations. They have been wrought into the fascinations of poetry; they have been set to music and have furnished the entertainment of itinerating minstrelsies and musical concerts; they have floated wildly on the breezes of heaven, and been made to sigh in sentimental strains around the evening hearth-stone. They have thus made stirring appeals to human passions, have perverted truth and disguised facts, have falsely wrought with the sympathies of the weak, the consciences of the unenlightened, the arrogance of the vain. They have made their subjects slow to obey and quick to rebel, stubborn and contentious for rights, but remiss in duties and sacrifices for the general welfare.

Men thus taught, regardless of their own sins and duties, in their anxious wailings over the sins of others and the ways of Providence, become ready victims of cunning demagogues, who, promising by an easy method to relieve their consciences and consummate their desires, with "good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." In this way a dreamy

hallucination and false sentiment have been extensively produced, and a feeling of hostility between the North and the South engendered, which threatens a final dissolution of the Federal Union.

We believe that the time has come, when such evil teachings should be firmly and boldly confronted, not by the antagonism of doubtful and perishable weapons, but "by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever," as expounded by a broad and faithful recognition of His moral and providential government over the world. It is with this view that we propose an organized effort, and commend it to the earnest coöperation of all good and true citizens in every section of our country. We disclaim hostility toward, and connection with, any existing political party. Our common country, our *whole* country, is our field; we believe that it still has multitudes of friends, strong and true at heart, in all sections and parties. We cordially invite all such, to unite with us in endeavors to disseminate sound and wholesome teachings, to conciliate differences and restore peace and harmony; gathering around the acknowledged standard of truth and the bulwark of our national liberties.

Our attention will not be confined to Slavery, but this will be at present our main topic. Four millions of immortal beings, incapable of self-care and indisposed to industry and foresight, are providentially committed to the hands of our Southern friends. This stupendous trust they cannot put from them if they would. Emancipation, were it possible, would be rebellion against Providence, and destruction to the colored race in our land. We at the North rid ourselves of no responsibility by assuming an attitude of hostility to Slavery, and thus sundering the bonds of state-fellowship; we

only put it out of our power to do the good which both humanity and religion demand. Should we not rather recognize the providence of God, in His placing such a vast multitude of the degraded and dependent sons of Africa in this favored land, and cheerfully coöperate, by all needful labors and sacrifices, with His benevolent design to save, and not to destroy them? Under a providential dispensation, lifting them up from the degradation and miseries of indolence and vice, and exacting of them due and needful labor, they can certainly be trained and nurtured, as many have been, for the services and joys of heaven; and if the climate and institutions of the South are such that our fellow-citizens there can afford to take the onerous care of them, in return for their services, should we not gladly consent? They freely concede to us our conscientious convictions, our rights, and all our privileges; should we not as freely concede to them theirs? Why should we contend? Why paralyze business, turn thousands of the industrious and worthy poor out of employment, sunder the last ties of affection that can bind these States together, destroy our once prosperous and happy nation, and perhaps send multitudes to premature graves,—and all for what? Is not such a course a struggle of arrogant assumption against the providence of the Most High; and if persisted in, will it not surely bring down His heavy and prolonged judgments upon us?

It is not for us to accuse our fellow-citizens at the South of failure in duty. We know that the church of God has no brighter ornaments, and our country no truer friends, than are found among them; and before we at the North sit in judgment upon their delinquencies, let us endeavor to correct our own. In treating their slaves as humanity and religion de-

mand, they may be providential instruments of unspeakable and endless blessings, not only to those under their personal charge, but eventually to the whole African race. And such, we have not a doubt, they are destined to be; without us, and to our shame, if they are forever separated from us by any fault of ours; but with us, and to our mutual honor, if we shall be united with them in the bonds of an affectionate brotherhood. That so we may be, we will labor in hope. We will endeavor to diffuse over the entire length and breadth of the land, sentiments favorable to the lasting peace and prosperity of our nation.

With these views and motives, we now organize ourselves into a Society, adopting the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.—This Association shall be called the AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING NATIONAL UNITY.

ART. II.—The object of the Society shall be to promote the union and welfare of our common country, by addresses, publications, and all other suitable means, adapted to elucidate and inculcate, in accordance with the Word of God, the duties of American citizens, especially in relation to Slavery.

ART. III.—The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary or Secretaries, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of twenty members, together with the President, Secretary or Secretaries, and Treasurer.

ART. IV.—The President, or in his absence, one appointed for the occasion, shall preside at meetings of

the Society; the Secretaries shall have charge of the correspondence; and the Treasurer of the funds.

ART. V.—The Executive Committee shall have power to admit auxiliaries, to call special meetings of the Society, and to employ all such means and agencies as they may deem necessary to promote the objects of the Society, and shall make a report of their doings at its annual meeting.

ART. VI.—The twenty members of the Committee shall consist of two divisions: one, of fifteen members, who shall be permanent; the other, of five, who shall be elected annually by the Society. Vacancies in the former shall be filled, as they occur, by the Executive Committee, who shall also choose the Secretaries and Treasurer. When a member is to be chosen by the Executive Committee, the whole Committee must be notified to that effect previous to the meeting at which the election is to take place, and the votes of three-fourths of those present at the balloting shall be necessary to a choice.

ART. VII.—At all meetings of the Executive Committee, seven members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum, and all elections of officers, whether by the Committee or the Society, shall be made by ballot.

ART. VIII.—All publications issued by the Society must first be examined and recommended by a Committee of Publication appointed by the Executive Committee, and be approved by three-fourths of the Executive Committee present when the vote is taken.

ART. IX.—The annual meeting of the Society shall be in the City of New York, on the last Tuesday in November in each year, or at such other place and time as the Executive Committee may designate, when the Society shall choose its President, Vice-Presidents,

five members of the Executive Committee, Honorary and Corresponding Members; hear the report of the Treasurer, and also the report of the doings of the preceding year by the Executive Committee.

ART. X.—Any person approving of the objects of this Society, may become a member of it by paying five dollars annually into the treasury, and a member for life by paying fifty dollars at any one time.

ART. XI.—This Constitution may be altered at any annual meeting of the Society, on recommendation by two-thirds of the whole Executive Committee, and by the votes of three-fourths of the members present.

AMERICAN SOCIETY

FOR

Promoting National Unity.

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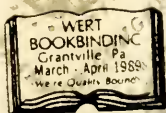
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