

Project Canterbury

Extract from the Address of the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart to the Thirty-third Convention, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of New York; Held in Trinity Church, in the City of New York, on Tuesday, Oct. 20th, and Wednesday, Oct. 21st, A. D. 1818. Together with An Address of the Chiefs of the Oneida Nation of Indians in the State of New York, To Bishop Hobart, and the Bishop's Answer to the Same; as Found in the Appendix to the Journal of the Said Convention.

No place: no publisher, [1818]

Transcribed by Wayne Kempton
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It is a subject of congratulation, that our Church has resumed the labours, which for a long period before the revolutionary war, the Society in England, for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, directed to the religious instruction of the Indian tribes. Those labours were not wholly unsuccessful; for on my recent visit to the Oneidas, I saw an aged Mohawk, who, firm in the faith of the Gospel, and adorning his profession by an exemplary life, is indebted, under the Divine blessing; for his Christian principles and hopes, to the Missionaries of that venerable Society. The exertions, more recently made for the conversion of the Indian tribes, have not been so successful, partly because not united with efforts to introduce among them those arts of civilization, without which the Gospel can neither be understood nor valued; but principally because religious instruction was conveyed through the imperfect medium of interpreters, by those unacquainted with their dispositions and habits, and in whom they were not disposed to place the same confidence; as in those who are connected with them by the powerful ties of language, of manners, and of kindred. The religious instructor of the Oneidas, employed by our Church, enjoys all these advantages. Being of Indian extraction, and acquainted with their language, dispositions, and customs, and devoting himself unremittingly to their spiritual and temporal welfare, he enjoys their full confidence; while the education which he has received, has increased his qualifications as their guide in the faith and precepts of the Gospel. Mr. Eleazar Williams, at the earnest request of the Oneida chiefs, was licensed by me about two years since, as their Lay Reader, Catechist, and Schoolmaster. Educated in a different communion, he connected himself with our Church from conviction, and appears warmly attached to her doctrines, her apostolic ministry, and her worship. Soon after he commenced his labours among the Oneidas, the Pagan party solemnly professed the Christian faith. Mr. Williams repeatedly explained to them in councils which they held for this purpose, the evidences of the Divine origin of Christianity, and its doctrines, institutions, and precepts. He combated their objections, patiently answered their inquiries, and was finally, through the Divine blessing, successful in satisfying their doubts. Soon after their conversion, they appropriated, in conjunction with the old Christian party, the proceeds of the sale of some of their lands to the erection of a handsome edifice for Divine worship, which will be shortly completed. [* See: Appendix for an interesting Address from the Chiefs of the Oneidas to the Bishop.]

In the work of their spiritual instruction, the Book of Common Prayer, a principal part of which has been translated for their use, proves a powerful auxiliary. Its simple and affecting exhibition of the truths of redemption, is calculated to interest their hearts, while it informs their understanding, and its decent and significant rites, contribute to fix their attention in the exercises of worship. They are particularly gratified with having parts assigned them in the service, and repeat the responses with great propriety, and devotion. On my visit to them, several hundred assembled for worship, those who could read were furnished with books; and they uttered the confessions of the Liturgy, responded its supplications, and chanted its hymns of praise, with a reverence and fervour, which powerfully interested the feelings of those who witnessed the solemnity. They listened to my address to them, interpreted by Mr. Williams, with so much solicitous attention; they received the laying on of hands with such grateful humility; and participated of the symbols of their Saviour's

love with such tears of penitential devotion, that the impression which the scene made on my mind will never be effaced. Nor was this the excitement of the moment, or the ebullition of enthusiasm. The eighty-nine who were confirmed, had been well instructed by Mr. Williams; and none were permitted to approach the Communion, whose lives did not correspond with their Christian professions. The numbers of those who assembled for worship, and partook of the ordinances, would have been greater but from the absence of many of them at an Indian council at Buffalo.

I have admitted Mr. Williams as a candidate for orders, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee; and look forward to his increased influence and usefulness, should he be invested with the office of the ministry.

There is a prospect of his having, some time hence, a powerful auxiliary in a young Indian, the son of the head warrior of the Onondagas who was killed at the battle of Chippewa, and who, amiable and pious in his dispositions, and sprightly and vigorous in his intellectual powers, is earnestly desirous of receiving an education to prepare him for the ministry among his countrymen. I trust that means will be devised for accomplishing his wishes. We ought never to forget, that the salvation of the Gospel is designed for all the human race; and that the same mercy which applies comfort to our wounded consciences, the same grace which purifies and soothes our corrupt and troubled hearts, and the same hope of immortality which fills us with peace and joy, can exert their benign and celestial influence on the humble Indian.

JOHN HENRY HOBART.
NEW YORK, October 21, 1818.

APPENDIX.

ADDRESS OF THE CHIEFS OF THE ONEIDA NATION OF INDIANS IN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK

To the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart.

[This Address was written by a young Indian, who is a communicant of the Church]

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

We salute you in the name of the ever adorable, ever blessed and ever living sovereign LORD of the universe; we acknowledge this great and almighty Being as our Creator, Preserver, and constant Benefactor.

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

We rejoice that we now, with one heart and mind, would express our gratitude and thankfulness to our great and venerable father, for the favour which he has bestowed upon this nation, viz., in sending Brother Williams among us, to instruct us in the religion of the blessed JESUS. When he first came to us, we hailed him as our friend, our brother, and our guide in spiritual things; and he shall remain in our hearts and minds as long as he shall teach of the ways of the great Spirit above.

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

We rejoice to say, that by sending Brother Williams among us, *a great light has risen upon us*: we see now that the Christian religion is intended for the good of the Indians as well as the white people; we see it, and do feel it, that the religion of the Gospel will make us happy in this and in the world to come. We now profess it outwardly, and we hope, by the grace of God, that some of us have embraced it inwardly. May it ever remain in our hearts, and we be enabled, by the Spirit of the eternal ONE, to practise the great duties which it points out to us.

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

Agreeable to your request we have treated our brother with that attention and kindness which you required of us; we have assisted him all that was in our power, as to his support: but you know well that we are poor ourselves, and we cannot do a great deal. Though our brother has lived very poor since he came among us, but he is patient, and makes no complaint: we pity him, because we love him as we do ourselves. We wish to do something for his support; but this is impossible for us to do at present, as we have lately raised between three and four thousand dollars to enable us to build a little chapel.

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

We entreat and beech you not to neglect us. We hope the Christian people in New York will help us all that is in their power. We hope our brother will by no means be withdrawn from us. If this should take place, the cause of religion will die among us; immorality and wickedness will prevail.

RIGHT REV. FATHER,

As the head and father of the holy and apostolic Church in this State, we entreat you to take a special charge of us. We are ignorant, we are poor, and need your assistance. Come, venerable father, and visit your children, and warm their hearts by your presence, in the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

May the great Head of the Church, whom you serve, be with you, and His blessing ever remain with you.

We, venerable Father,
Remain your dutiful children,

HENDRICK [his X mark] SCHUYLER,
SILAS [his X mark] ANONSENTE,
WILLIAM [his X mark] TEHOIATATE,
DANIEL [his X mark] PETERS,
NICHOLAS [his X mark] GARAGONTIE,
WILLIAM [his X mark] SONAWENHESE,
MOSES [his X mark] SCHUYLER,
HESTAHEL [his X mark] PETERS,
WILLIAM [his X mark] SCHUYLER,
ABRAHAM [his X mark] SCHUYLER,
STOFLE [his X mark] SCHUYLER,
HENDRICK [his X mark] SCHUYLER, Jun.
WILLIAM [his X mark] TEWAGERATE.

ONEIDA Jan 19, 1818.

THE BISHOP'S ANSWER.

MY CHILDREN,

[This is the appellation with which the Indians expect to be addressed by the Bishop.]

I have received your letter by your brother and teacher, Eleazar Williams, and return your affectionate and Christian salutation, praying that grace, mercy, and peace, from GOD the Father, and from our LORD JESUS CHRIST, may be with you.

MY CHILDREN,

I rejoice to hear of your faith in the one living and true GOD, and in His Son JESUS CHRIST, whom He has sent, whom to know is life eternal; and I pray that, by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, you may be kept steadfast in this faith, and may walk worthy of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

MY CHILDREN,

It is true, as you say, that the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST is intended for Indians as well as white people. For the great Father of all hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth; and Hath sent his Son JESUS CHRIST to teach them all, and to die for them all, that they may be redeemed from the power of sin, and brought to the acknowledgment of the truth, and to the service of the living GOD.

MY CHILDREN,

It is true, as you say, that the religion of the Gospel will make you happy in this world, as well as in the world to come; and I join in your prayer, that you may profess it inwardly as well as outwardly; that by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, you may be transformed by the renewing of your minds, and acquire the holy tempers, and practise the holy duties which the Gospel enjoins. And for this purpose, I beseech you to attend to the instructions of your faithful teacher and brother, Eleazar Williams; to unite with him in the holy prayers of our apostolic Church, which he has translated into your own language; to listen with reverence to the Divine word which he reads to you; to receive, as through grace you may be qualified, and may have an opportunity, the sacraments and ordinances of the Church; and at all times, and in all places, to lift up your hearts in supplication to the Father of your spirits, who always and everywhere hears and sees you, for pardon and grace, to comfort, to teach, and to sanctify you, through your Divine Mediator, JESUS CHRIST.

MY CHILDREN,

Let me exhort you diligently to labour to get your living by cultivating the earth, or by some other lawful calling: you will thus promote your worldly comfort, you will be more respected among your white brethren, and more united and strong among yourselves. And when you are thus engaged, you will be saved from many temptations; and you will prove yourselves to be good disciples of Him who, by His inspired apostle, has enjoined, that while we are "fervent in spirit" we be "not slothful in business."

MY CHILDREN,

Continue to respect and love your brother and teacher, Eleazar Williams, and to treat him kindly; for he loves you, and is desirous to devote himself to your service, that, by GOD'S grace, he may be instrumental in making you happy here and hereafter. It is my wish that he may remain with you, and may be your spiritual guide and instructor.

MY CHILDREN,

I rejoice to hear that your brethren, the Onondagas, are desirous of knowing the words of truth and salvation. I hope you will not complain if your teacher, Eleazar Williams, sometimes visits them, to lead them in that way to eternal life, from GOD'S word, he has pointed out to you. Freely you have received, you should freely give; and being made partakers of the grace of GOD through JESUS CHRIST, you should be desirous that all your red brethren may enjoy the same precious gift.

MY CHILDREN,

It is my purpose, if the LORD will, to come and see you the next summer; and I hope to find you as good Christians, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living righteously, soberly, and godly

in the world. I shall have you in my heart, and shall remember you in my prayers; for you are part of my charge, of that flock from whom the Son of GOD gave Himself even unto the death upon the cross, and whom He commanded His ministers to seek and to gather into His fold, that through Him, they might be saved for ever.

MY CHILDREN,

May GOD be with you, and bless you.

JOHN HENRY HOBART,

Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of New York,

Dated at New York, the 1st day of February, in the year of our LORD 1818, and in the seventh year of my consecration.

[Transcriber's note: From the Journal of Convention in the following year 1819:

On Tuesday, the 21st, I performed the interesting solemnities of consecrating, by the name of St. Peter's Church, the chapel erected for the use of the Indians, at Oneida Castle, and of confirming 56 Indians, who had been prepared for that holy ordinance by their instructor, Mr. Eleazar Williams.

Among the pleasing circumstances which I noticed in my recent visitation, was the consecration of the Indian Chapel at Oneida, and the evidence of the continued zeal of Mr. Eleazar Williams in promoting the interests of his Indian brethren. The young Onondaga chief, whom I mentioned in my last address as desirous of procuring an education for the purpose of qualifying him as the spiritual instructor of his countrymen, will be able, through the bounty of Episcopalians and others, principally in the city of New York, and through the aid of the government of the United States, to attain his object. He is advantageously receiving an education under the care of the Rev. Mr. Fuller, of Rensselaerville.

Mr. Eleazar Williams, a young man of Indian extraction, a candidate for Holy Orders, is licensed by the Bishop as a Lay Reader and Catechist, to officiate in the Mohawk language, in St. Peter's Church, Oneida Castle, Oneida county, the congregation of which is composed of Indians; and employed by the Committee for Propagating the Gospel in the State of New York in those capacities, and likewise as a Schoolmaster among the Indians.]

[Project Canterbury](http://anglicanhistory.org/indigenous/oneida/journal1818.html)