THE WORK OF THE BRAY ASSOCIATES IN PENNSYLVANIA

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Our Historical Society serves a vital purpose when it sets forth the spiritual influences that animated the makers of America.

Too often contemporary writers overlook the veriest essential in character culture and race progress. In the birth of no other nation are the facts so clear; and in no other of the Thirteen Colonies is the evidence more convincing. Our Founders were the product of English Christianity, inspired with the principles revealed by the Master of Men.

In his stirring Sesqui-Centennial address here, President Coolidge emphasized this thesis, and clinched it with the statement: “Unless the faith of the American people in these religious convictions is to endure, the principles of our Declaration will perish. If we are to maintain the great heritage which the Fathers bequeathed us; we must keep replenished the altar fires before which they worshiped”.

This it is that gives significance to such a cherished shrine as Christ Church. Amongst the personages of major influence identified with it was the resourceful Commissary Thomas Bray who, in 1696, was sent to us by Henry Compton the Bishop of London. With fertile brain and tireless zeal he made a surpassingly valuable and enduring contribution to our common life. Strangely enough we have had to wait for outsiders to tell us of several of his outstanding accomplishments here. Some twenty years ago a New York scholar, Dr. Austin Baxter Keep did a brilliant bit of research, and told us of the existence and meaning of the Bray Library, established here in 1696, and still preserved amongst the treasures of the old Church. Now we are again fav-
Early in the Eighteenth Century, missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts were reporting the baptisms of slaves in Pennsylvania. There seems to have been less prejudice against the conversion of the negro in that colony than in the other colonies; and, about 1712, we find the Reverend George Ross of Chester commending a slave-owner for his "endeavours to train up his negroes in the knowledge of religion." Fifteen years later, the same clergyman, then at Newcastle, reported that little care was taken of instructing the negro slaves. The Quakers, he said, left their negroes "to their common principles, the natural light;" the dissenters "are so taken with the doctrine of absolute decrees," that they lay no stress on baptism. "Those few that are baptized belong to Churchmen. The truth is, there is a general indifference in Churchmen, as well as in those of other Sentiments, to make proselytes of their slaves; the true cause whereof is the want of Zeal in Masters, and the untoward haughty behaviour of those Negroes who have been admitted into the Fellowship of Christ's Religion." The Reverend Robert Weyman, in 1728, made

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2 William Stevens Perry, Editor, *Historical Collections relating to the American Colonial Church, Delaware*, p. 48.
a similar complaint. He declared that he had often impressed upon the masters the necessity and duty of instructing their slaves, and had offered his services to prepare them for baptism; "and could never prevail but with one Family at Oxon and another at Radnor to bring them to Church."³

On the 26th of January, 1744, the Reverend Robert Jenney, whose coming to Christ Church, Philadelphia, had infused a new spirit into the church, wrote the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel that, while the congregation was very numerous and the only difficulty was finding room for those who want seats and are willing to pay for them, the results of the work among the negroes were unsatisfactory. The lack of results was due to the lack of a catechist, who could look after them. He felt that a great opportunity lay in this direction.⁴ On the 8th of April, 1746, the Venerable Society wrote the vestry of Christ Church, offering a salary of £30 for "settling a catechetical lecturer in the Church in Philadelphia, for the instruction of negroes and others." It was suggested that, if a suitable person could be found, he should be sent to England to receive deacon’s and priest’s orders. On the 6th of December of that year, the vestry read a letter from the Reverend Henry Barclay, who had been doing splendid work among the Indians of New York, in which Mr. Barclay recommended a young man by the name of William Sturgeon as assistant to Doctor Jenney. The rector felt that Mr. Sturgeon would make a suitable catechist for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. So, in January, 1747, it was arranged to send him to England for ordination.

Mr. Sturgeon was educated at Yale. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel promptly appointed him catechist to the negroes in Philadelphia, and settled a

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³ William Stevens Perry, Editor, Historical Collections relating to the American Colonial Church, Pennsylvania, pp. 162–165.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 235–236.
stipend on him in consideration of that service. On the 28th of May, 1747, the Reverend Philip Bearcroft, secretary of the Society, wrote the wardens and vestrymen of Christ Church that the Society had consented to Mr. Sturgeon's becoming assistant to the rector on their promise to add £30 a year to his salary and to grant him, as catechist to the negroes, a comfortable maintenance.5

The new catechist arrived the last of the year. On the 25th of April, 1749, the vestry of Christ Church informed the Secretary of the Society that "Mr. Sturgeon has rendered himself agreeable to the congregation; and, considering his youth, and the stinted education given in the American colleges, he discharges extremely well the offices of his function."6 On the 29th of April, Mr. Sturgeon himself advised the Secretary that he catechised about fifty negroes; that he would read a plain lecture afterwards on what he had taught them. He added, that he had baptized eleven negroes, including seven adults, after proper instruction. Though his duties as assistant to Doctor Jenney were great, "Yet I keep my Eye Steadily on the great Work of catechizing and instructing the Negroes, and Spare no pains to gain over those poor ignorant Souls to the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." He would catechise the children of his parishioners every Friday after prayers; every Sunday night, he would teach the catechism to a number of negroes of all ages, after which he would read them "a plain Lecture on the Several Parts of our admirable Catechism which I endeavour to adapt to their Capacities and to the gradual Improvement which I observe they make." The vestry had taken a collection of sixty pounds for him, he said: and "tho' the Sum be Small, yet as it was given with an hearty good will, and the People were

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5 S. P. G., B-17, No. 145; Transcript by Stevens and Brown in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
6 Benjamin Dorr, History of Christ Church, Philadelphia, p. 96.
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pleased to express a personal Regard for me, I am quite contented.""

Doctor Jenney wrote commending Mr. Sturgeon, October 26th, 1749. He said that his assistant was very industrious "'both in ye parochial & Catechetical Business;"' but he did not feel that the encouragement he received was equal to his merit. "'The Members of our Church are not the richest in the place, the Richest generally centering in the Quakers & high Dutch, who are very numerous & carry all before them. And our Church labours under a very great Discouragement as we have no legal Establishment (as they have at N York) not so much as a Charter of Encorporation to enable us to manage our Business to the best Advantage. And it is a very great misfortune to us, that many of our people having been born in the place & conversed always with Quakers, are so much tainted with their way of thinking as to have very slight notions of an outward Visible Church & Sacraments which gives ye Minister very great Trouble in many Respects.'" He expressed the wish that the Society would enlarge Mr. Sturgeon's salary.

In the meantime, the Associates of Doctor Bray, whose efforts in the American colonies were mostly directed towards the uplift of the negro, had been in correspondence with the Reverend Philip Reading, who had entered on his work at Appoquinnimink the middle of 1746. Reading received some books from the Associates for distribution; and, on November 24, 1746, he wrote that he had disposed of the same for the benefit of the negro slaves, by giving about a third to Philadelphia, about a third to the missionary at Perquihoma, and the rest he would use in the places under his care where the slaves were most numerous. He said that the

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7 S. P. G., B-17, No. 147; Transcript by Stevens and Brown in the Library of Congress.
8 S. P. G., B-17, Nos. 159-160; Transcript by Stevens and Brown in the Library of Congress.
masters and mistresses with whom he had talked had promised to encourage the good work.\(^9\)

On the 10th of October, 1748, Mr. Reading informed the Associates that he had received fifty prayer books and twelve copies of the history of the Old and New Testament, which they had sent him. But he had found difficulties in the conversion of the negroes, because of the prejudices of their masters and the slow apprehension and prejudices of the slaves. “All, without exception, where pinched in Food & Raiment, employ their Sundays in raising Potatoes, Pease, Melons &c., for their own Use.”\(^10\)

It was nearly ten years before the Associates took steps to educate the negroes of Pennsylvania in a systematic way. Literature was distributed, as we have seen; but the actual instruction was for the time in the hands of Mr. Sturgeon, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and Christ Church. On the 6th of April, 1750, Mr. Sturgeon informed the Society that the number of negroes in his care had considerably increased. He continued catechising the white children and the servants every Friday after prayers. Doctor Jenney and the vestry, he remarked, “continue their usual Kindness to me.”\(^11\)

The Society had been unable to follow Doctor Jenney’s suggestions regarding the raising of Mr. Sturgeon’s salary. Hence, on the 18th of July, that year, the rector of Christ Church declared that it would be impossible to keep him long; and no successor of Mr. Sturgeon would be willing to stay on so small an allowance. The local contributions had not sufficed to make up the agreed sum.\(^12\) But better times were in store;

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\(^10\) Ibid., October 10, 1748.

\(^11\) S. P. G., B-18, No. 152; Transcript by Stevens and Brown in the Library of Congress.

\(^12\) Ibid., No. 150
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and the next few years witnessed considerable activity in the field of education. The famous Academy and a charity school were the products of the fifties; but still very small regard was paid to the schooling of the negroes.

In 1758, the Associates, who had already been at work in New England and in the South, turned to Philadelphia as a field of operations. Benjamin Franklin was in London that year; and at a meeting of the Associates, April 5th, it was reported that he had recommended the expediency of opening a school for the instruction of young negroes at Philadelphia; further, he had mentioned Mr. Sturgeon, who was already the S. P. G. catechist, as a proper person for the task. It was resolved that the school be opened.\(^{13}\)

In November, the Associates' school was opened, with Sturgeon in charge. On the 9th of November, 1758, he wrote the Associates:

As soon as received your Directions, I acquainted our Vestry with the Design which Seemed to give them Pleasure. I agreed with a Woman, used many Years to teach a School, to undertake the Charge of the Blacks & the School would have open'd some Time ago but the Books did not [come] to hand till October last. Every Thing is now ready & the Mistress will begin in a few Days, & you may depend on my Care that She shall exercise the Trust with Fidelity. The Terms are that the Mistres is to teach 30 Children, the Boys to read, the Girls to Sow, Knit, read & work, and to attend at Church with them every Wednesday & Friday . . . & that all her endeavours are to be directed towards making them christians.

She would receive a salary of £20 from the time she opened the school.\(^{14}\)

By the 12th of June, the following year, there were thirty-six scholars. Mr. Sturgeon catechised them every Wednesday.\(^{15}\) The wife of Benjamin Franklin wrote her husband, August 9, 1759, that she had gone to hear

\(^{13}\) Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book, I. 114.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 120.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 124.
the Negro children catechised at the Church. "There were 17 that answered very prettily indeed & 5 or 6 that were too little, but all behaved very decently. Mr Sturgeon exhorted them before & after Catechising. It gave me a great deal of pleasure & I shall send Othello there." 16

By November 25, 1759, Mr. Sturgeon was able to report that there were eleven boys and twenty-four girls in the negro school in Philadelphia. Fifteen of the girls were learning to sew and to work with their needle. They were improving in their reading and in the knowledge of religion. It was suggested that the churchwardens be joined in the care and government of the school. 17

It was well that the responsibility should be shared. Doctor Jenney was seized with the palsy, and much of his work fell upon Mr. Sturgeon’s shoulders. On the 5th of January, 1762, he died, at the age of seventy-five. After his death, Mr. Sturgeon and the Reverend Jacob Duché were chosen as assistants of the united parishes of Christ Church and St. Peter’s. The Reverend Richard Peters was elected rector. On November 1, 1762, Franklin returned from England, after an absence of five years; he proved of great assistance in the project of the Associates.

Mr. Sturgeon’s duties had naturally increased, and the school had evidently been neglected. The Society accused the clergyman of neglecting the catechising of the negroes, and asked the vestry of Christ Church to appoint a committee to examine the matter. The committee, which consisted of the rector and four vestrymen, reported on the 27th of April, 1763, that Mr. Sturgeon "hath not neglected the exercise of his duty, as catechist to the society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts;" but had "constantly once a week, and

16 Dr. Bray’s Associates: Minute Book I. p. 127.
17 Ibid., p. 137.
sometimes oftener . . . duly catechised and instructed sundry negro children in the principles of the said church.' Still the Society felt justified in the accusation; and Mr. Sturgeon was dismissed. In a letter written November 20, 1763, he protested against this action, and blamed the complaint on another individual. He declared that the duty of the whole parish had rested upon him for five years, from the time of Doctor Jenney's stroke. Since the old rector's death, he had served as one of the ministers of the united churches.

All this time I preached twice every Sunday and read prayers and did all other duties of the parish, and on Wednesdays catechised the white children, and on every Friday the Negroes, and instructed both in the sense and purport of each part; and for more than 17 years preached every Tuesday at the City Alms House, and once in three weeks during the Summer Season went to a church in the country that has no Minister, and read prayers and preached and did baptize many. This has been my constant method from my first arrival to this day and lo! now I am discharged from the service of one of the most Honble Societies in the world, and what is the most hard to bear, for neglect of duty to the negroes, and by the means of one who has been the chief Instrument of dividing our Church. He is and has been long my Enemy. I mean Mr. John Ross of this city, who has been to me what the coppersmith was to St. Paul.

Mr. Sturgeon was allowed to continue his services. He wrote the Associates, on the 16th of August, 1764, that on account of bad health he had been unable to attend his school as much as formerly. Doctor Franklin, however, was doing everything to promote the school. Two years later, July 31, 1766, Mr. Sturgeon resigned his duties as assistant minister of the united congregations. He died in 1772.

On Mr. Sturgeon's retirement, Mr. Francis Hopkin-
son and Mr. Edward Duffield, both of Philadelphia, undertook to superintend the affairs of the negro school. The Associates realized the importance of resting their enterprise on a stable foundation; and at their meeting of May 7, 1767, they appointed as their attorneys for any lands which they might purchase for their use in Pennsylvania the following gentlemen—all of Philadelphia:—Benjamin Franklin, LL.D., the Reverend Jacob Duché, rector of Christ Church, Francis Hopkinson, David Hall, and Edward Duffield.\textsuperscript{22}

May 5, 1768, Messrs. Hopkinson and Duffield's report to the Associates was read at their meeting. The mistress of the school, Mrs. Ayers, gave an account of her work. From her appointment, November 20, 1764, to March 24, 1768, 59 negro children had been admitted. At the time of writing, twenty-seven attended. Of this number, three were in the Bible, one in the Testament, two were studying the tables, nineteen were learning to spell, and two were mastering the alphabet. Nineteen of the twenty-seven were slave children; eight were free. Ten were able to say their catechism pretty well.\textsuperscript{23}

Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Ayers resigned the school; and a Mrs. Sarah Wilson was appointed in her place. On the 26th of November, Messrs. Hopkinson and Duffield informed the Associates that the new mistress was doing her duty to their satisfaction. Meanwhile, they were making proper enquiries regarding the purchase of property.\textsuperscript{24}

The next two years, the school was reported full. Twice a week, the children, whose masters or mistresses were of the Church of England, were taken to the Church and catechised. There were applications for vacancies.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. 12.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 14, 21.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 34 (November 20, 1769); p. 40 (May 20, 1770).
On the 3rd of July, 1773, the two faithful trustees wrote the Associates that they had found a lot on one of the principal streets of Philadelphia... that is, on Market street... "very near the Buildings & Improvements in that Street, & which in all probability will soon become very valuable. It stands in the Corner of a Square, & of course has two Fronts, which is a material Circumstance." The lot ran 136 feet on Market, and 360 feet on Ninth street. The owner was unwilling to take less than £1000 local currency (about £600 sterling). The Associates agreed at their meeting, September 2nd, to request Messrs. Hopkinson and Duffield to purchase the same on as advantageous terms as possible, but not to pay more than £600.26

The Philadelphia representatives informed the Associates on the 22nd of November, 1773, that they had little doubt that in the course of from twenty-eight to thirty years the lot would considerably improve in value. They had agreed with the owner on the purchase price—£950 local currency, a little less than £600. They reported that the school was full and was going on well. As Mr. Hopkinson intended moving into another province, he desired that someone be appointed in his room.27

May 3, 1774, Hopkinson and Duffield wrote the Associates that they had made the purchase; and they asked instructions as to the disposition of the land. The deed was in their possession. Mr. Hopkinson had already left Philadelphia, and Mr. Duffield intended leaving the country.28

June 10th, the Treasurer of the Associates wrote Mr. Duffield, enquiring what immediate profit the land just purchased brings in. As he would be a more competent judge of the manner of disposing of it than the Asso-

27 Ibid., p. 65.
28 Ibid., p. 65, ff.
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ciates, he would be able to render information and advice.29

The Associates called on the Reverend Thomas Coombe to superintend their negro school, sometime after Mr. Sturgeon's death. Mr. Coombe was graduated in 1766 from the College of Philadelphia. A native son, he was born the 23rd of October, 1747; and had been recommended for ordination by Doctor William Smith, the provost of the college. In 1768, he had gone to England to study, till he arrived at the age for taking holy orders. Doctor Smith had said of him, that "he will be found an elegant and rational Preacher, & is so fine a Speaker that I know of none that excell him."30 On the 17th of October, 1771, he was given the royal bounty for his voyage to America.31 Later, he and the Reverend William White, the future Bishop of Pennsylvania, were called as assistants to the united churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's.

On the 21st of September, 1774, Mr. Coombe wrote the Associates, accepting their invitation, and saying that he was sincerely disposed to bear his part in any undertaking that had the happiness of the meanest individual for its object. It would give him pleasure to be made useful to the benevolent designs of the Associates. He would visit the school; but desired to have a coadjutor joined with him. He added that the deed from Thomas Lawrence to the Associates had been delivered to him, and he would immediately have it recorded.32

He wrote the Associates, February 10, 1775, that he had not been wanting in his attention to the school; that the same continued full; and that it was faithfully cared for by the mistress.33 Another letter, July 18th, con-

29 Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. p. 69.
30 Fulham MSS., Pennsylvania, No. 63; Transcript by Stevens and Brown in the Library of Congress.
31 Fulham MSS., Missionary Bonds.
32 Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book, II. 71.
33 Ibid., p. 74.
firms his former report about the diligence of the school-mistress. There were nine negroes in the alphabet; seven in spelling; four in reading; five in reading and sewing; two at the needle and knitting; one was busy with a sampler.\textsuperscript{34}

By this time the countries were involved in war; and there was no further communication. But it is to the credit of the little philanthropic society, that, after hostilities ceased, the work among the Philadelphia negroes was resumed. For some time there was correspondence about the tract of land which the Associates had purchased; and much of it is of considerable interest.

On the 9th of January, 1783, at the meeting of the Associates, a letter was read from Francis Hopkinson, informing them that the lot which they owned was lying waste. He had leased it for three years, on condition that the lessee fence it; and the lease would expire April 1st. He had paid taxes for the last year on said lot. If the Associates should care to sell it, he could be glad to have the refusal of it; and he offered the sum of £ 400 in Pennsylvania currency. The Associates, on reading the communication, agreed that their thanks be given Mr. Hopkinson for his attention to their interest; but, since Doctor Franklin was an old member of the Association and was in touch with them when the purchase was made, they would defer selling the lot till he might be consulted.\textsuperscript{35}

July 1, 1784, Hopkinson wrote another letter, in which he said that the lot was unimproved and that it would not bring in annual rent more than the cost of taxes and necessary repairs on the fence. He hoped that the Associates would come to some decision regarding it; for the present, he would consider himself their tenant and pay all taxes and repairs.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. p. 77.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 99.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., pp. 107–108.
But Mr. Hopkinson changed his mind. On May 3, 1785, he wrote the Associates that the taxes and repairs on the lot had amounted to eight guineas a year and that he made no use of it except as a pasture for his cow; therefore, he could no longer consider himself a tenant. He recommended that the whole, or a part of it, be let out on a perpetual ground rent, for which he supposed he could get three dollars a foot. The Associates, at their October meeting, agreed, on considering this letter, that the Secretary acquaint Mr. Hopkinson with the fact "that the Associates, from the long experience they have had of his Zeal to promote their Designs, entirely confide in him for disposing of their Lot to the best Advantage, submitting however to his Judgment, whether if only a part were disposed of at present the remainder may not be much more valuable hereafter." He was asked to consult with Doctor Franklin, since it was by his advice that the land was purchased.37

To those who know the Philadelphia of today and the value of lands at Market and Ninth, the proposed rental of three dollars a foot will be rather amusing. But even in those days, values were advancing, as we observe from the next letter.

On the 23rd of August, the same year, Mr. Hopkinson advised the Associates that, on enquiry, he had found that he could get four dollars a foot for fronts on Market street, and two dollars a foot for fronts on Filbert street, supposing the whole lot were divided midway by an east and west line. Thus the whole ground would yield six dollars a foot on perpetual lease and amount to $792 a year for ever. From that sum, however, deductions must be made for the taxes upon the ground rents, which the lessor would pay. The lot, he recounted, had three fronts—132 feet on Market, 306 on Tenth, and 132 on Filbert. The Market street front was the most valuable. The lots must run at least halfway the depth of the whole, that is, 153 feet. Mr. Hop-

37 Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. pp. 118-119.
kinson states that "he much doubts whether the Lot will ever produce a higher perpetual Ground Rent than the above; at least he is confident that no future Rise in Value will be equal to the Loss of the Interim, or the Loss of the Rent it would produce between the present & the Time of such supposed encrease of Value." He said that he had paid eight guineas for taxes, which sum he hoped the Associates would repay.

November 7th, the Associates agreed to send their thanks to Mr. Hopkinson for his great attention to their interests, and to assure him "that he may depend upon his Order for the Taxes being duly honor'd." The Secretary was instructed to prepare a letter of attorney to empower Doctor Franklin and Mr. Hopkinson to lease out the land in lot upon such leases as should be most advantageous to the Society.38

Mr. Hopkinson informed the Associates, May 29, 1786, that Doctor Franklin had delivered into his care the letters of attorney. A person who had bought the adjoining lot to that of the Associates had made a proposal, to which both Doctor Franklin and himself assent: a proposal to run a ten-foot street or alley through the ground from Ninth to Tenth street, leaving a depth of 96 feet for the lots fronting on Filbert street. By such means the frontage would be increased and access would be obtained to the stables which might be built by means of the alley. "I intend to exert myself in letting out as much Ground as will set the Charity School again on foot. I shall in every thing take Dr. Franklin's advice & concurrence whose Friendship I have enjoyed from my Youth & with whose intimacy I am now honour'd."39

From this letter, we infer that the school itself had been dormant, probably since the beginning of the Revolutionary War. The Associates, however, had hopes of reviving its activities.

38 Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. p. 120.
39 Ibid., pp. 133–134.
On June 3, 1786, Doctor Franklin wrote the following letter to the Associates.

Philadelpa June 3, 1786

Sir

I received duly the Letters you wrote to me of Oct. 4, 1785 and April 4th 1786. Being much occupy'd I referrd the first to Mr. Hopkinson, who I suppose has written to you. This serves to acknowledge the Receipt of the Power of Attorney enabling us to lease the Ground belonging to the Associates, and to assure you that my best Assistance therein shall not be wanting. With great Esteem for the Society, I am

Sir

Your most obedient humble Servant
B. Franklin

While Doctor Franklin was the sage Nestor to whom the Associates looked for endorsement, it remained for Francis Hopkinson to attend to most of the details. This he seems to have done in the best and most obliging spirit. On the 24th of October, 1786, he wrote the Associates that he had leased on ground rent for ever a portion of the lot, and would fix a value on the rest of the estate. This would enable him to let out more of the ground on equally good terms and would make it possible to revive the negro charity school "according to the designs of the Associates." The lot that he has let runs twenty-five feet on Market and was two hundred feet deep; it was leased to Samuel Corry for twenty-five pistoles a year for ever . . . the pistoles of 4 pennyweight, 6 grains, of standard gold each pistole. "This, I think is a great Rent, considering how distant the Lot is from the Mercantile part of the City." (Twenty-five Spanish pistoles amounted to about twenty-five pounds in local currency.)

Mr. Hopkinson also reported that he had agreed with a woman "every way proper for the purpose," at £30 a year, to open the school and attend thirty scholars, each scholar paying some small matter for winter-firing.

*Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. p. 132.*
In his negotiations with Corry, Mr. Hopkinson neglected to stipulate that he pay taxes. "Indeed," he said, "I avoided throwing difficulties or obstacles in the way lest the Bargain should not take place." But he hoped that the odd five pounds a year would more than pay taxes of every kind on the lot; and he would take care to let no more ground without obliging the tenant to pay all taxes.

In explaining the sketch which was submitted, Mr. Hopkinson said:—"I propose the Lots on Market Street to be 200 feet deep those on Filbert Street to be 96 feet deep & to run a ten feet Alley for the back parts of the Lots." If he should succeed in letting the rest of the lot fronting on Market street at the same rate, it would produce £ 104 per annum. Should he let the fronts on Filbert street at only ten shillings a foot (which he thought they would soon produce), it would amount to £ 66 per annum; making an income for the whole of £ 250 a year. This would be a very advantageous transaction. "The Associates gave £ 950 for the Lot, & will receive, should these Leases take place, the legal Int. of more than £ 4150—Our legal Int is 6 pet on the principal."

The school was reopened; and in a year's time it was

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41 Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. pp. 139-140.
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full. But the lessee disappointed the owners. On the 22nd of October, 1787, Doctor Franklin and Mr. Hopkinson wrote a joint letter to the Associates. They said that, when they rented part of the ground to Samuel Corry—spelled "Correy" in some of the correspondence—they expected that he would build on the same, according to his declared intentions. This would have given a permanent security for the rent. He had failed to do so; and when the year was completed (September 30th), it was found that he was a man of embarrassed circumstances, and there was no probability of getting the land without a lawsuit. They were apprehensive that he would declare himself a bankrupt, should they take legal steps. Under the circumstances, therefore, they had agreed that if he would pay the year's rent already due and a quarter's rent in advance, for the continuance of the school, they would take back the estate and relieve him of the contract. This he had engaged to do within ten days. They felt that the Society would be "well rid of such an uncertain Tenant." Further, they would do their best to rent the ground again upon more promising security.

The school itself, they added, was "full, & many applying for admission. It is conducted we believe to general satisfaction." They would not break up the school, if they could avoid it; in fact, they would advance two quarters' salary to the mistress.42

Corry reconveyed the lot and paid the rent. On the 12th of March, 1788, Mr. Hopkinson rented the corner lot, 40 feet fronting on Market and 200 feet deep on Tenth street, to James Traquair and John Miller, stonecutters, for 106 Spanish milled dollars a year, to be paid quarterly. The lessees were described by Mr. Hopkinson as industrious men; and they proceeded to build two brick houses on the ground, thus making the rent effectually secure. This rent was sufficient to support

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the school. Mr. Hopkinson said that he was anxious to let one more lot on Filbert street; but the rest of the ground might lie idle for awhile, as in a year or two it would probably advance considerably in value, on account of the buildings and improvements which were greatly increasing in that quarter. "I am sorry you have been so hasty in adding to the Schools in Nova Scotia," he declared, "in expectation of Removals from hence. When this Lot was purchased for the Society it was at a considerable distance from the improved Parts of the City, & there are now no Houses beyond it, but it is fast increasing in Value. I have let part of the Grounds for nearly 20" of Foot at the Time it was purchased it would not have produced more than 8 or 10" of Foot."

On a visit to the school, about May, 1788, Mr. Hopkinson found eleven boys and twenty-one girls. There were fourteen in reading, fifteen in spelling, three in the alphabet; the girls were sewing. There were catechism and prayers every Thursday. "Your Estate is exempted from Taxation which is a very considerable saving."

Doctor William White had been consecrated first Bishop of Pennsylvania, on the 4th of February, 1787; and during his long stay in England, he had familiarised himself with the various agencies of the mother Church. Among other things, he had called on the Associates in London, and had promised to keep them informed of the state of their Philadelphia school. On his return to the states, he notified the Associates (December 1, 1788) that "those of the Children who have made sufficient progress in Learning duly & decently attend catechetical Instruction, once in every Month at one of the Churches;" likewise, "they discover not only a sufficient readiness, but also that their Mistress has attended in School to this Branch of their Education."

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Furthermore, "the general Conduct of the School gives Satisfaction so far as I have been able to Learn; & I may say, to observe; for I have sometimes called at it with Mr Hopkinson the Agent of the Society; & was pleased with the diligence & order apparent in it."44

The death of Benjamin Franklin deprived the Associates of a man whose judgment was considered sane and dependable. In a letter written August 30, 1790, Mr. Hopkinson said that as it was necessary that someone be joined with him "in the management of the Negroes School & charge of the Societies Lot of Ground in the City," in Doctor Franklin's place, he had proposed the matter to Bishop White, who made no objection. "The removal of Congress to the City," he said, "will undoubtedly increase the Value of your Estate. I think that in about a Year four Dollars $9 Foot may be had for the Ground, but I shall not conclude any thing hastily or without your farther advice." The school, he added, was well attended and full; more applying than could be admitted.

Thereupon, the Associates agreed that Mr. Hopkinson receive their thanks "for his unintermitted attention to their Concerns;" and that Bishop White be requested to accept the trust in room of the late Doctor Franklin.45

Bishop White was active in his new responsibility. On the 23rd of May, 1791, he replied to the Associates, accepting the trust. In that letter, he conveyed the sad news of Mr. Hopkinson's death, May 9th. Three days before his death, Mr. Hopkinson called on him to ascertain his opinion on a bargain which he thought would be in his power, namely, the letting of what remained of the lot on Market street, at four dollars annually a foot. The Bishop encouraged him in the proposal; and Hopkinson went away, determined to make the offer and to cause an instrument to be drawn, associat-

ing him in the trust. But he died without warning; and when the Bishop called on the scrivener, who was to have made out the power of attorney and on the gentleman who had treated with him for the lot, he found that the offer had been made and the necessary instructions given, but nothing effectual had been done in either case. The Bishop suggested as a joint trustee the Honourable Samuel Powell, late mayor of the city, and at the time a member of the upper branch of the State Legislature, whom he described as "a Gentleman eminent among us for his Integrity his Talents & his Fortune & who besides his other Qualifications for the Trust, has this in a very singular Degree...that he is minutely attentive to whatever Business he undertakes."

The Associates agreed, October 6, 1791, that Mr. Powell be requested to accept the trust in the place of their 'late very worthy Agent.'

On the 3rd of October, 1793, the Associates read a communication from Bishop White and Mr. Powell, explaining that only in the last few days had they received the papers in the matter of the lot and the part management of the school, and that the want of the same had prevented their knowing what powers were necessary. The school, however, had gone on; money had been duly received from the tenants; the mistress had been paid. They said that the mistress desired an increase of salary. The house-rent and all necessary expenses occasioned "an enormous Rise, owing partly to the great Influx of Strangers, & partly to the Residence of the Officers of the federal Governm'. Altho it is probable that after a while Prices will settle to their former Level, yet we think that in the mean Time the Salary of the Mistress is below an Equivalent for her Labour."

Regarding the property, they said that applications had been made for the remainder of the lot on Market

*Dr. Bray's Associates: Minute Book II. pp. 102-104.*
street, consisting of an area ninety by two hundred feet. "We do not lament that it has not been in our Power for want of the necessary Authorities to Let this on Gr[ound] Rent because besides the general Rise of Property in this City, there have been some accidental Circumstances occasioning an extraordinary Rise in that particular Neighbourhood." If the Associates wished to let that lot without delay, $6 a front foot would be about the price. Besides that lot, there was one of eighty by 132 feet on Filbert street, which might be best left for future sale.

June 4, 1795, Bishop White wrote the Associates that Mr. Powell had died. He recommended that the Associates issue a power of attorney to be made out, joining with him three gentlemen, so as to guard against the inconvenience resulting from death. He nominated as trustees, the Reverend Robert Blackwell, D.D., Mr. John Wilcoks, and Mr. Thomas Compton. Those men, when consulted, opined that $10 a foot might be expected for the lot of 92 feet on High or Market street. In that case, the Society would have "an handsome Annual Income at their disposal." The Bishop hoped, he said, that the funds would admit of a school on a more enlarged plan.

He added that the negroes have lately erected, partly at their own expense and partly by subscriptions among the whites,

a very convenient Church, which they have call'd the African Church of St Thomas, have declared a conformity to our Church in Doctrine Discipline & Worship, & have solicited the Ordination of one of their Number, a Man of great weight among them. Having known them for many Years & being perfectly satisfied with his Character & his Discretion; considering also that he has a measure of Literature, al tho' I wish it were more, I have thoughts of complying with their Request: All my Brethren in this City approving of it; & in the mean Time giving their services to the Congregation as much as their respective Engagements permit.

The Bishop asked if the Associates, when the rents of their lots allowed, would contribute to the building of a school-house and support a school on a more enlarged plan than the present one. In such case, proper persons might be selected, who, under the authority of the trustees, might inspect the education more minutely than could be done by the trustees themselves.

The Associates, on January 7, 1796, agreed that Bishop White be informed, that they would "with pleasure give all reasonable Encouragement to the Building a School House out of the future Profits of their Rent of their Lots in Philadelphia." 48

The 6th of February, 1797, the Associates read a letter in which the Bishop told them that, with the approbation of the gentlemen whose assistance the Society had sanctioned, he had let on a ground rent for ever to Mr. Joseph Donaldson, a lot on High street of 23 feet at $8 a foot. He was treating for another lot of the same size, at the same rent. He had also leased to Samuel Traquair the lot on Filbert at $100 a year.

"The Associates encourage me to hope," said he, that they will do something in behalf of the African Church towards the Endowment of a School on a more enlarged Plan than the present, the Benefit of which will never extend beyond very young Children or at best will not prepare Boys for trades. There are two ways in which the Society could serve them: one is by enabling the Vestry to build a School House on their Lot behind their Church. The other by allowing a Stipend for a School under their Management & Subject to Visitation of the Society's Agents.

He felt that the school might be kept for a time in their Church.

The Bishop's letter was considered by the Associates. They were of the opinion that "the most desirable Plan is the establishing another School;" so they agreed that Bishop White be requested to apply to that purpose any sum he should think proper, not exceeding

twenty pounds Sterling, being the produce of their lot.\footnote{Dr. Bray’s Associates: Minute Book II. pp. 248-249.}

Negotiations went on in regard to the property. By October 15, 1800, we find that the Bishop has received a payment of fifty pounds on an account of £160 5s. 5d., due the Associates. The Associates were informed that one of the purchasers of their property had declined finishing the contract; and that the sale of property was dull.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 277-278.} The Bishop asked that the Associates appoint some person in Philadelphia, to whom payments on their accounts might be paid. On December 1st, the Associates agreed to appoint Mr. William Poyntell as their agent, to receive payments at a commission of five per cent.\footnote{Ibid., p. 282.} Mr. Poyntell was acting in Philadelphia as the agent of Mr. John Palmer, a London merchant.

At their meeting, February 2, 1801, the Associates noted the fact that Mr. Palmer himself was preparing to go to Philadelphia, and that he had consented to make the remittances himself. His offer was accepted; and so John Palmer became their agent instead of Poyntell.\footnote{Ibid., p. 289.}

When Mr. Palmer reached his new home, he wrote the Reverend G. A. Hatch, of the Associates of Doctor Bray, in regard to the affairs of the charity. The rental which inured to the Society was inconsiderable, amounting to only $456, or a little over a hundred pounds Sterling. ‘‘There are no Houses built on the Premises, except on N° 4. by Traquair; and at present I see no probability that any will be built on it, inasmuch as the Peace in Europe has much affected the operations of this Country and diminished the Funds arising from Commerce.’’ He considered that it was unfortunate that the year 1797 was allowed to pass by without a sale of the whole property; but he believed that the value of
the same would advance again with increased population, and particularly with a change of political events which might prove more favourable to the commercial interests of America.

Palmer's letter was written March 20, 1802. On May 20th ... exactly two months afterwards ... Bishop White wrote to the Associates, recommending the establishment of another school in Philadelphia. He proposed the district called Southwark, adjoining and below the city. Next to that, he suggested the Northern Liberties, immediately above the city.

The Associates resolved, March 5, 1804, that, in accord with Bishop White's representation, another school be established in Philadelphia, "in such a Part of it, and on such a Plan, as the Bishop shall judge proper; but not exceeding in Expense Either of the others of the Society's two Schools now established in that City." The second school referred to was doubtless the school established in connection with the negro Church.

The arrangements were evidently entrusted to Bishop White, who seems to have acted without consulting the Associates' financial agent. On the 19th of December, 1806, John Palmer wrote the Associates that since the last letter, he had had no money paid him and had received not the slightest communication of any circumstances relative to the concerns of the Associates. However, he had heard of their having directed an additional school. Mr. Cumpston, to whom some of their property had been leased, had taken on a permanent lease for some of the property at $8 a foot. With this entry, the second Minute Book of the Associates makes its last mention of the philanthropic work among the negroes of Pennsylvania.

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Ibid., p. 325.
Ibid., p. 351.
Ibid., pp. 395–396.