



Class **BV2369**

Book **M5**

Author

Title

Imprint

16-50500-1 GPO

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Mills, Samuel John
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COMMUNICATIONS

RELATIVE

TO THE PROGRESS

OF

BIBLE SOCIETIES

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

With other articles of information, exhibiting the progress of
similar institutions.



**PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE PHILADELPHIA
BIBLE SOCIETY.**

1813.

July 19, 1813.

*Copy of a Resolution passed by the Board of Managers of the
Philadelphia Bible Society.*

"Resolved, That the communication of Messrs. Schermerhorn and Mills, laid before the managers at their last meeting, be printed, together with a brief summary of the intelligence contained in the treasurer's report of this day, relative to the institution of a Bible Society in Russia."

The Rev. Dr. Staughton and B. B. Hopkins were appointed a committee to carry this Resolution into effect, and were empowered to append to the above communication such other matter as they may deem pertinent. Five hundred copies were ordered to be printed.

*Copy of a Resolution passed at a Meeting of the Board, Sept-
ember 20th, 1813.*

"Resolved, That a compliment of a Bible in extra binding, be made to Mr. Schermerhorn, and another to Mr. Mills, as a testimony of the high sense entertained by this Board, of the exertions of these gentlemen in promoting the establishment of Bible Societies in their missionary tour."

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COMMUNICATIONS

RELATIVE TO THE PROGRESS

OF

Bible Societies in the United States.

Philadelphia, June 29th, 1813.

Robert Ralston, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

IN October last, we communicated to you the formation of the *Ohio Bible Society*, and that in order to accomplish it, we engaged that the Bible Societies of Philadelphia, New York and Connecticut, would each present them with one hundred bibles. From yours of November, 1812, we were happy to learn that "the managers of the Philadelphia Bible Society had agreed to furnish the Ohio Bible Society with one hundred English, and six French bibles," and that you had no doubt, there would be a disposition in the Society to aid "every new society, as far as it was in their power." This information, together with a letter from the Rev. Dr. John B. Romeyn, which stated that the New York Bible Society had placed at our disposal five hundred bibles, was a very great encouragement to us to attempt the formation of Bible Societies, in the states

and territories we should visit in the missionary tour assigned us. And it affords us great pleasure, that we are able at this time to communicate, through you, to the Philadelphia Bible Society, the success that has attended our exertions.

In travelling through Ohio, shortly after the formation of the Bible Society at Marietta, we found this event was hailed with joy by christians of every denomination, and would receive their generous support. Near one hundred and fifty dollars were subscribed by a few individuals, at the first formation of the Society, and upwards of one hundred more at two places where the subject was introduced after preaching. We are persuaded, from the well known character of the president and other officers of the Society, that through the beneficence of the Societies already mentioned, and the liberal subscription they obtained, they have already disseminated the word of life among many in Virginia, Ohio and Indiana Territory.

In Kentucky we found the *Lexington Bible Society* already in operation; but not in a very prosperous state. It was too limited in its operations, and only partially known, being confined to Lexington and its vicinity, and considered as a Presbyterian establishment by many christians of other denominations, and something in which they could not unite. It is peculiarly injurious to the cause of religion, that party spirit or sectarian zeal should ever keep good men from uniting heart and hand, in a cause of the purest benevolence—the distribution of the scriptures without note or comment,—and from which all profess to derive those sen-

timents and practices which keeps them at variance, and affect to consider as the only foundation of their hopes of happiness in the world to come. In order to promote the prosperity of this Society, and the cause of religion generally, it was necessary that this opinion, however erroneous, should be removed. To this end some amendments were proposed to their constitution, the object of which was to show more explicitly the design of the Society—to embrace, if possible, the co-operation of all denominations of christians, and to make it a general one for the whole state. Several of the officers of the Society informed us, they had no doubt, but that the proposed amendments would be adopted by the Society, and on condition that this would be done, we presented them with an order for one hundred bibles.

In West Tennessee is probably organized ere this, the *Nashville Bible Society*. We had not the pleasure of seeing this Society formed, before it was expedient for us to leave the place for Natchez. We had, however, the satisfaction of finding, that many with whom we had an opportunity of conversing, approved of the object, and promised their aid in the formation and support of the Society. When we left Nashville, the Rev. Gideon Blackburn assured us he would use every means in his power to have the Society speedily organized. With the hope and prospect that this would soon take place, we ordered fifty bibles for this Society, to the care of Mr. Blackburn, and gave assurances of future assistance, on representation of their circumstances to the Societies who had already

exercised such a generous liberality towards the Ohio Bible Society. While descending the Mississippi with major general Andrew Jackson, and the volunteers under his command, we had frequent conversations with the staff and field officers, on the prospect of the formation of the Nashville Bible Society, who testified their approbation of the design, by subscribing upwards of one hundred dollars, to be paid when the Society should be organized. To see such a respect for the word of God, such regard for the good of society, and such liberality manifested by the principal officers in the corps of Tennessee volunteers, made our hearts to leap for joy.

The *Mississippi Bible Society* was formed on the 27th of March, 1813, at Nachez. The prospect here at the first meeting, was truly discouraging, for not more than five persons attended, though notice had been given of the time, place and object of the meeting, in the newspapers, for near two weeks previous to it. But lest the enemy should rejoice at the ineffectual attempt to disseminate light and truth among them, the few that did attend were persuaded that it was necessary that something ought to be done before they separated. A committee, therefore, was chosen to draft a constitution, and a day appointed for its adoption. When the day arrived, there was a very respectable meeting of the citizens, among whom we were happy to learn, were a number of the officers of the general government for the territory; and that his excellency governor Holmes was placed at the head of the institution. From this, as well as many other in-

stances which we could relate, we are satisfied that nothing but perseverance and energy are necessary for securing success to a cause, which has for its object the prosperity of Zion, or the happiness of the human family.

The *Louisiana Bible Society* was formed at New Orleans on the 29th of March, 1813. The spirit which was manifested at the formation of this Society, far, very far, exceeded our most sanguine expectations. From the character we had received of the place, we were induced to think, if three or four individuals could be found who would distribute such bibles as might be committed to their disposal, by the Bible Societies in the eastern or middle states, that a great and very important point would be gained. This opinion was much strengthened from being informed on our arrival at New-Orleans, by Mr. Reis, a baptist missionary, that after being there near two months, he was unable to give away more than three or four French bibles, out of two dozen that had been committed to him for distribution. However great the discouragement, and small the prospect of success,—and these were truly so, when we reflect that there was no protestant minister settled here, and perhaps never, before last winter, been visited by *protestant missionaries*—the greater was the necessity, and the stronger the motives to attempt the diffusion of divine light and truth among the people.

The first step that we took was to call on the principal clergy of the Roman Catholic church, to ascertain whether they were opposed to the circulation of

the Sacred Scriptures among their people. To our great joy, and their great praise, they assured us they had not the least objection to it, and expressed themselves surprised that we could entertain such a suspicion. The bishop, however, observed, that he could not recommend to his people, any other than the versions authorised by the mother church. To this we replied, that the versions to be circulated in the English, French, and Spanish languages, were the same as those distributed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Should these versions, however, prove not to be the same as those authorised by their church, he told us, that even then he would not secretly or openly oppose the distribution of them; though he would be in duty bound to say, *if asked*, they were not the authorised versions. The bishop informed us, after having examined the French New Testament, that it met his approbation, and that a number of copies, if we had them, might be immediately distributed in the convent of Ursuline Nuns. At this nunnery have been, and are still educated the daughters of the principal catholic families in Louisiana.

A subscription paper was now circulated, to ascertain how many persons would favour the establishment of a Bible Society. In a short time near fifty names were procured, among which were the governor's, and many of the members of the legislature, which was then in session. On the day appointed to organize the Society, there was a general attendance of the original subscribers, and the constitution, which you have already received, was adopted. As soon as

it was known through the city that a Society had been formed, and a few French bibles were on hand, the catholics called for them, and in a very short time the two dozen of Bibles committed to the care of Mr. Reis, were distributed, and frequent calls every day for more. It is not improbable, that in less than two weeks two hundred bibles might have been distributed; and that among those who perhaps never had seen a bible in a language they did understand.

The general principle we had always in view, in the formation of those Societies, was to combine the united support and energies of all denominations of christians, by whatever name they were known. To this end the constitutions of the several Societies allow of a great number of managers, at the same time constituting a limited number, which may easily be convened, competent to transact the ordinary business of the Society. By this means the board of managers can always be composed of men of different denominations; and if chosen from different parts of the state in which the Society is formed, the places most in want of the scriptures may be easily discovered, the the charity of the Society most properly bestowed, and we would hope also, aid to it more generally contributed. It is but just to observe, that whatever success has attended our exertions in the formation of *Bible Societies*, in a great measure must be attributed to the generous donations of the Philadelphia, Connecticut and New York Bible Societies, and to the promises of similar aid from them in future, on proper representations being made to them. For the first ob-

jection we generally found was the want of support to such an institution; all were agreed as to the utility and importance of the thing itself. This objection was removed by being able to present them with a number of bibles immediately, and to hold out the prospect of future assistance. And this aid we felt in some measure authorised to promise, from the cheerfulness with which our engagements to the Ohio Bible Society had been fulfilled, and from a firm persuasion that it can be the only object of Bible Societies to circulate the scripture, and that too where they are most wanted. Dear Sir, these Societies are tender plants, and require much care and attention. Some are planted in the barren heath, where little or no water is; still they must be watered—frequently and generously watered—before many can enjoy their refreshing shade, or partake of their blessed fruits. Aware, however, that the above Societies had already made very generous donations—that calls for their charity were great at home, and that particularly the funds of the Philadelphia Bible Society were nearly exhausted, by the purchase of their stereotype press; we made no promises to the Bible Societies in the west of any immediate or particular assistance. Neither was it necessary; for in addition to the number of bibles already mentioned as distributed among these Societies, we have ordered one hundred to the Mississippi Bible Society, and one hundred and fifty to Louisiana. We trust, however, that as the calls for your assistance multiply, your means of communicating will increase; and that in

very deed you may experience the blessing of the promise, "*he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.*"

We have as yet said nothing as it respects the great want of the scriptures in the Western country; neither can this be fully known, until after the Societies lately formed have gone into operation, and made diligent search as to these things. It may be observed in general, that there are but few bibles there, except those taken out by families religiously educated, who have emigrated to that country; and it will be granted that such families bear no great proportion to the whole number of inhabitants. There has been no edition of the bible printed *west of the mountains*, and the inducement to merchants to take out many, very small, as will appear from the following anecdote. A merchant in Tennessee observed during the earthquakes in 1811 and 1812, that before these took place, he *used to sell ten packs of cards where he sold one bible, now he sold ten bibles where he sold one pack of cards.* We have, however, some data from whence we may form a general estimate of the great want of the scriptures in this part of our country. If we are correctly informed, the Bible Society of Connecticut has distributed in New Connecticut, Ohio, five hundred bibles, and that two or three hundred more would be necessary to supply the destitute in this district. The population at the time these bibles were distributed, was about 16,000 inhabitants. Suppose then, that eight hundred bibles were necessary to supply the destitute among this number of inhabitants, and then it will be found one bible was wanted among every

twenty souls. This district cannot be supposed, when we reflect from whence the settlers chiefly went, to be more destitute than any other part of the western country; so that we may safely estimate that want of the bible in this part of our country, to be as great in proportion to the population, as was found to exist in New Connecticut. The states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and the Territories of Indiana, Illinois and Mississippi, have a free population of upwards of 1,000,000, and of slaves about 150,000. Now if we suppose those destitute of the scriptures in these states and territories, to bear the same ratio to the whole number of inhabitants that existed in New Connecticut, at least 50,000 bibles are necessary to supply their immediate wants; and we should not be surprised if, on enquiry, it was found, that double this number was wanted. For it is supposed, and that by those who have taken pains to ascertain, that in the state of Connecticut, which has a population not exceeding 270,000 souls, about 20,000 bibles were wanted to supply the destitute among them. If the want of bibles is so great in a state that has churches and schools, with able teachers, established in every town, is it reasonable to suppose, that in those states and territories, where in most places they have only occasional preaching, few schools, and these poorly supplied with instructors, and in many places neither churches nor schools, that the want of the scriptures can be less?

The inhabitants of Louisiana and the territory of Missouri, before the United States took possession of the country, were entirely Roman Catholics, and we

know that formerly it never constituted a part of their policy to tolerate protestant preachers, or allow the circulation of the scriptures among the people, and must be considered, therefore, as entirely destitute, except the few that have been sent there since the cession of the country. The bishop at Orleans spoke his mind most freely on this subject, and observed that he did not believe there were ten bibles among all the catholics in New Orleans. This is probably correct, for we were informed that when the Americans took possession of the country, it was not until after long search that a bible could be found to administer the oath of office; and the one at last procured was a Latin vulgate from one of the priests. This country at present contains a free population of 100,000 souls, of which about 70,000 are catholics, and slaves about 40,000. Many of the protestants, it is to be lamented, are as regardless of the scriptures as if they had no souls, and there was no hereafter; but many also, as appears from a letter from S. Hamstead, St. Louis, have not means to procure them, and wish that some bibles might be sent there. Here also are 70,000 of our adopted brethren without a bible—the obstacles which formerly existed to the circulation of bibles among them removed, and they eager to receive them. And can christians, who have bibles enough, and to spare, withhold from them and our other destitute brethren in the west, *the bread of life*? *Does charity begin at home*? Here then is an ample field for the exercise of it. Thousands! tens of thousands, sit without a bible

in a land of Gospel light and liberty. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon."

We would suggest to you, whether it would not be greatly for the interest of Religion, should the Bible Society of Philadelphia, the parent institution in America, commence a correspondence with the Bible Societies in the Atlantic States, on the subject of printing, in union with the Louisiana Bible Society, an edition of the French New Testament for distribution in Louisiana and Missousi. The French inhabitants are upwards of 50,000. It is a fact, however, that not more than one out of ten can read; an edition of 5,000 copies, therefore, would probably meet the present necessities of the country. Could not some general bond of union be formed among some of the Bible Societies for similar purposes, hereafter, for the assistance and encouragement of new bible societies in the country—and particularly for the supply of our brethren in the west?

The Spanish inhabitants are not numerous. Five hundred bibles is supposed will be sufficient to supply all the Spaniards that can read in Louisiana, and these may be obtained from the British and Foreign Bible Society. Would it be improper, in some of your communications to this Society, to suggest, that if they design to make any donation to the Louisiana Bible Society, it would be most to the interest of the Society to receive the amount in Spanish bibles or testaments? Should the revolutions which are now taking place in New Spain and South America, finally terminate in the establishment of independent govern-

ments, an event which we look upon as certain, and not far distant, the printing of the Spanish bible for distribution in those countries, would be a very important consideration for the Bible Societies in America, and its accomplishment form a new and most interesting era in their history.

With our best wishes for the prosperity and welfare of the Philadelphia Bible Society,

We are,
with esteem and affection,
your obedient friends and servants,

SAMUEL J. MILLS,
JOHN L. SCHERMERHORN.

THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF
JAMES OGLETHORPE
BY
JAMES OGLETHORPE
OF THE
CITY OF SAVANNAH
IN THE
STATE OF GEORGIA
PUBLISHED BY
JAMES OGLETHORPE
OF THE
CITY OF SAVANNAH
IN THE
STATE OF GEORGIA
1834

ADDRESS.

THE Managers of the Philadelphia Bible Society cherish, with confidence, the persuasion, that their sister societies throughout the Union will perceive the importance of the measure recommended by the Rev. Mr. Schermerhorn and the Rev. Mr. Mills, in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth pages of the preceding communication. The circulation of the New Testament through a section of country where literally exists "a famine of the word" is in a high degree desirable. It will not merely increase a love for reading and attempts to succeed in it, in a country where not more than "one out of ten *can* read," and in so doing subserve the interests of civilization and literature, but may conduce eminently to the banishing of moral ignorance, error and prejudice, and to the diffusion of that light which is *the life of the world*.

An edition of five thousand French Testaments would be a task, which no individual society, in conjunction with its other duties, might be able to complete: but the joint efforts of such societies as can spare funds for the purpose, would render the measure easy, prompt, and effectual. It would, moreover, present a most interesting proof of the unity of the *common design*, and of a disposition to harmonize in every attempt that can embrace the honour of the Son of God and the salvation of the souls of men.

An edition of the French New Testament has already been printed at Boston. There, or in some other of our cities, another edition equally fair and accurate can without doubt be produced. All that is wanting is funds, nor can it be believed that these will long be defective. Mr. Ralston, the treasurer of the Philadelphia Society, will with pleasure receive any communications on the subject of the desired edition, from Bible Societies in the United States, and any individual contributions which the pious and generous heart may be disposed to offer. A wide field for the labour of christian love, most certainly is thrown open. The circumstance will be most happy should an immediate concurrence of resources render it practicable to complete the work during the ensuing winter.

APPENDIX.

Extract of a Letter from Josiah Roberts, Esq., London, to Robert Ralston, Esq.

London, April 19, 1813.

“WHILST the judgments of the Most High are pouring out on different parts of the earth, the sad consequence of man’s apostacy and rebellion, it is cheering to observe, that mercy in its most attractive form is still dispensed.

In Russia (how marvellous are the dispensations of the All-wise God!) a wide and effectual door is opening for the spread of the blessed gospel, in its unadulterated state, by the establishment of Bible Societies on an extensive scale, and under the highest patronage—the Emperor himself having undertaken the office of patron; and such was the interest excited in his mind, that he deferred, for a time, his journey to the head-quarters of the army at Wilna, to sign the constitution of the society, adopted by the first public meeting held at St. Petersburg. The finger of an over-ruling Providence, has been remarkable in every stage of the business. Under the sanction of a princess of the empire, residing at Moscow (whose heart the Lord had opened through the instrumentality of a missionary, since engaged as a teacher in her family) the first meeting was to have been held there, two days only, before the French entered that devoted city. Their approach put a stop to the measures, which would have been abandoned for a time, but that the principal agent, on his return to St. Petersburg to embark for Sweden, was there detained by the indisposition of his wife (most reluctantly) for a considerable season, and circumstances were so over-ruled, as to open a way for carrying the design into execution in that city, and under such favourable aspices. Here again we may exclaim, this is the Lord’s doings and it is marvellous in our eyes!”

From a Report of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, relative to the progress of the Society’s operations abroad.

Translation of a Letter from the Rev. Leander Van Ess, formerly Parish Minister of Grevenburg, in the kingdom of Westphalia, and now Catholic Professor of Divinity at the University of Marbourg.

I HAVE just received from my friend Professor Klaiber, in Stutgard, the pleasing news of your arrival in that city, and your

willingness to purchase 3,000 copies of our New Testament, for distribution amongst our poor. I have long had a great desire to apply to you by letter, but your great distance, and the uncertainty of correspondence, prevented me. The greater was my joy, when informed of your being in your native country, and of your desire to spread the saving word of the Lord amongst the needy of our people.

I commenced the translation and printing of my New Testament in humble reliance on the assistance of God, and with the sincere wish to benefit his people. It had been nearly frustrated more than once, through the opposition raised against it by deluded bigots: but, He that gave me the will assisted me in accomplishing the work; strengthened me his feeble servant, with power for the conflict; and enabled me to persevere to the end. The first edition of 11,000 copies was disposed of in a few months: it was published at our own expense; and being desirous to promote its circulation by rendering it as cheap as possible, so far from gaining by it, we lost, owing to the dishonest dealings of some of the booksellers, 300 R. Ds. (about 60%.) Of the second edition of our New Testament with standing types, about 7000, and of the third edition, with larger types, about 1500 copies are disposed of. Almost every one of our free copies has been gratuitously distributed: we have had many pleasing proofs that their reading has been attended with a real blessing: godliness, contentment, and consolation, were the visible fruits of it. In many a family, in which the reading of the New Testament became a sacred custom, especially on Sundays and holidays, I saw the good seed springing up and ripening for eternity. Now this book of books is numbered among the jewels and sacred relics of the family. The people become more familiar with its contents; and draw from this source instruction and warning, encouragement and comfort. We beheld the beneficial effects of its introduction in many schools, conferring blessings on the parents by the instrumentality of the children; in some it was distributed as a reward for diligence. But in those places, where the attention of the people to the New Testament was recommended by the Catholic clergyman himself, their eagerness and joy in reading it was still greater. I have heard many interesting narratives from my fellow clergymen concerning the good effects of scripture reading, by which many souls have been turned from vice to virtue; from the service of sin to a lively and active faith in Christ. Many desponding, harassed by fears and struggling with doubts, were cheered, encouraged, and confirmed, seeking peace with God and rest of conscience through Christ, or esteeming themselves happy in having found Christ in the Bible as their salvation and life eternal. In other places, where the minister paid but little attention to the word of God, I heard people frequently saying, "the pure word of God, I read in my New Testament, edifies me more than the vain words from the pulpit; might our minister but read unto us a portion of the New Testament in-

stead of them." I had lately a conversation with a modern philosopher, who reduced the doctrine of Christ to a mere system of morality, considering his reason far superior to its authority, and who exalted virtue at the expense of faith. I handed him my New Testament, referring him to the history of Cornelius; who, notwithstanding the virtuous life he had led as a heathen, was earnestly pressed by Peter to believe in Christ and his doctrine. He went away, read, and returned a convert, with fervent gratitude to God and a strong faith in Christ, who had become his all in all. With him I praised the Lord for his grace and mercy. Ah! and how many do I hear in these heavy times of oppression and distress, declaring the happiness they enjoy in the knowledge of their Bible, in the midst of all their troubles. If every thing (say they) should be taken from us, should we be even forced to part with our property and with our children; one comfort remains, of which none can rob us, that from the Bible.

At the recommendation of some of our clergy, parents present their children with a New Testament on their first receiving the Holy Sacrament; and it is now a customary present from the bridegroom to his bride.

How often did my heart bleed to behold many coming to me from other parishes soliciting the gift of a New Testament, representing with tears, their poverty to be so great, that they were unable to spare even the smallest sum for it; and yet it was not in my power to dispense the bread of life to these hungry souls. For, in consequence of my gratuitous distribution of almost every one of my free copies, too many people applied for me to satisfy the demands of all; being obliged to pay for every copy about 8d., besides the carriage and binding. My annual income of 230 rix dollars, (46l.) now hardly sufficing for my own wants; I felt deeply grieved, and in the moment of compassion, fancying myself richer than I was, often gave more than I could afford. The same is the case with many of my fellow clergymen, who frequently with joy perceive in their flock a thirst after the word of God; but owing to their own poverty, and that of their people, are unable to satisfy it.

The hunger after God's word, and the eagerness to read it, keep pace with the increasing distress; but it grieves us that we are unable, in the *wilderness of the present life*, to administer to them the heavenly manna, to lead the fainting to the source of divine comfort.

It is true, that the New Testament is pretty well distributed in our circle; but what are a few copies among so many? they are like the five loaves amongst those four thousand that lay at the feet of the Lord; they are but drops insufficient to quench the general thirst. Here, indeed, is occasion for help; and may the great Head of the church multiply this heavenly bread, as he once did the earthly, to the satisfying of all.

The fields are more and more ripening for the harvest, by the encreasing oppression of the times. All earthly comforts are

vanishing from the children of men; ill-treated, robbed, and heavy-laden as they are, their eyes full of tears look towards the realms above for refreshment and comfort, where alone it is to be found. This is the time to work; their hearts humbled and softened, are more accessible to divine light and truth; they are opening like the dry ground, that languishes for the fertilizing shower; their eyes desire to see the salvation offered to them in the word of God.

As to the other parts of the country in which I reside, it is really in a deplorable state. In the province of Paderborn, for instance, hardly the sixth part of the schoolmasters are in possession of a Bible or New Testament, much less are they to be found in the schools; in Munster and Hildesheim it is the same.

Indeed, I have learnt by experience, that the Catholic people are more ready to read the Bible, than the elder Ministers are to permit or recommend it. For there still continues among our clergy, in many places, the pernicious prejudice, that our church prohibits to laymen the reading of the Bible; and another as general as the former, that scripture reading produces more harm than good among the people. This induced me a few years ago, to publish, "*Extracts from the Holy Fathers and other Divines of the Catholic Church, concerning the necessity and usefulness of reading the Scriptures, by L. Van Ess;*" fourteen sheets, price 1s., which contain such a mass of evidence in favour of the practice out of all centuries, and such a cloud of witnesses, as might silence the prejudices abovementioned. In order to make it as cheap as possible, that it may be more generally read, and to avoid having to do with the booksellers, I undertook the printing of it at my own expense, at 8d., to my no small disadvantage.

Although I had many proofs of its usefulness, yet the enemies of truth and of the reading of the Scriptures, conspired to prevent it obtaining publicity, because they would not have the bar removed, that to many of the Catholics still keeps the Bible closed. Thus, it is but little known, and from an edition of 1000 copies, hardly half of the number is disposed of. In Osnabruck, my New Testament is extensively circulating, and has been introduced into many schools. But that country now being a French province, the introduction of the scriptures in any language but the French, meets with great difficulties; and it cost us much trouble to procure permission from Paris for the importation of 400 copies.

My cousin Charles Van Ess in Huysburg, near Halberstadt, who is episcopal Commissary in Magdeburg and Halberstadt, endeavours to disseminate our New Testament amongst the Catholics and schools of that country; and his exertions are evidently accompanied with the blessing of God.

May your arrival in Germany be blessed! may it be productive of much fruit for the everlasting welfare of multitudes, and contribute to the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth!

For Christ's sake, I entreat you to let me have a number of

our New Testaments for distribution. My sphere of usefulness is extending more and more: many worthy clergymen of our church join themselves to me; who, with the most lively zeal for the cause of the Lord, assist me in my endeavours to do good. My request is for the highest and best gift, even for the scriptures of truth, which are able to make men wise unto salvation.

I myself am still too poor to do much: the sacrifices I have made are really almost too much for me; and I shall be obliged to employ the surplus of the income from my future more lucrative situation at Marburg, for paying off the debts incurred by the first edition of our New Testament, and by the purchase of many Oriental books, without which I could not undertake the difficult task of translating the Old Testament. You see, Rev. Sir, I speak to you as to a brother; support me, if you are able, in my useful undertaking. I will prove a faithful steward.

I wish soon to be favoured with a letter from you; I could wish to see you face to face! Once I trust we shall meet, if not here below, yet above, before the throne of the Lamb of God, our common Lord and Saviour!

Your's faithfully and affectionately,
LEANDER VAN ESS.

September, 1812.

From the same. Grevenburg, October 6, 1812, addressed to a Friend at Altona.

HAVING represented to Mr. Steinkopff the great want of the Scriptures among many of my countrymen, and their encreasing desire to read them he commissioned me in a letter (dated Stuttgart, September 14,) to get an impression of 3,000 copies of my New Testament printed without note or comment, for gratuitous distribution or cheap sale among poor Catholics, and to employ the profits arising from the sale for the purchase and disposal of an additional number of copies.†

Gratitude to God and sacred joy fill my inmost soul at this seasonable help. Many were my difficulties and trials, but the Lord evidently supports and comforts me by his providence and grace. The benevolent aid of the Society is indeed a great encouragement to me. Blessed be the name of the Lord, and adored be his goodness and mercy.

I need not repeat with what blessing it has pleased God to accompany the reading of my New Testament; I will only add, that in the place of my residence, and all the country round, a lively desire to read the Word of God is increasing among the Catholic people, the blessing of which becomes daily more evident. The prejudices of our Clergy against Laymen's reading

† The Translation of Mr. Van Ess is made from the original, and approved and recommended by leading Ministers in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

the Bible are gradually disappearing; many begin even to promote its dissemination. If the Lord grants me life, health, and the light of his Holy Spirit, I shall publish a work under this title. "Are Catholics confined to the Vulgate?—A critical history of the Vulgate." The design of this publication is still further to counteract existing prejudices, and to recommend faithful translations from the original.

Assisted by some friends to the cause of our divine Lord and Saviour, I have used my best endeavours to spread the New Testament in my native town, and the neighbouring provinces; and I thank God, that some who formerly were among its most violent opposers, have now become its most zealous promoters.

Poverty and distress increase among us: many are drawn thereby to seek something better; but being scarcely able to provide the necessaries of life, and to pay their taxes, they cannot spare even a small sum of money for the purchase of a Testament. As for me and my friends, our hands are tied, and our purses too narrow to satisfy all the claims of the poor, who really seem panting for the bread of life. Even the present of 3,000 Testaments, large as it may be considered, is small when compared with the multitudes who apply.

Yet, blessed be God for this most welcome gift, which will afford instruction and comfort to thousands. May the Lord, who is rich over all, compassionately regard the remaining wants, and afford further supplies to the needy and destitute.

Stimulated by the assistance of your Bible Committee, I feel emboldened to attempt, what I long since wished, the formation of another Catholic Bible Society; the design of which will be, by collecting voluntary contributions, to promote the cheap sale and gratuitous distribution of the Holy Scriptures. As soon as I shall have entered upon my new office, as Catholic Professor, and Pastor of Marburg, and obtained a little leisure time, I shall print a plan, begin the correspondence, and unite with active friends of christianity for this beneficial purpose.

You know that I have been engaged these several years past in the translation of the Old Testament, and without consulting my private emolument, agreed with the printer to print it at fourteen pence a copy. He is desirous to execute the work on standing types, (if he meets with the needful support,) which would be the more desirable, as this will be the first cheap edition of the German Old Testament in our church. I hope to complete the translation next year."

Extract from a translation of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. —, Munich, Aug. 26, 1812; addressed to the Secretary of the Bible Society at Bâle.

A new impression of our Testament is now printing. If, in addition to this, I contemplate the zealous endeavours of Lean-

der Van Ess, two impressions of whose Testament I have seen, and the many other editions, both of the New Testament and the whole Bible, which have lately been circulated among Catholics, the amount of them all constitutes a large number.

Yet there remain thousands and tens of thousands, both in towns and in the country, who are entire strangers to this Holy Book; thousands and tens of thousands, who, having become sensible of its value, wish to possess it. Surely here is ample scope for benevolence, for Christian zeal. Every possible exertion ought to be used, that the Word of the Lord may run and be glorified; that it may fill all countries, all towns, all villages, all houses, all hands; and, what is still more—all hearts: that it may penetrate them, prove like a two-edged sword, piercing, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; that, by its illuminating and enlivening powers, it may create a new world, or renew the face of the old corrupt one. Whosoever has any thing to give away, whosoever has a full purse, let him freely and bountifully distribute, without making too anxious calculations. He is using the Lord's money. Recollect for whom you spend your substance; even for him, who says: "Put it to my account, I will repay. You shall receive an hundred-fold in this world, and, in the world to come, life everlasting."

O, thou Word of the Lord, thou blessed Bible, lay hold of the hearts of the rich, who still read and regard thee; and incline them to employ their wealth for multiplying thee without number, and dispersing thee through all lands. I should like to address the rich in the words of our blessed Lord: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

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