

**AN ANSWER**

200

TO THE

**OBJECTIONS OF THE MANAGERS**

OF THE

**PHILADELPHIA BIBLE-SOCIETY,**

AGAINST A

**MEETING OF DELEGATES**

FROM THE

**BIBLE SOCIETIES IN THE UNION,**

TO AGREE ON SOME PLAN TO DISSEMINATE THE BIBLE IN PARTS WITHOUT THE  
UNITED STATES.

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And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him saying, come  
over into Macedonia and help us. Acts. xvi. & 9th.

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**BURLINGTON NEW-JERSEY**

**PRINTED BY DAVID ALLINSON.**

# AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS &c.

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**AT** the Annual Meeting of the New-Jersey Bible Society, at the city of Burlington, on the last Wednesday in August, 1814:---It was Resolved,

*First.* That in the opinion of this Society, it would greatly promote the accomplishment of the important purposes for which the Bible Societies in the United States have associated, if a union of them all, could be obtained by an annual or biennial meeting of delegates, to be appointed by the Societies in each State, at some central place to be agreed upon, to conduct the interests of the whole, where they respect the distribution of the Sacred Scriptures beyond the limits of particular States, or in case, where a Society in a State cannot furnish so many as are wanted.

*Second.* That the President of the Board of Managers be, and he is hereby authorized by this Society, to send a copy of the foregoing resolution to the Bible Societies in each State, with a circular letter directed to the President of each Society, requesting him to lay the said resolution before his Society as soon as possible, trusting that it will command their full and serious attention; and if agreeable to them, that they will approve the same, and appoint at least two delegates, either of whom may represent the Society, to meet at Philadelphia on the Monday preceding the third Wednesday in May next, at 3 o'Clock in the afternoon of the same day, with full powers to digest and form a plan for a well organized and constituted Body, to be called "*The General Association of the Bible Societies in the United States*," or such other name or title as may be agreed upon, for the purpose of disseminating the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament according to the approved version, without Note or Comment, in places beyond the limits of the United States; or within them, where the State Societies in any one of them, should be unable, from any circumstance whatever, to supply their wants, or where there should not be a Society in the State.

*Third.* That the President do request the several Societies to give as speedy notice as may be, to him, of their determination; who is hereby empowered and required, (whenever he shall receive the approbation and appointment of delegates, for the purposes aforesaid, from twenty Societies, and they shall have signified their consent to the measure,) to give public notice thereof in the Newspapers, and that the meeting of the delegates will be had accordingly.

(A true Copy)

ELIAS BOUDINOT President.

A Copy of these Resolutions were sent to the Bible Society of Philadelphia, and to the other Societies in the Union.

The President of the Bible Society of New-Jersey, soon after received the following Letter from the President of the Bible Society of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, Dec. 14. 1814.

Dear Sir,

With this, there will be delivered to you a communication from the Bible Society of Philadelphia, signed by me as their President, and addressed to you as President of the Bible Society of New-Jersey. This contained the Objections, which have been sent to the different Bible Societies in the United States. In addition to the Con-

tents of the said Instrument and the reference to the design intended in it, of *sending circular Copies to the other Societies* in the United States, I am instructed to inform you, that there will be a delay of those Copies for the space of three weeks, in order to give time for consequent communications of the Society over which you preside, should any be thought expedient.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your Humble Servant,  
WILLIAM WHITE.

To this Letter the following Answer was sent.

Burlington, January. 1815.

Right Reverend, and dear Sir.

Your polite letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> Instant covering the address of the Managers of the Bible Society of Philadelphia, containing their objections to the resolutions of the Bible Society of New-Jersey inclosed in my circular of the 5<sup>th</sup> September last came safe to hand. Those objections have commanded that close attention, consideration, and reflection, that they were entitled to, from the respectable Source from which they came. The more so, as I consider myself a member for Life of that important and useful Society. I rejoice that "any difference that exists between our Societies, relates only to the means most proper for adoption". I have no doubt; of the most harmonious Union, as to the invaluable End of our pursuits.

While I admire the ingenuity, and labour spent on these objections, I cannot discover any part of them that applies to the substance of our resolutions, or the subject matter of my circular Letter. Indeed I have spent considerable time to find out, what is designed by them; my knowledge of your respectable Society will not suffer me to suppose that they are inimical to the Meeting of the Friends of Zion, to consult together for the welfare of immortal Souls.

However, I will with all convenient speed do my duty, by calling a Meeting of our Board of Managers, though at this inclement Season of the year; and lay your letter with its enclosure before them, and advise you of the result as soon as I can. But the Managers are so dispersed through the State, that it will be impracticable to accomplish this in the time you mention, and I can see no advantage, in your delaying the sending the objections as you propose, without ceremony. We cannot for a moment suppose, that Men of sound minds, and having proper zeal for the glory of God and the spread of the Gospel of his beloved Son, can be prevented from pursuing the object recommended by our Society, by objections so foreign from the purpose they have in view. Had the Delegates already met, and had a regular plan before them for consideration, and objections, applicable to such plan had been urged by your Delegates, all would have been perfectly right. But what is it, that the society of New-Jersey have proposed. "That thinking it their duty to use all the means in their power, to promote the great objects of their association, and conceiving that the greatest union of Christians of every profession in so desirable a cause promised most success in the undertaking, they take up the subject and after full consideration, determine, *that in their opinion*, it would greatly promote the accomplishment of the important purposes for which, Bible Societies have associated, if a union of them could be obtained, by the meeting of Delegates to conduct the common Interests of the whole, where they respect the distribution of the Sacred Scriptures beyond the limits of the United States, or where a society in a State cannot furnish as many as are wanted". They then direct their President to make this opinion known to their Sister Societies throughout the Union, and to request a meeting of Delegates with full powers to digest and establish a system for this purpose.

Are these objections then calculated to deny that this was the opinion of the New-Jersey Society? If not, do they go to shew, that there is any impropriety in Delegates conferring together and endeavouring to form a plan of greater usefulness in the Lords Vineyard, or to promote on a larger scale the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and the propagation of the words of eternal life? I cannot think they would undertake to ascertain beforehand, what course the Delegates when met would pursue for this great purpose, or whether they would agree on any other, than what is already established. It can then be only the opinion of our society, individually considered, that they mean to dispute. If so, this can answer no valuable End, and it will be scarcely worth while, to anticipate that which

will be only proper before the convention of Delegates when met, for if they were to convince our Society of the irrelevancy of their opinion, and yet the Convention should differ from us and determine that it was worthy of being carried into execution, it would be but lost labour. But lest it may be said, by this answer I have wholly evaded the Objections, I will in as few words as I can, attempt to reply to them. They are prefaced with an assurance that the subject is not novel to them. The objectors must have concluded, that our Society had not a proper idea of the wisdom and penetration of their worthy members, that we should suppose that a subject so obvious to every zealous Mind, could have escaped their observation; but this we did know, that however you had considered this subject it had never been carried into execution. Our Society therefore could not conceive that there could be any impropriety in calling your attention to so great a subject, in conjunction with the collected wisdom of all our societies. Had we been possessed of your early proceedings as a society which I am sorry we were not (for until this day I was a stranger to them, tho a life member of your Society, which is not much to my credit, as I suppose they are to be purchased,) we should have been still further convinced, that the subject was not novel to you, for I now find by your first report page 8, speaking of the £200 generously presented to you by the British and Foreign Bible Society you say "and so strong was the Tide of their generous affection towards this Society, that a much larger sum would have been voted for its use, had they not supposed that our Institution was limited in its operation to the State of Pennsylvania. They express an anxious wish that our plan should be enlarged, so as to comprehend the whole union in one Society." I shall now take up their objections in the order, they have urged them against the opinion of our Society.

1st. They say, *It is unseasonable*, this charge when closely considered will appear not to be well founded. If the New-Jersey Society, should be governed by example and experience, their opinion will stand the Test. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed and established in the midst of a long, perplexing and most expensive War, with the combined powers of Europe, that threatened the very existence of great Britain. Their zeal, activity, expenditures, and Success, arose almost to a miracle. Her praise is in every Christians mouth, and thousands, nay millions of prayers, ascend before the Throne of the Eternal for blessings on their Heads. To Her under God we owe the present Existence and Prosperity of our Societies, and in particular, no one more than that of Philadelphia. If we look to those Countries where the dreadful ravages of War have reduced a majority of the Inhabitants to the most awful distress, and the ruthless footsteps of an unprincipled Tyrant are marked throughout their territories with blood, distress and affliction: these evils will be found to have produced greater susceptibility of the solemn importance of seeking those durable Riches, that cannot be taken from them. Here it is that Bible Societies increase and flourish. Let them speak for themselves. In the 10th report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for this year, you will find Germany, that has been the Seat of War and devastation, setting up Societies in every quarter. Even Leipzick the centre of destruction, has her Bible Society. Poland is following her example. Finland is not behind them in her exertions, and Russia is setting one, that astonishes the whole World.\* Our Sister Society at Salem in Massachusetts, has summed up these ideas in so strong a manner, in her 3d report pages 6 and 9 which will justify my troubling you with the extract, though I may lay myself open to the charge of being rather tedious. "If it were only to supply the needy in our neighbourhood, our Society would deserve our zealous support. We ought not however to be content with such a limited operation, but to become tributary to that mighty River of knowledge which is flowing throughout the whole earth. On this occasion let us extend our views as the subject requires. Let us glance at the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Parent of all the Bible Societies in the world, and the most important human establishment Christianity has yet produced, or the World has ever seen. Who can contemplate the Exertions, the Effects and the prospects of that Society without wonder and gratitude to God? Like every other good object in this Evil World, it had to combat great opposition, but it soon, through the zeal of the Members with the blessing of God, rose triumphant. Its Friends rapidly increased. It soon shone forth with splendour, and we trust that it will shine more and more, till

\* The late general Bible Society established in the Netherlands, a Country ruined by the War, on a plan similar to one that might be established in this Country, is full to the point, both as to the seasonableness and practicability of the Measure.

like the Sun it sheds its light upon the whole Earth. Their liberality falls like the rain of Heaven upon all. While England has been standing alone with all the Nations against her, this Society has been at peace with all the World, and has been sending Ambassadors of peace amidst the enemies of their country, to make such inquiries and to take such measures as might promote the accomplishment of its object; they know no foe, but such as oppose the spread of the Gospel. The Emperor of Russia amidst the cares, the toils, and tumults of war; found time to give his attention and sanction to the establishment in his Capital, and on a plan as extensive as his empire, of a Bible Society; which he endowed in the outset with the munificent donation of 25000 Rubles, and of which he desired to be considered as a member, with an annual subscription of 10,000 Rubles. Who now would be content with merely distributing Bibles in their Vicinity? Who is not anxious to aid, in sending them through the whole earth? say not there is no need of exertion. If in our own neighbourhood many are found who need this charity, what must be the situation of the newly settled parts of our Country? From the inquiries of Messrs Mills and Schermerhorne, it is estimated, that in addition to the calls for French Bibles, not less than 200,000 English Bibles are needed for immediate distribution in the Western States. Many thousands are wanted in our own district of Maine, and in other parts of our Country many thousands more. Let us then resolve with that Society, that with the divine blessing on the endeavours of Bible Societies, that hope shall not be disappointed, that the hungry shall be fed, the thirsty shall be refreshed. The Sun of Righteousness will again arise with healing in his wings, and the light shall lighten the Gentiles:" almost all other institutions have created the jealousy of many sincere christians, and have been confined to particular sects; but what jealousy can a Christian have of a society whose object is the distribution of the book on which he founds all his hopes of happiness? It is the very object, which was wanted to destroy our little animosities and unite the prayers, exertions and affections of all christians. Here we can all meet, forget our differences and recognize our common relation to the same divine master, and our common obligation to support His cause in the world. What can be more sublime than an anniversary of the British and Foreign Society, where thousands of all ranks and denominations, where Princes and the lowest subjects crowd to express their zeal for the diffusion of the scriptures? What more interesting than to behold the friends of the Redeemer in every nation, at the time when the world is convulsed to the centre, by wars, themselves knowing no war, engaged heart and hand in promoting the kingdom of peace and righteousness."

These are sentiments worthy the disciples of Jesus Christ. Would your Managers have us to shew less regard to the honour of God? Less confidence in our Lord and Master, by not trusting so fully in his over ruling Agency, or be less engaged in the spread of his gospel, over other parts of our guilty Globe, where his name is not known in spirit and truth. Have we not received as great forgiveness, and cannot we love as much? I will not do them injustice. I know it is the desire of their hearts. Their works prove it.

When I examine their records, I find them, when convinced of the necessity of a Stereotype Press, but destitute of funds for so expensive a purpose, and having no visible means of obtaining them; not disposed to sit down contented, and wait the motion of the waters till means should come, while in the interim, thousands were perishing for want of knowledge; But they trusted in their great Head, and put their shoulders to the wheel, and cried mightily to Him who alone could help them. Your success was answerable to your Faith. Why then now desponding, as if you had found your Lord and Master failing you in a time of need?

2nd. *You think this measure unsanctioned by Example.* I have anticipated the answer to this objection under the proceeding. Was the British and Foreign Bible Society, being a Parent institution, so essential to her existence as you suppose? yet I cannot see the Force of the Argument, that the like Character, must be necessary for a Society, for like purposes in this Country. Every Society in the United States contradict the principle. Your own Society was established in your own State, wholly unsanctioned by example in this Country, equally if not much more so, than the one we aim at. Again let me ask, if the British and Foreign Bible Society was not wholly unsanctioned by example, and would you expect or desire to make out better than they have done? They had tenfold the opposition that we have, or are likely to have. And the very learned and able opponents they had, urged tenfold stronger and more plausible arguments against the measure, than can be urged against us. All the Societies, except two, from whom I have yet heard; express



themselves as delighted with the proposal, and consider it as suggested from heaven. One only objection to the expense, arising from their present poverty: but promises a ready acquiescence when in their power. The excellent Society, so often referred to, were assailed by Learning, Ingenuity and Influence. If you have read the very able, conclusive and pious answer of the Rev. Mr. Dealtry to Mr. Wordsworth, a learned Professor at Oxford, you will feel the force of this observation. But did that Society submit to the Opposition? No, by no Means. They rose triumphant with tenfold grandeur! You well know their History, and I doubt not daily bless God for it. Their faith and hope have been witnessed in all lands. Forget not what they say to your Society, when you first reported your establishment to them. The Rev. Dr. Owen their Secretary writes, "It was the unanimous disposition of the Committee to have manifested their respect for your undertaking, by granting you pecuniary supply upon a much larger scale, but *they were restrained* from indulging it, by the consideration of those limits which you appeared to have prescribed to the plan and designation of your Bible Society. Had it entered into your views to comprehend as many provinces as could be brought to concur with you in one Institution, of which Philadelphia might be the Centre, the Committee would have regarded your Plan as better adapted to the accomplishment of your object, and would gladly have extended it to a proportional degree of pecuniary encouragement." Mr Josiah Roberts of London, about the same time, writes, "I was charged (by the Society) particularly to state, that the assistance of the society is by no means intended to be confined to the sum now granted, should the Scale of your Institution be extended, *which is earnestly desired*. And could it be made the foundation of a Society, confined not to one state, but embracing the whole of the United States, under the Title of "*The Union Bible Society, or United States Bible Society*, much larger assistance would be afforded." Here is not one word of complaint of your proceedings being *unsanctioned by Example*, but on the contrary, a union of Strength strongly recommended.

But Reverend Sir, we certainly have the Example of this wonderful Society, which has appeared as the Angel flying in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them who dwell upon the Earth, and to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue and People. Have we not the Examples of Petersburg, Moscow, (still smoking in her almost total ruins and yet covered with ashes) Finland, Germany &c. &c.?

I was sorry to observe the following Sentence under this objection, "The Metropolis where their Committee reside (meaning London) has risen with respect to their other Cities, above the Jealousies of Rivalry." Surely Sir, your managers did not consider the small consequence in the Scale of States, or of Influence, in which New-Jersey stands, or they would not have suspected for a moment, that our Society could foster an idea of the least ambition in this business, but that of advancing her Masters Cause in the world. But if any uneasiness has arisen from this Quarter, It can easily be remedied. I will engage on her behalf, in case your Society will enlarge her Charter and extend her objects to the whole family of the human Race, as she may be provided with means, that not a member of the New-Jersey Bible Society, shall ever thereafter stir in this business, further than to aid the funds of so extensive a plan. If your Managers "cannot discover any real and important advantages likely to result from the association, which the Circular from New-Jersey mentions" they ought not to endeavour to cast obstacles in the way of their Brethren who think they do see great and essential advantages, under the influence and direction of the holy Spirit, likely to arise to the Church of Christ from some plan of more universal Extent, than any yet established in these States, which may be produced by the united wisdom of the different Societies.

May there not be many plans proposed, besides the one suggested by the New-Jersey Society? Might not an agreement be made that each Society should take a particular department under their direction? Or that a union should be formed for the particular objects to be specified, from funds to be raised by subscriptions and donations for the purpose? Or an independent association originated for the enlarged purpose mentioned in the Resolutions? Many other plans might be mentioned for the consideration of the Delegates.

I find my Letter increasing to such a length, that it is time to dismiss this Objection, without further observation.

The 3d Ojection is, that the proposition strikes you as USELESS. This is the first time, that among Friends of Bible Societies, an association for sending the glad tidings of

Salvation to those who are deprived of the good News, *without the limits of the United States*, could be thought USELESS. Surely the Soul of a man on the Missouri, is as precious to him, as it is to a Citizen of any of the States. Whenever an individual plan is in *transitu* or maturing, the Delegates met together, would undoubtedly hearken with pleasure to the learned, laborious and ingenious arguments that might be offered against the Measure, and I am confident, will endeavour so to accommodate it, as to remove every solid objection or give it up altogether; but till your Managers know the plan in its details, they can hardly say, with Justice that it is, or will be *useless*. Part of this objection seems to be formed under the Idea, "that the number of Societies in the Union are sufficiently great, and that none of them are restricted in the extent of its operations". Suffer me to remind you of your own Words in your first report page 8. After speaking in grateful Terms of the donation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of £200 Sterling in aid of your Funds, you add, "And so strong was the tide of their generous affection towards this Society, that a much larger sum would have been voted for its use, had they not supposed that our Institution *was limited in its operations to the State of Pennsylvania*. They express an anxious wish that our plan should be enlarged, so as to comprehend the whole Union in one Society; but the Managers are of opinion, that when the address of the Society shall reach them, together with the explanations, which have been directed to be made, they will be convinced, that the plan which has been adopted, is the most eligible for this Country." And in speaking of your actual experience after some time of trial you say, "The deficiency of Bibles has been found much greater than was expected, and it is believed that the whole of the funds in the possession of the Society could be profitably expended in supplying the wants of this City alone; and the opportunities of distributing them in other places are so numerous, that if the funds were tenfold as great as they are, they would be inadequate to satisfy the demand." You also under another objection, inform us that you have obtained a respectable legal opinion, by which your minds are confirmed in the conviction, that no funds of individual incorporated Societies can be placed under the direction of any common Society. And yet you made no hesitation in asking your Sister Societies to favour you with part of their funds saying, "the joint efforts of such Societies as can spare funds for this purpose, would render the measure easy, prompt and effectual." This they immediately complied with, and you have testified your grateful sense of their readiness to assist you according to their abilities: thus approving of their placing part of their funds under your direction. Neither can you forget how diffusely the British Society has sent out their funds into all the World. But Sir, where will you find a hint that our Society wished the funds of any individual Society, to be put under the direction of another Society. But if the fact had been otherwise, multiplied instances of Societies from all quarters, sending part of there funds to, and placing them under the direction of the British and Foreign Bible Society, contradict your legal Opinion.

As to the 4th Objection, "may not the contemplated meeting, prove, *Injurious*." I answer, by asking another Question. May not the next meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church or of the Convention of the Episcopal Church, prove Injurious to the Interests of Religion? Surely they may. It is possible. If they should get into a violent quarrel, and abuse one another, acting in all things contrary to their Christian Character and Profession, it would certainly be highly injurious to the common interests of Religion. Yet would it not be absurd to urge such a possibility against pious and learned Men meeting together in a Church Judicatory. And so fifty other Questions equally applicable, may be asked. But is it likely, or presumable within the Bounds of Christian Charity, that a public meeting of respectable and pious Brethren of all denominations of the Church of Christ, meeting together, in a solemn and serious manner, for the express purpose of forming a plan to promote the glory of God, by sending his gospel to the Ends of the Earth, and thus publishing the benefits of redeeming Love, to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, should prove Injurious,—injurious to whom? Certainly not to the great Cause of gospel light and knowledge. No. It must arise from a fear "of being charged with *Osensation*." I must set this objection down along side that of the fear of Jealousy of Rivalry.

But if the Bible Society of Philadelphia, really thinks this a substantial objection, or indeed any of the others, they have the remedy in their own hands, there being no force upon them to unite with those who approve the pious Measure. If they should refuse to join

us, surely they will then be safe from injury. But may I not in Charity hope, that it is their greater local knowledge of your City, that has led them to think, that our meeting there, from some peculiar circumstances unknown to us, may prove injurious to your Society. If so, though I cannot now see the possibility of it, I would have used my influence, to have had it in New-York, had I been informed of it in time; for I shall always be averse from doing the least injury to a Sister Society. I would rather aid and assist them all in my power. And if this objection should still remain, I will obtain the Influence of our Society, not to repeat it.

If this Work is of God, and those who accept the Invitation (and I trust no other will) are filled with a pure and holy Zeal for the great cause, which our Society have in view, I have no apprehension of "any charge of Ostentation," of "any danger of existing Societies dismissing their zeal, with their Delegates." of "the Expence" that will necessarily attend their assembling together, of "the possibility of being degraded by the paucity of numbers, or of the impression that may be made from a division among Bible Societies. If the Spirit of the Gospel reigns in the Heart, all will be well. And if any of the inconveniences should so effectually arise as to prevent success, or any improper Measures taken to prevent the Experiment, how awfully responsible will those be in the great day of account who shall promote them.

These objections are dangers from mere possibilities, and had the British and Foreign Bible Society attended to objections of this complexion, and indeed of much more formidable ones, when they were invited—urged—terrified—and warned to consider their dangerous Conduct, thousands, if not millions, who are at this day sounding forth the praises of the glorious Redeemer, would still have continued under the Shadow of death.

Your Managers from their local situation should have been the last to have complained of either distance or Expence in their delegates attending. They should have waited to hear such complaints from distant Societies. From the many answers I have received, I hear of but one, already mentioned. But will not the same objection lay, with additional force against the meeting of the Episcopal Convention—the General Assembly and the Baptist association? Do not their Members come from the most distant parts of the Union? and some remain together for a fortnight. Will some of the Members of your Board, estimate the large Sums paid out of the public funds for their travelling Expences, and say how many Missionaries, might be sent to vacant congregations, by means of the aggregate amount. But what would be said to the Man, who should oppose the Existence of these Judicatories for these Reasons.

Suffer me Sir, to refer you to the language of our Sister Society in Virginia, in their address to the public. It holds up very different Ideas. "That there is at present, say they, a great need for the exercise of this Charity (the establishment of Bible Societies) is most manifest to the impartial enquirer. Wide is the dominion of Sin in this World. Dark is the cloud of Ignorance and Error now covering the Earth. Unnumbered millions of the human Race are now under the influence of Mahomedan delusion or involved in heathenish darkness. Who can contemplate the wretched outcasts of Africa, the miserable victims of Hindoo Superstition, or the Savages of our own wilderness, engaged in their obscene and bloody Rites mis-named Religion; and not feel the invincible persuasion, that Christians who rejoice in the blessed hopes of the Gospel, ought to contribute a portion of their Substance for the purpose of sending the Messenger of heavenly Mercy to these benighted Nations? But if these objects of Charity should appear too remote to excite an Interest in the breast of any among us, let us look at home. We are called a Christian people, and with good reason we rejoice in the light that shines around us; but there are numbers in this highly favoured Land of ours, who have no Bibles. In the neighbourhood of our large Towns, on both our Eastern and Western Frontiers and among our Soldiers and Sailors the Bible might be distributed to great advantage.

Whether then we regard our Country-men or the Heathen, the poor or the rich, we shall see that Providence opens a wide Field of useful labour for us, and we shall find powerful motives to the most vigorous Exertions in behalf of these Institutions, and as there is great need of Bible Society's, so there is much to encourage the hope, that our labours shall not be in vain in the Lord. The cause which we espouse is the cause of Heaven. No Institution of Charity, that the World ever saw, have been so favoured by a gracious Providence as these, which have for their simple and sublime object, the universal diffusion of the holy Scriptures. God smiles on this work of Love, in which his people are engaged."



Your last objection is "*that it is impracticable*" I confess this objection surprized me, from want of practicable application. If we never meet together on the subject, it certainly will be impracticable. But as we can do it if we will, and if we should do it and agree on some useful plan and carry it into execution, it will be practicable. But as you have fully answered the objection yourselves by shewing how it may become practicable, I need go no further. The paragraph is concluded by saying, "a national Institution could be formed only as private ones have been, by the voluntary association of individual Citizens." And although I cannot subscribe to this doctrine, that this is the only mode, as I see and know that the contrary principle is frequently carried into execution in civil life; yet Sir, surely your managers will not say, that Delegates from different Societies, when met together, may not form a plan for just such an association, and recommend it to be carried into Execution by the individual Members of their Societies, their Friends and Neighbours. I have not taken notice of your saying "a National Institution," as I presume it was a slip of the pen, as you would hardly call any voluntary association, however enlarged their plan, a National Institution, without being constituted by the government by Charter, in which case all the terms of it must be legal.

Thus very Reverend and dear Sir, have I given you my own individual opinion on your Managers objections. I alone am answerable for them not having had any opportunity of conferring with more than two of our Society. And although we greatly differ as to the means, I bless God that we are united in the important End we have in view. Our joint object is great and glorious and though we may not arrive at maturity in one, two or three years, let us begin and lay the foundation Stone and build thereon, as we may be provided with materials. The British and Foreign Bible Societies began with a comparatively small subscription, their success has been astonishing. We have a bright example in the Apostles, who did not confine themselves to their particular districts in preaching the glad tidings of Salvation, but went through out all the Roman World, in Europe Asia and Africa publishing to all the unsearchable Riches of Christ, in Stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in Watchings, and in fasting's.

We serve a kind and gracious Master and need not to despair: Paul said that he could do all things, through Christ's Strengthening him,—so can we. Jesus is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. I beseech you to reflect on the State of our Western Country as represented by Messrs. Mills and Schermerhorne, in barely passing through it—consider the wants of the Inhabitants along the Lakes,—on the Frontiers of New-York, Vermont, in both the Canada's, and the Eastern parts of our Continent. Harken to the cries of Louisiana, the territories along the Mississippi and up the Missouri; the Floridas and Spanish America. Cast an eye of Pity (if not of impartial justice, for we owe them much) on the Aborigines of our Country; and indeed on all the Indian nations, from East to West, and from North to South; and do not forget the West India Islands; and then say, who are sufficient for these things! You have just heard Paul's answer—let us Rouse our Courage and confidence and begin the work. As some parts of your objections, seem to doubt the practicability of the measure, from the extent of the United States, supposing the distance too great for the Delegates to attend—let me remind you of a civil Institution as a model. The late Bank of the United States, respected the whole Union. The Stockholders belonged to every State in the United States. They chose Managers, or rather Directors, in every part of the States, but having the largest number in or near the City of Philadelphia, they did not fail to have a quorum ever ready to transact the necessary business. Whenever the Directors, or any of them, came from a distant State on their own business or for pleasure, they met with us and had an opportunity of examining into all our proceedings. The Directors served without fee or reward for twenty years. I was one about Eighteen, and I never heard of any complaint, jealousy of Rivalry, or uneasiness about the Expence, or any charge of ostentation, though we have had them come from Boston and from Georgia; but believe we gave universal satisfaction, though we had seven branches to attend to and support. Be assured Sir, that we have the highest opinion of the Zeal and perseverance of your Society in disseminating the Gospel of the Son of God, and we have experienced much of their success and usefulness. We value ourselves on our attachment to them, and the great cause we are all engaged in, though we thus differ in the detail. May the great Head of the Church enlighten us by his holy Spirit to do his will and give us all the unity of that Spirit in the Bond of Peace. Nothing would give us more pleasure, I must repeat it, than that you should get your plan enlarged and lay it before the

Delegates, so that we might see that you could carry it into execution, and that you would take the labouring Oar on yourselves. I am confident that the most productive funds would not be wanting to extend your usefulness, beyond any conception you now can form of it.

A succession of important business, that your Letter found me engaged in, which could not with propriety be delayed, has been the occasion of keeping back this reply so long.

I have the honour to be with Sentiments of

Esteem and respect, Reverend and dear Sir;

Your Brother in the faith of Christ,

E B.

The Right Reverend Dr. William White, President. &c. &c.

P. S. Since writing the foregoing Letter, your second Letter covering Mr. Chauncey's opinion came to hand, for which I am much obliged, as it shews the reason of what I have considered as an extraordinary opinion from a Lawyer, as it was stated in the address to me from your Managers. It should never be forgotten in considering a written opinion, that it is given on the Case as stated, not as it really exists. With equal propriety, (by only adding that the Delegates referred to, meant under cover of such meeting to plan a Scheme for aiding and assisting the Enemy,) Mr. Chauncey might undoubtedly have given an opinion, that if carried into execution, all would have been guilty of Treason. I am therefore glad for his sake, that I have seen his opinion at large. I do not find therein *"that attempts to unite in a general association, are totally inconsistent with the Spirit and design of the Charter,"* but directly the Contrary, in these words, *"still however, I see no objection to arise from the Charter, to an intercommunim of Sentiments by delegates, with other Societies for the purpose of obtaining and imparting information and promoting the object of their Society."* Had the appointment of delegates been proposed, *"with liberty to exercise any controul or make any disposition of the funds of the Society,"* such a Question would have been both necessary and proper, to have been put to Council of legal knowledge, and such an opinion, as Mr. Chauncey's, might have been given with great propriety; but such an Idea never entered into the mind of a Member of our Society. But even in that case, had it been added to the Question, *"for the sole purpose of distributing Bibles to those who stood in need of them,"* the answer would have been very different. As to the second question, *"whether the monies of the Society could be legally appropriated to defray the Expences of such delegates to a general Meeting,"* it will scarcely bear consideration. If your Managers, or rather any two of them, are to be paid for going a few hundred yards from their own Houses, to consult on so important and pious a design, as a more enlarged plan for spreading the Gospel and promoting the Salvation of other human Beings beside those of their own State; they differ very much from our Managers, not one of whom has ever received a farthing for their expences, or other personal services since the Institution of the society; though so scattered as to come (some of them) 50-60 and 80 Miles to a Meeting.

If the Case is otherwise with you, I should think it but prudent and wise to decline the appointment.

On the whole, I have not met with a much stronger argument for pressing on our purpose, than the legal opinion mentioned in your objections. If your Society is so exceedingly contracted in their powers by Charter, surely we ought to seek for another Institution on a larger scale. If your Ideas under this objection be right, that no funds of individual incorporated Societies, can be placed under the direction of any common Society (and of course, of any other persons) your Managers cannot be justified in lately sending the 5000 French Testaments to new Orleans, out of their own State, where they were put under the direction of those not belonging to the Society, and the Expences of carriage and distribution must be paid. Surely these Bibles were part of your funds.

*In the same Spirit with the objections from the Bible Society of Philadelphia, after the above answer was written, the following Letter from the Auxiliary Bible Society of the same City, was received, and the subjoined answer was sent by the President of the New-Jersey Bible Society,*

Philadelphia, January 18th, 1815.

Dear Sir,

I have the honour of transmitting to you the Report of a Committee of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Philadelphia, on the three Resolutions of the New-Jersey Bible

**Society.** The Report was unanimously adopted by the board of managers,

With great respect, dear sir, I am, Your obedient servant,

JACKSON KEMPER.

Hon. Elias Boudinot.

The Committee to whom was referred the "Circular" of the "New-Jersey Bible Society" dated 5th September, 1814, which was laid before the Managers of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Philadelphia, at a special meeting held on the 24th of November, 1814, beg leave to report, that they are of opinion that this Society ought not to concur in the measure proposed in the said circular, principally for the following reasons.

1. We doubt the expediency of the measure under any circumstances. What facilities would such a Society, as is proposed in the said circular, possess for diffusing the Scriptures, that are not now in operation? Would they have more knowledge of the state of our own, or of foreign countries, or could they command greater funds, to carry their plans into effect? Not more knowledge, for as the general association, would be composed of delegates from the different Societies of the Union, they would possess no information, when they come together, that they had not before. It may be objected, that in a general association, this knowledge, which is now diffused amongst many, would be collected and brought to a point, where something effectual might be done.

To this we answer, when on a recent occasion, it was made known to the Philadelphia Bible Society, that the people of Louisiana were destitute of the Scriptures, and willing to receive them, that society applied to her sister societies, and very soon obtained the sum necessary to print a large edition of the Testament for the use of that people. We presume that what was done by the Philadelphia Bible Society, in that case, will be done, and with similar success, by any other society which may discover a field of charity to which its own funds are unequal.

Whence would arise the funds of the proposed association, for it is evident, it is not designed to be a mere advisory or directory body. It must possess funds to answer its declared objects. Would the different Societies be willing to place part of their funds, at the disposal of a general society, without knowing the specific object to which their money would be applied? some might, but we believe the greater number would not; or have none to spare. How would the funds be obtained to pay the expenses of the delegates? Would we depend on individual liberality? How partial then, would be our representation! or would they be paid out of the general fund? Let us look at the probable amount; suppose the delegates, one with another to travel two hundred miles to the place of meeting, this could not be done for less than fifty dollars each; there are at present sixty-five Bible Societies in the United States: if they send two delegates, from each Society, and the meeting be annual, there would be an annual expense of six thousand five hundred dollars—half that sum, if the meeting be biennial. Here then would be a great and positive loss: and as to any counterbalancing advantage, it would be a matter of untried and uncertain speculation.

Further—is it probable that the different independent Societies, will voluntarily sink into the state of Auxiliaries? But, suppose they would, and are willing to give part of their funds to a general Society, will their charters admit of such an appropriation?

*Secondly.* Were all the foregoing objections completely removed, and we know not but they may—still, we deem the present a very unseasonable time, to form a general Bible Society. For, *in the first place*, God has blessed the Bible Societies of our country with great prosperity. Indeed when we contrast the age and wealth of our country with those of Great Britain, our success will not appear insignificant, even when compared with that of the British & Foreign Bible Society. Our Bible Societies are still growing. Scarcely a month passes, without bringing to our ears the pleasing intelligence of the formation of one or more new Societies. In its present form the work progresses rapidly. Is it not hazardous then to touch the wheel that moves well, even though our benevolent intention be to accelerate its motion. If the work were at a stand, or public feeling cold on the subject of Bible Societies, we admit, it might be expedient to attempt to excite renewed interest in the work, by directing the publick attention to a grand national establishment, but as this is not the case, we deem the attempt at present unseasonable.

3d. If our country enjoyed its wonted prosperity—'tis probable many of our citizens would contribute liberally to a general Bible Society. But in the present exhausted state

of the nation, the calls of publick charity, must and will give way to the loud and pressing calls of domestick necessity. The present season therefore we think most inauspicious, to attempt the organization of a general Bible Society.

4th. With all due respect and deference for the New-Jersey Bible Society, we must further state, that at any time, or under any circumstances, we should hesitate to approve of the proposed method of forming the contemplated association. We allude to the third of the resolutions accompanying their circular, which is in these words, viz. "that the President do request the several Societies to give as speedy notice as may be to him of their determination; who is hereby empowered and required (whenever he shall receive the approbation and appointment of delegates, for the purposes aforesaid, from twenty Societies, and they shall have signified their consent to the measure) to give publick notice thereof in the News-papers, and that the meeting of the delegates will be had accordingly."

There are now between sixty and seventy Bible Societies in the Union. The New-Jersey Bible Society, propose to proceed, if the consent of *less than one third* of the Societies be obtained. Suppose this number should enter into the measure, more than two thirds of the Societies standing aloof? now allowing, what is hardly possible, that no unkind feelings, no jealousies, should arise; how would we appear in the eyes of the world? most certainly the world would rejoice, that Bible Societies, were at last, divided!

This our opinion, is respectfully submitted: that, were all difficulties removed, the time suitable, and the benefits of the measure certain; it should not be attempted, until the Societies very generally concurred in the measure.

(a true copy)

JACKSON KEMPER, *Prest.*

Burlington, January 21st. 1815.

Reverend, and dear Sir.

I duly received your polite Letter of the 18th Instant, informing, that you transmitted me a report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Philadelphia on the three resolutions of our Society in this State. What, was my surprise on reading the enclosure to find that it was a report of a Committee of the Managers of the Society made and adopted by themselves, but not containing any evidence that it had been agreed to by the Society, or that they had any knowledge of the business. The Bible Society of New-Jersey addressed the individual Societies in the Union, and they had imagined, that on the principles of common politeness, they had a right to expect an answer from each Society: however, I am much pleased to find, that though we differ in the means, we all agree unanimously in endeavouring to accomplish the same invaluable end.

I really am sorry to see so much time and labour spent to find out reasons for not complying with the proposition of our Society, most of which appear to me to be foreign to the design in view, when their decent refusal would have answered every purpose. There is but one or two that seem relevant to the business, and neither of them are properly stated. As to the expense, had it been stated, that if the delegates should come on an average 1000 Miles instead of 200 the expences might have been increased five-fold, but I cannot conceive why the Managers of such an institution, if the framers of the Constitution should think it otherwise too expensive, might not be chosen within 10, 20, or 50 Miles of the place of Meeting. I have been a Trustee of the College of New-Jersey nearly forty years, and have attended at Princeton generally twice in a year. I have been a Director of the Bank of the United States nearly 20 years. A member of the Corporation of the general Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. A Trustee of the widow's fund. one of the committee of Missions, and a Member of the Bible Society. I never received a farthing for my attendance or expences of any one of them in my life, nor to my knowledge did one of my colleagues. Now is the disseminating the word of eternal life, among those who are perishing for lack of divine knowledge in the unenlightened corners of the earth, of such a nature, that the servants of our common Lord and Master must be tempted to his service by pecuniary rewards?

The other reason is, *as to the time*. As your Managers appear to apprehend it, I have no doubt they esteem it well founded; but some of us have been of opinion, from happy experience, that this is the very time to call the publick attention to measures of this nature. A thorough conviction of the transitory nature of earthly things, and the uncertainty of the riches of this world, softens the hearts of the people, and leads them to imitate the unjust

steward by "making to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. But Sir, your Managers have not considered that this business cannot be effected in a day or a year: The plan must be digested, well understood, and reported to the different Societies for their consideration, must be approved and confirmed, organized, and funds raised; this will take time; the sooner it is began the sooner will it be carried into effect. If you will examine into the conduct of some good and wise men in the kingdom of great Britain, especially if you will read the Reverend Mr. Dealtry's excellent answer to Professor Wordsworth's observations on the British and Foreign Bible Society, you will find many of your objections fully answered, and I must observe, that if objections of a similar nature with those of your Managers, had been of force with that miraculous Society, a considerable part of the world now rejoicing in the knowledge of the gospel of the Son of God, would still have been oppressed with heathenish darkness. Blessed be God, they regarded them not, but pressed on in their Masters service, through good report and evil report. But my dear Sir, we here cordially join you in opinion, that if your Society entertain the same opinion with your Managers, under their misapprehension of the business, you ought to refuse to accept our invitation, we do not wish that a single Society should unite with us, that is even luke warm in a work of so much moment. Besides talent and influence, we want zeal, fervour, activity, and perseverance. We hope and depend upon having your best wishes and your earnest prayers, for our success in this undertaking for the benefit of our fellow men, as it is the same cause we are all engaged in, and the same gracious Master we are desirous to serve.

We cannot have a meeting without the agreement of 20 Societies, but if only ten, or even five had been the limitation, and there was a prospect of sufficient funds, I should have had no hesitation in proceeding, and should not fear any evil arising from an Idea "that Bible Societies were at last divided." Your Managers acknowledge that there is already a division of between 60 and 70 Bible Societies in the Union," and I believe that neither "unkind feelings nor Jealousies" have yet taken place. And I am delighted to mention, that I do not believe such a consequence has in the least degree, followed the establishing your Auxiliary Bible Society, though that of Philadelphia was so well established before your institution, and they might with equal propriety have asked, "What facilities would such a Society possess for diffusing the Scriptures that are not now in operation"? These Sir, are my own individual sentiments, but I shall lay your Letter before our Society, whenever they meet, and transmit their doings thereon.

I have the honour to be &c. &c.

The Reverend Jackson Kemper &c. &c.

ELIAS BOUDINOT.