

Dänisch-Hallesche Mission

Propagation of the Gospel in the East

Propagation of the Gospel in the East: Being a Farther Account of the Success Of The Danish Missionaries, Sent to the East-Indies, For The Conversion Of The Heathens in Malabar

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London, 1714

Chap. III.

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C H A P. III.

Scarcity of the New Testament in Portuguese. The Malabar Translation of the New Testament is begun, and finished. The Design is encouraged by several European Nations. The Letters of the Missionaries are published in England, where they meet with a favourable Acceptance. A Proposal is printed. A Correspondence settled. The Missionaries are chosen corresponding Members by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. They are supplied from England with a Printing-Press. An Impression of the New Testament in Portuguese is procured, and a good Number of Copies sent to the East-Indies. Some Obstructions happen. One of the Missionaries arriveth at London. Some young Men come over from Hall, with a Font of Malabarick Types, designed for the Service of the Mission. They embark on Board the English Fleet.

§. 1. **T**H E Missionaries had overcome most of the Difficulties accruing from the Two aforesaid Languages, and were now endeavouring to bring over as many Heathens as they could, to a saving Knowledge of Christ. The greatest Obstruction which remained, was caused by the Want of the divine Oracles

Oracles in these two Languages; and they had hardly any Prospect, how to compass a Design of so great an Importance. The *New Testament* in *Portuguese* was extream scarce, and not to be purchased, even for ready Money. The two first Missionaries did, after their Arrival in the *East*, accidentally light on one single Copy, printed in *Batavia*: And the Two last that follow'd them, bought one for three *Specie-Dollars*, at the *Cape of Good Hope*. As for the *New Testament* in *Malabarick*, it was in vain to look for any; since it was never translated, except a few Passages of the *Old*, and of the *New Testament*, done heretofore by some *Roman-Catholick* Missionaries. And to enter upon an entire *Translation*, seemed to be a Task, attended with almost insurmountable Difficulties. Not, as if this Language was not expressive enough, for uttering and explaining the sacred Writings; but by Reason of its *Singularity*, and particular Way of Delivery, altogether differing from the Languages in *Europe*.

§. 2. But notwithstanding all those *Difficulties*, which seemed to stifle all Hopes of compassing it; Mr. *Ziegenbalgh*, who was the greatest Proficient in this Language, engaged at last in so laborious an Enterprize. He had, besides the *Original Text*, a few other *Versions*, together with some of the ablest *Commentators* by him, as helpful Means for steering safely his Course in so unbeaten a Road. The Division of the *Chapters* hath been preserved entire; but it was impossible to keep close to the Distinction of *Verses*, us'd in the *European Translations*. The Reason is, the particular

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Genius and *Idiom*, whereby this Language is distinguish'd from all the rest. The Construction requireth often, that some Verses be transpos'd, and that some Words come in at the End, which, in other Languages, stand in the Front. Besides this, there is neither *Comma*, *Colon*, nor *Semicolon*, to be met with; and therefore no Verse can be fully concluded, but where there is a *Full-point*, in an *European* Language. If these *Proprieties* of Speech be neglected, and Things transfus'd at random, no *Matabarian* will be able to apprehend the Sense or Meaning of what he readeth.

§. 3. Before the said Missionary enter'd upon the Design, he translated some other small Treatises into *Malabarick*. This he did, to make Trial of his Skill, in so weighty an Undertaking, being unwilling to venture upon the Translation of the divine Oracles, till such Time as he was Master of a clean and ready Style in that Language. The Beginning of this Work was made *October 17th, 1708.* and, after many Difficulties, was happily finish'd *March 21. 1711.* to the no small Furtherance of the Missionaries that are sent already, and of those that are to be sent hereafter, on the same Design. But all these Labours, though laudable in themselves, were as yet but so many *Preliminary Steps towards* settling the Work on a better Foundation in Time: For this could not be effected, till the Missionaries were supplied with a *Printing-Press*, and thereby enabled to publish that sacred Book, in so ample a Manner, that others also might partake of a Blessing, which was now brought so near their

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their Home. And here we must leave the Missionaries a while, with the *Malabar Version* of the *New Testament*, and briefly rehearse, what Assistance some *European Nations* have contributed hitherto, towards reclaiming the Infidels from the Ways leading to everlasting Destruction.

§. 4. When the first *Collection* of the *East-India Letters* was printed in *High-Dutch*, it had so good an Effect in *Germany*, that many were excited to wish well to so Christian an Enterprize. Some also were inclined to contribute liberally towards such Helps as were found wanting. Several good Sums have accordingly been made over, at divers Times, for supporting and enlarging the Work once begun. And as an *Historical Narration* of its Progress, hath all along been successively published, from the Missionaries Letters; so the Contributions have likewise continued to this Day; though not altogether sufficient for making any considerable Addition to the Undertaking. The like Favour they have also met with in *Denmark*, whence several charitable Contributions have been remitted to *Tranquebar*, gathered by the Reverend Doctor *Lutkens*, one of His Majesties Chaplains, and the very first Person that put the King upon this Christian Attempt. But he being lately dead, the Missionaries have lost an eminent Benefactor, by the Death of that Gentleman.

§. 5. In the Year 1709. the Substance of the aforesaid first Letters was publish'd in *English*, and dedicated to the most Honourable *CORPORATION*, for Propagating the Gospel in
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Foreign Parts. In the Year 1710. it was followed by another *Abstract of Letters*, containing an Account of the *Progress* of the Mission; and of its various Letts and Obstructions, caused both by the idolatrous Heathens, and the wicked Lives of the Christians. No sooner did these *Letters* appear in *English*, but many publick-spirited Persons began seriously to lay to Heart so worthy an Undertaking, too sparingly and superficially attempted hitherto by *Protestants*. They considered of *Helps* and *Means*, whereby these small Beginnings, tending to the Conversion of Heathens, might be effectually supported. The Endeavours of these *Gentlemen* have produced many good Effects already, and 'tis hoped, will continue to do so; forasmuch as they know, that *their Labour is not in vain in the Lord*. The Society for *Promoting Christian Knowledge*, (f) did employ themselves more particularly about this Affair, not altogether foreign to their own Concernments at Home. In Effect, they resolved to take upon them the Management of such Charities as, by well-disposed Persons, should be put into their Hands, for the Support of the Mission.

§. 6. In Pursuance of that Resolution, they drew up a *Proposal* in September 1710. with a View chiefly of procuring an *Impression of the*
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(f) *A voluntary Society of Clergy and Laity at London, whose chief Design is, to promote Charity-Schools, and to disperse practical Treatises in Great-Britain, and other Parts of Her Majesty's Dominions.*

New Testament in Portuguese, for the Use of the Missionaries, together with a Supply of Money, for enabling them to set up *Charity-Schools* among the Heathens in *Malabar*. By that Time this *Proposal* had been publish'd for *Two* or *Three* Months, it pleas'd the Lord to move the Hearts of many Persons, of both Sexes, and of all Ranks, in and about *London*, to so liberal a Charity, that the Society began to think of making the aforesaid *Proposal*, more ample and *comprehensive* ; so as to extend their Assistance also to other Parts of *India*, and especially to those, where *British* Factories were erected.

§. 7. This being resolv'd upon, the said *Proposal* was now publish'd the *Second* Time, with the additional Paragraph just mention'd. There was also a *Correspondence* settled in the most eminent Places, that are subject to *Great Britain* in *India* ; to the End that, by this Correspondence, they might the better acquaint themselves with the most proper *MEANS*, to promote the Conversion of Heathens, as well as with the most material *OBSTACLES* that were like to obstruct it. If the like *combined Endeavours*, rais'd on a regular *Correspondence*, were us'd by the Protestant Churches in *Europe*, they might prove exceeding helpful for managing the Mission with a fairer Prospect of Success, than hitherto has been effected ; particularly, since the Progress thereof depends as much from Friends and Benefactors in *Europe*, as from the Missionaries themselves, that go on that Errand. And it was for the same End, that the *Two* first Missionaries were chosen

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Corresponding Members, by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in the Month of September 1710.

§. 8. But that the Money already receiv'd, might be applied immediately to the Purposes for which it was bestow'd; the *Society* appointed a *Committee* of their Members, to give such *Directions* as they should think fit, for a due Application thereof. And that no Time might be lost, the whole Management was finally left to the said *Committee*, who met generally twice or thrice a Week for that Purpose, and so continued to do, till they had dispatched what was judged necessary to be sent by the Fleet, then going to *India*. And because the Missionaries, as hath been hinted before, complained of the vast Labour and Charge they were at, in getting transcribed School-Books, and other Treatises, for instructing the Heathens in the Doctrines of Faith; it was resolved to take off, as soon as possible, so expensive a Business, and to supply the Missionaries with a

Printing-Press, and all the necessary Utensils. Six Hundred Weight of Roman and Italick Types.

One Hundred Ream of Paper.

§. 9. Before these Goods were shipped off, the Society took into their Service, one Mr. Jonas Finck, a Native of *Silesia*, to go over as Printer with the said *Press*, being instructed for that Purpose, some Time before the Departure of the Fleet. He had taught School for some Years together, and so he was fit to assist the Missionaries,

naries, in the Quality of a *School-master*, besides the Business of *Printing*. He was, at his setting out, provided with a good Number of Practical Books in *Latin*, *English*, and *Hight-Dutch*, both to disperse them, if any Opportunity should offer, and to see 'em translated into such Language or Languages, as should render them most useful in *India*.

§. 10. The *New Testament* in *Portuguese* was now in the *Press*, to be sent with all convenient Speed to the Assistance of the Missionaries. But the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, being only printed off, when the Fleet failed, (which was in the Beginning of the Year 1711.) Two Hundred and Fifty Copies were sent thereof by this Fleet, as a present Help for the Children of the *Portuguese* School. This was accompanied with a Present of Money in Foreign Silver, together with some Sums in *Bills of Exchange*, to enable the Missionaries to carry on more effectually their Design. All these Goods, together with the Person attending them, were embark'd Freight-free on one of the Ships of the *Honourable East-India COMPANY*, who have all along not only granted a free Passage to such Persons and Goods, as were design'd for a Support of this Work; but have also most readily laid their Commands on their *Governours* in *India*, to protect and countenance the *Protestant* Mission in those Parts. And undoubtedly would it be a most effectual Help, towards promoting so Christian a Work, as the *Conversion of Infidels* is, if the *Governours* and *Magistrates* residing among them, on behalf of Christian Princes, did
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concern themselves somewhat more, about the *SPIRITUAL* Good of those Nations; or, according to the Apostle's Phrase, did *sow spiritual Things* unto the Heathens, that so they *might reap their carnal Things* again, with the greater Comfort and Benediction. By such sincere Endeavours *Protestants* would actually declare against that impious *Maxim*, heretofore receiv'd by the *Spaniards*, and charged upon them by some of their own Confession, *viz.* That *the Son of God, by his Blood, had not redeemed the Souls of the Indians; and that no Difference was to be made betwixt these, and the vilest Creatures upon the Earth.* (g)

§. 11. The *New Testament* in *Portugueze*, intended for the Good of the Mission, was printed off about the latter End of the Year 1711. and amounted in all to 1250 Copies. Care was now taken, to see a competent Number transmitted to the Missionaries, by the next Fleet. The Gentlemen concern'd in this Matter, did not think fit to make a larger Impression at present; since these were suppos'd to suffice for this small Beginning of the Gospel-dawning in the Pagan World. After the Publication of this Book, several Persons, knowing in the *Portugueze*, have communicated some *Remarks* made upon the Translation; and which may be of good Use, if perhaps another, and more improv'd *Edition*, should happen to see the Light hereafter. Of this

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(g) See *Tavernier's Relation du Japon, & la Cause de la Persecution des Chrestiens*, p. 51.

Edition had the Missionaries sent 'em *Two Hundred Fourteen* Copies, in the Beginning of the Year 1712. together with a Set of *Mathematical Instruments*, to teach the *Rudiments* of that Science, to some young *Malabarians*, as well as to recommend themselves the better to the Natives, by Things of this Nature. Besides these, there were also presented *One Hundred fourteen* Copies of the *New Testament*, to the Chaplains in the *British Factories*; and to each Chaplain at *Fort St. George*, and *Bengal*, a Box of *English Books*, on Practical Subjects of Divinity, design'd as a Foundation of *Two Lending Libraries* in the said Factories.

§. 12. But as every Design, tending to promote the Salvation of Souls, and thereby the Glory of God, as its ultimate End, usually passeth through various *Trials* and *Obstructions*; so it fell out particularly in this Matter, attended hitherto with many illustrious Proofs of Providence, and a hopeful Prospect of Success. In the Beginning of the Year 1712. the *Society* receiv'd Advice, that the Vessel, which carried in her the *Printer*, *Press*, and *Goods*, was unfortunately fallen into the Hands of a *French Squadron*, at *Rio de Janeiro*, on the Coast of *Brazil*, and thereby stopt in her Progress to the *East-Indies*. By this unexpected Turn of Affairs, the *Society's Printer* was made a Prisoner, and the Goods became a Prey to the Enemy. And this seem'd to ruine at once this good Design, in its very Infancy. However, as the Ship was afterwards ransom'd, so the Printer, with the Press and Paper, regain'd also his Liberty; though he himself died

died soon after, on the Voyage from *Brazil* to the *Cape of Good Hope*, whilst the Printing-Press, with the Paper and Types, was carried to *India*, and deliver'd at last to the Missionaries at *Tranquebar*. And here, 'tis hoped, it may, by the Blessing of God, produce still the intended Effect, though retarded for a while by such Accidents, as Providence often permits, for the Trial of those that ingage in so momentous an Enterprize. For, as the Church of *CHRIST* hath been both founded and propagated, in the Midst of *Crosses* and Tribulations, and never degenerated more from her intrinsic Beauty and Brightness, than when worldly Splendour and Greatness came to be heaped upon her; so we must expect, that whenever the Church is to be recover'd into her first Power and Dignity, and planted among Heathens and Infidels, she must then return to it, through the same *Way of Crosses* and Trials, by which she was founded at first.

§. 13. There happen'd one Thing at *Brazil*, when the *French* took Possession of the Ship, too material to be passed over in Silence. It relateth to the aforesaid 250 Copies of the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, design'd for the *Portuguese* Church and School at *Tranquebar*: But undergoing now the same Fate the rest of the Goods did, they were seiz'd on by the *French*, and, upon Sight of their being *Portuguese* Books, dispers'd among the Inhabitants of that Country: Where perhaps, under the gracious Influence of Heaven, they may prove helpful towards the Conviction of some of those, in whose Hands they were left.

40 *Of the Arrival of a Missionary.*

left. There remained also some Copies of *John Arnd* his *True Christianity* in *Latin*, (h) together with some other *Latin* Treatises on edifying Subjects.

§. 14. About the Beginning of *November* 1712. Mr. *Henry Plutsch*, one of the Two first Missionaries to the *East-Indies*, arriv'd at *London*, after having embark'd at *Madras*, on Board an *English* Ship, *September* the 15th 1711. He brought with him a hopeful *Malabarian* Youth, baptiz'd at *Tranquebar* by the Name of *Timothy*, and design'd to be educated at *Hall*, for the Service of the Mission. The said Missionary laid before the Society, several Heads relating to the State of the Mission in those Parts ; together with the *Impediments*, whereby it was obstructed ; and some *Means*, whereby it might be advanced, if those that confess the *Christian Religion*, would but unite *Hearts and Hands*, in attempting so glorious a Work ; particularly, in such Countries as are already subject to *Protestant Powers* in *Europe*. During his Stay in *England*, where he was very kindly received, he drew up a *Brief Instruction* in *Portuguese*, containing the *First Principles of Christianity*, which might serve instead of a *Primmer*, in the Schools at *Tranquebar*. The Society ordered a *Thousand* Copies to be printed off immediately, and *Half* of them to be sent by the first Fleet going to *India*.

§. 15. Whilst the Society were consulting how to repair the Loss of the *Printer*, deceas'd
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(h) Printed at London, in the Year 1708.

on the Coast of *Brazil*, Three young Men arriv'd at *London* from *Hall* in *Saxony*, the 20th of *December* 1712. in order to embark for the *East-Indies*. They were designed to assist the Missionaries, one in the Quality of a *School-master*, and the other two as *Printers*; in order for the more speedy, and more extensive Publication of the glad Tidings of the Gospel among the Heathens on that Coast. They carried with them, for that Purpose, a Font of *Malabarick* Types, brought over from *Germany*: And being recommended to the Assistance of the *Society*, they did them all the good Offices they could, both with respect to the *East-India COMPANY*, with whose Fleet they were to go, and to other Persons with whom they were concerned. They had *Seventy five* Ream of *Paper* given them for the Service of the Mission, together with some *Portugueze* Books, as a Help to perfect the Missionaries in the Knowledge of that Language. All which the Honourable *Directors* of the *East-India* Company, generously allow'd to be sent thither on Board their Ships freight-free, to the no small Satisfaction of all the Well-wishers to the Design. They embark'd about the latter End of *January* 1713. being particularly recommended to the *Society's* Correspondents at *Madras*, to lend them a Hand in the Work they were engaged in.