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Contributors and Correspondents

LETTER FROM DR. FRASER.

Latitude 30 deg. 14 min. N.
Longitude 155 deg. 13 min. E.
Dec. 26, 1874.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I had thought that by this time we should have been on our way between Yokohama and Hong Kong, but we have 850 miles to go yet before we reach Yokohama. I think, however, that I had better get my letter underway, so that I shall have it ready to mail as soon as we touch land. We will have no time for letter-writing in Japan as we only stay in port some 12 hours to get out a little freight, and take in a new supply of coal, and I hope to go on shore and see something of the place and people. I wish very much to call upon the Rev. Mr. Cochran and Dr. McDonald, the two representatives of Toronto, and of Canadian Methodism in this far off land.

You will wonder that we are not farther on our way. I feel thankful—devoutly thankful—to our Heavenly Father that we have been brought thus far in safety. We have come slowly but surely. The winds have been adverse, and the sea has been rough, but our immense vessel has held on her way day after day without disaster of any kind. Majestically does she ride over the huge waves in this open ocean. The Pacific is not always pacific. It is winter here now as well as with you, and although we have no snow, and the thermometer has not yet fallen below 62 degrees, the winds blow fierce and strong, and the big waves chase each other across the face of the deep, dashing against the sides of our ship and breaking into beautiful foam, or lifting us high up upon their crests, only to plunge us in the depths again and baptize us with thin spray. How full of grandeur and sublimity the dark and deep blue ocean is, none can know save those who have seen it in calm and storm. It defies description. I shall not court defeat. I can stand and gaze, but I cannot speak or write.

But I may as well begin at the beginning, and tell you something of our life since we came on board. We left our moorings on the afternoon of Dec. 1st at 2.20. The kind attentions of our San Francisco friends only ceased when we passed out of their reach and sight. The last thing we saw on the wharf was the waving of their handkerchiefs as they stood in a little group, no doubt asking Him who holds the winds in His fists to keep us from all harm and bring us safely to our Island home. Of a surety God is the hearer and answerer of prayer. It has been a great strength and comfort to us to keep this in remembrance, and to know that from many a *fatia* altar and private closet in the land we have left, their ascend, daily, fervent prayers that God may keep and guide and bless us abundantly.

Let me pass over our experience of the first few days in silence. There are no sweet and pleasant memories tempting us to linger on the recollection of these days. We were sea-sick. How full of meaning that word is to those who have been in the depths! The baby escaped entirely. The little girls were soon sick and soon well, and have remained so ever since. They are capital sailors, no sea however rough disturbs their equilibrium. But my wife and I . . .

Since the first week however, we have been very well, except when the ship rolls or pitches very much, and even then by lying quite still we can manage pretty well. Our vessel is large—8500 tons—and according to the testimony of some of our passengers who have been round the world once or twice, the steadiest in which they ever sailed. To be sure she is slow, but what matters a day or two in such a passage as this? Safety and comfort are the great desiderata, and we have both. The whole fitting up of the ship is in first rate style, and she is well officered, from the Captain to the Steward, and well provisioned, so that on the whole our life is rather an enviable one than otherwise. We are not huddled together as passengers so often are crossing the Atlantic. Indeed, we feel as if we had the whole ship to ourselves. We have accommodation for 240 Cabin passengers and there are only 23 of us, for 900 Steerage, and there are only 680. Our Steerage passengers are Chinese taking a run home after a few years stay in California, or going back to spend their lives, and the money they have amassed in the land of their birth. I often go down among them, for there are two of them Christians, and I consider it my mission in the meantime to be as helpful to them as I can. They have been to school in California and are able to read a little, so I help them to read their Bibles, and talk with them, and sometimes sing a simple hymn. The other Chinese stand round and wonder, or listen

and make out more or less of what we are talking about, or singing, or reading. A hundred times have I wished that I could speak to them in their own language in which they were born, and tell them of God's hatred of sin, and of Him whom he made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. One day, if my life is spared I shall be able. Till then, patience and perseverance! I have purposely refrained from any attempt to learn Chinese from any of the Chinamen on board, for they are all from either Canton or Shanghai, and would be a little understood in Formosa as I myself, so that anything I might be able to learn would have to be unlearned. I have, however, been very much interested in observing their customs and manners, and in studying their character. They live just as they do at home, sitting on the floor at their meals, and eating boiled rice, and pork and Chinese sausages with Chinese pickles and sauces, served up in Chinese style, with pans and bowls and chop sticks. Indeed, to be in the Steerage of our ship is to be in China. The dress of the people, their dark dark skins and long queues, their unintelligible jargon, their books—nearly every Chinaman is a reader—everything about them, is Chinese.

In the Cabin we have a great variety of people, though there are only 23 of us in all. We have an English and an American Consul going out to their posts, a retired Colonel of the British army "escaping the unpleasant weather of the winter at home," a couple of genuine Yankees "doing round the world," a couple of California men on their way to Japan, to see "if they can see a show for a spec," a manufacturer from Newark, New Jersey "out pushing business," a gentleman from Oregon and another from Birmingham travelling for their health, a Japanese merchant (an Englishman) on his way back to his business, a Czekny man "travelling for pleasure," and a German away from Fatherland on the same errand, Spanish Mendicant Monk on his way to Catholicize the Chinese, a young Japanese Nobleman on his way home after spending three years at school in the United States. A Chinese Mandarin and his younger brother on their return from escorting 30 Chinese boys to Springfield, Massachusetts, to be educated, and two young Chinese gentlemen, one a minister and a Dr. like himself, the other a college student, both going back to China to do what they can to Christianize their countrymen. Besides Mrs. Fraser, there are only three ladies. One of them carries her head very high, and seldom condescends to speak to anyone; another talks to everyone, talks incessantly and perpetually; the third an English lady, travelling with her brother, is very intelligent and agreeable company.

And so our days pass somewhat pleasantly and I trust not altogether unprofitably. We chat with one another, discussing all manner of questions civil, political, social, moral and religious. Then we walk up and down deck like horses in a treadmill, by way of exercise. Then we read books and write letters. When the wind is fair and the sea not too rough we are all in fine spirits; when the wind is adverse and the sea rough, and the steamer making slow time, and some vacant places at the dinner-table, we draw long faces and are very unsociable. On the whole I am enjoying the voyage, though I shall be glad enough when we reach Hong Kong, and gladder still when we get to Formosa. I want to get to work, though my time is not being altogether wasted now. I am getting a great deal of information about China and the Chinese from Dr. Suvoont and Ngan Za Soong, our two Americanized Chinese Christians. The Dr. has been in the United States 15 years, and has taken three college courses. He is intelligent, scholarly, genial, and from all I have seen of him a devout Christian. His friend has only been 5 years away from home, but has made good use of his time. I congratulate myself on my good fortune in having come by the same boat as they.

When you know what we do one day, you know what we do every day. Our life is without incident and full of monotony. The Sabbath is an exception. We observe the Sabbath. According to the regulations of the ship religious services are conducted every Sabbath morning according to the form of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. I conduct the service. In the evening after dinner I preach, and conduct religious services according to the form of the Canada Presbyterian Church.

And now I shall have to say good-bye. Earnestly requesting you, and all your readers, who love the Lord Jesus, and delight in the prosperity of Zion, to unite with us in thanksgiving to God for his goodness to us, and in prayer for a continuance of His favour and loving kindness,

I remain, yours very sincerely,
J. B. FRASER,

The following letter received by Mr. Sankey while in Dublin, gives some indication of the extent to which his "Sacred Songs and Solos" have found their way into far distant parts of the earth:—"Sir,—Far away in Eastern Bengal, South of Assam, are the Khassay Hills, in which the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists have a Mission. It may please you to know that the children (over 800) in the Mission school, at Cherra Poonjoe, are singing 'Hold the Fort,' and 'I am coming, Lord,' and other hymns, in their own language. It may interest you to see translations of two hymns, which I enclosed, and which were lately sent from Cherra Poonjoe to me.—Doon, Germany, Nov. 9.—Christian.

MISSION WORK IN MANITOBA.

VI.—STINKING RIVER SETTLEMENT.

The most difficult part of our work is in the new settlements; and this department, at the present, has not the attention devoted to it that its importance demands. Our ministers all reside in parts long occupied, where nearly all of them have sufficient work, so that only occasionally they can visit the outlying districts. But even if they had leisure, they would find at many times that the roads are almost impassible. Several of these settlements are connected with the Headingly congregation, the nearest being that on the Stinking River. This stream is about twelve miles south of the Assiniboine, and the road to it passes out from Headingly about two miles down the river from the place I write. Having selected a favourable time, I went out to visit the people. After driving several hours, we saw a line of woods extending from east to west, which marked the banks of the stream, and when we came very near we saw a house on the north bank, to which we went. The friends whom we visited informed us that the settlement consisted of fourteen inhabited houses, and these were all beside the river, and within a distance of fifteen miles. The natural advantages which attracted the people here, they considered important. Their crops were good, but were eaten for the most part by locusts. Hitherto there was not much worldly prosperity, but another settlement further away was a great deal worse; and they were thankful to Providence for what they possessed, and hoped for better things in the future. If we were to come to a conclusion about the wisdom of families coming to Manitoba, from the experience of the past three years it would be unfavorable. To effect a settlement on these plains involves more inconvenience than most people anticipate; and it would be all but as easy to make a home in the forest. It is certain that a great deal of privation must be endured by the families that emigrated to Manitoba. Many are gone to places where there are neither schools nor churches, and where it is difficult to communicate with the outside world.

It is almost impracticable to have a meeting for worship on a week-day in a new settlement; and so it was thought better to hold a meeting on the ensuing Sabbath. But to choose a place was by no means easy, for in no house would the whole of the people meet. I tried to persuade them to do so, but found the task too great. Even when there are a few families living in the same neighbourhood, and in a wilderness, it is only rarely that they have the pleasure of dwelling together in unity. Their intercourse with the world without is not sufficient to interrupt them very much in increasing their wrath towards one another, and many opportunities are afforded for mutually annoying each other when they feel disposed to act in this way, so that ill-feelings are likely to be much more intense under the circumstances.

After conducting a morning service at Headingly, I drove out, and arrived at the house appointed a little after dark. I found about thirty persons present; as many, I was told, as could possibly leave their homes, and some of them had walked five or six miles on a poor enough road. They listened most attentively while the Word was preached to them, and joined heartily in worship. They seldom had an opportunity of meeting together for such a purpose; and though a considerable part of them were formerly Presbyterians, they had not, as yet, been visited by any of our ministers. It is probable that a mission station will soon be established here by us, although for some years it will not be of much importance, as there is no immigration to this neighbourhood, because the lands around are reserved for half-breeds. It will not be of less importance than many of those that we hope to establish within the next few years, if we obtain assistance from the Presbyterian Churches of Ontario. No doubt, as time passes on, it will become more and more necessary to establish an itinerant mission in Manitoba, and to prosecute the work in such a way that a great number of little stations like that at the Stinking River will obtain occasional supply. The formation of congregations out of stations like these, does not appear as yet a very successful policy. In practice, a small congregation is treated precisely as a mission station; and, in more recently settled parts, the state of affairs is such that it would not be wise to concede an authority to the people that there is not a prospect of their using wisely. The fact is, that in many cases we have still to find out who our people are. There are many who belong to one denomination or another, according as their feelings of friendship towards particular ministers predominate; and some who profess to assist and support all, do not, it is to be feared, care much about any. Many never belonged to any Church. These are accessible to us here; and though the doors are open for the Gospel, it will be seen that the prosecution of the work is beset with difficulties. Besides those qualifications that are necessary for success in every field, the missionary in Manitoba should have experience and con-

siderable abilities. The work is of such a nature that few will be found who can devote a lifetime to it; nor is it by any means suitable to the old, and in the future, as in the past, will doubtless be "set the hearts of even the vigorous and young, so that besides mental, certain physical qualifications are necessary for its prosecution.

SAMUEL DONALDSON,
Headingly, January 23, 1875.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

MR. EDITOR.—Allow me to call the attention of the Church, and especially of Ministers, to the state and prospects of the work of French Evangelization. Some years ago the Synod initiated a distinctively Presbyterian Mission to the French Roman Catholics throughout the Dominion. The scheme adopted embraced the training of Missionaries and Ministers speaking both French and English, and these qualified to occupy fields especially in the Province of Quebec where both languages are required. This work has been conducted so far, with gratifying success. French students have been drawn from St. Ann, Kankakee, from Quebec and New Brunswick. These have been employed during the six summer months of College recess in teaching, colporting, and preaching. Fifteen are now in the classes of the Presbyterian College, Montreal. Two have finished their Theological curriculum and are settled as Ministers and Missionaries in most important centres of influence. Two more will complete their Collegiate Studies in April next.

As one illustration of the blessing which has attended the efforts of our young men, it may be stated that Messrs. M. B. Paradis and T. Bronillette were the means in God's hand, of bringing out of the Church of Rome a sufficient number of families at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, to constitute a promising and spirited congregation. These converts continue steadfast in their attachment to the truth, and evince their determination to help themselves by contributing towards the erection of a church. The Presbyterian Church of the Lower Province, with characteristic Missionary zeal took up their cause. Mr. Paradis passed through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, preaching and soliciting aid for his fellow countrymen. His success will be best stated in his own words. In the January issue of the *Home and Foreign Record* of his Church, he says:—"Now that I have returned to my field of labour, I feel encouraged to think that, if it be the will of God, we will soon enter into a handsome house of worship, and free from debt. The cost, besides the necessary outlay for stoves, lamps, &c., is \$2,700. The total amount collected by myself is \$2,354.65, besides subscriptions amounting to about \$100 that I have obtained in Grand Falls."

Mr. T. Bronillette is settled in an equally important field, at Valenier near Quebec, where he has ready access to a large French Canadian population. These are the results, Mr. Editor, for which to give God thanks, and which should stir up his people to greater liberality and zeal. Had we nothing more to show as the fruit of our efforts to evangelize this people, I should feel in some measure satisfied and encouraged; but these are only specimens of a similar work accomplished in various degrees by all our young men.

Let me now direct attention to another aspect of this subject. Your readers are aware that the General Assembly in June last united the Kankakee Mission with the work of French Evangelization in Canada, and arranged to have Father Chiniquy labour within the Dominion. It gives me peculiar satisfaction to state that he is now in Montreal, where his labours are most abundant, and already signally successful. In a former letter I stated that it is simply impossible to prevent the French people assembling to see and to hear their old and still revered friend Chiniquy. Accordingly the Church in which he preached and lectured five times last week, was crowded to its utmost capacity; and what is even more encouraging, a large number of Roman Catholics (as many as fifteen heads of families in one day), waited upon him for conversation, and to learn from his lips the way of life more fully. In view of this cheering beginning of his work, will not the prayers of God's people ascend in his behalf, and in behalf of his fellow-countrymen, whose salvation he so earnestly seeks. It is the conviction of many who are most competent to form an opinion on the subject, that there is a great movement among this people at hand. The field is providentially opening before us. Shall we go in and possess it? Mr. Chiniquy is now employed precisely in the manner at which many in the Church have long desired. They have frequently declared that in this great and arduous service he would be abundantly supported. We look to our people to implement those promises. Our committee is most anxious to employ our fifteen students as teachers, colporters, and missionaries during next summer; and they are all eager to enter the field. Very favourable openings are presented to us for the formation of mission schools. One instance may be mentioned in which a French convert offers an acre of land for the site of a mission house; and in the meantime, places a suitable house at our service, in which the school may be commenced, with the prospect of from 20 to 30 scholars.

What are we to do under these circumstances? It is for our ministers, elders, and people to say. Unless largely increased funds are forthcoming speedily we must allow our young men to look for secular employment during the summer; leave

promising fields unoccupied, and suffer the Jews to push forward the work of perverting and destroying the very children who, along with their parents, beg us to teach and to save them.

I am instructed by the Assembly's Committee to make known the fact to the Church that, so far as we can judge from the Treasurer's receipts to date, the income of the current year will be utterly inadequate. The one fund is now charged with the support of the Kankakee mission as well as the work in Canada; and at least six thousand dollars is required. This is a small sum when distributed among all congregations of the Church. It is a little more than one cent to each of the fifty thousand members in our communion, and not half a cent per annum to each person connected with the Canada Presbyterian Church. And is this to be the measure of our efforts for the overthrow of a tyranny which enslaves a million of our population, and has long affected and perverted the civil institutions of our country? Are there not earnest and zealous Christians in our communion, to whom we appeal not in vain, and who will set an example of liberality in this matter worthy of themselves and of the great interests involved? Will not ALL CONGREGATIONS come to the help of the Lord against the mighty? We call for six thousand dollars; but we should have double that amount in order to extend our operations. The income last year for Kankakee and French evangelization was over six thousand; and we can only be satisfied with this amount by refusing to enter the door thrown open to us, and by giving no employment to several of our missionaries. The matter is now fairly stated to the Church, and we shall wait the issue. All contributions should be sent to Yardon King, Esq., 615 Craig Street, Montreal, or to the Rev. Wm. Reid, Toronto. In behalf of the Assembly's Committee on French Evangelization, yours truly,

D. H. MACVICAR,
Presbyterian College, Convener.
Montreal, Feb. 10, 1875.

The Hymn Book.

COMMUNICATED.

MR. EDITOR.—Psalmists asks you to give the reasons why you say, "It is more than doubtful whether that collection (the Book of Psalms) was made for the purpose of public worship." He also may properly give his reason for concluding "that they were given to the churches to be employed in singing God's praise." If you will allow me I shall essay an answer to his question, at the same time examining his proof as adduced.

Let me promise that we are all agreed that most of the Psalms (and so far as the argument goes, we may say all of them) were originally used in praising God; or at least in worshipping God. What we call in question was the design of the collection. We are very doubtful of just what Psalmists states, "is generally believed," viz., "that the detached pieces were afterwards compiled by Divine authority, into one book, and entitled the Book of Psalms, or Book of Praises, or as it may be rendered, the Hymn Book."

Now for the reasons for doubt:—
1.—It is quite uncertain who made the collection, as we now have it. The Psalms may be divided into five distinct books, dating probably from the times of David, Hezekiah, Josiah, the captivity, and the Return from Babylon under Hara and Nehemiah. But it is not improbable that some of the Psalms, e.g., the 149, may be of later date—Hara and Nehemiah may have been the last editor, or the final arrangement may have been after their time. This is doubtful. But nothing in Scripture warrants the statement that the compilation was made by Divine authority into one book, in such a sense as to exclude all other songs in public worship. We have a collection of hymns which were used at different times in worship, but it does not follow that because this collection was made God authoritatively excludes other psalms or hymns.

2.—It does not appear "that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to designate this collection, the Book of Psalms, or Book of Praises, or the Hymn Book; and the songs of Zion, and the songs of the Lord."

The designation "Book of Psalms," occurs in Luke xx. 42; and Acts i. 20. Now in our Lord's time the Jewish Scriptures were divided into (1) The Book of the Law; (2) The Book of the Prophets; (3) The Book of Psalms; and the Hagiographa, which included other writings than the *Lehitien*. And the designation no more belongs exclusively to the collection in question, than it applies to the book of Daniel, or than the book of the Law applies to Genesis exclusively.

The designation "songs of Zion," occurs in e.g., 137, and it must be admitted was used before the collection was made, and so could not apply to it.

The designation "Songs of the Lord" occurs 1 Chron. xxv. 7; and was used long before the collection was made.

Thus it is manifested that the collection is no where referred to in Scripture as the Hymn Book. Far less is it declared by God to be the authorized Hymn Book of the Old Testament Church at any period, in such sense as to prevent the use of other hymns in public worship. Least of all, is it said in any part of Scripture to be the only authorized hymn book for the Christian Church in all times to come. Well then sir, did you say it is more than doubtful whether that collection was made for the purpose of public worship, especially as the argument which you were meeting, claims that it is a God-directed compilation of inspired hymns, and bases on that claim the conclusion that it contains the only hymns which can be without sin used in God's worship.