

In 1833 the Board sent another young man to Canton to superintend its press and to offer to the followers of Confucius the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Returning after years of honourable service, not as a printer only, but as editor, translator, lexicographer, author, sinologue, and diplomatist, Dr. S. Wells Williams counted it one of his highest honours that he was called to be the president of the American Bible Society.

Time does not permit me to call the long roll of missionaries, dead and living, who as translators, distributors, or agents, have had a conspicuous part in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign lands. But it must be said that the ability of the Bible Society to do anything in circulating the Bible abroad, is largely due to missionary co-operation and counsel. How shall the word of God be printed in a tongue which has never yet been written, and never paid allegiance to the name of our Redeemer?

We cannot too much admire the pluck and patience of men who undertake to catch and tame unwritten words and employ them to express inspired truth to men who have never learned letters. Each language conquered and enriched with Bible terms; each translation, attempting to express God's truth in human formulas; each revision made with larger knowledge of vocabulary and idiom, opens a wider range for the Bible Society to do its work.

I hold in my hand the latest production of this kind, issued this very month from the Bible House, the New Testament in the language of the Marshall Islands. Not thirty years have yet elapsed since the first attempt was made to reduce this language to writing. Fifteen hundred copies of this Testament will form part of the cargo of the Morning Star next year. The Gilbert Islands Testament has already passed through numerous editions. The Mortlock Islanders are reading theirs this year for the first time. Next year the Ponape Testament will be complete. Kusaie has also had the printed Gospels. So five languages of the Micronesian group are already enriched with the truths of inspiration.

And this is part of the work of giving the Gospel to such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Seventy-five years ago the founders of these societies confessed that they were looking for the millennial day as close at hand. Who knows but before another seventy-five years has passed away, the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and all shall know him from the least to the greatest?

But if that consummation is reached, much, very much work remains to be done in the fields cultivated by this Board, and in the regions beyond. Some versions born in this century, like the Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Hawaiian, Dakota, and Mandarin, may become accepted classics, needing but little change; but the *entire Bible* has been given to comparatively few nations. Shall we hold back any part of it from them? As good stewards of the manifold grace of God, are we not under obligation to give them "Moses and the prophets" as well as Matthew and Paul?

But the isles are still "waiting for His law." The common people in Japan have not yet read what Isaiah predicted of Christ. China, with all that has been done for it, has not yet received its standard Bible, adapted alike to the learned and unlearned. Corea is only just spelling out the gospels. New versions of the Bible are needed for the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people of the western hemisphere. And no one knows how many dialects must be studied and brought into subjection to Christ, before the "dark continent" is illuminated with the radiance of the gospel.

The groundwork of all this must be done by missionaries. Years afterward, converts from paganism may revise and perfect their work. But the theory of Protestant missions requires that all oral teaching shall be supplemented and confirmed by an appeal to Scriptures. So said the fathers; so say we; and on this blessed work of providing for the nations the same Holy Book which we possess, may a heavenly benediction rest!