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LETTER FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

VICTORIA, Jan'y. 5, 1878.

REV. MR. NICOLSON.—The last time I had the pleasure of hearing you preach, or being in your company, was about 18 years ago, in Charlottetown, P. E. I. Many a change has happened, and many have gone to their reward during those years. The Rev. Mr. Green's letter from Nass River I send to you for publication in the *WESLEYAN*, if you think it worthy of space in your paper. I will try and give you a glimpse of the Nass Mission.

About November, 1869, I felt a strong impression that the Lord would not bless us as a church unless we did something for the natives. About this time an Indian came on a Sunday to our Church, the first one I ever saw there. I had a conversation with him. He could speak but few words in English. For the last ten years we had a prayer meeting at my house on Saturday evening. The Indian question was taken up at the prayer meeting. Some old Victorians thought that nothing could be done for the Indians; that we could not get two tribes together without fighting. But some of us had faith in the gospel of Christ, that it can save the chief of sinners; so we went to work and commenced our Indian Sunday school on the 19th Decr., 1869. We started with eight or nine. Our school was always growing. On the 2nd of February, 1870, we had three conversions. We can say with truth, Jesus hath done it all. Those converts prayed in their own language, and not one of the teachers understood a word they said; but the prayers had the spirit of the Master in them. When the Rev. Mr. Crosby came he was delighted with our success, and we all took courage and blessed the Lord. This school went on for a year or two in this way, with a conversion now and then. At last an Indian woman, a great chief's wife from Fort Simpson, came to our school; in three or four weeks she was converted. She was called Mrs. Dicks; she became a great power in our school. This Mrs. Dicks is the Mrs. Palmer of this coast. When she was converted she went to the Lord in prayer for her son and his wife at Fort Simpson. The Fort is 600 miles from here. She prayed to the Lord to bring them to her. She prayed to be converted. She took the Lord at his word that he would answer prayer. To my own knowledge she prayed whole nights. One Sunday morning she came to school looking so happy; she told me that the Lord had heard her prayers and brought her son Alfred, his wife, and 19 others in a big canoe from Fort Simpson. It was said that this Alfred was the worst man in that part of the country. Now her trouble commenced. When they came they would not go to school for her. She now had to go to the Lord in prayer that he might send them to school to be converted. Again her prayers were answered, the Lord sent them to school and converted them. Alfred's wife was half French and half Indian. She was brought up a Roman Catholic, taught by the Sisters of Charity, a good English scholar. When she was converted she became the greatest power we had. We had now one of the best of interpreters. If you could see me sitting at a table night after night, with twelve or fifteen Fort Simpson Indians, Mr. Alfred for interpreter. Our first lesson was 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of St. John. If you could see the faces of those noble looking natives when they would hear the name of Jesus spoken for the first time, and Heaven spoken of as the home of the redeemed. We had conversions every night; we had Heaven thus come down to earth. Alfred and his wife were married and baptized. A large number of the Fort Simpson Indians believed and were baptized. Alfred and his wife remained with us about three months and went back to Fort Simpson. Alfred commenced preaching, and his wife teaching school. When the Chairman, Mr. Pollard went out, he found 250 in school. The Rev. Mr. Crosby is there now over two years. Fort Simpson, that was cannibal heathen over three years ago, is the most Christ-like of any part of British Columbia to-day. The Rev. Mr. Crosby came to Victoria last April to the District Meeting. Nass being only about fifty miles from Fort Simpson. Crosby urged for a missionary for that place. The chairman told him that it was impossible to send one for want of money. I am told that he left the room, went out and wept like a child. It being Saturday evening, he and some of the rest of the ministers were at the prayer meeting. Mr. Crosby that evening pleaded for the Nass mission in such a way that in about 10 minutes 12 of us subscribed about 300 dollars, and agreed to see the Rev. Mr. Green supplied for two years. We begged the Missionary Committee to send Mr. Green. They granted our request; you can see by Mr. Green's letter how the Lord is blessing the work. The Nass Mission is in the hands of 12 of us at Victoria. James E. McMillan, Esq., is Secretary and Treasurer.

I have given you a short sketch of our Indian work, the grandest work this day in the known world. Dear Brother you can see the little band that is trying to carry out the Nass work. This little band or company of ours cannot fail, the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of this Company. It is safe for investing in. We get a hun-

dred-fold in this life, and the reward to come is life everlasting. I sent an account of this Company to Brother Alley, at Charlottetown. He and a few more of the dear old Brothers there were so delighted that they invested \$120. I hope that some of our dear brothers in Halifax will invest in the Company. We have to help in building houses as well as supporting the minister, but the work is a glorious one. We no sooner sow than we reap, and by having the Master at the head we cannot fail.

Dear Brother, I cannot explain this work as I would wish, but I believe it will be one of our themes in eternity, and I will tell it all there. Mr. W. F. Archibald is here with us. He is a good brother in the church.

I am, Dear and Rev. Brother,
WILLIAM MCKAY.

P.S.—This Indian work in Dec. 19, 1869, was small and feeble, now we have native preachers throughout all the North. They tell me that these natives are the salt of the earth, up at the mining country of the Cashear Mines, Fort Rangel, an American Station, a place where they keep a company of soldiers, a place Satan seemed to have for his special headquarters. Our Fort Simpson Indians started a preaching place and kept it up till the people there got a minister from Portland.

W. McKay.

THE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

The work of revising the English Bible, which for seven years has been going forward under the labours of distinguished English and American scholars, has naturally awakened a deep interest among English-speaking Christians in all parts of the world.

There are two opinions about the wisdom of the undertaking. The general verdict is that the revision is demanded by the progress which Christian scholarship has made during the last three centuries, that it will aid and increase the study of the Word of God, and quicken the spirituality of the Churches. But there are others on both sides of the sea who fear that the proposed revision will unsettle the faith of many in the authority of the Scriptures, and wean the hearts of the people from the grand old English Bible.

Whatever the result may be, it is now quite certain that in a few years a new Bible will be in the market competing for popular favor with the old one, and commended by many of the ablest Christian scholars of our times. But there is, we think, no occasion for fear. The able committees who have the work in hand do not purpose to make a new translation of the Scriptures. They purpose simply to amend and correct the old one where it is evidently defective; and so conservative is the spirit in which the work is being done that with the new version in hand most Bible readers will fail to discover, without special examination, that they are reading a revised version. In order to put this subject clearly before the reader he is invited to review the origin and history of the English Bible.

The sixteenth century gave many great gifts to the world, among which may be reckoned Protestantism and the great evangelical Churches, the awakening of the intellect of Europe and the revival of classical learning; and, chiefest of all, an open Bible. It was the most important of the nineteenth Christian centuries, the first only excepted. More aptly than Hugo wrote of Waterloo, it may be said that the Reformation was "a change of front of the world."

Learning had risen from the tomb of ages with the Bible in her hand. The day of reckoning had come for the apostate Church which had polluted the temple of God with her abominations. Men's brains were busy, their spirits were stirred, and their hearts were full. The world was young again. The miracle of tongues was repeated, and in a single generation the Bible was translated into every chief language of Europe, and men cried out, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonder-

ful works of God." Germany first broke the spell; but England joined the shout and echoed it back with her island voice from her thousand cliffs and craggy shores in a longer and louder strain. "With that cry," says Hazlitt, "the genius of Great Britain rose and threw down the gauntlet to the nations." Then from the poets went forth:

"Those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still."

Then Richard Hooker gave ecclesiastical polity to the Church; Sir Edward Coke gave the Common Law to the State; Sir Francis Bacon opened the purblind eyes of science and philosophy; and William Shakespeare wrote his dramas for the world. Drake and Raleigh were on the high seas, and Philip Sydney led the chivalry of England in the brave conflict of the Dutch with Spain. The clatter of printing presses, pleasant as the Spring notes of the bluebird, was heard in the land. Oxford and Cambridge were in a ferment. Fires of martyrdom were burning at Smithfield, and enthusiastic gospellers, hawking "Tyndale's Testament" or the "Geneva Bible," went everywhere through the land.

It is a striking proof of the greatness of that epoch that all the great Protestant Churches of the world had their birth in the sixteenth century—the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, the Episcopal Churches, the Presbyterian Churches, the Baptists, and the Congregationalists. Methodism, like the apostle born out of due time, is the only exception. It was that great sixteenth century which gave the world the authorized version of the English Bible, a version which all things considered, is probably the noblest copy of the Word of God ever produced. From Selden to Schaff, the almost universal testimony is that "it is, upon the whole, the best translation ever made." The genius and the heroism and the piety of sixteenth century England were poured into it. Unlike the other great vernacular versions of Europe it was not the work of a single translator, or of a single generation. Luther gave Germany her Bible, but the English Bible was the growth of a hundred years. Three generations wrought upon it. It was begun when William Tyndale, born only one year after Martin Luther, made the vow in his young manhood, that "if God spared his life he would cause a boy that driveth a plough to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope did," and it was completed when the able revisers of King James finished their labors in 1611. The "King James," which we prize so much, was not, therefore, a new translation, but a sixth or seventh revision of a translation made in the first quarter of the preceding century. Dr. Niles, Smith, one of the revisers, wrote: "We never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, but to make a good one better; or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against."

In another respect, the English Bible differs from the Bibles of the Continent. It has the seal of martyrdom upon it. Luther, Calvin, Lefevre, and others of the Continental translators, died in peace and honor; but our Tyndale was first exiled and afterwards strangled in a foreign land; Coverdale, who gave us our first complete Bible, by cruel exile barely escaped the stake; Rogers, author of the "Matthews Bible," was the first victim of the Marian persecution. Sir Thomas Cromwell, whose influence brought out the fourth revision, the "Great Bible," was beheaded; and Cranmer, life-long friend of the Word of God, whose picture stood with those of Henry and Cromwell on the frontis-

piece of the "Great Bible," perished with his friends, Latimer and Ridley, in the martyr fires at Oxford. A baptism of blood consecrated the English Bible to the Master's service.

Who can estimate the blessings which the dear old English Bible has bestowed upon the English speaking nations and upon the world! No other version of the Scriptures has been so widely or so reverently read; and it is estimated that in our time the two Bible societies of England and America send forth more copies of the English Bible than are printed in all other languages combined. The touching tribute of Dr. F. W. Faber, after he became a Ramanist, to "the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible" may be quoted: "It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten; like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle and pure and penitent and good speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but oh! how intelligible, voice of his guardian angel, and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant, with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

If it were proposed to take away this version of centuries and to put a new one in its place, then, indeed, would there be a loud and persistent protest. To many the proposition would savor of sacrilege. Devout minds always shrink from any interference with their sacred things. The conservative instinct of religion is ever alert to protest against any interference with the past. To this day it is a crime in the eyes of a devout Mussulman to translate the Koran. And the Church of Rome was successful through centuries in confining the Bible in the sepulcher of a dead language. And the Greek Church to this day persists in upholding the exclusive authority of the old Septuagint version, though confessedly a most defective translation of the original Scriptures.

One of the bravest things ever done was Jerome's revision of the Old Latin Bible, or, more correctly, his translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek, and his exposition of the errors and absurdities of the received version. For the performance of that great work, by which he now commands the homage of the world, the coarsest vituperation was heaped upon him. "His enemies," he said, "snapped at him like dogs." Even Augustine looked upon the labors of his friend with painful suspicion, and entreated him to give over his ill-advised schemes. Fortunately for the Church Jerome was as obstinate and determined as he was irascible. "They malign me in public," he said, "but read me in a corner, being at once my accusers and my defenders." "Let them read," he wrote to a friend, "rejoicing in hope, serving the time. Let us read, rejoicing in hope, serving the Lord." It took two hundred years for the magnificent translation of Jerome to overcome the superstitious prejudice of the Church. Augustine to the last refused to countenance it. A loud outcry from the faithful that he was a disturber of the peace of the Church was his reward. But

time is on the side of truth, and now for many a century Jerome's Bible has borne that most honorable name, the Vulgate—the common people's Bible.

Two questions present themselves to every mind that comes to this subject for the first time: Is there need of a revision of the English Bible? and is it expedient to attempt such revision at this time? A brief review of the history of our Bible will help us in forming an opinion on these questions.

It has already been stated that "King James" is the sixth or seventh revision of the original translation. The Jews and Christians of the first century claimed that a divine inspiration protected from error the translators of the Septuagint, but such claim has never been made for the English Bible, which, however, comes much nearer to the original than did the Septuagint. It is a revision of revisions, going back through the Bishop's Bible (1568), and the Geneva Bible (1557-1560), and the great Bible (1539), and Matthew's Bible (1537), and Coverdale's Bible (1535), to the Bible of William Tyndale (1525-1535), who was the Luther of the English Reformation, and, as Schaff says, "the real author" of the English version.

Westcott, in his history of the English Bible, writes of Tyndale, "It is even of less moment that by far the greater part of his translation remains intact in our present Bibles than that his spirit animates the whole." William Tyndale was a man of original genius and of extensive learning. He was a master of the chief languages of his time in addition to the Hebrew, Latin and Greek. But his character, more than his learning fitted him for his great work. Foxe calls him "for his notable pains and travail, an apostle of England." "My part be not in Christ," Tyndale wrote, "if mine heart be not to follow and live according as I teach. And as concerning all I have translated or otherwise written, I beseech all men to read it; for that purpose I wrote it, even to bring them to the knowledge of the Scriptures."

Tyndale's New Testament was published in Germany in 1525, because the King of England refused to give him or his book a place in his native land. The versions employed in the translation were Erasmus's third edition of the Greek text and Luther's German Testament. His Pentateuch, the only part of the New Testament which he published, was translated from the Hebrew, and issued in 1530.

A coadjutor not unworthy of Tyndale was Miles Coverdale, to whom it was given to finish what was so well begun. Coverdale lacked the heroic vigor and massive strength of the English Luther; but like Melancthon, he wins admiration by the beauty of his spirit, the fervor of his piety and the purity of his English. Encouraged by the friendship of Cromwell, he published a complete English Bible in 1535, first on the Continent, and soon after in England also. Coverdale was not an original translator. The title-page of the first edition reads, "faithfully and truly translated out of Dutch (German) and Latin into English." The versions he employed were Tyndale's, Luther's, the Vulgate, and the Zurich Bible of Zwingli. "Lowly and faithfully," he wrote, "have I followed mine interpreters." An instinct of discrimination and a delicacy of ear is claimed for him as a translator. To him we owe the phrase "the pride of life," which supplanted Tyndale's "pride of goods;" also "the world passeth away," instead of "the world vanisheth away." He had the phrase, and shutteth up his heart," where Tyndale read "shutteth up his compassion," and King James has the ugly phrase, "shutteth up his towels of compassion."

The so-called Matthews Bible was an edition revised by John Rogers, the martyr, on the basis of Tyndale and Coverdale, and published in 1537. The Great Bible was edited by Coverdale at the request of Cromwell, and published in April, 1539. It passed through six editions in two years. As Tyndale's translation was the basis of the work, it came about that "my Lord of London," Tunstall, whose name was on the title-page, authorized what a few years before he had condemned and burned.

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