

John Paterson, Bible Society Pioneer, 1776-1855

The Earlier Years - 1776-1813

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John Paterson was born at Duntocher in the parish of Old Kilpatrick near Glasgow on 26th February 1776, the third child of George and Isabella Paterson. At school he acquired the rudiments of English and of Latin. On leaving school, he was apprenticed at the age of 16 to a cabinet-maker and house-carpenter, and on the conclusion of his apprenticeship he moved to Glasgow for private study, specially in Latin with a view to entering University to train for the ministry. He entered and matriculated in Glasgow University in 1798 though he never completed a course for graduation.¹

Dr James H. Glassman has pointed out in his thesis on Ebenezer Henderson, that the last decade of the eighteenth century was a period of the beginnings of several great Christian movements.² The first movement was the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, formed at Kettering in 1792, the body which later became the Baptist Missionary Society and whose greatest missionary was William Carey, contemptuously called in the *Edinburgh Review* "the consecrated cobbler" of Paulerspury,³ in Northamptonshire, who became the first great Bible translator since the early days of the Reformation.

In 1793 John Campbell,⁴ an ironmonger in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh, who later became minister of Kingsland Chapel, London, founded the Edinburgh Religious Tract and Book Society, which expanded to become the Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland in 1855—the forerunner of the Scottish Colportage Society of today. In 1795 came the Missionary Society,

¹ J. Paterson (edited, with an introductory 'Memoir of the Author' by W. L. Alexander)—*The Book for Every Land*, 1857, pp. xi-xiv. (Hereafter referred to as 'B.E.L.')

² J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson, Missionary, Traveller, Teacher, Biblical Scholar*—Ph.D. Thesis, 1958 (typescript) in Edinburgh University New College Library, pp. 2-6.

³ G. Smith—*The Life of William Carey, D.D.*, 1885, p. 352. Quoted by G. A. F. Knight—*The History of the National Bible Society of Scotland 1809-1900*, (typescript) in that Society's Library, p. 13.

⁴ D. Kyles (edited by A. Macdonald)—*Colportage, What is It?*, 1968, pp. 7, 8.

later the London Missionary Society, now part of the Congregational Council for World Mission. 1796 was marked by the formation of the Glasgow Missionary Society and of the Edinburgh Missionary Society—later the Scottish Missionary Society, which worked amongst other places in the Caucasus areas of south-east Russia. 1797 saw the beginning of the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society. Down in London again in 1799 the Society for Missions in Africa and the East—later the Church Missionary Society—was founded on 12th April, while the following month on 10th May the Religious Tract Society came into being—now the United Society for Christian Literature. These evangelical movements of the last decade of the eighteenth century had their voice in the *Evangelical Magazine* (founded in 1793) and the *Missionary Magazine* (founded in 1796).¹

It was arising from a report to the Religious Tract Society in 1802 from the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala that the dearth of Bibles in Wales as seen in the story of Mary Jones was brought to public attention and an appeal by the Society for Bibles for Wales led in 1804 to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society,² which will figure prominently later in this paper.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1796 was the occasion when Dr John Erskine made his passionate appeal to the Fathers and Brethren to give their approval to a collection being taken for the work of these new Missionary Societies—"Rax me that Bible", he is reported to have said when the argument was propounded that men must be polished and refined before they can be enlightened in religious truth; he read the account of Paul's enforced stay among the "barbarous people" of Malta, and said, "Paul prayed, and surely it would be in the name of Jesus, and he would tell them why he did so."³ The appeal failed, as did a similar appeal in the Relief Church and in the Anti-Burgher Synod, though the Burgher Synod accepted it, but a new seed was sown in the field of the Auld Kirk.

These movements were brought near to John Paterson in the persons of two famous itinerant preachers, the brothers Robert Haldane and James Haldane. In 1797 they formed the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home.⁴ Their preaching led to the setting up of congregations and "Tabernacles" based on the model of the Apostolic Churches of the Book of Acts.

¹ J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 7.

² W. Canton—*The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, Vol. I, 1904, pp. 465-470, quoting from that Society's *Monthly Recorder* of Jan. 1867.

³ E. G. K. Hewat—*Vision and Achievement, 1796-1856*, 1960, p. 1. See also Note by H. Watt in S.C.H.S. Records X, pp. 54, 55.

⁴ A. Haldane—*Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his brother James Alexander Haldane*, 1852, pp. 190-192; also H. Escott—*A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, 1960, pp. 61-66.

Other leading figures in this early Congregational movement in Scotland were Greville Ewing, John Aikman and William Innes. Paterson had earlier attended the Burgher Secession Church where he professed a conversion. He took a small room for himself away from his home to study in peace; particularly he was affected by a tract on the nature of saving faith in which the doctrine of the Scripture on that subject was clearly set forth. He started on his three brothers and two sisters. He had been attracted by what he had heard of the work of the London Missionary Society, and it was with a view to service overseas with that Society that he set himself to study for entry to Glasgow University. He would not think of going abroad till he had acquired a knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written so that he might be qualified to translate them into the languages of the nations whither in the Providence of God he might go.

I should say at this juncture that the greatest part of the material for this paper has been culled from a Journal written by John Paterson himself, and preserved in MS, along with some of the actual correspondence, at the Bible House in London. He began writing it in 1805 at Copenhagen, for, as he said, "Many things may occur which it may be useful for myself to recollect and for others to know who may be engaged in the work of preaching the Gospel in foreign countries." An expurgated version of this Journal with insertions from other papers by Paterson, was published in 1858 entitled "The Book for Every Land: Reminiscences of Labour and Adventures in the work of Bible circulation in the north of Europe and in Russia, by the late John Paterson, D.D., edited with a prefatory memoir by William Lindsay Alexander, D.D., F.S.A.S."

Although he was much influenced by the Haldanes, Paterson did not respond to their first appeal for young men to be trained as students for the ministry.¹ The first class was formed in January 1799 by Robert Haldane in Edinburgh, trained under the Rev. Greville Ewing, and taken across later in the two-year course to Glasgow. Paterson, however, having been brought up in the Burgher tradition, disliked the 'Independency', although his fellow-student in Glasgow University, Claude Morrison, left his University studies and joined the Haldanes' Seminary, and later had a fruitful ministry as a tract writer in Ireland.

Paterson finished his session at the University and entered the second 'intake' in the Seminary, starting his course in Dundee in January 1800 under the tuition of the Rev. William Innes, and finishing the following year in Glasgow under Ewing. Admission to this course was subject to pretty strict discipline, and all students had to be prepared to earn their own living on the

¹ A. Haldane—*ibid.*, pp. 247-249.

model of St. Paul in Corinth.¹ It was on 'Early Church Fellowship' principles too that the Haldanes' congregations in Edinburgh felt led to seek to set apart and send two young men as missionaries to the East, without any recourse to Societies or other organisations. As a student, Paterson joined the Independent Church, attending Mr Dale's weeknight meetings in Glasgow; he was also sent to preach to a group of people influenced by the Haldanes in Cambuslang. Dr Harry Escott in his *History of Scottish Congregationalism* notes that beyond Glasgow the oldest Congregational Church in Lanarkshire is that of Cambuslang.² The people had rented a house for meeting in, and had asked for the services of a student in 1799. The congregation grew in strength, building and opening a Chapel in 1801, and early in 1802 Paterson became its pastor. In June 1803 it was able to call him as its own first pastor. Rev. John Paterson was ordained on 5th July 1803, and continued to minister at Cambuslang till he demitted the charge on 17th June 1804, after altogether spending twenty-seven months in their midst. Paterson maintained his contacts with the members of the Cambuslang congregation, including Neil Livingstone and his family, of Blantyre; David Livingstone, in particular, corresponded with Paterson in later years.³ He went out in November 1840 as a missionary of the London Missionary Society to Africa.

The appeal from the Edinburgh Congregational Churches for two missionaries to be sent to India came again in December 1803. Archibald Maclay, a fellow-student of Paterson, had been interested with him earlier in this proposition: he had been for eighteen months minister in Kirkcaldy. He applied and suggested Paterson as his colleague. They were accepted and agreed after release from their congregations to do some further study at Edinburgh University,⁴ as no passages from London to India were immediately available. Maclay was married, and Paterson and the Maclays stayed together in lodgings in Leith Walk, the two men attending classes in Moral Philosophy, Logic, Greek, Hebrew and Anatomy. In January 1805, a son was born to Maclay, so India was not considered a suitable sphere of service for him: he went instead to New York, and Paterson was asked to seek for another companion from among the third and fourth intakes of students at the Haldanes' Seminary, studying now in Edinburgh under John Aikman.

Paterson chose Ebenezer Henderson,⁵ a young man from Dunfermline, born in 1784, a member originally of Queen Anne Street Secession Church,

1 J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 22.

2 H. Escott—*A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 310, 311.

3 'B.E.L.'—p. xxx: cf. W. G. Blaikie—*The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 1884, p. 23.

4 'B.E.L.'—p. xvi.

5 'B.E.L.'—pp. xvi, xvii. Also J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, pp. 31, 32.

influenced by the Haldanes' preaching, by the growing Sunday School movement in that town and by several tracts produced by John Campbell and James Haldane. The use of tracts and Scripture portions in evangelism was, in fact, considered as of prime importance both by Henderson and by Paterson, for they accepted the dictum which John Campbell later wrote to Henderson: "Tracts will live longer than you and be always with their possessors."¹

Paterson and Henderson then became the two men destined for India. The location of the Mission in India which they were to start was not yet fixed—Surat, Poona, Benares and Madras were mentioned—but it was agreed that they should first of all contact William Carey in Serampore. Passages to India and permission to work there were only available for servants of the East India Company. Charles Grant, a Scotsman from Inverness-shire and a member of the first Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society,² had tried to get permission for Christian teachers to enter India when the East India Company Charter came up for renewal in 1793: he failed. About 1805 he obtained an entry as a Chaplain of the Company for Henry Martyn, who later did so much for Scripture translation in India and the East: in 1813 he succeeded in getting the change made in the Charter before it was again renewed, but by then Paterson and Henderson were otherwise employed.

The only way open to them in 1805 was to go to Denmark to seek a passage on a vessel of the Danish East India Company and to land on territory in the Danish settlements in India which included Serampore. Accordingly, passages were booked for them at two guineas apiece on a ship due to sail in August from Leith for Denmark in a convoy for these were war years; it was not until 21st October that year that Nelson removed the menace of the French fleet by defeating it at Trafalgar. Farewell services were arranged for the young missionaries in Glasgow, Dunfermline and Linlithgow, culminating in Edinburgh in a service at the Tabernacle in Leith Walk (near the site of the Playhouse Cinema) on 27th August 1805, at which they were set apart as missionaries by a group of Pastors and both of them given certificates commending them 'to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ'.³ These documents were signed by James Haldane, John Aikman and William Stevens of Edinburgh, by Greville Ewing of Glasgow and Robert Little of Perth. Many presents were given them including gingerbread which, Paterson remarked with feeling, was "the very worst thing possible for a seasick stomach." Next day they embarked at Leith Docks on the "Fame", a ship

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 10.

² J. A. Patten—*These Remarkable Men*, 1945, pp. 89-95.

³ 'B.E.L.'—p. xviii. Also J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 33.

whose skipper, Captain Macfarlane, came from Alloa. Stormy weather scattered the convoy, but the "Fame" arrived safely in Elsinore after over a fortnight's voyage on Friday, 13th September 1805.

Next day they left by coach for Copenhagen where they used introductions which they had been given to meet John Dickie, a Scots merchant in that city. The state of religion in the city, particularly the lax observance of the Sabbath, convinced them that there was much need for a missionary in Copenhagen. While waiting for a passage to India, they arranged services for the English in the city, first in a private house, but before long in a large hall used during the week as an auction room. They also made arrangements for the translation into Danish of one of Morrison's tracts, "The One Thing Needful".¹ Meantime their passage negotiations received a setback. Only one ship was due to sail for India before the winter set in, and all accommodation on it was booked. So Paterson and Henderson were compelled to wait for the spring before a passage could be obtained for them.

"Well", wrote Paterson, "if stop we must we determined, by the help of God, to make ourselves as useful in trying to do good as possible."² The English services expanded, and spread to Elsinore. They also studied the Danish language. Meantime correspondence from Britain began to direct their attention away from India. One letter dated 25th December 1805 from the Edinburgh Churches, whose emissaries to India they were, stated that they felt, after hearing from them of their work in Denmark, 'it was impossible to find any other place where you can be of greater service in Christ's Kingdom'. This was not very encouraging for young men whose hearts were intent on their original mission to India. Supporting letters from their Edinburgh friends, John Robertson and George Gibson, indicated that the real difficulty arose from the cooling off of the missionary enthusiasm of the Churches concerned. Paterson and Henderson were encouraged to seek means of financial self-support, which they did by giving English lessons to young people in Copenhagen: in fact they were able thus to meet the greatest part of their expenses, though some financial support still came from Edinburgh till the Bible Society came to their assistance some seven years later.

When John Campbell of Kingsland, already referred to earlier in this paper, heard that they would have to remain in Denmark till the spring he wrote to them on 26th December 1805 asking about the possibility of them establishing a Tract Society in Denmark, asking also for any information they could furnish as to the religious situation and, in particular, as to the needs for Scriptures in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Lapland and Poland. He also

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 4.

² 'B.E.L.'—p. 5.

helped by obtaining for Paterson and Henderson, through Mr Joseph Reyner of the Religious Tract Society, an introduction to a notable Icelandic scholar and lawyer, Mr C. J. Thorklein, who was at that time resident in Copenhagen. Thorklein had studied in Scotland and England and gladly introduced his Scottish friends to several of the leading ecclesiastical and evangelical men. Campbell's letter gave them their first objective for their enforced stay in Denmark—to enquire into the Scripture wants of the Scandinavian peoples.

As regards Denmark they knew of the Danish Evangelical Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and True Christianity which had been formed in 1800 in the island of Funen,¹ the neighbouring island to Zeeland on which the capital city, Copenhagen, is built. The Society had printed some excellent tracts in Danish, as well as an Evangelical Magazine; it was producing the Bible in Danish, and New Testaments in Danish, Greenlandic and Creolese (for the Danish territories in Greenland and the West Indies), and later in August 1806 when Paterson and Henderson were able to contact its leaders, Dean Beesen and his brother, they found that at Mr Thorklein's suggestion the Society was embarking also on the production of an edition of 2000 copies of the Icelandic Testament.

As regards Sweden, Paterson contacted Professor Hylander of the University of Lund, who told him that Gospel preachers in that district were like the hawthorn bushes there—few and hard to find. Henderson contacted Mr L. C. Retzius of Lidkoping, near Lake Vener, who told him that a small Society of about twenty preachers had been formed in 1802—the only such Society in Sweden—for the production of tracts for distribution in Sweden. Henderson was invited to visit Sweden early in 1806, and made arrangements for the translation and printing of two tracts which had already been used by him in Denmark. In June, Paterson and he visited the district around Lund, and they left some more tracts with Professor Hylander, which he translated in Swedish. Henderson, who, as Glassman records,² had been accounted even in his student days as more of a linguist than a theologian, and more given to literature than divinity, had made good progress in the Danish language, and Paterson was also able to understand and make himself understood in that language, and they found that this knowledge enabled them to understand the closely allied Swedish language as well.

As regards Iceland Mr Thorklein was a mine of information. Of the adult population, nearly 99% were literate, and there was no people in the world fonder of reading: they were transcribing books by hand for themselves to read. But there was a famine of the Word of Life. Paterson and Hender-

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 13.

² J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 28 (footnote): quoted Thulia S. Henderson—*Memoir of the Rev. E. Henderson, D.D., LL.D.*, 1859, p. 24.

son felt that tracts and Scripture extracts should be translated and prepared in Icelandic at once, and that the proposed 2000 copies of the New Testament should be increased to 5000 in order to meet the tremendous need.

While Paterson and Henderson were engaged in gathering all their information, further interesting letters were received by them from their Scottish friends. Robert Haldane wrote in mid-March telling of a meeting which he had had at Gosport with Dr Steinkopf, Pastor of the Lutheran Church in London, who was one of the Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He asked Paterson what he felt about books as a means of 'trying to do good', specially Bibles and Testaments. James Ogilvy, on the other hand, conveyed to them the discouraging news that the Edinburgh congregations wanted them to curb their expenditure. As Paterson remarked in his reply, it was clear that "little dependance could be placed on those who had sent us forth".

Paterson and Henderson, however, took fresh heart from Haldane's letter. They sent a long letter giving both the information which they had already gathered in response to Campbell's request, and their own suggestions, particularly in respect of the Icelandic Scriptures. This letter Haldane laid before the Committees both of the Religious Tract Society and of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The former welcomed the reports and took up with enthusiasm the requests for assistance in the production of tracts for Denmark, Iceland and Sweden, while the Bible Society, with equal enthusiasm agreed that, if the Danish Evangelical Society were agreeable, the printing of Icelandic Testaments should be increased as proposed, the extra cost to be met by the British Society, and that Paterson himself should be asked to supervise the production in Copenhagen. "This correspondence", as Paterson noted, "laid the foundation of our connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has led to such important results. Thus the Lord was gradually leading us in a way we knew not."¹

Thoughts of proceeding to India were laid aside in 1806 for the reasons already outlined, and Henderson, now residing at Elsinore, carried on his ministry to the English-speaking congregation there, as well as working on tracts and teaching English, and Paterson, in Copenhagen, divided his energies between ministering to the English there, acting as Private Secretary to Mr Garlick, the British Minister to the Danish Court, and supervising the production of the Icelandic New Testament and Scripture extracts. In this third occupation he was assisted by Mr Beesen on the business and technical side of the undertaking, and by Mr Thorklein as the only man in Copenhagen

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 21. Part of the letter to Haldane quoted anonymously—*From a Correspondent in Copenhagen*. Reports of British and Foreign Bible Society (reprinted) Vol. I, pp. 152, 153.

qualified to check the text as it was produced, being thoroughly acquainted with the language. Excellent progress was made, and by the spring packet ship in 1807 the first 1500 Testaments, and some at least of the Scripture extracts and tracts, were despatched. It was expected that the balance would follow before the end of the year, and plans were already being made for the printing of the whole Bible along the same lines of correction and alteration which were followed for the New Testament. Paterson and Henderson also planned during the summer of 1807 to make tours of Sweden, of Holstein, and of Germany, to obtain personal knowledge of the situation in those countries. It was, however, several years before Iceland received more Testaments, and still longer before the Icelandic Bible was available.

The political situation was rapidly deteriorating in Northern Europe. Napoleon had forced Russia and Prussia to make peace with France, and it was clear that pressure would next be brought to bear on Denmark and Sweden to join his alliance and so cut off Britain from the northern part of the Continent. At that time (1806) it should be remembered that Denmark included Norway, while Sweden included Finland.

Henderson decided in August to proceed from Elsinore to Sweden; he had received some rather disconcerting information about Retzius' tracts—he had translated and was printing a much longer one, entitled "The Friendly Advice", with twenty-four in place of four pages, and was distributing all his tracts free with no sales at all. Henderson, like Paterson, was a true Scot and did not like waste! Henderson took up his residence in Gothenburg, where he was soon ministering to the large colony of Scots and English attending the private English chapel.

Paterson had been aware of the political situation through his connection with Mr Garlick, and in August the blow fell. Garlick and his staff left Copenhagen for Sweden, and part of the British fleet arrived in the Sound off the city. The fleet was accompanied by British troops. All was confusion, a British merchant ship was set on fire, and the troops landed a little below the city. A few days of comparative calm followed but after an ultimatum to surrender the city had been rejected by the Danes, on Sunday, 23rd August, a first bombardment of the city began. The bombardment was resumed in earnest on 2nd September, fires broke out in many parts of the city, the great Frieer or Lady Church was demolished, over 400 houses, a great part of the university, and some of the finest warehouses in the world were destroyed, and about 1700 citizens killed. On 7th September the city commander agreed to surrender to avert further disasters, and the British took over the citadel, the dockyards and the Danish fleet.

Paterson was present in the city throughout the bombardment, which was carried out under the command of one of the leading supporters of the Bible

Society in London, and has written a full account of the bombardment as seen from inside the city.¹ Although a Britisher, his life was often in peril from his fellow-countrymen's shells, and, as a Britisher, he lived in fear of mob attacks by the citizens. Throughout the attack, one of Paterson's chief concerns had been the security of the remaining copies of the Icelandic Scriptures and tracts. Although so inflammable by nature, the sheets and books were found to be safe.

The Crown Prince of Denmark, acting in the place of the King, his father, repudiated the capitulation signed by the city commander, so, although the occupying forces still remained in the city for a short time, Paterson felt convinced that, as a Britisher, he could no longer with comfort or safety continue his labours in Denmark. He left accordingly on 18th October for Malmo in Sweden: from there he went to visit Dr Hylander in Lund, and then proceeded to join Henderson in Gothenburg. He helped Henderson there till the end of 1807. Gothenburg was almost the only port of the Continent open to the British where they could land and embark in safety, so there were many of their fellow-countrymen there; there was also a great deal of speculation and bribery. Both men were deeply distressed at the want of Scriptures among the Swedish people as a whole. There was need for an examination of the possibilities for the printing and distribution of the Scriptures, and they agreed that this could best be taken up by Paterson in Stockholm, while Henderson remained on in Gothenburg.

To Stockholm then on 22nd January 1808 Paterson came, and took up his residence with one of the Moravian Brethren. In Sweden at that time there were no Moravian congregations or churches, though there were several Societies of these Brethren who were considered ecclesiastically as members of the Lutheran Church, the State Church. Here he met the Rev. John G. Staehelin and Mr Samuel Runestadt, a printer. Mr Staehelin took up Paterson's suggestion for the formation of a Swedish Evangelical Society and in less than five weeks from the time of Paterson's arrival in Stockholm the foundation was laid for the formation of such a Society, for the publication of religious tracts and, if circumstances permitted, of the Scriptures.

The two missionaries continued to receive discouraging news from Scotland. There were deep divisions in the supporting congregations; thanks, it was said, to the many changes introduced by the Messrs Haldane in respect of Church matters, once flourishing churches in the Tabernacles and elsewhere were weakened, and no aid could be expected from churches connected

¹ 'B.E.L.'—pp. 29-49. Paterson states that his Journal appeared in *Scripture Magazine*, Vol. I, pp. 39, 86, 128, 173 and 217, and later as a pamphlet. The British Admiral, James Gambier, was a Vice-President of the British and Foreign Bible Society from 1805 till his death in 1832.

with the Haldanes. The main change was the adoption of the practice of Believers' Baptism by several of the leading ministers, including James Haldane himself, in April 1808. His brother Robert, the Laird of Airthrey, whose generous financial support had played an important part in the building up of the Tabernacles, followed suit within a year, as did 200 members of the Edinburgh Tabernacle. Another innovation was the adoption of the holy kiss as a Church ordinance as in the Glasite Churches.

For ordinary expenses Paterson and Henderson were self-supporting, Paterson by his work in teaching English to young men and women in Stockholm, and Henderson chiefly by his serving as pastor to the English chapel in Gothenburg. Haldane did offer to pay for their passages back to Scotland, but no employment was offered in Scotland, while a great door was open to them in northern Europe. Joseph Tarn from London promised to find assistance for them from the Missionary Society in London if Scottish support ceased. So they continued in Sweden.

Paterson and Henderson embarked on the first of several extensive tours together in northern Europe at the end of July 1808, returning to Stockholm in the middle of September. By dint of applying themselves, they had become reasonably fluent in the Swedish language. They travelled first to the northern parts of Sweden, through the ancient province of Dalecarlia, where they found that very few of the people had ever bought a Bible—Bibles were family heirlooms. The travellers were able to distribute numerous tracts to help them to understand that the Gospel is a living truth for all time. At Gefle they did the same. At Hernosand they met one of the finest Christian leaders in Scandinavia—Bishop Nordin, whose diocese included the whole of Swedish Lapland. He was familiar, not only with the English language, but also with Scots and Gaelic. He was engaged in preparing and printing a version of the Bible in their own language for the Lapp people of Sweden. Paterson welcomed all this new information, and arranged with the Bishop to ask for help from the Bible Society in London for a further printing of the New Testament from the plates Nordin would be making and using for that part of his Bible. The Bishop's printing house was the only press authorised to print any book in the Lapp language.

From Hernosand they went on northwards through Angermanland, Umea and Pitea to Tornea at the top of the Gulf of Bothnia. They were able to discover that the Christianity of the Laplanders was little more than nominal, and the need for Scriptures and Christian Literature in their language was essential for the real growth of the Church. At Tornea they entered Finland, at that time part of the Kingdom of Sweden. They had hoped to proceed south through Finland to Abo, and from there to cross the Gulf back to Stockholm: but, once again, political and military happenings intervened to

prevent them. After the bombardment of Copenhagen by the British, Denmark had joined Russia and Prussia, in alliance with Napoleon. Russia and Denmark attacked Sweden, the only northern Kingdom still collaborating with Britain. The Russian army advanced across Finland, and forced Paterson and Henderson to turn back and make their way up to the north end of the Gulf again. Back into Sweden, Paterson and Henderson visited Uppsala on their way to the capital, and met another interesting scholar, Dr Samuel Oedmann, who had made a new translation of the New Testament into Swedish, although it was never published. Oedmann died in 1829. They also visited the University and the Library with the MS of Ulfilas' Gothic translation of the Gospels. On their return to Stockholm and Gothenburg respectively, Paterson and Henderson drew up and sent to London¹ a full statement of the situation they had found in Northern Sweden and in Finland—the distress, the possibilities and, above all, the needs—needs for Scriptures and tracts for refugees from Finland, and for seamen of several nationalities, including many from Britain.

Paterson ends his report on 1808 with the admission that he was mistaken in his expectation that the Lapp Scriptures being prepared by Bishop Nordin would serve the Laplanders who lived in the neighbouring areas of Norway (or, as it then was, Denmark), Russia or Finland. The translation, however, did serve the Lapps in Northern Sweden and those near the Swedish borders.

The first three months of 1809 were marked in Sweden by an intense cold, so that there were fears of the French and Danish armies marching over the ice across the Sound and the Russian army across the Gulf of Bothnia from Finland, where it had established itself the previous year. There was great political unrest and the mental instability of King Gustavus IV made the position of the British military and naval forces (under Sir John Moore) untenable. They withdrew and Gustavus was faced with a three-pronged Russian attack from beyond the Gulf of Bothnia—from Abo by Aland; from Wasa to Umea, and round the north of the Gulf through Tornea. The Swedish army forced Gustavus to abdicate, and negotiations were opened which led to a peace treaty between France, Russia, Denmark and Sweden, thus cutting off from Britain her last ally in the north of Europe.

Bible operations, however, progressed wonderfully. Before his abdication Gustavus had been a reader of the Bible in his saner moments; his Government had approved on 21st January 1809 the formation of the Swedish Evangelical Society and in February his signature brought that body into existence, perhaps the first-fruits of Paterson's and Henderson's work in Europe.² Within four months of its formation, it had printed some 200,000

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 95.

² 'B.E.L.'—pp. 70, 71. Reports of the B.F.B.S. (reprinted) Vol. I, pp. 210, 211.

copies of tracts, seven in Swedish and one in Finnish. With the sudden change in the political situation, one of these tracts nearly brought the Society to an untimely end. It was prepared as an address to soldiers and began, in reference to Proverbs 24, 21 with these words: "A good soldier is one who fears the Lord and the King, and meddles not with those who are given to change". These tracts were distributed among the rebellious troops who successfully overthrew Gustavus! An apology was made immediately by the President of the Society, which was accepted, but naturally for several months thereafter the Swedish Evangelical Society had to suspend its operations, and even Paterson and Henderson had to turn their energies elsewhere.

With the end of hostilities in Sweden, they were able to resume contact with Denmark for the printing of the whole Icelandic Bible; they had to see to the execution of the printing of the Lapp New Testament at Bishop Nordin's press, and they had asked and obtained liberty to publish the Scriptures in Swedish. The British and Foreign Bible Society had voted a grant of £300 for the printing of the Swedish New Testament, but there was great difficulty in obtaining the necessary materials for printing. Paterson began to learn from experience many hard lessons in regard to methods of printing, supplies of paper, checking of printers' proofs and difficulties of bookbinding—lessons which were invaluable to him in later years.

There were other inducements to Paterson to remain in Sweden. The British and Foreign Bible Society at its fifth Annual Meeting¹ expressed its indebtedness to Paterson and Henderson and persuaded them to accept a gift of £100 as a token of thanks for the services they had already rendered. Paterson also remarked that they "had already formed many endearing friendships in Sweden". One, in particular, led to his becoming engaged to marry a Swedish young lady who had earlier been one of his English pupils in his Moravian Brethren home near Stockholm. She was Katrine Margarate Hollinder. They were married in Stockholm on 31st August 1809.

Returning to the Swedish Bible, in 1809 the Reformation Bible was still the most popular and the only authorised version. It was not until 1917 that an entirely new version based on the modern critical editions of the Hebrew and Greek texts was authorised by King Gustav V as the Swedish Church Bible.

The prices at which the Bible was sold in 1809 put it beyond the reach of ordinary people. Paterson therefore planned to reprint first the New Testament then the whole Bible, without the Apocrypha, through the Swedish Evangelical Society, with generous financial grants from the Bible Society

¹ J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 70. Reports of the B.F.B.S. (reprinted), Vol. I, p. 205.

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in London—a heavy task with the limited printing facilities available at that time in Sweden.

The Swedish Evangelical Society had from its inception planned to produce not only religious tracts but also cheap editions of the Scriptures for extensive distribution. Paterson and Henderson had in a short memorial given an account of the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society as a separate body from the Religious Tract Society. Owing to the distressful state of the country, it was agreed that, at least for the time being, the two operations should continue to be performed in Sweden by the one Society, but that the finances of the two operations should be kept separate. With Paterson's new proposals both operations were now in progress. Before the end of the year Paterson received a further £50 from London to supplement the dwindling support he and Henderson were receiving from Scotland, and finally they were informed that the Religious Tract Society had made both of them Honorary Life Members of that Society,¹ the first to be so appointed, as a fitting recognition of their service for Iceland and in Denmark and Sweden.

Towards the end of 1809 a British captain, who had been ordered "to capture Danish vessels", seized and occupied the island of Iceland, presumably treating it as a kind of outsized Danish ship! His action was repudiated by the British Government, but, thanks to the British naval command of the sea, Iceland was cut off from Denmark, and it was only through Britain that the inhabitants could be supplied. This was the reason why, amongst many other things, the remaining Icelandic Testaments and tracts could not be shipped from Copenhagen to Iceland.

The year 1810 opened with expectations of considerable developments in Bible Society work in all the Scandinavian countries. Paterson and Henderson, who received gifts of £50 from the Religious Tract Society and the London Missionary Society in appreciation of their services, agreed that it was desirable for one of them to give particular attention to Iceland, visiting that island if possible and taking the remaining Testaments and tracts with him, while the other returned to Copenhagen to keep an eye on the Icelandic Bible printing, and also to be near enough to superintend the Swedish and Lapp printings in Stockholm and Hernösand.

Henderson then offered to go to Iceland, while Paterson was to move to Copenhagen or, failing that, to come at least to Helsingborg on the west coast of Sweden across the Sound from Elsinore. Unfortunately, the political situation made it impossible for Henderson to go to Iceland, so that visit had to be postponed for four years. The members of his English congregation in Gothenburg, however, realised that their pastor needed a holiday, and gave

¹ Paterson's handwritten Journal: *cf.* Religious Tract Society Minutes of 11th May 1809, No. 5, pp. 69, 70.

him a presentation of about £130 to enable him to visit Britain. He, therefore, was able to make his first visit to his homeland since 1805, leaving Gothenburg in June, and returning there in September. His reports had led the Edinburgh Bible Society, formed on 4th August 1809,¹ "having the same object in view with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to act in concert with it, or separately as circumstances shall require", to vote from the funds available during its first year of operations a sum of £100 towards the printing of the Icelandic Bible. Henderson's visit enabled him to make this project, as well as those in Sweden, become alive to the faithful supporters, both in Edinburgh and in England. He attended the meeting of the Edinburgh Bible Society Committee, held in the Asylum (for the Blind) in Nicolson Street, on 17th September 1810, where the Minute reads:

"The representations of the Stockholm Evangelical Society were then more fully considered in consequence of Mr Henderson from Sweden being present who is now in this country collecting for that Society. The Committee voted a second donation of £50 Stg. to assist the Evangelical Society in the distribution of the Scriptures among the poor in Sweden."²

Henderson had been greatly encouraged by the welcome he received in London and in Manchester, but deeply distressed at the situation he found in the Tabernacle Churches in Scotland. James Gordon and John Aikman were still staunch supporters of Henderson's work, but William Innes, Paterson's first tutor, had joined the Baptist section of the divided Churches, following the Haldanes.

Paterson's correspondence with London about his visit to Bishop Nordin led to a grant of £250 being given for the printing of the Lapp New Testament, so that arrangements were completed and the work begun early in 1810. The first tentative copies of the Swedish New Testament were completed by the end of March, and these proved very satisfactory, so a second and larger edition was ordered right away. Paterson got the Old Testament books set up in the same format as the New Testament to make the complete Bible. These things Paterson had to see to before he could leave for the west coast, and Mrs Paterson's health delayed him further till the middle of June.

John Paterson and his wife came to Gothenburg in the end of June and from there to Helsingborg. Mrs Paterson's health improved considerably as she took a course of sea-bathing. Paterson tried to contact his friends in Denmark, particularly Beesen and Thorklein; he did after much delay get an

¹ Edinburgh Bible Society Minute Book, Vol. 1, pp. 1-3. (The Minute Books of the Edinburgh Bible Society 1809-1861 are in manuscript in the office of The National Bible Society of Scotland). Reports of the B.F.B.S. (reprinted) Vol. I, pp. 319-321.

² Edinburgh Bible Society Minute Book, Vol. I, p. 46.

invitation from Thorklein to come across to Copenhagen. He knew, however, that he was *persona non grata* in Denmark. It seems that his earlier association with members of the British Embassy staff in Copenhagen, coupled with reports that an Englishman of his name had been supplying the English fleet near Gothenburg with provisions and information, had brought matters to the point that he would almost certainly have been arrested as a spy had he crossed to Copenhagen.¹ Correspondence also was dangerous. He did, however, get Thorklein to obtain estimates for the printing, and placed an order for paper from Sweden, while the finance was held by the Swedish Evangelical Society. The printing, he agreed with Thorklein, should be done at the Orphan House in Copenhagen, which also printed all Danish Scriptures. So at last, after five years of delay, the printing of the Icelandic Bible was near to being begun, and Paterson returned to Stockholm.

Henderson, on his return to Gothenburg, told of suggestions made to him in Britain that he and Paterson might turn their activities to Russian Finland and beyond to Russia itself. Paterson was still much concerned in 1811 that news about the Icelandic Bible was so scanty. It was not until he returned to Stockholm from Finland in October that he was at last assured that the work had begun.

With the installation as Crown Prince of Charles John Bernadotte, a Marshal of France, Paterson and Henderson feared that his influence might render their stay in Sweden impossible, but the new Prince quickly identified himself with his new people. The Swedish Evangelical Society continued its work quietly, printing Swedish, Finnish and Lapp tracts and Swedish and Lapp Scriptures. At the beginning of May Bishop Nordin reported that the Lapp Testaments would be printed by the end of the month, and half of the 5000 copies were brought to Stockholm for binding as soon as the Gulf of Bothnia was clear of ice. The Government agreed to provide free transport of the books from Stockholm to the Laplanders, and several thousand copies of three tracts translated by the Bishop into Lapp accompanied the Testaments.

On 18th May, the Patersons' eldest child, Anders George, was born in Stockholm. Although Mrs Paterson had some difficulty and considerable expense in getting food for him, George thrived and was baptised in Stockholm by Pastor Haggmann.

¹ 'B.E.L.'—pp. 125, 126. H. J. Barnes, in *History Today*, Vol. XVIII, 1968, pp. 307-313, tells the story of another Scottish clergyman, Father James Robertson, O.S.B., employed in Denmark from June 1808 to July 1809 as a British agent by Wellington to contact General Romana's Spanish troops there, with a view to their joining in the Peninsular Campaigns. Robertson succeeded and escaped though not without difficulty. Danish suspicions of Scottish clergymen were not without some justification.

Paterson next turned his attention to Finland—by then part of Czar Alexander I's Empire. He had already contacted the Czar through Prince Galitzin, the Minister of Foreign Confessions, about the import and use of Lapp Testaments for the Laplanders in the Finnish part of Lapland, and received a very favourable response, the Czar granting all that was requested in a royal proclamation.

Starting with his experiences with Henderson in 1808, Paterson collected information about Finnish Scriptures and the needs of the Finnish people. This he passed on in a memorial to the Swedish Evangelical Society and to the Bible Society in London.¹ The latter, through its Secretary, the Rev. Charles Steinkopf, D.D., himself a Lutheran pastor serving the German congregation in London, passed a resolution authorising Paterson to visit Abo and, if necessary, St. Petersburg, in order to arrange for the printing of Finnish Testaments and Bibles to meet the great need and in order to start, if possible, a Bible Society for Finland. The London Committee backed up this resolution with a grant of £500 to assist in the work. It was strange that the main danger threatening Paterson, as he started off from Stockholm for Abo came from British sailors in small craft attacking Russians and Swedes alike in the Gulf of Bothnia. However, despite some sickness, Paterson arrived safely in Abo.

In Finland by 1811 not a Testament or a Bible in Finnish was available for sale, the last stocks of Testaments having been used for Finnish refugees in Sweden a few years earlier.

To meet this situation, Paterson had to meet Bishop Tengstrom. Tengstrom he found, like Nordin, to be an interested and intelligent man. He wrote in his Journal of them that they were "men of great learning but they had nothing about them of the haughtiness which characterises our English bishops"—the last five words of which remark have been modified down in "The Book for Every Land" to "which sometimes characterises men who have been raised to the place of bishops"²

Paterson laid before Tengstrom his desire to have the Finnish Scriptures printed on standing types in order that copies might be furnished to the inhabitants at the lowest possible price and to the poor gratis. He also proposed the formation of a Bible Society for Finland in order to secure a regular supply of Bibles and to superintend their future distribution. Tengstrom received the proposals, examined them with great care, and called a meeting of interested friends on 18th September, a Conference at which the foundation of the Finnish Bible Society was laid. Tengstrom and General

¹ 'B.E.L.'—p. 148. 8th Report of B.F.B.S., p. 102, and Appendix pp. 35, 36.

² 'B.E.L.'—pp. 143, 144. Paterson's handwritten Journal contains the unexpurgated text.

Steinheil, the Governor of Finland, agreed to bring the proposals before the Czar and to ask his sanction to them. It seemed too good to be true. It was also too far away for Paterson in Abo to get a speedy answer from St. Petersburg. He returned, therefore, to Stockholm after again running the gauntlet of British vessels in the Gulf of Bothnia.

On 13th November Tengstrom was able to write to Paterson informing him that the Czar Alexander I had heartily sanctioned all the proposals put forward, permitting the acceptance of the £500 from England and contributing 5000 roubles from his private purse, and giving full permission to form a Bible Society for Finland. Tengstrom favoured the normal quarto format for the Bibles, but asked Paterson for estimates for printing an edition in octavo. General Steinheil also wrote to him introducing him to Baron Nicolai, one of the Czar's representatives in Finland, who was able to give him much information about things in Russia, advising him to go to St. Petersburg and get the Finnish Scriptures printed there. The Czar, like the King of Sweden, was growing restive under the domination of Napoleon—hence his willingness to accept the aid from London against Napoleon's orders. For Paterson, Russia was clearly becoming the next stage of operations. At the end of December, Henderson, who had resumed his pastoral work in Gothenburg, also had the satisfaction of seeing the first Congregational Church in Sweden opened there.¹

The year 1812 was a momentous one in the history of Russia, and also for Paterson in his new sphere of work in that country.

He had great joy on receiving from Thorklein in February a proof of the first sheet of the Icelandic Bible, printed at Copenhagen. Paterson characteristically examined it carefully and, although he only knew Icelandic in so far as it resembled Danish and Swedish, suggested some corrections to Thorklein. Plans were going forward for a further printing of the Icelandic Testament.

In March in Stockholm too he had what he calls "the unspeakable pleasure of seeing my great work for Sweden—the first edition of the Swedish Bible with standing types—completed, and a bound copy presented to the Evangelical Society at the annual meeting on the 17th of the month".² A second edition of the Swedish Bible was put in hand, and with a £200 grant from London was completed by the end of the year.

As soon as the ice began to break up, Paterson set out for Abo and, thanks to his haste, he had one of the most disagreeable, dangerous and

¹ J. H. Glassman—*Ebenezer Henderson*, p. 78. Reference also to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, XIII, p. 267.

² 'B.E.L.'—p. 154.

fatiguing journeys he ever made, but reached Abo safely, after eight days' travelling, on 19th May. He had to go on again next day as Bishop Tengstrom was in the country, but, when they met, Paterson was able to persuade the Bishop of the desirability—even the necessity—of having an octavo size Bible rather than a quarto one—a proposal which was accepted by a general meeting of the friends of the Society.

His plans for the formation of a Russian Bible Society—probably for the Protestant Churches only—were now becoming clearer. He was able on his return to proceed at once to meet with Henderson and Steinkopf. Although Henderson had met Steinkopf and others in London in 1811, this was Paterson's first personal meeting with an official from the Bible Societies. Steinkopf had come to meet Henderson at Gothenburg, and they together met Paterson at Helsingborg. A frank and full discussion followed. A third Scotsman, Robert Pinkerton,¹ was also in touch with Paterson. He had been a missionary of the Scottish Missionary Society in Karass, near the Caspian Sea. He had come to Moscow with his wife and family of four, where he was making a livelihood tutoring noble families in English, and distributing tracts in English and German. He knew of the activities of Paterson and Henderson in Scandinavia, and wrote to Paterson suggesting plans for a Russian Bible Society centred at Moscow, whose aim might be to distribute Scriptures and tracts, to establish schools, to print and distribute Scriptures in Asiatic Russia. Paterson replied to him suggesting a meeting later in the year when he, Paterson, came to Russia, and Pinkerton replied cordially welcoming such a meeting, to share information and make plans together. "Nothing of consequence", he said, "will be done (about a Russian Bible Society) till you come."

Meantime from the meeting in Helsingborg it was agreed that Paterson should proceed to Russia, Henderson to Denmark, and thence to Iceland, while Steinkopf continued his tour by visiting Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

During his return journey to Stockholm Paterson was amused to hear from one of the postilions what an excellent and pious Crown Prince they had got in Bernadotte for he loaded his couriers' carriages with good little books which they had to distribute by hundreds as they crossed the country in their two-horsed carriages. Paterson had used two horses on his way to Helsingborg and soon identified the Government courier!

On reaching Stockholm Paterson, with his wife, made preparations for the move to St. Petersburg. They decided to leave young George, aged only fourteen months, with his Hollinder grandparents till they were able to have a

¹ J. Owen—*The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, Vol. II, 1816, p. 237.

home ready for him in St. Petersburg. The political situation was far from settled: Russia had broken away from the French alliance and the troops in Finland were training for the imminent French attack; it was already being reported that Napoleon's Grand Army was on its way through Germany and Poland to attack Russia. While travelling from Abo to Viborg near the Russian border, Paterson renewed contacts with his Finnish friends in planning for the new Bible Society there. He arrived finally at St. Petersburg for the first time on 5th August 1812.

On his dangerous voyage across the Gulf of Bothnia in May Paterson had had the company of a Mr Morgan, an Englishman who worked in St. Petersburg, and to his home the Patersons made their way. Morgan arranged for Paterson to meet Prince Galitzin, with whom he had already had correspondence leading to the Czar's approval of the formation of a Finnish Bible Society. His first fortnight was taken up in seeing what printing facilities were available in St. Petersburg for printing the Finnish Bible: he soon realised that he would have his hands full in carrying out this project, but that it was not impossible. He discussed with Prince Galitzin the possibility of a visit to Moscow; the Prince was not enthusiastic in view of the weather and still more of the French invasion. The Czar had met Bernadotte, the Crown Prince of Sweden, and secured an assurance of Sweden's neutrality. The Finnish army was thus free to join in the defence of Russia. All work was directed to the war effort.

Paterson determined to meet Pinkerton as quickly as possible, in accordance with the promise he had made in his letters, so on 24th August he set out for Moscow accompanied by his wife. It was indeed a hazardous journey. The Czar, acting perhaps on Bernadotte's advice, was not engaging Napoleon in a great battle, but skirmishing a little, withdrawing in front of the main army, harassing the rear of it and destroying everything that might be of use to the invaders—a scorched earth policy. The Patersons reached Moscow on 2nd September, staying with some other Moravian Brethren, the Schmidt family. One of the family was due to go to St. Petersburg, so the Patersons decided to return with him, after Paterson had had an interview with Pinkerton. Pinkerton knew the Russian character well, but never was able to work along with Paterson—there was an incompatibility of temperament. In the wartime atmosphere of Moscow no constructive planning for the future was possible. The conversations were useful, however, though Paterson remarked at the close, "I certainly returned to St. Petersburg no wiser than when I left it". He also contacted the Governor General of Moscow, and two sisters, the Princesses Metchersky and Galitzin, with whose co-operation Pinkerton was translating several tracts into Russian. Pinkerton and his family accompanied the Princesses when they had to leave Moscow a few days after Paterson's visit. The Patersons and young Schmidt left on 5th September

and arrived after a terrible nine days on the road in St. Petersburg on 13th September, Mrs Paterson, who was pregnant, suffering particularly great inconveniences with the bumping and the excitement. No sooner had they reached St. Petersburg than word came that the French had occupied Moscow, but had found it already a smoking ruin, a fire that lasted nearly ten days. The French advanced a little farther, but lack of supplies and the extreme cold forced them to retire. There were reports of their advancing on St. Petersburg, so that all there had plans ready for flight. In fact, the Patersons were only stopped from moving out by a severe fever which attacked Mrs Paterson.

Paterson, forced to remain in St. Petersburg, set himself with all his energies to work on two projects—the printing of the Finnish Bible and the formation of a Russian Bible Society. For the former, he had to look after the casting of the types by the Russian Academy of Sciences. Only rather poor German letters were available in type for use for the Finnish Scriptures, but Paterson had to use what was available, as there was no-one to cut fresh type in Russia, and in the political situation matrices could not be imported from Germany or Britain. It was a slow task but the printing was proceeding.

With regard to the formation of a Bible Society for Russia, Paterson made remarkably—almost miraculously—rapid progress. Bible Societies of a local nature had already been formed at Reval in 1807, at Dorpat in 1811 and at Riga in 1812 in the Baltic Provinces of Esthonia and Livonia (Latvia), as well as at Moscow. The British and Foreign Bible Society had also been working with the Scottish Missionary Society at Karass, Pinkerton's first sphere of service, and with the Moravian missionaries at Sarepta on the Volga.

Paterson planned to start from St. Petersburg, envisaging a truly Russian Bible Society to serve all the millions of the Czar's peoples.

The dark days of the Napoleonic invasion had been followed by the miraculous deliverance of the people. As in Britain in the days after Dunkirk, the people in Russia felt that God had intervened. The way was thus prepared for the Czar's readiness to assent to the Memorial drawn up by Paterson and the plans submitted by him for the formation of the St. Petersburg Bible Society.

The Memorial had been presented to the Czar on 18th December 1812 by Prince Galitzin.¹ To quote from Paterson's own words: "He read the whole carefully over, and noticing what I had said about our having commenced a translation of the New Testament into the Calmuck language he said to the Prince, 'I am grieved to think that, although the Calmucks are to

¹ 'B.E.L.'—pp. 185-188. Owen—*History of B.F.B.S.*, Vol. II, pp. 243, 244.

have the Scriptures in their language, nothing is proposed to be done for my poor Russians. But let us see', he added, 'how the present plan succeeds; if it is well received we can afterwards have them included in the scheme.' ” The Emperor at once gave his sanction as usual by appending to the Memorial and Plan—"So be it, Alexander." On 14th January the ukase, the official sanction of the Czar, was made public, and a public meeting was called and met on Saturday, 23rd January 1813, at which Mr Popoff, the Secretary-designate, read over the Memorial and the Rules of the Society and the Imperial Ukase permitting the establishment of such a Society. So the St. Petersburg Bible Society was formed. Prince Galitzin was appointed as the first President, Count Kotshuby as the Vice-President, Mr Popoff and Mr Tergenov, the Director of Prince Galitzin's Chancery, as the Secretaries, with Mr Schmidt, the Moravian, as Treasurer. Paterson himself was appointed as the Executive Officer of the Committee.

The new Society got off to a flying start. Subscriptions poured in headed by a contribution from Prince Galitzin. Paterson added the £500 voted by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It got into action very quickly too. An extra printing of Finnish Testaments and Bibles was ordered from the types being used for supplies for Finland. The Committee ordered supplies of the official Slavonic Bible from the only official printers—the Holy Synod in Moscow—for distribution by the Society.

Paterson came up against one difficulty—the presence of the Apocryphal books in the official Slavonic Bible.¹ He had assumed that all the Bibles published or distributed by the Bible Societies would be without the Apocryphal books. But to quote his own words: "I at once saw that if I insisted on leaving these books out I should break up the Society. It was painful to me to yield such a point but I thought it better that the millions of Russia should have the Scriptures according to the rules of their Churches than not at all."

At its second meeting the Committee of the St. Petersburg Bible Society² had declared its object to be "to provide every family and if possible every individual in the Russian Empire with a Bible, that invaluable gift of heaven."

At a meeting of the Edinburgh Bible Society Committee on 15th March 1813³ it was minuted that:

1 'B.E.L.'—pp. 193, 194. The controversy within the Bible Societies about the Apocrypha did not boil up until 1822-1826.

2 Summary of transactions at 2nd meeting of the Committee of the St. Petersburg Bible Society—quoted by J. Owen, *History of B.F.B.S.*, p. 421. (also pp. 413-416).

3 Edinburgh Bible Society Minute Book, Vol. 1, p. 117.

“. . . important intelligence was also communicated from Iceland and Russia. The intelligence particularly read by Mr Aikman from Russia contained in a communication which had arrived this morning was deemed by the Committee so interesting that he was requested to translate it for the benefit of the public and the meeting resolved that it should be printed at the expense of the Society.”

All this success was marred for Paterson by a personal tragedy—the sad death of his wife. She had been far from well during her pregnancy. Her child, a daughter, Catharine, was born on 7th March 1813 but it was too much for Mrs Paterson. She died that evening, and the next day her infant daughter also died. They were buried together in St. Petersburg. Paterson was completely prostrated with grief and with exhaustion. But in time his spirit triumphed.

The Scots joiner from Old Kilpatrick had already done much to revive the Churches and to provide the Scriptures in Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland. Now for fourteen short years, along with his fellow Scots—Henderson and Pinkerton—he was to work in Russia, a country as difficult to enter in those days as it is now, but for these few years doors were opened, and the Russian Bible Society was able to print and distribute nearly 900,000 copies of Scriptures, in no fewer than thirty different languages, and the instigator and executor of this work was John Paterson—“Sanan Lahettilas”—Ambassador of the Word, as Dr Kailo calls him and calls his biography of him.¹

¹ U. Kailo—*Sanan Lahettilas: John Patersonin Elama Ja Työ* (published only in Finnish, by Agricola Seura, Helsinki, 1962).