

John Paterson, Bible Society Pioneer 1776-1855

The Later Years—1813-1855

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I am tempted to begin this paper somewhat irreverently in the words of St Luke: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus". The subject of that treatise as of this is the Rev. John Paterson, D.D., Bible Society Pioneer Extraordinary. Born in Old Kilpatrick in 1776 he became the first pastor of the Congregational Church in Cambuslang. In 1805 he set out with the Rev. Ebenezer Henderson for India but, being delayed in Copenhagen, started working for the Evangelical cause and later for the Bible Societies in Northern Europe—in Denmark, Sweden and Finland; and in 1812 in Russia. There at the end of 1812 Czar Alexander's decree or ukase approved the formation of the St Petersburg Bible Society, which was formed on 23rd January 1813 with Paterson to carry its work into effect. On 7th March 1813 Paterson's wife died in childbirth as a result largely of a terrible winter journey from Moscow to St Petersburg when Napoleon's armies entered the former city. So the former treatise ended on this note of achievement and of personal sorrow. In his work Paterson worked closely with two other Scots—Rev. Ebenezer Henderson from Dunfermline, like himself a Congregational minister, and the Rev. Robert Pinkerton, a former missionary of the Scottish Missionary Society, in the Caucasus area. Both these men appeared frequently in the former treatise and do so again in this second paper. It is interesting to note in passing that the Czar's personal surgeon at the time was another Scotsman, Sir James Wylie, though in Paterson's own accounts of his wife's illness there is no mention of the names of the doctors who tried to save her life.

Since the presentation of the former treatise one new source has come to hand—an English translation by Mrs Sinikka Kurikka of Dr Uriel Kailo's *Sanan Lahettilas: John Patersonin Elama Ja Tyo*, a life of John Paterson in Finnish. The translation is only in a typescript form.¹ This work draws largely however from the same original sources² as were used for the first paper, though from time to time some further details can be found in it drawn from other local sources.

The first year of the St Petersburg Bible Society saw a truly wonderful expansion of its work and of the support it received.

¹ U. Kailo—*Sanan Lahettilas: John Patersonin Elama Ja Tyo*, 1962—English translation hereafter referred to as "Kailo tr. Kurikka".

² J. M. Alexander—*John Paterson, Bible Society Pioneer: the Earlier years*—SCHS Vol. XVII, Part II, 1970. p. 133.

The retreat of the French led many to give thanks to God for their deliverance and, led by one from the Czar himself, contributions poured in for Paterson's work. Paterson found a type cutter and employed him to cut a fount of type to print the Kalmuk Scriptures and later in the year the printing of St Matthew was started. The printing of the Armenian New Testament was also put in hand in St Petersburg. During 1813 the local Bible Societies, already established but somewhat in abeyance owing to the French invasion, were reorganised as Auxiliaries of the St Petersburg Bible Society. In St Petersburg Paterson found himself almost overwhelmed in meeting orders for Scriptures from all over the Russian Empire and in furthering the printing of the Finnish, German and Armenian Scriptures. By the end of the year he was supervising production or preparations for production in ten different languages. The most interesting issue was that of the Slavonic Bible.³ This was the official "Authorised Version" of the Scriptures for the Russian Orthodox church and was printed only by the Holy Synod in Moscow and in Kiev. Distribution could be carried out by any agency, including the Bible Society, but the smallness of the annual supplies and the high costs of the Bibles when produced led Paterson to suggest that the young Bible Society should undertake the production, a proposal to which the Holy Synod agreed—with the result that instead of 400 copies being brought into circulation in a year as many copies now came to be circulated sometimes in a week.

At length, early in 1814, Paterson was able to take a furlough in Britain but on his way through Finland and Sweden he laid the foundations for a Swedish Bible Society to take over the Scripture side of the Swedish Evangelical Society's work, leaving that Society to concentrate on the production and circulation of other Christian literature. He met Henderson at Gothenburg and was delighted to hear from him that the 5,000 copies of the Icelandic Bible had been completed along with a further 5,000 Testaments. Henderson left for Denmark where he was able to see the formation of the Danish Bible Society on 22nd May 1814, and on 6th June he sailed for Iceland taking with him a large supply of the Icelandic Bibles and Testaments.⁴ Paterson proceeded to Britain, landing at Harwich—nearly nine years after his departure from Leith in 1805.

During his furlough Paterson addressed a number of meetings in England then visited his home, his parents in Glasgow, his old congregation in Cambuslang, and his birthplace, Old Kilpatrick.

³ J. Paterson (edited with an introductory "Memoir of the Author" by W. L. Alexander) *The Book for Every Land*, 1857, p. 233. (hereafter referred to as "B.E.L.").

⁴ "B.E.L.", p. 225. Henderson has given a full account of his stay in Iceland in *Iceland, the Journal of a Residence in that Island during the years 1814 and 1815*, published in 1818.

He studied stereotype printing with a view to using this method of printing in Russia. He encouraged the revivification of the Scottish Missionary Society, leading to their expanding work in Russia, and also persuaded the London Missionary Society to open up work among the Buriats near the Mongolian borders of Russia. The Czar also paid a visit to England at this time; the Czar's meetings with members of the Society of Friends and with leading Congregational churchmen did have some repercussions later in Russia in which Paterson was involved. Before leaving London Paterson received from the Rev. George Greig, minister of Crown Court Church in London, a letter to be carried to a Miss Jane Greig in St Petersburg, about whom more will appear later. Miss Greig was the daughter of Admiral Samuel Greig, a Scotsman who had become Admiral of all the Russias, one of many Scots soldiers and sailors who served prominently in continental armies and navies. On his death Miss Greig came to England where she was converted to a strong Christian faith, but returning later to Russia she looked after her brother Alexis Greig, who was an Admiral in the Czar's navy. She found the company which her brother kept was very unsatisfactory for a young Christian and she found the contacts with Paterson which followed on the delivery of the letter to be a real source of comfort and guidance. They became interested in one another in other respects for Paterson wrote in his diary in 1815, "Miss Greig had so far gained my affections by her amiable and Christian conduct that I felt it my duty to make proposals of marriage to her . . . and received a favourable answer", but when Admiral Alexis Greig heard of it he forbade all further contacts. He was transferred however to the Black Sea fleet. Miss Jane Greig left Russia for England to look after another brother in Devon, Charles Greig, who was dying of consumption but the correspondence between her and Paterson continued.

Paterson returned by way of Hamburg and Lubeck, forming Bible Societies in both cities, and thence through Denmark, Sweden and Finland. He was too late for the first Annual General Meeting of the St Petersburg Bible Society. A further ukase had been proclaimed which changed the young Society's name to the Russian Bible Society, to include in the sphere of its operations all the inhabitants of Russia, of every religious denomination, whether Christian, Mohammedan or heathen.

Back at St Petersburg Paterson again undertook the management of the Russian Bible Society, superintending the warehouse or depository and also the production of the various editions of the Scriptures passing through the press. The British Ambassador to Persia visited St Petersburg bringing with him the manuscript of the New Testament in Persian translated by Henry Martyn, the famous missionary to the Muslims and the Society undertook its publication. An edition was undertaken also of de Sacy's version of the New Testament in French, the language which was more

used by the upper classes in Russia, better liked and more easily understood than the old Slavonic. Arrangements were made with the Archbishop of Georgia for printing an edition of the Georgian New Testament in the church characters by Pinkerton at Moscow.

By the beginning of 1815, in the short space of two years, the Russian Society was undertaking the printing of Scriptures in thirteen different languages—Finnish, German, Kalmuk, Dorpat Esthonian, Reval Esthonian, Latvian (or Lettish), Slavonic, Armenian, Persian, French, Georgian, Polish and Samogitian (a dialect of Lithuanian). This was more than was ever done by any other Bible Society within such a short time from its commencement. The Czar lightened the expenses of the Society at this time by granting the Society free postage both on letters and on parcels and also freedom from customs duties. Paterson received welcome reinforcements in the persons of Mr Thomas Rutt and two young assistants to look after the printing operations, and the setting up of the new stereotype printing press with which they had had experience in England, and Rutts' name appears on many of the Russian Society's publications. George Brown, a man whom Paterson described in his diary as "the only pious Englishman in St Petersburg", provided accommodation for Thomas Rutt and his two helpers. According to Paterson, "The Gospel at that time was not preached in the 'English Episcopal Church'";⁵ he started Sunday evening services in Mr Brown's house, and these developed in time till they became the start of the first Independent Church in St Petersburg.

Paterson was also instrumental in assisting the resettlement of some Cossacks from Finland who belonged to a sect, the Duchobortsky, similar in many ways to the Quakers, on lands on the Sea of Azov, and in gaining for them freedom of worship.

Early in 1816 a most important step was taken. The Czar called for a translation of the New Testament to be made from the Original Greek into modern Russian for the use of all classes of his subjects. The translation was to be made under the direction of the Holy Synod and the new Metropolitan Michael was very enthusiastic on the translation.

With the continuing expansion of the work more accommodation was essential and the Czar again showed his support in granting a five-storey house in the Taurida Palace. This became the headquarters of the Russian Bible Society after some restoration and a new printing office was erected in the adjoining grounds. Accommodation for Paterson and his staff as well as for the offices of the Bible Society was thus provided.⁶

⁵ "B.E.L.", p. 239.

⁶ "B.E.L.", p. 257, quoted in the 13th Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), published 1817.

The development of the press at the new Bible House occupied much of Paterson's time over the 1816/1817 winter and Henderson's presence made it possible for Paterson to visit England again. He travelled by sledge through Finland and Sweden. While in England on 19th April 1817 he married his second wife, Miss Jane Greig, with whom he had been in correspondence for some time. He and his wife returned in June to St Petersburg visiting Sweden and Finland en route. In St Petersburg Paterson met a fellow-student from Glasgow University, Mr Glen, who had been appointed by the Scottish Missionary Society to minister to the Persian community at Astrakhan, and also Mr and Mrs Rahmn, who had been appointed by the London Missionary Society to work with the Rev. and Mrs Stallybrass among the Mongolians at Irkutsk in Siberia;⁷ these contacts and others extended the influence of the Russian Bible Society still farther afield. Meantime at the end of 1817 Paterson was constituted Resident for the British and Foreign Bible Society at St Petersburg, with Pinkerton appointed to travel around Poland, Russia, Moldavia and the Crimea, and Henderson to make his headquarters at Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, Paterson got the following letter from one of his oldest continental friends, Archbishop Tengstrom.

"Abo, 1st November 1817

"I hasten to inform you, with much joy and satisfaction, that His Imperial Majesty has been pleased in connection with the festival of joy we now celebrate to confer on you the degree of Doctor of Theology, along with many of the Professors of the University here and Pastors in this See, as also our good friend, Secretary Beck. The Emperor mentions particularly your services in connection with our Bible Society as the reason of his remembrance of you on this occasion: and I with heart and soul say 'Amen' to this. I wish you joy of this new honour! May you long enjoy it for the welfare of religion and the prosperity of the church!"⁸

Paterson replied declining the honour, partly because of a doubt about the rightness for a Christian minister to hold such titles as "Doctor", partly because of a sense of unworthiness. Tengstrom replied to him on 6th December 1817. "Doctor Paterson in his last letter has asked me how it was possible he should be a Doctor of Theology in our University. This question is of easy solution. He who has merited the honour has a right to it. The Emperor, the University, the whole land have borne testimony to the former—viz., that you have deserved it—the conclusion follows of itself,

⁷ T. S. Henderson—*Memoir of the Rev. E. Henderson, D.D., Ph.D.*, 1859, p. 260 (footnote). Rahmn had been a Swedish Artillery Chaplain at Gothenburg.

⁸ "B.E.L.", pp. xxii-xxiii.

namely, that you have a right to it. He who in bygone times possessed the theological degree was always denominated 'Doctor of the Holy Scriptures'. So the Finlanders generally call me even to this day. We are doing honour to the memory of Luther who 300 years ago opened the Scriptures to the common people by translating them into the vulgar tongue. So we ought at the same time to honour the individual who has a second time given the Bible to Finland."⁹ Paterson then accepted the honour and wrote to tell Henderson of it, asking him to let it be as little known as possible. Henderson was already reading of it in the newspapers.

The year 1818 was a less spectacular year; on 4th November a daughter, Jean, was born, who later became Mrs Edward Baxter of Kincaldrum. She was baptised by the Rev. William Swan of the London Missionary Society in the Patersons' drawing room in December. It was a year in which, as Paterson himself said, much was done for the propagation of the Gospel in Russia and much more in the way of preparation for its propagation in the coming years. The first printed sheets of the Russian New Testament appeared, and school development plans in which Paterson was also concerned, provided an even wider use of the completed work.

It has already been mentioned that when the Czar visited England in June 1814 he met with members of the Society of Friends. William Allen, in particular, spoke to him about popular education. As a result Allen and Stephen Grellet came to Russia in 1818, joining two other Quakers, the brothers Walter and John Venning, who were already there. With the help of Prince Galitzin they visited schools, prisons and hospitals. They succeeded in having improvements introduced in prison conditions with regular visitations of prisoners, Venning being particularly concerned in this. Turning to education they found that the school readers used were based on Voltaire and Cicero. Allen and Grellet had been pioneers in new methods of education in Britain—using a system known by the name of its founder as the Lancaster system. There is a vivid account given by R. C. Scott in *Quakers in Russia*. "Returning to their lodgings (after visiting the schools) Grellet and Allen, with the aid of Dr Paterson and also with the Vennings and William Swan, a young man on his way to Siberia as a missionary, spent the greater part of several nights in cutting up Bibles and pasting together the selected passages to compose a Reader which was purely scriptural in content. A copy of this text-book in English is to be found in the Library in Friends' House. When brought to the attention of the Czar this Reader appealed to him greatly as a means of spreading religious truth throughout his dominions. It was translated into several languages and adopted as the standard text-book for Lancastrian schools in many countries

⁹ "B.E.L.", pp. xxiii-xxiv. The letter is in the archives of the BFBS in London and is quoted by Kailo tr. Kurikka, chap. 16.

besides the Russian Empire".¹⁰ Paterson himself added that "for passages of the New Testament the new translation into modern Russian was used, while for the Old Testament ones a translation had to be specially made—the only Old Testament passages in modern Russian (apart from the Book of Psalms) available for the ordinary Russian speaker for many years."¹¹

On Easter evening 1819 Paterson presented to the Emperor, through Prince Galitzin, the first copy of the Gospels in modern Russian—perhaps the most momentous occasion in his life. The first printing was soon finished and a second edition of 10,000 ordered immediately. Paterson proceeded to make an extensive tour of Finland in the summer months completing in the company of Dr Henderson the organisation of Finland in the cause of the Bible Society by placing efficient Auxiliaries in all the centres of influence.¹² On his return to St Petersburg all his attention was directed to expedite the printing and binding offices to meet the continually growing demand for Scriptures particularly in the Slavonic and modern Russian versions.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Russian Bible Society in 1819 was held in the magnificent rotunda situated in the centre of the Taurida Palace. From pictures it would seem that the Taurida Palace, built in 1783-89 for the Czarina Catherine the Great by her great architect, Starov, had a magnificent colonnade with a rotunda modelled on that of the Pantheon in Rome. Strangely enough, nearly a century later in 1917 this same Palace became the seat of the government during the Revolution. "The Duma (Parliament) refused to obey the Tzar's dissolution ukase. It continued meeting in the Taurida Palace".¹³ "The Taurida Palace seemed to be the centre of whatever authority remained in the Capital of Russia".¹⁴

The developments in prison welfare under Walter Venning produced an unexpected calamity. On 3rd January 1820 Henderson wrote to the British and Foreign Bible Society in London: "I am sorry to inform you that Mrs Paterson is dangerously ill of the typhus fever . . . She had just commenced a new and most useful career as a member of the Ladies' Committee for visiting prisons and there is reason to think she caught the seeds of her present sickness in performing the benevolent duties of that station".¹⁵ Dr Galloway, the most eminent physician in St Petersburg, was called in after Mrs Paterson had objected to one who had attended

¹⁰ R. C. Scott—*Quakers in Russia*, 1964. p. 89.

¹¹ "B.E.L.", p. 311.

¹² Kailo, tr. Kurikka, chap. 17. Kailo records that this was his longest and also his last visit to Finland and quotes some of Paterson's vivid descriptions of the country.

¹³ J. S. Martin (ed), *The Picture History of Russia*, 1945, p. 192.

¹⁴ W. B. Walsh, *Russia and the Soviet Union, a Modern History* 1958, p. 375.

¹⁵ Letter in archives of BFBS.

her father in his last illness, but neither he nor Dr Leighton, their family doctor, was able to do anything. Mrs Paterson died on 19th January 1820 and was buried beside the first Mrs Paterson and her infant daughter in the Moravian Church cemetery in St Petersburg.

This time however Paterson was more fortunate in his companions. Rev. Ebenezer Henderson had been a bachelor during his interesting sojourn in Iceland in 1814 and 1815, but when Paterson had been in England in 1818 he had met a Miss Kennion and when he and Henderson were together in St Petersburg in 1816-17 Paterson had encouraged his friend to open a correspondence with her. Henderson visited her when on furlough in England in 1818; they became engaged in March of that year and married in May.¹⁶ Although the British and Foreign Bible Society had given Henderson his new headquarters at Astrakhan (with his "bishoprick" extending as far as Tibet), he and his bride came first to St Petersburg where he worked along with Paterson all through 1818. In March 1819 a daughter was born to whom they gave the unusual name "Thulia" to remind them of Henderson's years in "Ultima Thule", the name Pliny gave long ago to Iceland. Henderson visited Sweden in 1819 and proposed to go on to Norway, but a fall from his gig when the horse bolted resulted in a dislocated shoulder. He like his friend had been dubbed "Doctor", for the University of Kiel had conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor in Philosophy in 1816. He began to take up the study of Eastern languages. They lived close to the new Bible Society offices but on Mrs Paterson's death moved in beside Paterson and his motherless bairns—George, who had been staying with his father and stepmother since their return from Britain, and baby Jean, who was nearly of the same age as Thulia. Paterson was overwhelmed with grief and a complete change was essential for him. He left baby Jean with the Hendersons and took George with him to England. There he placed him in a boarding school at Harpenden near St Albans. A full tour of speaking was arranged for him including a special meeting of friends of the Glasgow Bible Society in the Trades Hall and an extra meeting of the Edinburgh Bible Society—reports of Christian activity in Russia were as interesting to a large circle of the Christian public as they are today. He returned to Russia in September.

Plans were already in hand for a long and extensive tour by Henderson and Paterson in the south of Russia and the regions beyond the Caucasus. They got together the necessary equipment and supplies as well as permits and letters of recommendation to both ecclesiastical and lay authorities in the twenty provinces through which they were to travel. On this tour the two

¹⁶ T. S. Henderson, *op. cit.* p. 229. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. John Owen, clerical secretary of the BFBS.

friends embarked on 14th March 1821.¹⁷ They made for Moscow where they attended a meeting of the Moscow Bible Society where the Metropolitan Seraphim of Moscow gave a moving address. Along with the Metropolitan Michael of St Petersburg and Philaret the Archbishop of Tver, Seraphim was responsible for new translation still in process of completion of the Bible in modern Russian. At this time he was a keen supporter of the Bible Society cause though before long when he succeeded Michael in St Petersburg he seemed to Paterson to turn around completely.

In Moscow Paterson and Henderson were each granted certificates of membership of the Society of Natural Curiosities—a strange-sounding name for a learned society! After spending a month in Moscow (Dr Pinkerton was at this time on furlough in Britain), although the weather was still more wintry than expected, the travellers moved southwards first by Tula and Orel and Kursk to Kiev and on to Odessa on the Black Sea from where made a fairly extensive tour of the Crimea. Unfortunately near Taganrog on the Sea of Azov Henderson drank a draught of milk straight from an ice cellar, which brought on a severe attack of malaria; and this fever persisted every third day to the end of the tour. Quinine had not yet been discovered so Paterson treated him with calomel and bark. When Henderson was sufficiently recovered the party proceeded towards Astrakhan visiting the Moravian missionaries at Sarepta on the way including Mr and Mrs Rahmn who had had to move westwards again from Siberia. At Astrakhan they stayed with the missionaries of the Scottish Missionary Society but Henderson had renewed attacks of malaria; letters from St Petersburg and from England also rejoiced their hearts. They set out across the Steppes southward towards Karass, another Scottish Missionary Society station, where they met again with Mr Glen and other old friends who accompanied them to Mozdok at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains. With armed guards to protect them against bandits they proceeded to Vladikavkaz and Nasran where another missionary, Mr Blythe, worked among the Ingush people and where Paterson had a very narrow escape when a hut in which he happened to be suddenly collapsed and slid over a precipice. Following the course of the torrents of the Terek river they came to Kasbek and across the highest point of their journey — nine thousand feet above sea level, when the cold aroused Henderson's malaria again. However they reached Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, on 20th October. There they met with the remnants of a party of German colonists who had left their homeland to cross the

¹⁷ Mr Serov of the Russian Bible Society accompanied them as far as the Crimea. Henderson has given a full account of the journey in *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia*, published in 1826.

Caucasus to meet the Lord at His Second Coming. They did not find Georgia to be a Paradise.

When they were at Tiflis preparing to go forward into Persia letters were received from London sent on by Mrs Henderson from St Petersburg which completely upset their plans. It had been with the approval of the British and Foreign Bible Society that the journey had been embarked upon. It seemed the Committee in London had decided not to await the result of their investigations. Paterson and Henderson felt that their work had been undermined, that Pinkerton had supplanted them, and that even their motives for undertaking this dangerous journey were being questioned. Henderson's illness aggravated their distress and disappointment. They decided there was nothing to do but abandon their journey and return at once to St Petersburg and to resign from the British and Foreign Bible Society¹⁸ for although they never received a salary they were accredited agents of that Society. As soon as Henderson was fit to travel again after another bad bout of malaria they proceeded not towards Persia but homewards—for Kasbek and through the mountain passes to Mozdok. They sent a letter to the British and Foreign Bible Society in London intimating their separation of the ties between the Society and themselves and their reasons for doing so—the letter ran to seven foolscap pages and caused a great deal of surprise and distress to the Society. They had left their carriage at Karass on their way south and done their travel through the Caucasus on horseback. Paterson narrowly escaped serious injury again when his horse fell on a slippery hillside path—at least a hundred miles from any surgical assistance. At Mozdok they met the Presbyters of the Church of the Spiritual Christians—"Christians of the Bible Society" they had called themselves at first—a group of Evangelical believers who were well versed in their Bibles, similar in their practice to the Quakers in many ways. So on to Astrakhan, Sarepta, Tzaritzin and Moscow where Henderson was treated by Dr Kerr, a doctor from Scotland. Back finally to St Petersburg after eleven months' absence having covered over 6,000 miles.

The joy of their return to their families was clouded over by a number of ominous reports. Following the death of the Metropolitan Michael of St Petersburg, Metropolitan Seraphim of Moscow was appointed in his place and he was soon seen to be no friend of the Bible Society. Henderson's malaria had weakened his physical powers and Paterson began to suffer from the effects

¹⁸ T. S. Henderson, *op. cit.* pp. 264-8. Miss Henderson gives the chief reason for the resignations as the acceptance for publication by the BFBS of a Turkish New Testament translation which Dr Henderson had found to be "interlarded with oriental epithets and human additions". Dr Henderson wrote two outspoken pamphlets on this subject in 1824 and 1825.

of the continued strain of his friend's illness and their relationships with the British and Foreign Bible Society. Blythe, the Scottish missionary to the Ingush, was ordered to leave his station as the Greek Church was said to be working among those people so the Scottish Missionary Society's services were not desired there. The missionary leaders had expressed their fears of such developments to Paterson and Henderson when they had visited their stations: events were moving swiftly against him. Their resignations were finally accepted by the British and Foreign Bible Society on 20th June 1822 after several approaches had been made to them to reconsider their decision.

The Russian Bible Society itself however expressed its confidence in Paterson and Henderson and in spite of their separation from the British and Foreign Bible Society Prince Galitzin most sincerely asked them to remain in the employment of the Russian Bible Society, Paterson as the general executive of the Society, Henderson as editor of the Bibles being or to be printed—particularly those in oriental languages. These appointments they accepted so were able to postpone their return to Britain and other employment. They each received an annual salary of 6,000 roubles which was more than they had ever received from any other Society.

The Czar was however being pressed by the more conservative and reactionary elements in the Russian Church leadership. Prince Galitzin was a first target of their hatred and jealousy; with the help of Prince Galitzin the Czar still resisted those who desired the suppression of the Bible Society.

Mr Popoff, who had from the beginning been the Secretary of the Bible Society, was in a bad state of health and it was suggested that Harrogate water might help him. Paterson was asked to accompany him. So Henderson was left in charge at St Petersburg for the six months Paterson and Popoff were away. They visited many Bible Societies on their way—Dorpat, Riga, Mitau, Reval, Berlin and Paris. They were in London for the Annual Meeting in May of the British and Foreign Bible Society when Popoff was the lion of the meeting. George Paterson joined his father and Mr Popoff during his holidays and the programme included three weeks of sea-bathing at Portobello and visits to Paterson's parents, brothers and sister in Glasgow, and a meeting of the London Missionary Society in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh. They returned, sailing from Leith on 1st September 1823 and Paterson was delighted to find that Henderson had carried on everything satisfactorily during his absence in spite of the growing opposition of the Greek Church. The attacks on Prince Galitzin came through attacks on Lindel and Gossner, two Roman Catholic priests from Germany who had come to Russia and ministered very effectively to congregations including many Evangelicals. Lindel had begun in St Petersburg and then

moved to Bessarabia; although he was a Catholic priest he had a "niece" with him in St Petersburg whom he married and by whom he had a son. Perhaps under pressure from Austria the Czar acted and banished Lindel from Russia in November 1823. Gossner had followed Lindel in St Petersburg and was still working on a New Testament commentary with the help of Popoff but he too was under suspicion.¹⁹ It was being hinted strongly that no foreigners should be preparing commentaries for the Russian people and that no "heretics" should be doing so for the Greek Church.

On 19th November 1824 a different kind of catastrophe occurred—a hurricane blew up from the south-west.²⁰ The water in St Catherine's Canal which ran just in front of the Taurida Palace was seen to be raising rapidly. Presently it overflowed all the banks of the canal. Soon there was four feet of water in the streets which undermined the garden wall and broke into the house. Most of the stocks of Scriptures were on the ground floor and many thousands were ruined and damaged. No lives however were lost at the Bible Society but one result was that the Czar began to wonder if this was a punishment from God and the reactionary elements in State and Church made use of this sorrow to their own advantage. In August 1825 the Czar went to Taganrog where the Empress had gone for her health earlier in the year but he caught typhus while visiting the Crimea and died at Taganrog on 19th November 1825. He was succeeded by Nicholas I who was not nearly so sympathetic to the Bible Society as Alexander had been. The Henderson home suffered quite severely in the floods and he lost many of his books and valuable papers and letters. On the domestic side the faithful nurse employed by Mrs Henderson to look after Jean died of consumption early in 1824 but another pious lady, Mrs Bazancourt, took her place. Jean herself was ill of fever during that summer but recovered much to the relief of Paterson. Paterson had earlier had word that his father had died on 8th April aged 80 and six weeks later his mother also passed away at the age of 82.

A bigger change for Paterson was the departure of the Hendersons. The general feeling of uncertainty for the future led Henderson to his decision to return to Britain and to look for evangelical work there. He left St Petersburg at the end of May and arrived in England where he discovered that the clerk who worked for Mr Reyner, who had looked after the financial affairs of so many of those working with the Bible Society, had

¹⁹ J. Zacek in *The Russian Bible Society and the Russian Orthodox Church* mentions that Gossner was publishing a Russian translation of his book, "Geist des Lebens und der Lehr Jesus Christi" and that the opposition got hold of some proof-sheets and got it condemned, and that Gossner was expelled from Russia.

²⁰ "B.E.L.", pp. 386-91. T. S. Henderson, *op. cit.* pp. 292-3.

absconded with £50,000, most of it obtained through forgery, and Mr Henderson's savings were among the moneys lost. So he found himself penniless but early the following year (1826) he was appointed to succeed another old colleague, Dr Bogue, as tutor in the Missionary Seminary at Gosport at which in particular the missionaries of the London Missionary Society received their training. He was appointed temporarily at first but the appointment was confirmed as a permanent one.²¹

Before Jane Paterson died one of her dying requests to her husband was that when their daughter Jean reached the age of eight he should take her to Britain and place her in a good Christian home so that she would be brought up and educated in such a home. Accordingly Paterson drew up a petition for permission to spend six months in Britain for this purpose. Permission was easily granted because on 12th April 1826 a ukase had been issued suspending for the present the operations of the Russian Bible Society. As usual the petition was presented to the Czar (now Czar Nicholas I) by Prince Galitzin and granted to the fullest extent—on the understanding that Paterson would be returning for at least a short time and that his apartments be kept reserved for him during his official absence.

George was by now ready to enter the University as a medical student in Edinburgh. So Paterson moved north to Edinburgh for the autumn term of 1826. While in Scotland he made a long tour in the west, north and east, visiting and preaching in the Congregational churches of many of his old friends and fellow-students—Campbell in Oban, Kennedy in Inverness, James Dewar in Nairn, Martin in Forres, McNicol in Elgin, Munro in Knockando, Thomson and Penman in Aberdeen, and Russell in Dundee. While he was in Glasgow he got word from John Venning, one of his Quaker friends in St Petersburg, telling him that by a further ukase from the Czar as from 15th August 1826 the Bible House, its books, capital and all other possessions had been delivered into the complete charge of the Holy Synod; though there had been an amendment to the ukase according to which the sales of the Scriptures in stock were to be continued as before. This made Paterson's future road clear. He did not send Jean to a boarding school but decided to start her education at home with a governess and made plans for making his home in Edinburgh.

He had however to return to St Petersburg to wind up his own affairs there. He had foreseen the coming storm and during the preceding years he had built up a large supply of Scriptures in

²¹ T. S. Henderson, *op. cit.* p. 306. The Seminary moved, later in 1826, to Huxton College, London. Dr Henderson moved to Highbury Theological College in 1830. In 1840 received a D.D. from Amherst College and also from the University of Copenhagen. He retired in 1850. He died in London in 1858.

St Petersburg, about 200,000 in all, which would serve as a supply for years to come. When he arrived in St Petersburg he went to see the Metropolitan Seraphim but was told that there was no place for him in the Bible House under the Holy Synod and that his employment ceased on 1st December when his six months' leave of absence expired.

Paterson had therefore to bring the matter before the Czar through Prince Galitzin. He reminded the Prince of all that had come to the people of Russia through the Russian Bible Society from the British and Foreign Bible Society—nearly £17,000 in cash and £2,000 in Scriptures, as well as £3,000 for Finland—over £20,000—in addition to help from other Churches and Christian organisations in Britain. As the Metropolitan had told him his services would not be required by the Holy Synod after 1st December 1826 he requested that he should be allowed to remain in his apartment in the Bible House until he could depart for Britain—travel by sea was not possible while the Baltic Sea was frozen—and also asked for a pension for the rest of his life. The Czar was astonished to learn that Paterson's services were not welcomed by the Metropolitan; on being told that the Synod regarded Paterson as a heretic he became quite annoyed but eventually agreed to grant Paterson's request, with a pension for life of the same amount as his salary on condition that he would return whenever the Czar might call for his services. This generous pension was payable to him wherever he might be through the Holy Synod which was now responsible for the work of the Bible Society in Russia. Paterson was at liberty to remain in Russia if he so desired and was granted permission to remain in his Bible House apartment till he found it suitable to leave. Paterson also secured pensions for his assistants and his bookbinders who were all now thrown out of employment. He left behind him the graves of his two wives and his infant daughter in the Sarepta House grounds.

As previously arranged he settled in Edinburgh on his return to Britain in a flat at 10 Elm Row. Although Mrs Bazancourt, Jean's nursery maid, now her governess, was willing to continue to stay with the family Paterson felt her presence might give rise to gossip and invited his sister Bethiah's daughter, Margaret Cameron, to take up her home with them. This she did and remained with the family till her marriage about 1836 to one George McMillan.

There were three movements to which Paterson was to dedicate his service during his remaining years in Scotland—the British and Foreign Bible Society, the London Missionary Society and the Congregational Churches — both individual congregations and the Congregational Union of Scotland.

To start with, the Bible Society. Paterson was instrumental in calling a meeting to form an Auxiliary of the British and Foreign

Bible Society in Edinburgh—much to the annoyance of many of his old friends, including Robert Haldane and Dr Thomson of the Edinburgh Bible Society. Paterson himself was appointed Secretary and worked from his home at 10 Elm Row. This involved him in raising funds for the London Society in Edinburgh and in arranging meetings in the interests of the Society. He was also invited himself to speak for the Society on short tours in England and one in Ireland. The contribution of the Edinburgh Auxiliary was by no means negligible and continued so until Paterson's departure to Dundee in 1850 and his death in 1855. The Auxiliary was happy to unite with other British and Foreign Bible Society Auxiliaries in Scotland and with Scottish local Bible Societies, including the Edinburgh Bible Society, in 1861 to form the National Bible Society of Scotland.

Paterson's chief contribution to the work of the Bible Society in these years was a tour which he undertook for them in Norway and Sweden in 1832. There had been no Agents' visits to Norway since 1826 and while the work of the Swedish Bible Society was generally flourishing further consideration of the future was very desirable.²² An invitation was extended to Paterson to make a visit. He knew he had to abide strictly by the British and Foreign Bible Society decision of 1826 with regard to being sure that no British money went to finance the printing or the circulation of Bibles containing the Apocrypha²³ but he was sure there were other lines in which aid could be given.

He went first to Gothenburg before he went to Stockholm. In Westeras he found 10,000 families with no Bibles of whom 6,000 could not afford to pay for one. Sweden had just been celebrating the Millenary of the arriving of Christianity in Scandinavia and the 300th anniversary of the Reformation in Sweden itself in 1831—so the time for a new step forward was ripe. Collections had been taken to ensure that everyone should receive a Bible on the occasion of their first communion but the load fell on the Swedish Bible Society and took up so much of the funds which were locally available that there was little left for plans to meet the needs of Westeras or for Norway.

In Norway, although it had been part of Denmark till 1814, and the Bible used was Danish, there was growing up a demand for a Norwegian Bible as distinct from the Danish one and translation work was in progress. Here too there were not sufficient local funds or stocks for free distribution. In Bergen in particular there was need for Scriptures in Danish, Spanish, French, Dutch, Italian and English, for at least 200 fishing vessels from

²² BFBS 28th Annual Report, 1832, pp. xlii-xliii.

²³ W. C. Somerville. *From Iona to Dunblane*, 1948, pp. 21-23. The Apocrypha Controversy can be studied in the voluminous, and often vitriolic, pamphlets published by the supporters of the BFBS and of the Edinburgh Bible Society respectively.

the north visit the port twice a year. He also visited Christiania (Oslo), Dronthin (Trondjem), Stavanger and Christiansand. In all he travelled 4,500 miles and met with all but four of the Bishops in the two countries. Agencies of the British and Foreign Bible Society were needed in the five largest cities in Norway which he had visited, as the British and Foreign Bible Society would be able to meet the great need for Bibles at reduced prices or free. Bibles with the Apocrypha would continue to come from Copenhagen and Stockholm. This, his last visit to Scandinavia, was a great personal success and the source of a new combined operation to meet the needs of the peoples for the Bible in this part of Europe.²⁴

In 1837 Paterson received a request from the British and Foreign Bible Society for advice on the production for the Society of Scriptures for the blind which were being prepared in Edinburgh by James Gall. Gall used a system of embossed letters which the blind person could read by touch.²⁵ In 1834 he had introduced a new character founded upon the ordinary Roman capitals but with angles in lieu of curves. This system was later modified by Bailie John Alston of Glasgow and then superseded first by that of William Moon in the 1850s and finally by Braille, but in 1837 it was a pioneering system and Paterson and the Bible Society were in the vanguard of the experiment.

In 1837 also the famine in the Highlands compelled the Bible Society to think more about the needs of their fellow Scotsfolk in the north. The Society in Scotland for Promoting Christian Knowledge had produced Gaelic Scriptures since 1767 but partly owing to poor communications, partly owing to poverty, the supplies of Gaelic Bibles in the hands of Gaelic speakers was very scanty. At this time Hugh Macdonald, schoolmaster of Dervaig in Mull, reported that for the population of 2,100 in his parish there were not more than 100 Bibles, seventy-five of which had just been received through a colporteur. He wrote of the needs of the semi-literate at home as compared with those overseas. The same story came from others—from Avoch and from Islay for example. The forty families in Canna had only one Bible till a grant came to them in 1837. Mr I. W. Lillingston in particular outlined the needs of those around Kyle of Lochalsh, an area of special need following the Clearances.

Paterson took up with enthusiasm the need for tracts for distribution among the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders especially in the famine years of 1837-38. But the situation is described by John Prebble in the following words: "The harvest failure of 1836 brought a terrible famine to the Highlands. There was hunger all over the British Isles from the Channel to the Orkneys but in the

²⁴ Kailo tr. Kurikka, chap. 18.

²⁵ W. C. Somerville, *op. cit.* p. 24.

mountains of Scotland it was worse than even they had ever known (or were to know till ten years later). Half the population of Skye, for example, was 'destitute and starving. . . . Destitution had followed eviction, and now famine made the trinity'.²⁶

While the first need of these people was for physical nourishment, food for their minds was also needed. Paterson therefore made a brief tour of the Highlands—to Balmacara and to Tobermory with a visit to Skye in between. He met with some of the shepherds who had moved up from the Lowlands when the landowners introduced sheep on to their estates; they were English speakers and Paterson conducted a service for them. The greatest needs however were those of the Gaelic speakers. Supplies of Bibles and Testaments were made available to meet the needs of the destitute but supplies of Gaelic tracts were non-existent. Paterson arranged with the Glasgow Tract Society to take the matter up and to produce and make available suitable tracts in Gaelic. Supplies of similar Scriptures and tracts were also required for some of the Highlanders who had already emigrated—particularly those in Cape Breton Island.

In Russia Paterson had been associated with three Missionary Societies—the Moravians, the Scottish Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society. Apart from correspondence and occasional visitors he had little to do with the first-named after his return to Britain. The Scottish Missionary Society found their work in the Caucasus, which had already been attacked while Paterson was in Russia, soon had to be abandoned through the reactionary pressure on the Czar. There was however a happy reunion of the members of the Scottish Missionary Society staff from Russia in Paterson's home at Elm Row in 1828—on the Old New Year's Day which was observed in Russia—a reunion which repeated itself whenever former missionaries were in Edinburgh as Elm Row became their natural gathering point.

With the London Missionary Society he had the closest connection right from the time of his return to Edinburgh in 1827. He was responsible that year for arranging a tour for Dr Philip and Mr Townley as representatives of that Missionary Society. The same happened in 1828 and 1829 when Paterson also himself formed one of the deputation parties to Ireland and to the north of England—tours lasting two months which often left him quite exhausted. As the Scottish Secretary in an honorary capacity he was able in 1829 to remit £1,000 from Scotland to the Mission Headquarters in London.

It was not surprising therefore when a successor to Mr Orme was wanted as Foreign Secretary of the Society that Paterson was invited to consider taking the post. He agreed to go to London for an experimental period of three months in 1830 before Mr

²⁶ J. Prebble—*The Highland Clearances*, 1969, p. 163.

Orme left but he did not feel happy with the Board of the Society which had, he wrote in his diary, "too many ministers on it", and when first his son George took ill, necessitating for Paterson a return to Scotland, and when the invitation had been received from the British and Foreign Bible Society to visit Norway and Sweden on their behalf, he felt that the Foreign Secretary post was not for him and finally turned down the invitation even although they offered to keep the post open for him until after his tour of Scandinavia. He continued however to act as Scottish Secretary for many years.

In July 1827 shortly after his arrival in Edinburgh Paterson was advised to go to St Ronan's Well at Innerleithen to drink the sulphurous water there for his health. He was joined there by George when his vacation came round and by Jean and her governess, Mrs Bazancourt. In 1850, Paterson wrote in his diary about their visit in 1827: "As they had no Gospel at that time in the place I thought it a good opportunity of holding forth the Word of Life to the inhabitants, and the visitors, and was well attended. This, I believe, was the commencement of preaching by the Congregational Union in that village which has been kept up more or less regularly ever since, particularly in the summer season, and laid the foundation of a small Independent Church there which has now a Pastor settled over them". He was preaching there again in 1828 when he went for the waters after his exhausting tour of Northern England, and again in 1835 and finally in 1847. The minister of the Parish Church in 1827 and 1828 would be the Rev. James Pate, then aged 80, and along with his successor, the Rev. Patrick Booth, he wrote in the New Statistical account: "The dissenters in this parish are very few, fewer perhaps than in any parish of the same size in this part of the country".²⁷ This was in March 1834. Dr Harry Escott in his *History of Scottish Congregationalism* has recorded: "Innerleithen Congregational Church was formally constituted in 1848 from a preaching station that appears to have existed for some years. William Dobson became pastor. A Church was opened for public worship in March 1848".²⁸ Paterson's return visit in the summer of 1847 may well have helped to bring this Church to birth. It was closed in 1961 when it is hoped Paterson would have agreed the Gospel was being preached in the united Parish Church.

Another Congregational Church in which he gave signal service was that at Greenock where around 1830 there was a great awakening of interest. Wherever he stayed his services were at the call of the Congregational Church. The three winters after his return from the Continent (1836-39) he spent in Dundee and was able to preach with great acceptance both in Ward Chapel and in

²⁷ New Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. III, 1845. Peeblesshire, p. 34.

²⁸ H. Escott—*A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, 1960. p. 333.

the Rev. R. Lang's Church²⁹ In 1828 he had the honour of being invited to preach the annual sermon at the meeting of the Scottish Congregational Union held in Glasgow at the end of April. In 1829 he made a tour in the north of Scotland speaking on behalf of the Congregational Theological Academy during the course of which he visited every Independent church north of Dundee.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the Congregational cause in Scotland was in connection with his setting up of a Free Fund for the Union. Dr W. Lindsay Alexander, who was himself a Congregational minister, wrote of this in the memoir with which he introduced Paterson's own story: "As Chairman of the Committee of the Union for several years, his influence was felt for good through every part of the denomination. One important service which he rendered to it will never be forgotten. By his device, a scheme was formed, and by his persevering efforts greatly futhered to a successful issue, by which an oppressive burden of debt resting on the chapels of the Scottish Congregationalists was removed. A debt of £20,000 was paid off by the help of a central fund, not exceeding £7,000. The surplus was raised by the churches themselves, and to this they were stimulated chiefly by the assiduous efforts by means of correspondence and personal visits, of Dr Paterson"³⁰

One of the main reasons for Paterson's settling in Scotland was to enable his family to have a home. With his niece acting as housekeeper it was a home where the family and visitors were alike welcome. Mrs Bazancourt continued as Jean's governess till her death in 1833 although she was no longer staying in the home. Jean then went to a school near London with Thulia Henderson, whose father had by then moved to London.

George completed his medical training in 1835 and that winter Paterson with George and Jean did a continental tour which lasted exactly a year and a day. They visited Hamburg and Berlin, Paris, Geneva and the Rhine. Thulia Henderson joined the party in Paris. On their return to London they met Admiral Sir Alexis Greig and Lady Greig who had been visiting King William IV, an old naval friend of the Admiral's. They returned home in November 1836. Paterson wrote a full account of the tour for the *Scottish Congregationalist* magazine serialised over several issues in 1836 and 1837.

George, now a doctor, settled in Edinburgh at 12 Northumberland Street in 1837. He married in November 1841 the sister of Doctor Balfour, Professor of Botany at Glasgow University, and in 1842 they set up house at 11 Salisbury Place, Edinburgh. Later in 1849 he took up an appointment in Tiverton in Devon where

²⁹ "B.E.L.", p. xxix. Also W. Norrie—*Dundee Celebrities*, 1873, p. 164. H. Escott (*op cit.* p. 349), says Robert Lang was minister of Ward Chapel, 1849-53.

³⁰ "B.E.L.", p. xxvii.

his father spent the winter of 1850-51, and derived much pleasure from walks and drives amid the beautiful scenery of North Devon.

Special visitors to Paterson's home in the early 1840s included his first missionary colleague, the Rev. Archibald Maclay, now of New York. He had joined the American Baptist Church and a Bible Society of that Church wanted to produce a special Bible for Baptists in which wherever the word "baptise" occurred it would be rendered by "immerse". "His violence on this point, and his thorough Americanism", commented Paterson, "sadly marred the pleasure of our intercourse". Another interesting piece of news about that time came from the Rev. Robert Moffat who had been one of the first missionaries of the London Missionary Society that Paterson had had to receive as their representative to tour Scotland. He referred to the school reader drawn up by Paterson with Allen and others in St Petersburg, consisting of Scripture passages suitably arranged, and told Paterson that the same material was being translated into Sechuana for use in the schools of Bechuanaland—a far cry in those days from the northern region of Russia.

After George's departure Paterson's old Dundee friend, Edward Baxter, approached him about the possibility of his son lodging with him during the two years of his studies at Edinburgh University. A consequence of this request was that Jean Paterson became engaged to Edward Baxter himself and on 24th April 1844 they were married, the Rev. W. L. Alexander conducting the service. She moved across to Dundee; their first child, a daughter, was born the following year, who to their grief died aged two and was buried in Blackness cemetery.

Paterson stayed on in Edinburgh after 1844 but finally in 1850 he was persuaded to move to Dundee to be nearer his daughter. The first winter he spent at Tiverton and the summer he spent largely with his daughter and her family at Kincaldrum. He again visited Germany in 1852 with his friend, Mr W. G. Baxter, but took ill and had to return to Dundee, where he still continued to welcome visitors to his home and to read.

"On the evening of Sabbath, 1st July 1855", his daughter Jean wrote: "he appeared unusually well, listened during part of the evening to an interesting letter from Dr Livingstone, and felt so strong that he consented to lead the family devotions",³¹ but he failed rapidly that week and died peacefully on 6th July 1855 and was buried in a lair he had previously purchased for himself in the (then) new cemetery in Dundee.

³¹ "B.E.L.", pp. xxx-xxx1.