

became most shameful; but owing to the peculiar disposition of the natives, and their suspicions regarding the whole subject matter, it was not easy to correct it. But Mr. Seddon procured the passage of a law prohibiting any person from purchasing land from natives, the colonial government only being excepted; and all transfers of land, owned by natives, made to the government, were required to be under the control of a committee of Maoris, chosen by the natives themselves, for this purpose. Thus the natives were protected, were granted full representation, and were made responsible for results. When all the elements of the matter are considered, the statesmanship embodied in the law will become apparent.

Perceiving the necessity of providing for the relief of sick and injured coal miners, and of the families of such as might meet with fatal accidents, Mr. Seddon procured the passage of a law laying a tax of one per cent per ton on all coal mined in the colony, the proceeds to go to such a relief fund. To insure a just and proper use of the fund, a commission selected by the miners from among their own number, was charged with disbursing it. This law has been productive of admirable results, and has provided needed help to sick and injured coal miners, and to the widows and orphan children of such as have died.

It is a notable fact that during the great panic of 1893, when the evil genius of commercial disaster held sway in different countries, notably in the United States, and while many banks in Australia failed, not a bank in New Zealand succumbed. When Mr. Seddon was asked how this was, he replied, in effect, that he was confident that the banks were really sound provided they could be tidied over for a short time; and to do this he made liberal deposits in them of government funds. Being colonial treasurer he had the power thus to act. He realized that there was some risk in such a course, but he also realized that if the banks of the colony were to be protected from a storm that was sure to wreck some and perhaps many of them, he must act quickly. His promptness, decision, foresight and philanthropy saved the colony from widespread commercial disaster.

From an obscure boy of humble parentage, in a manufacturing town in England, Mr. Seddon has risen, by his native energy and talents, to the positions he holds; and the same laws and principles which have elevated him in New Zealand, would undoubtedly have produced the same effect in a broader field, had Providence so cast his lines. It is a pleasure to note the excellencies of his character, not the least of which is his tenacious friendship for the companions of his boyhood.

AN AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE.

An announcement of interest to the Christian communities of this country is to the effect that what will be known as the American standard Bible is to be published in the latter part of next year. This will be substantially the revised English version, but with material differences. As is well known, when the revised version was being prepared many suggestions of the members of the American committee were only embodied in an appendix, although admitted to be nearer accuracy than the readings retained in the text. The proposition now is to give these a place in the text and to make such other alterations as may seem necessary. The work of revision is being performed gratuitously by American scholars, solely for the purpose, it is stated, of giving to the American pub-

lic a Bible true to the spirit and the letter of the original.

It is a curious fact, not quite satisfactorily accounted for, that the people most interested in a faithful reproduction of the sacred writings in a modern form are slow as a rule to accept any proposed improvements in the version with which they are familiar, even if they are fully aware of the need of corrections. People prefer the text that was prepared centuries ago, in a less scholarly age than our own; the style of the early days of Bible translation is more pleasing to them than modern and more elegant expressions, and as a consequence they prefer King James's version to the revised one, though the latter is regarded as superior in scholarship. It is not easy to account for this, unless it can be assumed that modern languages centuries ago were better suited for religious purposes than they are now, or—which amounts to the same thing—that the development of speech has been so one-sided in a secular direction as to provide no new dress in which to clothe the sacred thought.

There can be no doubt that language in the period of man's history when religion was the dominant element in public and private affairs, naturally assumed a form accordingly. The Hebrew, in its golden age, was capable of expressing the ideas of God-inspired seers. For modern business purposes it would probably be about useless. But its poetry, its word-painting, its power to awaken holy emotions, are unexcelled. It is, by its very characteristics, "sacred." No translation has ever been made that equals the original and those best familiar with it have despaired of rendering it into modern forms to perfection. In the same way, it is reasonable to suppose that in the age of the Reformation and subsequent centuries, when religious thought was predominant, languages were largely moulded accordingly, and this would account for the fact that Luther's Bible translation, for instance, though admittedly inaccurate in many places, is still regarded as a literary marvel and retains its popularity notwithstanding the superior efforts of modern scholars from a scientific point of view. It would also account for the fact that King James's Bible is more popular than the revised version, the result of the best scholarship of our century. And if this view is correct, the American standard Bible, to become popular, must be excellent indeed.

One improvement much needed in a revised edition of the Bible is to render as far as possible the same word in the original by the same English word. This rule is in the authorized version sometimes broken unnecessarily, as when the same word is translated "comforter" and "advocate;" "covenant" and "testament;" "life" and "soul." On the other hand, different words in the original are sometimes rendered by the same word in English. The word "repentance" means both a change of conduct and a change of disposition or mind and is represented by two different words in the New Testament. The word "hell" is a translation of two words, one meaning only the place of the departed spirits without reference to their condition of happiness or misery and the other supposed to refer to the final condition of the unrepentant sinner. Two different words are also translated "temple." One refers only to the sacred place which was the abode of God; the other includes the outer courts where in the days of the religious decline markets were held. Bible translators have also been singularly inconsistent in their rendition of the original words denoting the evil one. In a number of

places they translated "devil" and "devils" where the Scriptures have "demons" or evil spirits. The result is confusion regarding the Bible teachings about the fallen "son of the morning" and the evil influences at work among the children of men.

The various efforts at revised version of the Bible and the results obtained suggest the thought that the Christian world which persists in rejecting the living word of God through His inspired servants and rests only on the written utterances of past ages, of necessity must be deprived of the sure foundations of faith. No scholarship, however profound, can be a substitute for that divine authority by which man is enabled to say to his fellowmen, as the Apostles of old, "Thus saith the Lord."

THE WORK IN NEW JERSEY.

Elder John M. Whitaker, of this city, who recently took his departure on a mission to the Atlantic states, has written from New Brunswick, N. J., under date of Jan. 1, to Elder Franklin D. Richards, enclosing a number of newspaper clippings, and the recipient has kindly handed the letter and enclosures to the "News." The missive names the Elders, seven including its writer, who have their headquarters at New Brunswick, and says the public mind has been much prejudiced by anti-Mormon literature. Two daily papers published in New Brunswick, the Home News, and the Times, have contained, in their news columns, somewhat lengthy accounts of the arrival of the Elders and of their methods and intentions. These articles were written by reporters and are in the main fair. The Home News published a long interview with Elder Whitaker, in which it was evidently the aim of the reporter to be truthful and accurate; and the Times opened its columns for a series of articles written by Elder Whitaker, in explanation and defense of the principles of the Gospel.

So far as their news columns are concerned, both papers seem to have been fair to the verge of generosity to Elder Whitaker and his companions; but editorially they are not so friendly, though neither takes a position of pronounced hostility. The Times of Dec. 17 had the following editorial utterance:

"Whatever may be the ultimate result of the effort of the five Elders of the Mormon Church to establish a mission in this city it is certain that the effort will meet with opposition on the part of the representatives of the established churches in this vicinity. The first gun of the campaign was sounded recently at Bound Brook, when Rev. T. E. Davis, a minister prominent throughout the state by reason of his connection with Christian Endeavor work, hurled a philippic at the Latter-day Saints and their belief. He denounced Joseph Smith, the founder of the religion, as a man who shunned no crime. He painted him as a man of the worst type and declared, like Job of old, that nothing good could come out of so unclean a thing. It will be interesting to hear what the representatives of the religion of Joseph Smith have to say in their own behalf and the Times has arranged with Elder Whitaker for a special article on the subject, which will appear tomorrow. For its own part the Times thinks that we Brunswickers can get along very well without any Mormonism in ours, and it will be very sorry indeed if any local people yield to the arguments of our visitors from Salt Lake City. But the religious convictions of our town are not so weak-kneed and so poorly founded that they cannot resist the fair presentation of a hostile cause."