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JEREMIAH—THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

Jeremiah was a native of Anathoth, a village of Benjamin some three miles north-east of Jerusalem. His father Hilkiyah was a priest, belonging in all probability to the family of Abiathar, who, on being deposed from the high-priesthood by Solomon, had been condemned to retirement within his "own fields" in Anathoth.¹ Jeremiah, accordingly, would have inherited the traditions of an illustrious ancestry, and his early life would have been moulded by the distinctive religious influences of the community to which he belonged. God however had "provided some better thing" for him than to spend his days in serving at the altars of a proscribed and degenerate priesthood. The young son of Hilkiyah had been appointed to the tremendous destiny of being a prophet of the Lord in one of the most testing hours in the history of His chosen people.

It was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, that is, in the year 627 B.C., that Jeremiah received his call to the prophetic office. His ministry extended through the disastrous years which culminated in the tragedy of the Exile, and after that was continued in Egypt, we know not how long. Altogether it lasted for at least well over forty years. While lacking to some extent in the overwhelming splendour which marks the inaugural vision of Isaiah or of Ezekiel, the circumstances of his call have an impressiveness which strikes an even deeper note. Several of these circumstances are so charged with meaning that a true conception of their significance is essential to a right understanding of the prophet's subsequent history.

¹ 1 Kings, ii. 26.

AN "AMERICAN" TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*

"Why should anyone make a new English translation of the Old Testament? With the Authorized Version of King James and the British and American revisions, to say nothing of unofficial renderings, have we not enough?" This question, the editor of this translation, Dr. Powis Smith, who may be assumed to be speaking for his colleagues as well as for himself, tells us in the Preface, may quite fairly be asked. He answers it in the following words: "The only possible basis for a satisfactory answer must be either in a better knowledge of Hebrew than was possible at the time when the earlier translations were made, or in a fuller appreciation of fundamental textual problems, or in a clearer recognition of poetic structures, or in such a change in our own language as would render the language of the older translations more or less unintelligible to the average man of our day. As a matter of fact our answer is to be found in all of these areas."

Since the "American" translation lies finished before us, it would seem to be evident that the reasons just enumerated for the preparation of this new translation must have appeared to Dr. Powis Smith and his colleagues sufficiently cogent to justify the commencement and completion of so laborious and exacting an undertaking as the translation of the Old Testament. Admitting, as we do, that the reasons alleged are the ones which must be established if a new translation is to justify itself, we have two questions to consider: first, whether these reasons while valid in themselves are as cogent as the editor of this new translation believes them to be, that is, whether the increase in our knowledge and the difference in our forms of expression are actually as great as is alleged, and, secondly, whether these reasons have really been the controlling factors in the work of preparation itself,

* *The Old Testament—An American Translation*. By ALEXANDER R. GORDON, THEOPHILE J. MEEK, J. M. POWIS SMITH, LEROY WATERMAN. Edited by J. M. POWIS SMITH. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1927. 8vo. Pp. xii, 1713. Price \$7.50, postage extra.

or whether there are other reasons which Dr. Smith has not mentioned, reasons sufficiently important to be regarded as really determinative of the character of the new translation.

PHILOLOGY AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Especial importance seems to be attached to the first of the reasons alleged, the fact that we have today a better knowledge of Hebrew than was possible when the earlier translations were made. Thus the editor in enlarging upon these reasons tells us in the next paragraph: "The most urgent demand for a new translation comes from the field of Hebrew scholarship. The control of the Hebrew vocabulary and syntax available to the scholar of today is vastly greater than that at the command of the translators of the Authorized Version or of its revisers." This statement is a surprising one. It would be sufficiently striking had the editor contented himself with declaring that our knowledge of Hebrew is "vastly greater" than that possessed by the translators of 1611. But it is to be noted that the words "or of its revisers" are added. This amounts to saying that our control of Hebrew vocabulary and syntax has "vastly" increased in about twenty-five years, since the American Revision did not appear until 1901. We should hesitate to accept this extreme statement even as applicable to the 1611 version. But when the English and American Revisions are expressly included, it becomes, we believe, simply indefensible. In proof of this, we shall call attention to a few facts which are noteworthy.

In justification of the statement which we have just quoted the editor goes on to say: "This [the vastly greater control of Hebrew vocabulary and syntax] is due partly to the greater degree of scientific methodology now practised in the study of language in general and of Hebrew in particular, and partly to the contributions made to our knowledge of Hebrew by the decipherment of the hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings." The reference to "scientific methodology" we take to mean that "comparative" method which has done so much to clarify the study of language in recent years. We

gladly recognize this. But it should be remembered that among the scholars who prepared our 1611 version there were those whose linguistic equipment was quite extensive and whose knowledge of Semitics was very far from meager. "How large an amount of scholarship was enlisted" in the preparation of the AV¹ is illustrated according to Canon Henson by the following facts: "It includes Dr. Andrewes, afterwards bishop of Winchester, who was familiar with Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Greek, Latin and at least ten other languages, while his knowledge of patristic literature was unrivalled; Dr. Overall, regius professor of theology and afterwards bishop of Norwich; Bedwell, the greatest Arabic scholar of Europe; Sir Henry Saville, the most learned layman of his time; and, to say nothing of others well known to later generations, nine who were then or afterwards professors of Hebrew or of Greek at Oxford or Cambridge."² The claim which is made for this version is that it was "translated out of the original tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and revised." It was prepared in the middle of what we may call "the era of Polyglots"—Complutensian (1522), Antwerp (1572), Paris (1645), London or Walton's (1657). Anyone who will take the pains to consult Castell's *Lexicon Heptaglotton* (1669), which was prepared primarily as a companion to Walton's Polyglot, will be obliged to admit that these works, which may fairly be regarded as the product of the scholarship of the age which produced the AV, show that the interest in and knowledge of comparative Semitics was by no means inconsiderable. And it must not be forgotten that Gesenius' *Thesaurus* (finished 1858) was available for the English and American revisers from the very beginning of their work.

¹ The following abbreviations will be used in the course of this article: Authorized Version of 1611 (AV), American Revision (ARV), the Hebrew text of the Old Testament with Massoretic pointings (Hebrew or Heb.; also MT), the Septuagint (LXX), Targum (Targ.), Peshitto (Pesh.), Vulgate (Vulg.), Arabic (Arab.). In the quotations the following abbreviations are retained: omits (om.), Versions (Vrs.).

² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., Art. "Bible," Vol. III, p. 902.

We would also call attention to the closing words of the above quotation, the reference to "the hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings," that is, broadly speaking, to Egyptian and Babylonian research. It seems to be implied that such research has contributed very largely to the "vast" increase of our knowledge of Hebrew, which is given as a reason for the new translation. Consequently it is a decidedly noteworthy fact that in the nearly one hundred pages of "Textual Notes" which are added to this volume we have failed to find a single reference to Egyptian and only some half dozen to cuneiform discoveries. Of course we recognize that some, perhaps a good many of the new renderings found in this translation are due directly or indirectly to such discoveries. But if these discoveries have figured so prominently in the new translation, if the translators owe so much to this new department of knowledge which was opened up for us by Champollion and Grotfend early in the last century, it is surprising, to say the least, that the three thousand or more Textual Notes should make practically no reference to them.

The editor tells us further that "modern studies of textual problems reinforce the need for a new rendering," that "the science of textual criticism has made great progress in recent years and no translation of the Old Testament can afford to ignore its results."³ We have just called attention to the fact that the Textual Notes appended to the new version make practically no reference to hieroglyphs or cuneiform. It is to be noted now that, on the contrary, where objective evidence is cited in support of the "corrections" advocated by the translators, it is the well known and, in most instances, long known versions to which appeal is constantly being made. A large part of the textual apparatus used by Dr. Powis Smith and his associates was accessible to the translators of the 1611 version. It is true, of course, that they had access to the Septuagint—the version most frequently ap-

³ This is really the second of the four reasons enumerated above by Dr. Powis Smith. But since it is so closely related to the first we shall consider them together under the same general head.

pealed to in the Textual Notes—only in editions for which the great uncials were only partially and inadequately available.⁴ But Codex B which has been made by Swete the basis of his critical edition of that version was fully available to the English and American revisers, who, as we have seen, are expressly included with the translators of 1611 by Dr. Powis Smith. Valuable manuscripts have been discovered and critical texts have been published. But Walton's *Polyglot* can still be used with profit by the Old Testament textual critic, and is very far from being replaced by Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (1913) to which our translators seem to owe much by way of information as to the versions and also as regards conjectural emendations.

In what has just been said the writer has no thought of disparaging the valuable contributions to Hebrew vocabulary and syntax on the one hand or to textual criticism on the other which have been made within the last fifty or one hundred years. He recognizes and appreciates them very heartily. But in order to do this it is not necessary to disparage the knowledge or attainments of all previous ages and generations. The scholar of today, especially when he adopts theories which bring him into sharp conflict with opinions and beliefs tenaciously held by past generations, is all too prone to speak with ill-disguised contempt of their attainments and to assume an attitude of superiority for which there is far less real warrant than he imagines. We do not question for one moment Dr. Powis Smith's contention that we now know more about the Hebrew language and are in a better position to study the text of the Old Testament than were the scholars of 1611 or even of 1870-1900. But we do maintain that the word "vastly" is out of place, and we believe that we shall be able to convince the reader that the reason Dr. Smith and his colleagues feel that a new transla-

⁴ The Vatican Codex (Codex B) was undoubtedly used in the preparation of the Sixtine or Roman edition of the LXX (1587). But it is not now claimed that it supplies "a critical or even a wholly trustworthy representation" of this codex. Cf. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, I, p. vii; also Walton's *Polyglot*, I, p. 65.

tion of the Old Testament is so imperatively needed lies not in their greater knowledge of Hebrew and their better understanding of textual problems but in the fact that they assume a very different attitude toward the Old Testament text itself than was held by either the translators of 1611 or the English and American revisers. But before proceeding to cite the evidence which seems to us to justify this statement, it will be well for us to quote Dr. Smith's statement with regard to the method pursued by his colleagues and himself: "Our guiding principle has been that the official Massoretic text must be adhered to as long as it made satisfactory sense. We have not tried to create a new text; but rather to translate the received text wherever translation was possible. Where departure from this text was imperative we have sought a substitute for it along generally approved lines, depending primarily upon the collateral versions, having recourse to scientific conjecture only when the versions failed to afford adequate help. The reader who wishes to check the translation from the standpoint of its loyalty to the original will find the passages in which textual change has been made listed in the Appendix."

This statement as to the "guiding principle" of the translators would seem to indicate that their translation is characterized by conservatism and caution, and that it is based on strictly scientific methods; and the paragraph from which it is quoted closes with the words: "We trust that our attitude in this fundamentally important matter will commend itself to careful and cautious scholars." Since we believe that the reader will agree with Dr. Smith, as we do, that the question of the correct treatment of textual problems is "fundamentally important," let us first read the statement over again, and then proceed to test it by examples taken from the translation itself and from the Textual Notes.

We would call attention to several words in the above quotation. We are told that the Massoretic Hebrew text was to be retained wherever it made "satisfactory sense" and wherever translation was "possible," and that it was de-

parted from only when "imperative," that then the versions were followed, and that recourse was had to "scientific conjecture" only when the versions had failed to afford "adequate help." It is to be observed that all these words or phrases are of doubtful because uncertain meaning. What does "satisfactory sense" mean? Clearly it must mean, satisfactory to the author or authors of the translation. Who is to determine when deviation from the Hebrew text is "imperative"? Who else but the editor or his colleagues? The large number of "Textual Notes" at the end of the volume indicates that the authors of this translation have found much which they could not regard as "satisfactory." It would be still larger if all the deviations from the Hebrew had been listed, which they are not. But of this more will be said later.⁵

We shall now proceed to cite some examples which should enable the reader to judge for himself what "satisfactory," "imperative," "possible" and "adequate" mean in the minds of Dr. Powis Smith and his associates.⁶

⁵ Sometimes these omissions may be due to accident, which Dr. Meek so often tells us is the explanation of the difference between the Hebrew text and the reading which he prefers. Others may be due to a feeling on the part of the translator that the weight of critical opinion in favor of a "correction" made it unnecessary even to mention it. Yet we find minor changes listed while important ones are omitted. It is certainly strange that Dr. Powis Smith should give no "textual notes" on Pss. i-viii. Certainly the emendation of Ps. ii. 12, "kiss the son" (*vide infra* p. 124 f.) and of viii. 2 "I will sing" (אשר־ירה) instead of "who hast set" (אשר־תנה), both of which require the dropping of two consonants of the Hebrew text, are worthy of mention in a list which is declared to contain "the passages in which textual change has been made." Again, are we to suppose that Dr. Gordon felt that Isa. viii. 6 "melt in fear" instead of "rejoice in" had such a weight of critical authority back of it as not to need mention? Or are such inconsistent omissions as these purely the result of carelessness?

⁶ This translation follows the fourfold or Greek arrangement of the Old Testament books—Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy—with which the English reader is familiar through the AV and RV. These four divisions have been assigned in the main to Drs. Meek of Toronto, Waterman of Michigan, Smith of Chicago, and Gordon of McGill Universities respectively. But it may be noted that Dr. Meek has also translated Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the Song of Songs and Lamentations, that Dr. Gordon has translated Proverbs, and that Dr. Smith has translated the Minor Prophets.

Genesis iv. 1. "I have gotten a man from (**מֵ**) the Lord" (AV). The rendering "from" is doubtful: "with (the help of)" would be a more natural rendering of the preposition. The LXX renders by "through" (*διά* with gen.), Pesh. by "to" (**לְ**), Vulg. by "*per*," Targ. of Onkelos by "from before," Samaritan Targum by "from," Arab. by "from." Dr. Meek renders thus: "I have won back my husband; the Lord is with me." He does not give any explanation of the exceedingly questionable rendering "won back." He merely remarks regarding the last phrase, "So by insertion of one letter accidentally dropped; Heb. 'with the Lord'." We observe first that this statement is inadequate. It may be regarded as still an open question to what extent "vowel letters" are properly a part of the consonantal text (*Kethibh*). But if the "me" of "with *me*" (**מֵי**) means that a *yodh* was "accidentally dropped," why is this not equally true of "my husband" (**אִשְׁתִּי**). Either the words "I have won back my husband" are not in vs. 1 *d* to which this textual note refers, in which case there should be a note on vs. 1 *c* to which they would then belong, or Dr. Meek's statement should be changed to read "two letters accidentally dropped." We observe further that Dr. Meek has nothing to say in defense of his correction but "accidentally dropped." "Accidentally" is a favorite word with Dr. Meek. We were under the impression that modern scientists did not believe in accidents!

Deut. xxii. 21c. "To play the harlot in the house of her father." Dr. Meek's rendering is "by playing the harlot in her father's house." His note reads thus: "So by insertion of one letter accidentally dropped; Heb. om. 'in' before 'her father's house'." Yet every student of Hebrew knows that *place where* may be expressed by the simple accusative. This construction may occur in the case of a noun followed by a genitive and may also be due to "euphonic reasons," to avoid the coming together of two *beths*.⁷ In Gen. xxiv. 23 and xxxviii. 11 where the same phrase occurs Dr. Meek finds no fault with it. Why then does he do so here?

⁷ Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar* § 118 g.

1 Sam. i. 5, "a double portion." The Hebrew is supported by Targ. "a choice portion," Pesh. "a double portion" and by Vulg. "a sad (*tristis*) portion," where "sad" is perhaps connected with the idea of "anger." Since the word *'aph* may mean "nose" or "face" (?) in the singular number, as well as in the dual, *appaim* may easily mean two "noses" or two "faces," "a portion of two faces," i.e. a double portion (cf. the use of "feet" in the sense of "times" in Ex. xxiii. 14). It is possible that the word "double" (אֵפַיִם) is to be connected with the Aramaic אֵפַיִם or אֵפַיִם (a weakening of the guttural would not be without analogy); or with the Assy. root from which the word *iptu* "mass, multitude" is derived. The LXX has apparently read אֵפַיִם ("however") instead of אֵפַיִם ("and he gave Hannah [only] one portion, *however* he loved her"). Grammatically this rendering is of course quite simple. But it is open to serious objection. If Elkanah loved Hannah the mention of a double portion as an expression of his love is natural and appropriate. But why should the narrative state that she received only one portion when her husband might easily have given her more, and then proceed to add "however he loved her"? Or if the number of portions was determined simply by counting the mouths to be filled, why call especial attention to the fact that Hannah had no children to feed, since it has already been expressly stated that "she had no child," if the object was to point out his affection for Hannah? Clearly the LXX rendering is not free from difficulties; and the Hebrew is sufficiently well supported to be regarded as at least as "satisfactory" as the LXX. Yet Dr. Waterman makes the blunt remark: "'However' follows LXX; Heb. makes no sense"!

In 1 Sam. i. 12 the words "and it came to pass" (וַהֲיָה), where the perfect with *waw conjunctive* is used instead of the imperfect with *waw conversive* or *consecutive*, are said to mean "and it shall be" and summarily declared to be "ungrammatical." This statement would seem to imply ignorance on the part of Dr. Waterman that there is such a thing as *waw conjunctive* with the perfect in Hebrew and that it

occurs too often to be treated as simply an indication of a corrupt text.⁸ Surely Dr. Waterman did not learn either from the hieroglyphs or from the cuneiform that *waw conversive* with the imperfect is alone permissible, inasmuch as the *waw conversive* is not used in either Egyptian or Babylonian.

1 Sam. xviii. 28. Here the words "and that Michal loved him," although supported by Targ., Vulg., Pesh., and Arab., are changed to "and that all Israel loved him," following the LXX. Yet a number of good reasons suggest themselves for regarding the Hebrew as "satisfactory." The words in vs. 21 "I will give him her that she may be a snare to him" may well be regarded as supplying the explanation. Not merely had Saul failed to destroy his rival, but the marriage with Michal was not even a mere marriage of convenience. Michal, his own daughter, *loved* David and would consequently aid him even against her own father.

In 1 Kings xix. 2 Jezebel says in her threat to Elijah "so may (the) gods do to me," etc. This reading of the Hebrew is supported by Targ., Vulg., Pesh. and by Cod. A of LXX. It is changed to "so may God do," apparently solely on the authority of Cod. B of the LXX. (The Note says simply "so LXX," as if the reading of the LXX were not itself open to question). Why is this change made? Does not the Hebrew make "satisfactory sense"? The critics hesitate to admit that Elijah was a monotheist. Why should Dr. Waterman insist on making Jezebel, the devotee of Baal and Ashtoreth, speak like one? But perhaps this is only meant to imply that she was referring to *the* God of Israel whom it was her purpose to defy and whose servant she intended to destroy. Even so, granted that this might be the case, why is the statement of the Hebrew not equally "satisfactory"?

In 2 Kings vi. 15 we read that "the servant of the man of God" went forth and saw the chariots of Syria encamped about the city and that "his servant" said to him: "Alas my master, what shall we do?" We are told by Dr. Waterman

⁸ Cf. R. D. Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the O.T.*, p. 110 f.; Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, p. 161.

that the Heb. "is confused and harsh"; and that the change of "the servant (*בשרת*) of the man of God" to "so on the morrow (*מחרת* ?) the man of God" is made "with the help of the Versions and context." Yet the reading "servant" of the Hebrew is supported by Targ., LXX, Vulg., Pesh. and Arab. And it may be noted that the same word for "servant" occurs also in iv. 43. If the versions accepted this expression without demur, is there any imperative reason for the change? We might prefer to say "the servant of the man of God arose early . . . and he said to his master," or, "the man of God arose early . . . and his servant said unto him." But surely that does not justify us in speaking of the Hebrew as "harsh and confused" and resorting to conjectural emendation.

In 2 Kings xvi. 6 (end) we read that the "Syrians (*ארומים*) came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." The MT margin (*Qere*) has "Edomites" (*אדומים*) and is supported by the Vulg., LXX (Cod. B) and Pesh. Since the confusion of *resh* and *daleth* is well known to the textual critic, the marginal reading may be correct. But Dr. Waterman tells us that "this carries with it 'Edom' for 'Syria' throughout the vs." So he changes "Rezin king of Syria" into "the king of Edom," apparently without any textual warrant; at least he produces none. Is Dr. Waterman prepared to prove that the Syrians did not capture Elath and hold it for an indefinite period, or until they were driven out by the Edomites? His manner of statement indicates that his reading is purely conjectural.

Regarding 2 Kings xvi. 18 Dr. Waterman remarks: "The vs. is hopelessly obscure." The opening words especially have caused difficulty and have been variously rendered (ARV, "and the covered way [*ביסך*] for the sabbath"); and it is possible that the LXX ("and the foundation" [reading apparently *מוסד*] of the seat") has preserved a better text. But we notice that Dr. Waterman has ventured to translate the verse, which seems to imply that he does not consider the situation quite "hopeless." And since he apparently agrees

with Dr. Smith that our knowledge of Hebrew has "vastly increased," it is rather strange that he should take such a pessimistic view as to the likelihood of a satisfactory interpretation being arrived at. It should be recognized we think that it is at least possible that the obscurity may be due not to the passage itself, but to our ignorance of the subject matter of which it treats—an ignorance which we share with Dr. Waterman, but which we for our part are not prepared to regard as "hopeless."

Dr. Waterman tells us that in 2 Kings xxiii. 15 "Heb. has the impossible: 'he burnt the high place'." The form of statement is ambiguous. Dr. Waterman clearly cannot mean that the Hebrew is "ungrammatical" or "untranslatable" or that the meaning is "obscure." The Hebrew is very simple and clear; it means exactly what Dr. Waterman says it does. Consequently what is meant by "impossible" must be that it is absurd to speak of the burning of a high place, since a high place could not *possibly* be burned. So he follows the LXX reading ("and shattered its stones"), which involves considerable change in the text, against Targ., Vulg., Pesh. But is Dr. Waterman prepared to prove that a "high place" was as such impervious to fire, that there was nothing there that fire could burn? A stone building can be gutted by fire, even though its walls may remain standing; and if the fire is hot enough the very stones of which it is composed may be cracked and even melted. Dr. Waterman speaks with the confidence of an eyewitness and of an expert on high places. But we know that he was not the one and we doubt whether he can qualify as the other. Such wanton attacks upon the Hebrew Scriptures are clearly out of place in a translation which is expected to "commend itself to careful and cautious scholars."

In Neh. v. 2 it is alleged that the "Heb. is not straightforward." Just what this means is not clear. Does it mean that the statement contained in this verse, the language used by the poor and needy among the Jews in making their complaint, is insincere? Or does it mean that something is the

matter with the Hebrew text itself, in other words, that this complaint has not been correctly reported? Whatever be the reason, the word "many" (רבים) is supported by LXX, Vulg., and Pesh. Yet it is changed into "giving in pledge" (ערבים) to make it correspond with verse 3. This change cannot be regarded as "imperative," since the Hebrew makes satisfactory sense.

Psalm xxxvi. 1. "The transgression of the wicked saith (נאם) within his heart" is changed to "Transgression is delightful (נעם) to the wicked within his heart." This conjectural change is without the support of MSS or versions. It is interesting; but certainly cannot be regarded as "imperative."

As an interesting example of what is meant by "satisfactory sense" Ps. lxxiv. 8a may be cited: "They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them (*nînām*) together" (AV). This rendering, which makes good sense, takes the word *nînām* as Impf. Kal of ינה. The rendering is supported by the Pesh. and the correctness of the form is confirmed, as Delitzsch points out, by Num. xxi. 30. On the other hand Targ., LXX, Vulg., apparently found here the noun "posterity" (*nîn*). Dr. Smith recognizes such a word as occurring in Job xviii. 19, while Dr. Meek finds it in Gen. xxi. 23 and Dr. Gordon in Isa. xiv. 22. The sense is not nearly so good as "let us destroy them" which is clearly parallel with the "they burned" etc. which follows. But either rendering is certainly "possible," while the first seems to us quite "satisfactory." Dr. Powis Smith's rendering is: "They said in their heart, 'We will Hellenize them also'." His explanatory note reads as follows: "So by slight change; Heb. 'their progeny' for 'We will Hellenize them'." Two points are to be noted. The one is that Dr. Smith ignores the fact that the Heb. is ambiguous: he gives only one rendering for *nînām*, and that the less probable. The other is that the correction which he proposes is doubtful for at least three reasons: (1) It finds no support in the versions. (2) The verb "Hellenize" (we suppose he would read *νηγαρωσεν*, a hypothetical Piel form

from the root יין) is coined by him; it is not found in the Heb. of the OT nor in the Heb., New Heb. or Aram. of Targums and Talmud.⁹ (3) It would be at all probable only if the psalm were demonstrably of late, *i.e.*, of Maccabean date. At best it is only one of several conjectural emendations which are proposed on the unproved assumption that the Hebrew text is corrupt.

Isa. viii. 12. The reading "holy" (קדש) for "confederacy" (קשר; ARV, "conspiracy") rests simply on conjecture. It is of course suggested by the "sanctify" of the following verse. But the Hebrew makes good sense; and there is no "imperative" reason for changing it.

An interesting illustration of Dr. Gordon's understanding of the words "satisfactory" and "imperative" is furnished by the word rendered "watchers" or "watchmen" (נצרים) in Jer. iv. 16 and xxxi. 6 (so AV and ARV). It is hard to see where any valid objection to this rendering is to be found. Yet in iv. 16 Dr. Gordon changes the text to read "leopards" (נמרים) and in xxxi. 6 to "vintagers" (בצרים). Both of these changes are interesting conjectures and show the ingenuity of the textual critic. But neither is required by the context; and Dr. Gordon apparently has not succeeded in finding any support for them in the versions. Is he prepared to maintain that they are "imperative"?

Injustice is at times done the Hebrew text by asserting that it has a meaning which it need not have, a meaning which does not make good sense. Thus in Jer. ix. 19*d* what seems to be a perfectly legitimate rendering is "They have overthrown (cast down) our dwellings." Dr. Gordon's rendering is "to give up our dwellings." He remarks "So Vrs.; Heb. 'Our dwellings have cast us out.'" But there is no "us" in the Heb.; and "dwellings" may be object just as well as subject.

In Ezek. xxxii. 27*a* Dr. Gordon prefers to read "warriors of old (מעלם) instead of with the Hebrew "warriors of the uncircumcised" (מערלים). He remarks, "So Vrs.," al-

⁹ Cf. Levy, *Handwörterbuch*.

though Targ. and Pesh. support the Heb. In view of the fact that the word "uncircumcised" is used elsewhere *seven* times in this chapter, while the word "eternity" is not found once, it is hard to see that there is any imperative reason for following the LXX and treating the Hebrew text as corrupt.

Amos iii. 9, "Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt" (AV). The reading "Ashdod" is supported by Targ., Vulg. and Pesh. and also by the usage of Amos who elsewhere mentions the Philistines and all of their four cities (i. 6-8, vi. 2, ix. 7). Yet on the authority of LXX, "Ashdod" is changed to "Assyria," although Assyria is never mentioned elsewhere by Amos. Can Dr. Smith really consider this change "imperative"?

Nahum ii. 12, "Where is the den of the lions and the pasturage of the young lions." The word "pasturage" (מרעה) is well attested, being supported by the versions (e.g. LXX, *νομή*). Understood as meaning the place where the lion secures his food (his range) it is a striking, but by no means unnatural expression. We think Dr. Smith should regard it as "satisfactory." But instead he follows Wellhausen and Nowack in their conjectural reading "cave" (מערה). That the proposed reading makes good sense is obvious. But the change cannot possibly be called "imperative." We note further that the expression which follows and which Dr. Smith renders "whither the lion went bringing in spoil," is in need of explanation. The word "spoil" should be in italics or in a parenthesis. It is not in the text. The words "bringing in" apparently mean that Dr. Smith regards לביא as standing for להביא (cf. Jer. xxxix. 7, 2 Chron. xxxi. 10). Since the AV renders by "old lion" (ARV, "lioness"), Dr. Smith would have saved his readers some uncertainty by pointing out the ambiguity of the word לביא, that it can be rendered either way.

The passages we have cited are not in themselves of great importance, save as they have a bearing upon the vitally important question of the reliability of the OT text. We turn therefore to another passage which has been often discussed,

Psalm ii. 11 f. The AV renders "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry" etc. Dr. Powis Smith renders thus

Serve the Lord with fear,
Kiss his feet with trembling,
Lest he be angry and you perish in the way;

That is, in place of the words "and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son," he reads simply "kiss his feet with trembling," which means that "his feet" (רגליו) is to be reconstructed out of the words "and rejoice" (וגילו) and "son" (בר). Dr. Smith has not told us how his text is arrived at, whether "his feet" is derived from "and rejoice" by changing *waw* into *resh* and transposing *yodh* and *lamedh*, in which case the word "son" is to be simply deleted, or whether the *resh* of "foot" is borrowed from the word "son," in which case the *waw* of "and rejoice" and the *beth* of "son" are superfluous, while the *resh* must be regarded as having strayed rather far afield. We are not immediately concerned to account for Dr. Smith's text. But what we do want to call attention to is that it has no basis in either MSS or Versions. Certainly it cannot be argued that the frequent occurrence of the expression "kiss the feet of" (in token of submission) in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, constitutes any compelling reason for recognizing its occurrence here. Yet Dr. Smith not merely fails to explain this emendation; *he does not even list it in the Textual Notes.*

It is unfortunate that no consistent effort has been made to distinguish between changes which involve only the Massoretic pointings and those affecting the consonantal text. The reader is told in the Preface that "in a large measure the vowels only have been touched"; and it is pointed out that "A vowel change naturally involves a very much slighter correction than is involved in a change of consonants." Indeed, since the vowel points (we judge that the reference is primarily at least to the vowel points and not to the vowel letters) were not added till about the 6th century A.D., we might hesitate to call a change of pointing a correction at all. There

is consequently a real difference between the consonantal text or the *Kethibh* and the Massoretic text which is the *Kethibh* plus the pointing added by the Massoretes; and it would have been easy to distinguish them as "Heb." and "MT." Yet in the Textual Notes we observe a marked lack of consistency in this respect. The editor, Dr. Powis Smith, frequently distinguishes between changes which involve the vowels only and those which affect the consonants. The distinction is also noted at times by Dr. Meek. But Dr. Waterman and Dr. Gordon pay almost no attention to it. Yet the distinction is really an important one.

For example in 2 Chronicles xxxv. 21 we meet the words: "*I come* not against thee (עלִיךְ אַתָּה) this day, but against the house wherewith I have war" (so AV). According to this rendering the statement is elliptical. The words "I come" (as is indicated by the italics) are to be supplied from the context, while the phrase "against thee" is emphatic, the preposition "against" with its suffix being followed by 'attāh, the independent form of the pronoun.¹⁰ But another rendering is possible: "Not against thee *am I* come, but," etc. In this case the word אַתָּה is not to be pointed 'attāh (thou) but 'ôthéh (Kal. act. part. of 'āthāh "to come"), the "am I" being supplied from the context. This rendering seems to be supported by LXX, Vulg., Pesh., and Arab., all of which have the verb "come," though it is of course possible that it is simply supplied from the context as in the AV. The fact that 'āthāh is not the usual verb for "come" while the pronoun 'attāh occurs frequently might be cited in favor of this explanation. But we are inclined to hold with Dr. Waterman that the reading "come" is the correct one. It is not the rendering that we object to, but the statement made in the Textual Notes regarding it. This statement is as follows: " 'I come,' so LXX; Heb. 'thou.'" This is misleading. The Hebrew consonantal text admits as we have seen of either rendering. There is a good deal to be said in support of each. The ancient versions favor the one; the Massoretes adopted the other. If Dr.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g., Deut. v. 3, Hag. i. 4; also Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Gram.* § 135 g.

Waterman had said: " 'I come,' so LXX; MT 'thou'; Heb. permits either," his statement would be in accordance with the facts; and the general reader would not be left in doubt as to the extent of the correction—in this case, as we have seen, it is not really a correction at all—made necessary by Dr. Waterman's rendering.¹¹

Similarly Dr. Gordon commenting on Ezekiel xxx. 17*a* says "Heb. 'Aven' (trouble) for 'On'." To the reader who does not have the Hebrew text before him this would clearly imply a real difference between the Hebrew text and the reading preferred by Dr. Gordon, but it is merely a matter of pointing. No change in the consonantal text is involved.¹²

It is to be noted, furthermore, that these textual notes are misleading, because in them many instances are listed where the Hebrew is altered with the help of the versions or on the basis of conjecture. But nothing is said about the cases where the reading of the Hebrew is preferred to that of the versions, or where the Hebrew reading which is rejected has the support of the versions. Thus at 2 Kings x. 25 Dr. Waterman comments on the word "city" in the phrase "they went to the city of the house of Baal" as follows: " 'inner room,' a correction. Heb. has 'city' which is certainly wrong." Well, if it is wrong, then Targ., LXX, Vulg., Pesh., and Arab. are also wrong. Does it not create a false impression to refer to the Hebrew only when it is *alleged* to be wrong and to the versions only when they are *assumed* to be right?¹³ As for the statement itself, we see no reason for admitting that the

¹¹ A familiar example of the ambiguity of the Hebrew text is found in Jer. xvii. 8 where MT reads "and shall not see when heat cometh" (so Targ. and AV), whereas "fear" is perhaps the preferable reading of the unpointed text, being supported by LXX, Vulg., Pesh. and Arab. We note that Dr. Gordon who adopts the latter reading makes no mention of the ambiguity. Yet in Micah vi. 9 where "shall see" and "is fearing" is also only a difference of pointing Dr. Smith tells us that he follows the versions against the *Hebrew* which means against the MT.

¹² On the other hand in Ps. ix. 7 more than "slight vowel change" is involved in the reading of "behold" (הנה) instead of "they" (המה).

¹³ In Ps. ii. 8 the reading of the MT "crush" is followed by Dr. Smith *against* LXX and the NT (Rev. ii. 27, xii. 5) which by a different vocalization read "shepherd" (i.e., rule).

reading "city" is "certainly wrong." "City" may be used in a technical sense; or it may be that the translation "city" is wrong. That the Hebrew is "certainly wrong" is an unproved assertion.

How captious the critic may become in his treatment of the Scriptures is illustrated by Dr. Waterman's rendering of a phrase in 2 Kings xii. 10. In this verse we are told that the king's scribe and the high priest came and "bound up and counted" the silver which was in Joash's chest. The correctness of this order of words is confirmed by Targ., LXX, Vulg.; and we confess that it seems to us a correct one for an age when money was weighed instead of counted. It may mean that they tied up the silver shekels in bags of a mina or perhaps even a talent each and then counted the bags. Dr. Waterman apparently feels that the counting must have come first, that is that the single pieces of money must each have been counted before being placed in the bags. So he renders by "counted and tied up in bags"; and finding support for this in the Pesh. he phrases his note as follows: "'Counted and tied up in bags,' so Pesh.; Heb. reverses the order," as if the Pesh. were obviously right and the Heb. as obviously wrong, no reference being made to the versions which support the Hebrew. Such fault-finding criticism is petty to say the least.

The statement is frequently made in the Textual Notes that the Hebrew *omits* a word, simply because some version, notably Cod. B. of the LXX, contains it, even though it is at least equally possible that the real truth of the matter is that the version has *inserted* it. Thus in 2 Kings viii. 13 we read, "Who is thy servant, the dog, that he should do this great thing?" (ARV). This is rendered by Dr. Waterman: "What is your servant—a dead dog—that he should do this great thing?" The "note" reads: "'dead,' so LXX; Heb. om." We fail to see any warrant for this emendation. It is true that Mephibosheth calls himself a "dead dog" (2 Sam. ix. 8) and that Abishai applies the same derogatory epithet to Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 9). But Goliath simply asks "Am I a dog, that

thou comest to me with staves?" And since the LXX does not here *add* the word "dead" (it would hardly be appropriate, since Goliath was very much alive), Dr. Waterman does not inform us that the Hebrew "omits" it. But why should we suppose that the Hebrew has reported the hypocritical words of Hazael incorrectly? Is there any reason for thinking that Hazael must have likened himself to "a *dead* dog"? Is the one figure current usage, the other incorrect? If so Goliath's words should be corrected also, the LXX to the contrary notwithstanding. In view of the importance attached in the preface to the "hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings" it is interesting to note that the El-Amarna letters confirm the correctness of the Hebrew text of this passage. In Knudtzon¹⁴ No. 71 we read this interesting sentence, "Who is Abdi-Ashirta, the slave, the dog, that he should take the land of the king unto himself?" "Dog" is the contemptuous epithet which Rib-Addi of Gubla seems to delight in applying to Abdi-Ashirta whom he charges with disloyalty to Pharaoh. He does not call him "dead dog" but simply "dog." Surely "dog" is a sufficiently opprobrious epithet. And Rib-Addi's use of it clearly implies that it would have been natural for Hazael to use it when he wished to pretend that the rôle of warrior king was one to which his unworthiness could not dream of aspiring. If Dr. Waterman is not willing to admit this, if he is determined to make Hazael call himself a "dead dog," he should not, we think, content himself with improving the Hebrew text of this passage. He should carry his reforming zeal to the El-Amarna letters and see to it that Rib-Addi uses the correct terminology in telling the Pharaoh his opinion of Abdi-Ashirta.

1 Chron. x. 7, "And when all the men of Israel that were in the valleys saw that they fled" (AV). Here "they" is changed to "Israel," on the authority of the LXX (*i.e.*, of Cod. B.); and we are told that "Heb. om. Israel." Is it not equally natural to suppose that the LXX inserted "Israel" to make the sense clearer?

¹⁴ *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, I, p. 366.

While the frequent changes in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament are of primary importance, there are several other matters connected with the handling of the text which should not be overlooked. The first is that in a few instances the translator has rearranged the verses. This has been done twice in Job (xiii. 28, xxvi. 1-4), once in Proverbs (ix. 7-12), three times in Isaiah (v. 25-30, xxxviii. 21-22, xli. 6-7) and three times in Jeremiah (x. 11, xxxviii. 28*b*, xxxix. 3). Apparently these changes are made simply because the translators felt that they improved the sense. No evidence from manuscripts or versions is produced in their support.

Attention should also be called to the use of headings. Brief headings are frequently introduced into the text with a view to indicating as concisely as possible the general contents of the section which follows. They are usually the work of the translator and constitute no part of the text.¹⁵ Yet in about a dozen passages in Proverbs and Isaiah a verse of the text (either in whole or in part) has been used as a heading without any attempt being made to distinguish those headings which are inserted by the translator from the headings which are a part of the text itself. Where the entire verse is used as a heading (*e.g.*, Prov. xxv. 1, Isa. xiii. 1) the numbering of the verses suggest this; but where only part of the verse is so used (*e.g.*, Isa. xvii. 1, xix. 1, Prov. xxx. 1) there is nothing to indicate that these headings form a part of the text itself. This is misleading, to say the least, and certainly indicates lack of reverence for the text of Scripture.

It is to be noted also that brackets and parentheses are occasionally introduced. Their purpose is not explained in the Preface. But apparently the brackets are usually intended to call attention to what the translator considers to be a questionable addition to the original text. Examples of such usage are Jer. xxiii. 19-20 which, according to a footnote, is apparently regarded by Dr. Gordon as a duplicate of xxx. 23-

¹⁵ These headings are not all purely objective. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1-33 is entitled "The Deuteronomic Reform" and Ps. xlv. is called "A Royal Marriage Song."

24.¹⁶ Ezek. i. 2-3 has no comment, but is probably regarded as an editorial insertion.¹⁷ Similarly, the titles of the Psalms are enclosed in brackets, as editorial notes; and Dr. Meek, as a modern editor, uses them when he accompanies proper names with a translation: *e.g.*, "Gershom [immigrant]."

The Textual Notes constitute an instructive commentary on the "guiding principle" as stated by Dr. Powis Smith. The fact that there are several thousand of them and that so many of them propose changes which affect the consonants of the Hebrew text is significant. And it must be remembered that, as we have seen, there are others, even important ones,—how many we cannot say,—that are not listed in the notes. It may be remarked with regard to these notes that there is not a little difference between them, due to a difference in method of the four translators. As has been indicated above "accidentally" is a favorite word with Dr. Meek; again and again he justifies his changing of the text by telling us that something has been accidentally lost or inserted in the Hebrew. We gather the impression that the Hebrew text must have been rather carelessly preserved if accident has figured so largely in its transmission. That it was carelessly preserved is of course the assumption which, expressed or implied, underlies all the attempts of the critics to correct and improve it. Otherwise they would not dare to take such liberties with it. But it is nevertheless an assumption which cannot be established and which is contradicted by what we know about the extreme care exercised by the Jews in preserving their Sacred Oracles. At the same time Dr. Meek seems eager to avoid giving the impression that the changes which he adopts are drastic ones. A second favorite phrase with him is "so, by slight change." Dr. Waterman on the contrary is outspoken in his criticisms of the text; he constantly expresses his contempt for it. We are told again and again that the Hebrew is "ungrammatical," "unintelligible," "obviously wrong," "untranslatable." We meet such words

¹⁶ Cf. *e.g.*, Job xxiv. 18-20, 24; Isa. v. 15-16, vi. 13e, vii. 8c.

¹⁷ Cf. *e.g.*, Isa iii. 18-23.

as "inanely," "meaningless," "makes no sense," "entirely misses the point," "impossible," "confused and harsh," "hopelessly corrupt." Dr. Powis Smith only rarely indulges in denunciation of the Hebrew text,¹⁸ and he very frequently distinguishes between changes which involve the vowel points and those in which the consonantal text is affected. Dr. Gordon hardly ever comments upon the Hebrew text, contenting himself with stating his authority for his own reading, if there is any, and usually following it with a translation of the Hebrew which he rejects.

We have given our readers, we hope, enough examples of the methods followed by Dr. Smith and his colleagues to lead them to regard with decided scepticism such derogatory comments upon the received text of the Old Testament, as those just cited. We believe that our readers will agree with us that the translators have mistaken their function. They have not confined themselves to translating the Old Testament; they

¹⁸ Thus Dr. Powis Smith declares the Hebrew of Eccles. x. 15a to be "ungrammatical and untranslatable." Yet Plumptre, whose acceptance of the late date of Ecclesiastes should entitle him to a hearing in critical circles, accepted the AV rendering without demur: "the labor ('āmāl) of the foolish wearith every one of them." The distributive use of singular suffixes after words in the plural must be recognized as permissible (Ges. Kautzsch, § 145 m), and König (*Lehrgebäude*, III. p. 168) takes exception to the claim that an "abstract" noun must have the gender corresponding to its form. He makes this statement with express reference to the case in point; and the reasons which he gives are noteworthy: "For first, 'āmāl is not strictly speaking an 'abstract,' but often also [the word] trouble, etc., in the concrete, and furthermore the actual occurrence of תַּיְגַּעְנִי shows that rule [the rule that in the case of abstracts form and gender must correspond] to be a false generalization." In other words König argues that since 'āmāl is actually construed with a verb in the feminine an abstract noun does not have to be masculine if it does not have the feminine ending. Dr. Powis Smith on the contrary declares the Hebrew to be "ungrammatical and untranslatable," because the syntax does not accord with his theories as to correct Hebrew usage. This is simply one of many examples of the substituting of a *priori* reasoning for that truly scientific method which draws its rules from a careful study of all the facts. That the construction of this passage is difficult may be admitted. But to dismiss the Hebrew text which is confirmed by the versions with the words "ungrammatical and untranslatable" and then proceed to alter the text is to cut the Gordian knot, without facing the difficulty of untying it.

have sought to correct and improve it. Their attitude differs from that of the translations which they aim to replace—the Authorized Version and its Revisions—in that it is characterized not so much by reverence for the received text of the Old Testament as by an attitude of superiority to it. The freedom with which it is treated cannot possibly be regarded as in harmony with the decidedly conservative language used by Dr. Powis Smith in stating the “guiding principle” of their work.

METRICS—ITS USE AND ITS ABUSE

The third reason which is given for the preparation of this new translation is stated to be “a clearer recognition of poetic structures.” It is a fact which we gladly recognize that, in the course of the last half century much has been done toward the promoting of a clear understanding of the laws of Hebrew poetry. Ley, Sievers, Rothstein and others have studied the laws of Hebrew metre and sought to apply them to the poetical and prophetic literature of the Old Testament. This work has led in many instances to a clearer appreciation of Hebrew poetry. It should be noticed, however, that the most obvious characteristic of Hebrew poetry, the so-called *parallelismus membrorum*, is not a new discovery; it has long been recognized. On the other hand, no certainty has been reached with regard to the laws governing Hebrew metres. Hebrew metrics is very far from being an exact science. It has not been shown and, we believe, cannot be shown, that Hebrew poetry must be strictly regular in form. Yet on the assumption that this must be the case, words and phrases are cut off or transferred in the interest of uniformity. This has been very unfortunate. It has tended to discredit the new science of Hebrew metrics on the one hand and on the other it has led to radically destructive and totally unwarranted changes of the Old Testament text.

As an illustration of this we cite Isa. x. 27, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke

shall be destroyed by reason of fatness" (ARV). The words "his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder" and the words "his yoke from off thy neck" are obviously parallel one to the other. The only question that can be raised is as to the closeness of the parallelism. As the words stand in the Hebrew, the second member has no verb. There is no real difficulty here, and similar cases could easily be cited. Yet "metrical" scholars have felt that there should be a second verb. So they have taken the word "and shall be destroyed" (a *waw* *conversive* with the perfect) and by changing *waw* into *yodh* have turned it into "shall be destroyed" (an imperfect form), or going still further have read "cease" for "destroyed," which involves the further change of a *beth* into a *daleth*. In this way two strictly parallel sentences are secured, each of which has four words (four accents) in the Hebrew:

And on that day
 Shall his burden pass from your shoulder
 And his yoke be removed from your neck.

But this leaves the phrase "by reason of fatness" standing by itself and unrelated to what precedes or follows. So further change is made and by the insertion of a vowel letter and the change of a consonant these words are altered to read "he has gone up from Pene Rinnom." They then become parallel with the words "he has come to Aiath," which follow in vs. 28.¹⁹

¹⁹ It is apparently largely for metrical reasons that Dr. Waterman has altered 1 Kings viii. 12 f.: "The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever" (AV). His rendering is:

"The Lord established the sun in the heavens,
 But he chose to dwell in thick darkness;
 'Build my house, a house of habitation for me,
 That I may dwell therein for ever.'
 Is it not written in the Book of the Upright?"

In the Textual Notes this radical departure from the Hebrew text is explained by the words: "So substantially LXX." The Hebrew makes good sense and is supported as against LXX by Targ., Vulg., Pesh. Since Dr. Waterman treats the rest of the words spoken at the dedication of the Temple as prose, it is hard to see why Solomon should be re-

It must be obvious to the reader, we think, that such "recognition of poetic structures" as appears in the instance just cited is highly theoretical and questionable. It assumes that the "Prophets" are largely poetry and that Hebrew poetry is characterized to a marked degree by metrical regularity. Neither of these assumptions can be proved. The parallelisms in vss. 27 ff. are very marked: the passage is clearly poetic. But when the attempt is made to make the parallelism or balance strictly regular, difficulties appear at once. We have much still to learn about Hebrew metrics. Yet the critics use the imperfectly understood laws of Hebrew poetry as if they were a sure standard by which to test the correctness of the text of the Old Testament. In this volume the metrical test has not been applied with the recklessness which is characteristic of the Moffatt version. We judge that Dr. Gordon has made Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* the basis of his work. But it is perfectly clear that the interest of the translators in "poetical structures" is due in no small measure to the help which they hope it will give them in their attempt to revise and improve the text of the Old Testament.

The tendency with "critical" scholars seems to be to treat more and more of the "prophetical" literature of the Bible as poetry. Yet there is considerable difference of opinion among them as to what is prose and what is poetry. Most Old Testament scholars would probably regard the Book of Daniel as very largely prose. Dr. Moffatt, an enthusiastic metricist, prints only about six verses as poetry. Dr. Gordon on the other hand apparently adopts in general the arrangement of Loehr in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*. Both of them print some twenty-five verses as poetry, but with some disagreement as to the verses themselves. Thus both treat vii. 13-14 as poetry, but vss. 17-18 are so treated only by Dr. Gordon. He arranges them thus:

quired to speak in carefully balanced phrases in these opening words. It is to be noted furthermore that these words which are found in the LXX at the close instead of at the beginning of the narrative (after vs. 53), are not found in the other versions.

'These great beasts, four in number, are four kings,
Who shall arise out of the earth;
But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom,
And shall retain the kingdom forever, even forever and ever'.

If this is poetry, it would be easy we think to render almost any prose passage into "metrical" English. Dr. Powis Smith tells us that "poetry should not be printed as prose." To this we would add the quite obvious comment that prose should not be printed as poetry.

THE "UNINTELLIGIBILITY" OF THE AV

The fourth of the reasons given by the editor for the preparation of this new translation of the Old Testament is "such a change in our own language as would render the language of the older translations more or less unintelligible to the average man of our day." Elsewhere in the preface the statement is made: "The English of King James's day is not wholly natural or clear to the average man at the present time." It is pointed out that "in common everyday speech 'thou,' 'thee' and 'thy' are no longer used; they have been retained here when they occur in language addressed to God, since they convey a more reverent feeling than the blunt 'you'." But, we may ask, if "thou" is perfectly intelligible when used in addressing the Deity, why should it be regarded as unintelligible elsewhere in the Bible? Is "You must not commit murder" more intelligible, not to say impressive, than "Thou shalt not kill"? It is of course true that the endings "est" and "eth" and the word "ye" for "you," etc., are archaic; yet to very many people there is a quaint beauty and a distinctiveness about the Jacobean English of the AV which gives it a peculiar charm. We wonder what attitude the editor would take toward an "American Translation" of Shakespeare. We cannot help feeling that the attempt to translate the Bible into the vernacular of today usually results in a rather commonplace and ordinary translation. It may be noted furthermore that of the other archaisms mentioned by the editor as showing the need for a new translation, (*e.g.*, "prevent" in the sense of "anticipate") more than half have al-

ready been removed in the ARV, and consequently are quite irrelevant. If as Dr. Smith avers there are "many others like them," it is strange that he did not make a better selection of data in support of his contention.

While, as has been indicated, we cannot agree with the editor as regards the unintelligibility of the Authorized Version, we note with pleasure that the new translation seems to be free from some of the extravagances which have marred one of the recent "modern" versions of the Bible. We refer especially to the Moffatt translation. It is gratifying to be assured, although we had supposed it to be a generally recognized fact, that "the contents of the Old Testament is, with little exception, upon a high literary plane. The language of the translation, therefore, cannot be allowed to fall to the level of the street." We do not find in this translation as in the Moffatt examples of alliteration such as "a poisonous fly makes perfume putrid" (Eccles. x. 1), or of doggerel rhyme such as "for his love to us is vast, his loyalty will ever last" (Ps. cxvii. 2). We do not find in Psalm li. 7 "purge me with hyssop" changed into "purge me clean with marjoram." We note with pleasure that the familiar rendering "LORD" for the Tetragram has been retained.²⁰ On the whole the translation is a dignified one, and it does not offend against the ordinary canons of English style and usage.

At the same time there are many changes which seem to us decidedly unnecessary if not petty. "Futility of futility" is hardly an improvement upon the familiar "vanity of vanities" of Eccles. i. 2. "Funeral pyre" (2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxi. 20) is decidedly misleading. We naturally think of the word

²⁰ We are told that in this regard "the orthodox Jewish tradition" has been followed. This is only a partial statement of the warrant for "LORD." For the Christian the all-important fact is that this Jewish tradition has the express sanction of the usage of the New Testament. Thus in the Synoptic Gospels and in Acts where the words of Ps. cx. 1, "The LORD (יהוה) said unto my Lord (אדוני)," are quoted, the word "Lord" (κύριος) is used for the Tetragram, despite the fact that this partially obliterates a distinction clearly made in the Hebrew. Stronger evidence than this could hardly be given us that for the Christian "Lord" is the equivalent of the Tetragram.

pyre, a Greek word, as implying the Greek custom of cremating the dead. We hardly think that Dr. Waterman means to imply that this was followed in the case of the pious king Asa or of Jehoahaz. In substituting "propitiatory" for the familiar "mercy seat" (Ex. xxv. 17), Dr. Meek is returning to Wyclif who anglicized the *propitiatorium* of the Vulgate. We agree with Canon Harford that "mercy seat" which apparently goes back through Tyndale to Luther's "Gnadenstuhl" is still the best English rendering. It is certainly in harmony with the Scriptural statements regarding the Lord's "sitting" between the cherubim (Num. vii. 89). Dr. Meek's "propitiatory" is, of course, much to be preferred to Dr. Moffatt's "lid." But a Latinism that is at least as old as Wyclif and comes from the Vulgate does not impress us as characterized by modernity.

A great stumbling block to the translator is the difficulty of being consistent. The Old Testament is a large book. One of the most obvious weaknesses of the Moffatt translation is its inconsistency. In this case, where there were four translators there are inconsistencies which detract not a little from the value of the translation. Thus, the word "name" is a familiar one in the Old Testament. The expression "for my (thy, his) name's sake" is of frequent occurrence. Dr. Powis Smith retains it in Pss. cxliii. 11, cxlviii. 13, as does Dr. Meek in Joshua vii. 9 and Dr. Gordon in Isa. xlvi. 9, lxvi. 5. Yet in Pss. cvi. 8, cix. 21 he changes it to "reputation," and the familiar language of Ps. xxiii. 3 "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" he alters into "He guides me in safe paths, for his fame's sake." It is hard to see that anything is gained by such an inconsistent method of translation.

A more serious example of such inconsistency is furnished us by the rendering of the word "anointed" (AV). The familiar rendering is retained by Drs. Smith and Gordon. Dr. Waterman, on the contrary, has rendered it "Messiah" in Samuel, but "anointed" in Chronicles. It is decidedly startling, in view of the restricted usage of the word "Mes-

siah" to which Christians everywhere are accustomed, to read in 2 Sam. i. 16 "I have slain the Lord's Messiah." We cannot see that this is required by any change in the use of the English words. But certainly if such a change is made, this should be done uniformly and consistently.

As to this question of consistency Dr. Powis Smith tells us: "The Editor has left his fellow-workers free to express themselves as they would, and has aimed at uniformity only in the most essential matters. If it be felt that each translator has his own style, this should not be regarded as a defect, for each document in the Old Testament has a style of its own, and the extent to which such stylistic characteristics are ignored by translators is a measure of their failure. Each book ought to speak its own message in its own way, even in a translation." There is an element of truth, no doubt, in this statement. But it clearly does not apply to such inconsistencies as we have just cited. The fact of the matter is that to translate the Old Testament well and really improve on the standard versions which are generally in use is a very difficult and arduous task and one which requires very much more time and effort than the "modern" translators seem willing to give to it.

It would be possible to give a number of other examples of changes in phraseology which, to say the least, constitute in our opinion no improvement upon the familiar language of the AV. The above must suffice to call attention to them. But there is a further class of changes which are of especial importance, because they indicate a dogmatic bias on the part of the translators which is highly significant. Thus we have failed to find in this translation the familiar word "soul." We should hesitate to say that it is never found in the version, but the fact that in such passages as "He restoreth my soul" (Ps. xxiii. 3), "My soul thirsteth for thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 1), "Bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psalm ciii. 1), "In whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1), the words "life," "spirit," "whole being," and "I" are substituted certainly indicates an unwillingness to use this familiar word. We cannot but won-

der whether the avoidance of the word "soul" is out of deference to Dr. Powis Smith's one-time colleague at Chicago University, Professor John Dewey, in whose behaviorist vocabulary there is of course no room for this old fashioned word. The change, however it is to be explained, is important as an indication of the kind of "modernity" represented in this translation.

Similarly, it is safe to assert that Dr. Meek would not have rendered Genesis i. 11, "Then God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and the various kinds of fruit-trees that bear fruit containing their seed!'" which is certainly a very awkward rendering, were he not seeking to evade the force of the plain declaration of the narrative that the law of increase in the natural world is reproduction "after its kind." His translation is clearly influenced by the fact that the law of the stability of species which is so plainly stated here and which is so obviously the law of the natural world as we know it today, is the most serious objection to the widely accepted, but also widely rejected, theory of evolution by reproductive variation.

In Gen. iii. 15 the reference to the "seed" of the woman is made indefinite and generic ("Your posterity and hers . . . they . . . you"). There is nothing in the narrative itself to require this. It brings the narrative, it is true, into harmony with the mythological interpretation which sees in this passage an explanation of man's instinctive aversion to snakes; but it also makes it flatly contradict the Messianic interpretation given by Paul in Gal. iii. 16. "The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (Deut. vi. 4) does scant justice to this great declaration, called by the Jews the Shema, regarding the essential nature of the religion of Israel. It is clearly so phrased as to make it affirm nothing more than monolatry or henotheism.²¹ "A book of law" (2 Kings xxii. 8) tones down the

²¹ Like the rendering "various kinds" cited above, this is a novel rendering which is not favored by the Hebrew nor supported by the versions. That "one" can be used in the sense of "alone" is to be recognized (e.g. Josh. xxii. 20); but certainly the natural way of saying "alone" would

familiar rendering of the AV "the book of the law" in the interest of the Wellhausen theory of a composite Pentateuch. It is changes such as these which impress the reader with the fact that the compelling reason for a new translation of the Old Testament lies not in the archaic phraseology of the version of 1611 but in the doctrinal implications of this phraseology which are unacceptable to the "modern" mind. And since we believe that this archaic phraseology has been singularly successful in expressing the thought of the still more archaic origin, we are loath to see modern phrasing made the occasion and the pretext for altering the meaning of that original.

In view of the rather ambitious sub-title of this volume, which would seem to imply that it is distinctly and distinctively American, it may be noted that of the four translators only one, Dr. Waterman, is an American by birth: Dr. Smith was born in England, Dr. Meek in Canada, Dr. Gordon in Scotland. Consequently the word "American" must be used in a somewhat wider sense, we think, than that in which "the writings of Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Wilson are American." In fact we are told that the word is not intended as a "limitation" but an "enrichment" of our mother-tongue and that the volume "aims at being easily understood wherever English is spoken." We would not be regarded as provincial, nor would we insist that an American translation must be solely the work of native-born Americans. But we do think it would have been better if this volume had been called "a Chicago University translation," for that institution seems clearly to be the connecting link between the four translators. Dr. Smith has been connected with Chicago University, first as student and then as teacher since 1895, becoming Associate Professor of Semitics in 1912, and full professor in 1915. Drs. Waterman and Meek received the Ph.D. degree from Chicago University in 1912 and 1915 respectively, while Dr.

be to use לברו. The word "one" is undoubtedly to be understood as emphasizing the unity of God. This is the interpretation that has been accepted by Jew and Christian alike throughout the centuries.

Gordon was visiting professor in the summer terms of 1917 and 1923. In calling this translation of the Old Testament "an American translation" the intention is obviously to indicate that it is a companion volume to the translation of the New Testament (1923) prepared by Dr. Smith's colleague, Dr. Goodspeed, to which the name has already been given. We call attention to this matter because this title makes a claim for this volume which we believe to be without adequate warrant. We are quite ready to call this volume a "Chicago University Translation." It is quite representative of that theological liberalism of which Chicago University is an active exponent. We challenge the right of this theological liberalism to call itself distinctively "American."

Princeton.

OSWALD T. ALLIS.