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Taken by itself Zwemer's book would give the impression that there are very few Muhammadan agrapha, and that what there are can make no claim at all to embody any valuable material. He gives a useful bibliography of works on the general question, which, however, it is unnecessary to mention here since they contain no agrapha.

One point arises out of some of the facts just adduced. Remembering that Gospel sayings and doings are frequently found in the Hadith literature attributed to Muhammad, is it not conceivable that in some cases of divergent ascription of non-evangelical matter the same process has taken place and the same motive operated—a desire, perhaps, to gain kudos for the prophet or one of his followers? At any rate, there ought not to be an assumption that the opposite proceeding has always obtained, and that the ascription to Muhammad is the more original. In some instances, the date of the opposing witnesses is important; for example, a variant of the 'bridge' agraphon is found as a saying of Muhammad, but not before the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Asin's work referred to below, p. 369.

A small addition to our material was made in 1916 by A. Mingana, who published, in *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES* for May, three agrapha which he had found in a rare Arabic work of the thirteenth century called *The Book of the Beautiful Admonition*. One of these should perhaps hardly be included, since it occurs in the Quran as what Jesus will say to God at the last day. The following is more useful:

'O Doctors and Teachers of the Law! You have sat down in the way to the world to come; you do not walk in it yourselves in order to reach heaven, and you do not permit others to walk in it and to reach heaven. But the ignorant is more excusable than the learned.'

Mingana refers to Margoliouth, and appears not to rule out the possibility of some valuable elements being found in such passages. 'To say that they have simply been invented,' he says, 'by the writers who quoted them is an hypothesis which does not seem to be very attractive.'

(To be concluded.)

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## The American Translation of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>

BY PROFESSOR J. A. SELBIE, D.D., UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

MUCH has been done in recent years to make the Old Testament more intelligible and interesting to English readers. The Revised Version did much, and, but for the restrictions under which the translators worked, would have done much more, to secure this end. The need for more work of the kind and the growing interest in the Old Testament have been abundantly evidenced by the welcome given in many quarters to Dr. Moffatt's translation; and we feel sure that the appearance of this American translation will be hailed as a boon on both sides of the Atlantic.

When we read in the Preface that 'Our guiding principle has been that the official Massoretic text must be adhered to as long as it made satisfactory sense,' we were a little afraid lest the translation

might show the same imperfections as are exhibited by the R.V. text when compared with its marginal renderings. Happily this fear has proved to be to a very large extent groundless. No doubt the four distinguished scholars, the result of whose labours has now been given to the world, are convinced that, in some instances, their translation of the official Hebrew text, although intelligible, does not represent the true original. At the same time the ninety-one closely printed pages of 'Textual Notes,' showing the departures from the Massoretic text, are a sufficient indication that the translators have felt themselves free to give a considerable latitude to their instructions.

We have nothing but admiration for the form of the printed page, which is like that of an ordinary book. We venture to think that nothing has done more to repel readers of the Bible as literature than the printing of it in double columns. Space may thus be saved and the cost of production reduced, but these gains are dearly bought. In the present

<sup>1</sup> *The Old Testament: An American Translation*. By Alex. R. Gordon, Theophile J. Meek, J. M. Powis Smith, Leroy Waterman. Edited by J. M. P. Smith (University of Chicago Press, \$7.50; and Cambridge University Press, 37s. 6d. net).

volume not only have we admirable paragraph divisions, but the text runs across the whole page, and in the case of dialogues a new line is given to each speaker, as in a modern novel. This has inevitably swollen the translation to over sixteen hundred pages, but we feel sure that the methods adopted will make the Old Testament a more readable book than it has ever been. The reader is greatly helped also by the well-chosen headings which are freely interspersed in the different sections, while the distinction between prose and poetry is indicated typographically. In this way those who have no acquaintance with Hebrew poetry are enabled to form some conception of the balance and the rhythm of the original when, as so often in the writings of the Prophets, not to speak of books like Psalms and Job, a poetical structure is introduced.

The present writer shares a widely cherished prejudice against much of what passes on the other side of the Atlantic for English, and he began the perusal of the present volume with a dread lest the purity of language to which the A.V. has accustomed us might have suffered through the intrusion of Americanisms. Here, again, we have been agreeably disappointed. In this country, it is true, we should not say that 'Pharaoh hitched up his chariot,' but that is a comparatively trifling matter, and there are not many expressions like this. We are glad, too, to observe that the Garden of Eden remains a garden and has not become a park, and that the ark of Noah has not been transformed into a barge. A more serious fear was not unnatural, namely, that we might encounter expressions unworthy of the dignity of Scripture. While the present translation is singularly free from such blemishes, we have noted a few that we think might have been avoided. We mention only two. The first of these unfortunately occurs very early in the volume and might easily create a prejudice against the translator at the very outset. Gn 3<sup>8</sup> is rendered: 'They heard the sound of the LORD God taking a walk in the garden for his daily airing.' Not only does this jar upon our ears, but it is not a correct translation of the Hebrew original. Again, in Gn 25<sup>30</sup>, Esau says to Jacob: 'Let me have a swallow of that red stuff there.' It may be argued that this form of expression is justified by the principle laid down in the Preface that 'if the original be trivial, commonplace, and prosaic, the translation must take on the same character.' Perhaps so, but—

One of the points to which one naturally turns with interest concerns the way in which the Divine

name, the Tetragrammaton, is treated. We fancy it is now universally recognized that a very serious mistake was made by Dr. Moffatt when he adopted 'the Eternal' as the equivalent of JHWH. More wisely, the American translators have practically adhered to the course followed by the E.VV., which usually have 'the LORD.' But is even this entirely satisfactory? There is no getting over the fact that JHWH was practically the *personal* name of Israel's God, and in certain passages it is only by introducing a personal name that justice is done to the original. Take two typical illustrations. Ex 6<sup>2</sup> is thus rendered by Dr. Moffatt: 'I am the Eternal; I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty; but I never made myself known to them as "the Eternal."' Comment on this is needless. The American translation reads: 'I am the LORD; I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but did not make myself known to them by my name Yahweh [the LORD].' Surely this proves, as Professor Meek by his rendering implicitly admits, that the passage loses its force unless the personal name is introduced. Or take 1 K 18<sup>19</sup>, where, at the end of the conflict on Mount Carmel, the people cry, 'The Eternal is God, the Eternal is God' (Moffatt), or, 'The LORD, he is God, the LORD, he is God' (American tr.). Why did not Professor Waterman render, 'Yahweh [in contrast with Baal], he is God'? We venture to suggest that in a good many other instances the American translators would have done well to introduce the name 'Yahweh,' or (preferably, in a popular work) the familiar, if artificial, name 'Jehovah.'

The present translation is the work of four scholars, each of whom is primarily responsible for his own part. Old Testament scholars are very familiar with the names of two of them, Professor A. R. Gordon of Montreal, and Professor J. M. P. Smith of Chicago. The other two, whose names are perhaps less familiar, are Professor T. J. Meek of Toronto, and Professor L. Waterman of Michigan. The work of translation has been assigned as follows:

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| PROFESSOR MEEK . . .  | The Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Song of Songs, Lamentations. |
| PROFESSOR WATERMAN.   | Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.                 |
| PROFESSOR SMITH . . . | Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, the Twelve Minor Prophets.              |

PROFESSOR GORDON . Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.

We have read a large part of the work of Professors Meek and Waterman, and have examined crucial passages in both ; and, whether one always agrees with their renderings or not, one cannot but recognize that a strong case can be made out in their favour, and we feel that we are in the hands of thoroughly competent scholars. Both of them have done excellent work in their translations of the Pentateuch and the Historical Books, and we should like to congratulate Professor Meek on his fine translation and division of the Song of Songs.

The most important, as well as the most difficult, part of the work has been distributed between Professor J. M. P. Smith and Professor A. R. Gordon, and it could not have been put in better hands. Not to speak of other services rendered by Professor Smith, he is already very favourably known from his commentaries on some of the Minor Prophets in the 'I.C.C.' Hence we turn with confidence to his translation of all the Twelve, and our expectations are fulfilled. For instance, he has done everything possible to help towards the understanding of the great prophet Hosea, whose message has frequently been almost meaningless to readers of the A.V. The translation of the Psalter is a crucial test, which we feel fairly confident Professor Smith will be generally considered to have passed well. Perhaps a few of the verbal changes made without altering the meaning of the A.V. might have been dispensed with. He has upon his side a great weight of scholarship in the instances where he departs from renderings that have been endorsed by associations of long-standing. In a great many of these we are at one with him, but he will pardon us for saying that we are persuaded that, like Dr. Moffatt, he has destroyed the value of the 73rd Psalm by rendering v.<sup>24</sup>, 'By thy counsel thou leadest me ; and by the hand thou dost take me after thee.' A careful study of this psalm has convinced the present writer that the real meaning of that verse is given in Professor McFadyen's rendering: 'By a plan of Thine Thou guidest me, and *wilt afterward take me to glory.*' The Book of Job has, thanks to the labours of many scholars, had at last something like justice done to it, and its understanding and appreciation will be greatly helped by Professor Smith's brilliant translation.

Professor Gordon needs no introduction to readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. His services in all departments of Old Testament study have gained

him a foremost place among Semitic scholars. Having read the whole of the translations entrusted to him in the present volume, we have no hesitation in saying that by these he has laid us under a new obligation. We knew that he was thoroughly at home with the Prophets, and his translations of Proverbs and Daniel show the hand of a master also of the Hókhma and the Apocalyptic Literature. In following him we feel ourselves on sure ground. Not only does his work reach the high-water mark of scholarship, we have not encountered a single expression which seemed to offend against either good English or good taste. He has succeeded admirably in his rendering of Isaiah, notably in such testing passages as the dirge on the king of Babylon in ch. 14 and the famous Servant passage, Is 52<sup>13</sup>-53. And what shall we say of his translation of Jeremiah? No higher praise could be given than the expression of our conviction that this translation and the way in which it is presented on the printed page ought to set the personality and the work of Jeremiah in a clearer light than before, and to gain a popularity hitherto too often withheld for the works of one who is regarded by most Old Testament scholars as the greatest of the prophets. We do not envy Professor Gordon the task he had to face in translating the Book of Ezekiel, whose obscurity of thought is often aggravated by the corrupt condition of its text. But here, as well as in Proverbs and Daniel (from whose pages 'Messiah' as a proper name rightly disappears), he has very adequately responded to the call made upon him. The sound scholarship and sane judgment which underlie all Professor Gordon's work find their complement in the present volume in a corresponding felicity of expression.

Perhaps we may close by noting one or two minute but important changes on the A.V. (all selected from Professor Gordon's translations). In Is 9<sup>6</sup> we have 'godlike hero' for the misleading 'Mighty God' (strangely retained by the R.V.). In Is 20<sup>1</sup> 'Field Marshal' has taken the place of the E.V.V. 'Tartan,' which in our boyhood had suggestions connected with a kilt. In Jer 51<sup>59</sup> the mysterious 'quiet prince' is no longer a Serene Highness but has become a 'quarter-master.' In Ezk 11<sup>16</sup> 'a little sanctuary' becomes 'little of a sanctuary.' Some will grudge the loss of the old familiar phrase, but the change will commend itself to Hebrew scholars.

The University of Chicago, the editor and his fellow-translators, the publishers and the printers, are all to be congratulated on the production of a volume so worthy of its great subject.