

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

am alone, or seen of men, I place all my actions in the sight of God, who shall judge them, and to whom I have consecrated them all."

"Such are my opinions, and each day of my life I bless my Redeemer, who has transformed me, a man full of weakness, misery, and lust, of pride and ambition, into a man exempt from all these evils, by the power of His grace, to which all the glory is due; since of myself I have only misery and sin."

MONCREIFF.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE.

FOURTH PAPER.

CASES of "literalism" and "obscurity" in the English of the R.V. have been sufficiently dealt with. This Paper will tabulate instances where we think that an obsolete, or imperfect interpretation of the Hebrew has received the Revisers' suffrage. The writers may remark at the outset that they have re-examined (often independently of each other) well nigh every hard passage in the Hebrew Bible. They have arrived at the same decision in quite nineteen cases out of twenty. It is their misfortune to find, on turning to the R.V., about a third of what seemed unassailable translations, not exhibited in the text, but "*skied*" in a marginal annotation. In self-defence they again draw the reader's attention to the fact that a two-thirds majority was required before the Revisers could emend an A.V. mis-translation.

Gen. xxxvii. 3. Joseph's "*coat of many colours*" remains. We know no better reason for attaching this sense to

the Heb. כַּתְנַת פְּסִים than the fact that LXX. here gives χιτῶνα ποικίλον, and Vulg. "tunicam polymitam." The same phrase occurs in 2 Sam. xiii. 18, where these Versions give the preferable rendering, χιτῶν ἀστραγαλωτός, "talaris tunica," i.e. a robe reaching down to the ankles, the unusual length indicating special dignity. The composition of the term may thus be illustrated by our modern word, *paidâmah*, which literally means "feet-clothing." Or as כַּף is used of the "palm" of the hand in Chaldee, it is possible (but not so likely) that a "tunica manciata," or "long-sleeved tunic" is meant. Of course the Chaldee word does mean also a "piece," or "patch," but we can hardly believe it was thought glorious in lands noted for graceful apparel to dress like a clown in a pantomime. A "long robe" adapted to a life of luxurious ease, suggests itself. Joseph's brethren in work-a-day garb were naturally jealous of his being dressed like an idle gentleman.

Gen. xlv. 24. "See that ye *fall not out* by the way." We see no reason why Joseph's brethren should "fall out" on the road homewards, but they had every reason to "be afraid"; and to think twice before venturing again into their injured brother's presence. The R.V. renders this verb in Ps. iv. 4, "stand in awe." Like our "be nervous," it may indicate agitation from emotions of divers kinds. Here surely the all-powerful viceroy foresees the suspicions and second thoughts, which his guilty brethren will entertain when they have left his palace; so he says, "*Do not be afraid during the journey.*"

Gen. xlix. 14. "A strong ass *couching down between the sheep-folds*" is not a familiar spectacle; and the reader will wonder why the Patriarch chose such an odd simile in forecasting the fate of Isaachar. Nothing in the root connects the Heb. מִשְׁפָּתִים with "sheep." What is meant is surely, "A strong ass *couching in the midst of the pen,*" the very type of sullen but unresenting indiffer-

entism. Let him who doubts keep a donkey in the stable, and compare its habitual pose with the erect attitude of a horse. But the "couching" here originally suggested a more striking contrast. Judah, says the Patriarch, is a lion couching in his dreaded lair; Issachar is the spiritless couching beast of the stall, destined "to bow down his shoulder to bear, and become a servant under task-work." Similarly in Judg. v. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 13, we would substitute "*pens*" or "*enclosures*" for "*sheep-folds*." It is by no means certain in the latter case that it is not a *lager*, or camp-enclosure. Well, anything is better than the A.V.'s "Though ye have lien among the *pots*," albeit this rendering is sometimes invested with a deep ethical significance in devotional books. Job xxix. 24.

"If I laughed on them they *believed it not*." The pious sheikh is describing the philanthropy of his past life, and the general respect he won among the tribesmen. But a man whose smile cannot be credited is scarcely an attractive character. Besides there is no "if." Rend. "*I would smile on them [when] they were perturbed*." The root אָמַן denotes primarily *standing firm*; and there is no need to press its ethical use with reference to *belief*.

Job xxxix. 24. Here too this last remark applies. R.V. gives "*Neither believeth he that it is the voice of the trumpet*." We think the war-horse would not entertain any belief on the subject. Rend. "*And he stands not still at the voice of the trumpet*." Ps. xxv. 17. "*The troubles of my heart are enlarged*." Surely it is plain that

צָרָה "distress," is in antithesis to the verb, which must be pointed הִרְחִיבוּ. We will not try to reproduce the figures of "straits" and "enlargement" familiar to all scholars. Rend. "*My heart is in distress, do Thou give it deliverance*."

Ps. xli. 3. "Thou *makest all his bed* in his sickness." Were Jewish beds "made"? Would הפך "to turn," be the verb to represent the pro-

cess? And why "all," seeing a bed can hardly be made in part? The noun doubtless means here not the "bed," but the "being bed-ridden." Rend. "Thou, when he is sick, wilt *turn all his prostration* [*scil.* to health]."

Ps. lxxii. 15. "*And they shall live*, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba." This emendation is quite unwarrantable. The Heb. is "*And may he live*," and the phrase יחי המלך "*vivat rex*" was doubtless in the writer's mind. We note that the whole Psalm is a prayer, not a prophecy. We must render, therefore, "*may it be given*"; and substitute the precative "*may*" for "*shall*" throughout the piece.

Ps. lxxiii. 25. "*There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee*." Surely the Heb. does not mean this. Literally it is, "With Thee I delight not in the earth." This we render freely, "*In communion with Thee, I need no earthly pleasure*."

Ps. lxxviii. 51. "*The chief of their strength in the land of Ham*." Other passages make it certain that the Heb. means "firstlings of virile strength," as Delitzsch puts it. In fact, this second clause of the verse is a mere variation of the first, which runs "and smote all the firstborn in Egypt." But there is no need to reproduce the idiom. Rend. "The *first-begotten* in the land of Ham." So too in Ps. cv. 36, we must give "*all their first begotten sons*" for R.V.'s "*chief of all their strength*."

Ps. xc. 4. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, *when it is past*." Yesterday must be past. The R.V. makes the final clause a superfluity. Surely we should render "A thousand years *when past*, are but as yesterday." The singular of the verb merely denotes that the thousand years are regarded as a single period.

Ps. cxvi. 15. "*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints*." We do not understand the Revisers' meaning, but we hold that יקר here has its primary signification, "weighty." We may

keep the idiom by rendering "No light matter in the sight of the LORD, etc."

Ps. cxxiii. 5. The *proud* waters had gone over our soul." Here too we must think of the primary meaning of the adjective, rather than its ethical significance. Rend. "The *swelling* waters," or "The *surging* waters."

Prov. x. 9. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways *shall be known.*" Irish members, and the dire penalty of being "named," at once suggest themselves to us. A good verse ends in mere bathos. We believe Jer. xxxi. 19 gives sufficient proof that נודע may mean "*be corrected.*" We might draw arguments from the use of other Voices of the verb. If this be not allowed we must paraphrase—"gets infamy," or "gets notoriety."

Prov. xi. 21. "[*Though*] hand [*join*] in hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished." The force of the expression "hand in hand," which recurs in xvi. 5, is not certainly known. But the interpretation which R.V. retains from A.V. is the least likely that has been suggested. We prefer the view that it means "*From generation to generation.*" "My hand upon it," of the margin, is preferable to the rendering of the text.

Prov. xii. 27. "The slothful man *roasteth not that which he took in hunting.*" Again the margin is more scholarly than the text. "The slothful man *will not ensnare his prey,*" is better; the Commentaries will tell the student why.

Prov. xvii. 7: "*Excellent* speech becometh not a fool." Of course the reader will think "excellence of speech," or "eloquence," is meant. What the Revisers intend we know not, but probably they endorse Gesenius' "*verba egregia de virtute et sapientia.*" We think this view of שפת יתר is right, but "excellent speech," does not express it. Besides, "fool" is not exact. The fact is, Hebrew has a superabundance of terms for "fool" which must have delighted the late Mr. Carlyle, and נבל represents

the mischievous rather than the thick-headed type of fool. Freely rendered, the verse = "To talk of virtue becometh not a villain."

Prov. iv. 7. "Wisdom is the principal thing; [therefore] get wisdom." It is better to render, "As the first step in wisdom, get wisdom," though this translation may not be so attractive. We may compare our own English proverb, "Nothing succeeds like success."

Prov. iv. 23. "Keep thy heart with all diligence." This is hardly possible. Rend. "more than all else that thou keepest," taking *כִּשְׁמֵר* in sense of *כִּשְׁמֵרֶת*, Exod. xii. 6, etc.

Prov. vi. 13. "He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet." We demur to this view of the verb *מָלַל*. Rend. "shuffleth."

Prov. vi. 30. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul, etc." Practically the verse means that we do not let such a thief off easy. Rend. "deal lightly with" for "despise."

Prov. vi. 34. Apropos of the outraged husband—"For jealousy is the rage of a man." We hardly know what the R.V. means. But unless it be admissible to give "For jealousy is a mighty rage," we must render freely, "For jealousy begets rage in the man."

Prov. viii. 36. Wisdom says, "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." The antithesis, "whoso findeth me findeth life," surely endorses the equally allowable "misseth me," for "sinneth against me."

Prov. xxviii. 18. "Whoso walketh uprightly shall be delivered: but he that is perverse in [his] ways shall fall at once." The Heb. is literally "he that is entangled in two ways"; we have the same phrase in ver. 6. A "Pecksniff" or "Mr. Facing-both-ways" seems to be contrasted with a man of fixed principle. The word "uprightly" is misleading; for there is no metaphor connected with walking in the first clause. And we render not "at once," but "in one of them"; the hypocrite's very inconsistency brings him to grief at last. We must render very freely to do justice to this verse.

We suggest "A man of consistent life shall go on safely; but he who tries double courses shall fall in one of them."

Eccles. xii. 13: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the *whole* [duty] of man." The Hebrew is exactly reproduced in the LXX.'s *ὅτι τοῦτο πᾶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, "for this is the whole of man." We regard the introduction of the word "duty" as quite out of keeping with the tenor of the book. It is a philosophical rather than a moral disquisition. "The whole *metier* of man" would express our view, were the term allowable. "The whole *business*" is better than "the whole *duty*."

Isa. i. 27. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her *converts* with righteousness." Is it not better to interpret "they that return of her" (i.e. *her restored people*) as margin? We have nothing to do with proselytes here.

Isa. ii. 22. "Cease ye from man *whose breath is in his nostrils*." This should rather be "*in whose nostrils is mere breath*."

Isa. v. 30. "The light is darkened in the *clouds* thereof." We believe ערפִים is not "clouds," but is either "*destruction*," or "*ruins*." We cannot forbear quoting the bold rendering of a great scholar to whom Cambridge owes much, "An enemy comes with the light; and darkness sets in on her ruins"; i.e. dawn brings the foe, dusk finishes his work. Isa.

vii. 16. "The land whose two kings thou *abhorrest* shall be forsaken." To "abhor" in the modern sense is not the true meaning of קִי. Rend. "The land whose two kings thou *dreadest*." Similarly in Exod. i. 12, rend. "And they *dreaded* the children of Israel," not "And they were *grieved because of* the children of Israel," as R.V.

Isa. xl. 2. "Cry unto her that her *warfare* is accomplished." We prefer "that her *time of service* is accomplished"; and similarly in Job vii. 1, where R.V. gives, "Is there not a *warfare* to man upon earth?" That צבָה can bear this meaning is shown by Num. iv. 23; viii. 24.

Isa. xli. 26. "Who hath declared from the beginning that we may know, and beforetime that we may say that He is "righteous." Surely "right" rather than "righteous." צדק often refers specially to truthfulness; here it = "il a raison."

Isa. xlii. 19. "Who is blind as *he that is at peace with me.*" Despite Gesenius, we do not believe כְּשֶׁלֶם can mean "he that is at peace with me" (כְּשֶׁלֶם?): nor yet "*he that is perfect,*" as A.V: "*He that has been recompensed,*" seems to be the meaning.

Isa. xlv. 15. "Verily thou art a God *that hidest thyself,* O God of Israel, the Saviour." Here as often, we regret that speeches are not indicated by inverted commas. Probably the Revisers take the speech, as we do, as proceeding from the African converts of ver. 14. In this case (indeed in any case), why should the God who has revealed Himself be called "God that hidest Thyself." Rend. "*A God that actest mysteriously,*" His thoughts not being as men's thoughts, etc. cf. vv. 9, 10.

Isa. xlvii. 3. "I will take vengeance, and will *accept no man.*" This we suppose is to be interpreted by the note, "Or *make truce with no man.*" But we believe the passage simply means, "I will take vengeance and *shall encounter no resistance,*" lit. "shall encounter no man." So Symmachus and Jerome.

Isa. lii. 15. We were distressed to find the old rendering, "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations." What commentator of any note retains this interpretation of מִי? We admit critics differ as to the root. But they are agreed that the words mean practically, "So shall he *startle* many nations." Those who were "astonied" at his grievous degradation shall be equally "startled" at his great exaltation. Cf. LXX. οὕτως θαυμάσονται ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐπ' αὐτῶ.

Isa. liii. 8. "For the transgression of my people *was he stricken.*" We prefer "*who themselves deserved the stroke.*" We confess also a sneaking fondness for the well-known translation, "It was exacted and he was

held responsible" in ver. 7. But the whole passage is notoriously difficult. The Revisers have dealt fairly well with it, albeit in piecemeal fashion. But what do they mean by their "yet" in ver. 12: "I will divide him a portion with the great . . . because he poured out his soul unto death . . . yet he bare the sin of many." Apparently they give a slightly adversative force to וְהוּא. God thus rewards him, because he *not only* suffered, *but* suffered for unamiable characters. But we doubt if the reader will see this. "*Bearing the while* the sin of many" would be better.

Isa. liv. 11. "I will set thy stones *in fair colours.*" Is this rendering based on the mistaken connexion of פֶּךָ and φῦκος? פֶּךָ is certainly "antimony" or "stibium," used by Oriental females to darken the eyelid. We believe that in this description of architectural ornamentation the metaphor of the "bride" (ver. 5) is still latent. But anyhow, gray ore of antimony is not "fair colours."

Isa. lix. 18. "*According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay.*" Surely it is certain גַּמְלוֹת here means "requital," "retribution," cf. Jer. li. 56. Rend. "*On principles of retribution* will He render."

Amos vi. 10. "And a man's *uncle* shall take him up, even he that burneth him." וֹרֵךְ sometimes="uncle," but it clearly means here either "*near relation*" or (as commonly) "*friend.*" A man seldom expects his "uncle" to preside at his cremation or burial.

Nah. ii. 9. There is none end of the store, the *glory of all pleasant furniture.*" We appreciate the archaisms "none" and "pleasant," but should prefer a lucid rendering. "*There is no end of the stores: there is a quantity of all precious vessels,*" seems to express the sense.

Zech. x. 12: "And they shall *walk up and down* in his name, saith the LORD." What is meant is— their life shall be regulated by the fear of Jehovah. But why "up and down?" We might as well render in Gen. v. 22, "Enoch walked up and down with God."

In our next paper we shall notice stiff passages which the Revisers have not tried to cope with. We will here briefly notice another fault in the R.V.—neglect of an emphasis distinctly marked in the original. Thus in Isa. xxxvi. 10 the Assyrian vaunt is tamely rendered, “And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it.” The Heb. is, “And now is it without the LORD that I am come up, etc.”

Isa. xli. 27. “I first will say unto Zion, Behold, behold them.” How are we to emphasize this? By its position and by the context the stress is thrown on the Heb. word “first.” We must render either “I am the first to say to Zion, etc.,” or “I am beforehand in saying to Zion, etc.,” according as we interpret the passage.

Isa. liii. 4 is still tamely translated “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” Yet the emphasis of the Heb. is plain, “Surely our griefs He bore, and it was our sorrows that He carried.” This brings out the antithesis of the sequel, “Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.”

Ps. lxxiii. 28. “But it is good for me to draw near unto God.” In the Heb. there is a marked contrast between the Psalmist’s happy choice and that of men who, he says, are “far” from God. “But I—drawing nigh to God is good for me.”

Ps. lxxv. 3. “The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I have set up the pillars of it.” Who notes the emphasis on the “I”? But the whole Psalm is miserably rendered, and no uninstructed reader will guess what it is about. This verse wears a very different aspect if rendered, “When the land and all its inhabitants were dissolved, it was I who poised up its foundations.”

Ps. lxxvi. 8. “Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,” Would the reader imagine that “heaven” and “earth” were here in strongest antithesis. We render “From Heaven Thou didst issue sentence; Earth feared

and was still." The baffled invader (probably Sennacherib) is regarded as the world-power arraying itself in impotent fury against Jehovah.

A. C. JENNINGS.

W. H. LOWE.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

XI.

CONCILIATORY AND HORTATORY TRANSITION TO
POLEMICS.

"This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.—Col. ii. 4-7 (Rev. Ver.).

NOTHING needs more delicacy of hand and gentleness of heart than the administration of warning or reproof, especially when directed against errors of religious opinion. It is sure to do harm unless the person reproofed is made to feel that it comes from true kindly interest in him, and does full justice to his honesty. Warning so easily passes into scolding, and sounds to the warned so like it even when the speaker does not mean it so, that there is special need to modulate the voice very carefully.

So in this context, the Apostle has said much about his deep interest in the Colossian Church, and has dwelt on the passionate earnestness of his solicitude for them, his conflict of intercession and sympathy, and the large sweep of his desires for their good. But he does not feel that he can venture to begin his warnings till he has said something more, so as to conciliate them still further, and to remove from their minds other thoughts unfavourable to the sympathetic reception of his words. One can fancy some