

REPLY

TO THE

STRICTURES ON THE REMARKS

MADE ON THE TRANSLATION

OF GENESIS AND EXODUS

IN THE

Revision of the Chinese Scriptures.

BY M. S. CULBERTSON.

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CANTON.

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1852.

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## A REPLY, &c.

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A PAMPHLET, dated June 16th, 1851, has recently been issued by the Rev. Dr. Medhurst and the Rev. Messrs. Stronach and Milne, in answer to some remarks on the version of portions of the Scriptures executed by the Committee of Delegates. With the second part of that pamphlet I have nothing to do. It seems due to myself and to others, however, not to allow the first part to pass without some reply; in which, I trust, I shall be able to show that I have not made "an unnecessary and unprovoked attack" on that version, and that I have not been influenced in what I have done by any selfish or improper motives.

Before proceeding to notice the replies to the criticisms, which had been made on some passages of Genesis and Exodus, it will be necessary to offer some explanation in reference to several points, concerning which the writers of that pamphlet think they have just ground of complaint.

In the first place, they complain of being held responsible for work done by them in connection with others. I think no one, who understands the circumstances, will regard this as unjust. With the exception of a few weeks, there were never more than five members actually laboring in the committee-room. This left Messrs. Medhurst, Stronach and Milne, who held similar views in reference to principles of translation, almost always in the majority; and it was of course in their power to adopt any rendering they thought proper, in spite of the opposition of the minority. But is not the majority of every public body justly held responsible for its acts?

Another ground of complaint is that the work was criticised while yet in its unfinished state. But under the peculiar circumstances of the case, and for the special object in view, this can hardly be regarded, by an impartial judge as giving any just cause of complaint. The object of the criticisms was not simply to object to the rendering of a



few isolated passages, but to bring to view certain general principles of translation which ran through the whole work. Although this translation had not received a final revision, as was distinctly stated in connection with the criticisms, it was not to be supposed that its authors would, on making such a revision, abandon the cardinal principles of translation for which they had all along contended, however they might alter particular passages. There was the less ground of complaint on this account, because the principles objected to were the same with those which are found in the Delegates' Version of the New Testament, which had been published sometime previously. Nor was this exhibition of those principles of translation made without good reason. The Committee of Delegates had stated, in giving some reasons for continuing the work after the withdrawal of three of its most prominent members, that important differences of opinion in reference to principles of translation had long existed in the Committee. This statement was publicly called in question from the press. In order to establish its truth, no other course was possible than to exhibit the principles acted upon in the work as it stood at the time when those, whose principles of translation were under consideration, ceased to have connection with the Committee. It was upon this that the statement was founded, and only from this source that the evidence to sustain it could be drawn.

In the pamphlet now under review, the opinion is very strongly expressed, and fortified by sundry considerations, that I ought to have been "*the last person*" to criticise the translation. On this point I confess I am not solicitous to offer any justification. What my qualifications for the task may have been is a matter of no consequence. Indeed no great amount of scholarship is needed in order to detect the difference between the original and the translation in the passages quoted. The only important question is, whether the facts of the case were or were not correctly represented. That they were correctly given seems to be admitted, for it is stated that about one half of the passages had already been altered, and the correctness of the renderings given of the remainder is not disputed, except in a few instances. In the disputed cases, the difference, with perhaps a single exception, is slight and unimportant. It was doubtless through inadvertence that stress is laid upon the assertion that the critic had had "no experience whatever" in the work of translation; for this could hardly be said of one who had been engaged for eight months almost exclusively in this work. It is fair to presume that those who had been laboring together during that period, were as well qualified

as any others to form a correct judgment as to which of their number, all things considered, was in the best position for undertaking such a task. The fact that it was undertaken at the request of the other delegates, though without any joint responsibility, is a sufficient justification, if any were needed.

Another subject of complaint is that the criticisms were not submitted to the persons concerned before sending them to their destination. I confess that my feelings prompted me to do so, and that is the course which should ordinarily be pursued. It is quite possible that there may be some who will not be able to see that this was a case which called for a departure from the general rule. If so, I can but protest that in pursuing the course which has been complained of, I had no such motive as has been imputed to me. I did not suppose, for a moment, that any advantage would accrue to myself personally, or to the cause I advocated, by such a course, or that the criticisms would be thus rendered in any way more effective. I could not but foresee, indeed, that when the criticisms came to the knowledge of the authors of the work criticised, no very pleasant feelings would be excited; but I knew that this could not, in any case, be very long avoided, and a delay of a few months was no great object. It was, of course, anticipated that if the Directors of the British and Foreign Bible Society thought my remarks were worthy of consideration, they could not but submit them to the parties concerned. There were objections, however, to submitting the criticisms to their inspection at that time. Objections were raised by some whose opinions I respected, and others occurred to my own mind. One of these was that, since I had what I thought sufficient reasons for not printing them, the criticisms must have been submitted in manuscript. I had every reason to believe that they would, in that case, be immediately answered in print; and thus their answer would be widely circulated, while the criticisms themselves would remain inaccessible to the public. That this opinion was not without foundation, seems to be sufficiently proved by the pamphlet now under review. True, the remarks, as they came into the hands of the signers of the pamphlet, were printed, but it was only for private circulation among a few confidential friends, if indeed they were not limited to the Directors of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and these translators themselves. I may add that I was aware of Bishop Boone's purpose to bring this whole matter before the public as soon as he could prepare an article on the subject, and I was therefore the less careful to bring my own remarks to the notice of the translators.



Here perhaps I might drop this topic, assured that I will at least be exculpated from the charge of having been influenced by dishonorable motives. But as my conduct has been characterised as "*very blameworthy*," and since I have been publicly called upon to "confess my fault before all," as though guilty of a serious crime, I may perhaps be pardoned for dwelling a little longer on this point. It will be to the purpose to show that those who pass this censure, do not judge similar conduct with the same severity when their judgment is under a different influence.

It should be borne in mind that the remarks objected to were made in self-defense; and it is surely proper for any one who deems it needful to defend his conduct, to do so privately if he deems it best, before those whose good opinion it is most important to secure. I may state, in connection with this, that the manner in which the three signers of the pamphlet in question, had previously put forth their claim to the right of perusing any private document in which they might happen to be mentioned, was rather calculated to repel, than to invite the courtesy demanded. I refer to a passage on page 12 of their printed letter of August 1st, 1851. Speaking of the Committee of Delegates, they say, "they were in honor bound first to explain to us, (before committing to writing or to print,) the course which they intended to pursue, in explaining to the public the causes of the withdrawal of the London Society's missionaries, or in publishing reflections upon the conduct of a Committee, in which those agents occupied a very prominent place." All this is called forth by a simple expression of disapprobation of their mode of translation. It is not to be expected that such a claim would be acknowledged as valid.

Had a copy of the criticisms been furnished it would have been of course merely as a matter of courtesy. Such courtesies however, between equals, are expected to be reciprocal. But those who have so strongly expressed their views, as quoted above, have certainly not been in the habit of extending to their former associates that courtesy which they blame them for withholding. Lest this statement should be called in question, it will be well to state one or two facts bearing on this point. After laboring for years in connection with others, they suddenly withdrew from them, on a notice of a single day, without assigning any other reason than that the Directors of the London Missionary Society had left them no alternative. If those Directors so peremptorily required this measure, they must have had reasons for so doing; and those reasons, if founded on correct information, must have been based on communications from their agents in China.

Those reasons too could hardly have been other than such as had some connection with the character, qualifications, or opinions of those who were engaged as their associates in the work. Yet those associates are left in entire ignorance of the causes which led to this result. This statement is not made by way of complaint. All that is desired is, that both parties be judged by the same rule, and that a liberty allowed to one be also allowed to the other; which no one, it is presumed, will consider unreasonable. In reference to the above quotation from the letter of August 1st, 1851, it is proper to say that the Committee of Delegates never attempted to explain to the public the causes of the withdrawal of the London Society's missionaries. They did but explain to the Bible Societies and their constituents, the reasons which governed their own course. This it was proper to do, though they certainly did not feel that in carrying on the work intrusted to them, they were guilty of any such impropriety as to render it necessary for them to "justify this conduct." It is to be presumed that the three members who withdrew from the Committee of Delegates, also explained to the Bible Societies, the reasons for their withdrawal. Yet they seem never to have felt "*in honor bound*," (as assuredly they were not) to communicate what they wrote to those with whom they were, or had been associated.

In reference to this point, printed letters must be placed on the same footing with others. This is expressly admitted, for in the letter of August 1st, 1851, this passage occurs:—"To give publicity to such statements (whether in a periodical or in letters to a Bible Society) without communicating with us on the subject, we can not but regard as unfair and uncandid." (Let. to the Editor of the Chinese Repository, p. 12.) If there be any difference between the two cases, it must be in favor of the mere manuscript letter. If a letter be really of such a character that it ought never to have been written, it must of course aggravate the wrong to multiply copies by the press. An injury done by a private letter is limited to a few individuals, and the correction is easily applied. But in the case of a published letter, the injury is indefinite in extent, and may affect many minds which no correction can ever reach. If this be so, and if Dr. Medhurst and his two associates were right in pronouncing it "unfair and uncandid" to withhold from them the perusal of the letters of which they complain, I am at a loss to understand how they justify to themselves the publication of their letters of January 30th, 1850, of August 1st, 1851, and of June 16th, 1852, without first submitting them to those whose conduct is therein held up to reproach. In the last case there were some



special reasons for such a course, for an individual is there censured for a performance of which the writers did not certainly know that he was the author, until much of the letter had been printed, and publicly rebuked for another production for which he was in no way responsible.

In this letter too, the writers quote, apparently with approbation, a letter "written home" by "a Chinese scholar of some eminence," in which there is a virtual accusation (supposed by him to be against myself) of dishonesty or gross incapacity. Why was not the conduct of the eminent scholar in question, at least as censurable as that of the persons who are so severely reprov'd in the same pages, for doing just what he did; that is, express disapprobation of the views of others without communicating with them on the subject.

From the above facts it may perhaps be right to infer, that the severe language employed by the authors of the pamphlet under consideration, does not express their deliberate judgment in their calmer moments. Whether this be so or not, it is not easy to see why a course of conduct which is "unfair and uncandid" in one, is not equally so in another.

Dr. Medhurst and his colleagues have called in question the purity of my motives in criticising their work. My only object was, they think, to disparage their labors, and that I was "so anxious to pounce upon something to find fault with," that I could not wait until their version was printed. I beg, with all sincerity, to assure them that I never had any wish to disparage their work. I would most heartily rejoice to see them produce a version of the Scriptures that would render all others needless. I have no doubt that they might produce an excellent version, were their principles of translation unobjectionable; and it is much to be regretted that those principles differ so widely from those which are now generally regarded as essential to a good version. I am persuaded that if they would secure for their version the confidence of their missionary associates, or of those who may hereafter succeed them, they must not persist in acting on the principles avowed in their late pamphlet. The views of other missionaries may be inferred from the fact, that no complete edition of the Delegates' Version of the New Testament has yet been printed, except at the presses of the London Missionary Society. The funds provided for this purpose by the Bible Societies are left unemployed. The want of the Epistles is painfully felt, but so far I can learn, the old versions would generally be preferred to the new, because they are considered to be more faithful.



To show what motives led me to criticise the work, which had been left in the hands of the Committee of Delegates at the time of the withdrawal of the three members who seceded, I will state the circumstances which called forth the criticisms in question. In the letter of August 1st, 1851, before referred to, I consider myself, along with others, virtually accused of dishonorable conduct in withholding from the other members our real sentiments in reference to principles of translation. My object was to refute this charge before those whose relations with us rendered it important to do so. Connected with this was the object previously stated—to establish the truth of the assertion, publicly called in question by Dr. Medhurst and his two associates, that there were important differences of opinion on this subject between the members of the Committee of Delegates, during their connection with it. Statements on this subject do not agree with those of the other delegates. It is the opinion of the latter that these differences were made so prominent, in every day's discussions, that no member of the Committee could possibly be ignorant of them.

In a note dated Nov. 10th 1851, Dr. Bridgman speaks as follows of what took place in the Committee:—" (1.) Often and plainly I told them that such conciseness as they insisted on, such omission of particles and other words, I could not sanction. (2) Repeatedly, when the manner of translating was under debate, the opinion was maintained by me that a *version* should so correspond to the original, that it or something closely resembling the original, might be reproduced from said version. (3) In preparing manuscript for the committee-room, great pains were taken to have my native assistant distinctly understand the sense and order of the words in the original; and in daily revising the Committee's version, I took care to point out to him all omissions. These, on more than one occasion, drew forth from him, *in their presence*, very strong animadversions, he referring to the 18th and 19th verses of the last chapter of the Apocalypse."

Mr. Shuck, in a note of the same date, says, "I again and again declared my disapproval of their course in translating. I distinctly remember the circumstance of telling them on one occasion, at the committee-table, that I believed every theologian and philologist of note in Europe and America, would differ from them in the principles of their renderings."

I can myself give testimony to the same purpose. I had not been many days sitting with the Committee, before I perceived that the lines were very distinctly drawn in reference to principles of translation. The three members in connection with the L. M. Society general-

ly voted together, and against the other members, when the question was between a more free and a more literal rendering. On one occasion I felt it my duty to say, that in my opinion other missionaries would not accept a version made on the principles on which they were then acting. On another occasion the departure from the original seemed to me so serious, that I could not refrain from expressing the opinion that it would be justly regarded as trifling with the word of God. Mr. Shuck, in the note above quoted, says, referring to this, "They remembered this remark of your's; and often referred to it afterwards, declaring their views *to differ from your's.*"

From these facts it is evident that if any members of the Committee never suspected any difference of opinion as to principles of translation, the fault can not be justly laid to the charge of their colleagues. I have, however, good authority for saying that such was not the case. This authority is Dr. Medhurst himself. In one of Dr. Bridgman's notes, which have been printed *nearly* entire in the pamphlet dated August 1st, 1851, and which I had the privilege of perusing *entire* in manuscript, he mentioned that Dr. Medhurst once offered a resolution to the effect that the Committee should be dissolved on account of the wide differences of opinion among the members. In the reply, the statement was acknowledged to be correct, but in the letters as *printed*, the passages referring to this are suppressed. Had this statement been printed as it stood in the correspondence, which was deemed sufficiently valuable, with this exception, to give to the public, it would of itself have gone far to remove the impression which the pamphlet, without it, was calculated to make. The bearing of this statement on the questions discussed in that pamphlet is so evident, that its suppression can hardly be accounted for by supposing that its importance was not perceived.

Having shown that there were differences of opinion among the members of the Committee of Delegates, and that they were freely expressed at the committee-table, the next object of the letter of Nov. 10th, 1851, which is made the ground of complaint, was to show the extent and importance of those differences, and at the same time to justify the reason given by the Committee for going on with the work after three of its members had withdrawn, with the avowed object of preparing a translation alone. The reason given was, that the seceding members were taking such liberties with the sacred text, that there was no reason to hope that their version, when completed, would be such a one as, in the opinion of the other delegates, was needed. I will here pursue the same method as in the abovementioned letter.



This difference, however, is to be noted, that while in that letter there was no resource but to appeal to the version left in the hands of the Committee when the separation took place, an appeal can now be made to printed statements over the signatures of the persons concerned.

It should be premised here, that the writers of the pamphlet under review seem to be under a wrong impression as to the principles of translation advocated by their former associates. They by no means contend for such a slavish adherence to the letter and idiom of the original as those writers seem to imagine. The passages quoted from the English version as examples of omission, or addition to the text, are not such in reality. They are cases of pure idiomatic redundancy, or cases in which a word or words necessarily supplied by the Hebrew reader, require to be expressed in English. If one idea be expressed by two words in Hebrew, it does not by any means follow that two words are necessary to translate it faithfully. In translating into Chinese, or any other language, words must sometimes be supplied from the context to express the true sense. But it does not follow that it is therefore right to omit or insert whole clauses, or *needlessly* to take such liberty with single words. What is objected to is the insertion or omission of words, not because the idiom of the Chinese language, but because the ignorance or prejudices of Chinese readers require it. It is contended that the translator must not trespass on the province of the commentator.\* This these translators have done, and contend that they are right in so doing. The following remarks from the Princeton Review for January, 1850, are worthy of the serious consideration of those engaged in translating. They occur in a review of Delitzsch on Habakkuk. The writer says:—"In his exposition Delitzsch pursues the system of rigid translation, which since the publication of Winer's Grammar of the New Testament, has been constantly winning favor with the learned. The true plan of eliciting an author's meaning is to render word for word with the utmost possible exactness. We must assume that when he uses the future, he intends that, and not the past; when he uses the definite article, he does not intend the indefinite; when he says "for," he does not mean "but;" when he says "or," he does not mean

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\* It is not meant by this that a translator must not exercise his judgment in interpreting, but that he must not depart from the letter of the text to make it express his view of its meaning, and especially where the meaning is doubtful. He must often, however, decide between two or more renderings or interpretations, either of which might be sustained by the original.

"and." We must interpret what he says, not what we think he ought to have said. Unless this strict system be adopted, an opening is left to foist in, or explain away anything whatever, and no limit can be set to the abuses which will ensue."

One of the principles objected to was, that where two clauses occur in juxtaposition, which express the same or nearly the same idea, one of them may be omitted. In reply, these translators admit that they often act on this principle, and defend it on the ground that what "does not add to the sense" may be omitted with advantage, and that the practice is not uncommon with translators. The mere statement of this principle is sufficient to condemn it, and this open avowal of it can hardly fail to weaken the confidence of the public in any translation made by those who hold it. I proceed now to consider a few of the passages quoted in the pamphlet.

I. Instances in which some word or words of the original are unjustifiably omitted in the translation.

(1.) Gen. ii. 2. The second verse reads in the English version:—"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." The Chinese version rendered into English reads thus:—"On the seventh day he finished his work and rested." The omission of the last clause is defended on the ground that it adds nothing to the sense. I maintain that the omission or insertion of this clause is not at all a question of idiom. It might be written in good Chinese as easily as in Hebrew, and adds as much or as little to the sense in one language as in the other. I believe, however, that this clause does add to the sense, and that the addition is most important. This very clause is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Heb. iv. 4 as an important link in the chain of his argument. We have here two distinct statements; one is, that on the seventh day God had ended his work: the other is a solemn and emphatic and most instructive announcement that God observed the seventh day as a day of holy rest. What an exalted idea it gives us of the sanctity of the day that God himself so rigidly observed this first of Sabbaths. But the statement does not appear in this version. It is there a very different one, "that on this day God finished his work and then rested." The statement of the third verse is distinct from either of the others, the prominent fact being that the day was blessed. It is nothing to the purpose therefore to say that the idea is sufficiently expressed by combining these separate clauses briefly into one.



(2) Gen. vii. 15, 16. The Chinese rendered into English reads tshu :—"All flesh, male and female each one went unto Noah, and entered into the ark, according to the command of God. Jehovah then shut the door." Here the first clause of verse 16, "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh," is omitted. It is sufficiently expressed, the translators say, in vs. 15, but it was not expressed there until they inserted the words "male and female." Thus one change is made a reason for another. The idiom of the language surely did not require this change, nor can it be shown that this version fully expresses the meaning of the original. In vs. 15, the proposition is that the animals went into the ark, possibly intimating that they did so of their own accord. In vs. 16, the attention of the reader is particularly called to the fact that there was one male and one female of each species. But even if the sense had been fully expressed, the change would not thereby be justified. Would not a humble reverence for the sacred text require that where an inspired writer has chosen to express an idea twice, it should be expressed twice in a translation?

(3.) Gen. xxiii. 5, 6. In English is "the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him." In Chinese it is, "the Hittites said." Those who are accustomed to regard with reverence the very words of the inspired text, will hardly look upon so needless an abbreviation as a trifling matter. The Chinese idiom would undoubtedly allow a much closer rendering. There could certainly be no objection on the ground of idiom to the insertion of the name Abraham in such a sentence. I called attention, in the letter of Nov. 10th, to the use of "forbid" for "withhold," not as objecting to it, but because the change of construction required this change of the word. Thus we have "none of us will forbid you," instead of "none of us will withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." Here again there is a marked modification of the idea. From the original, it appears that no Hittite was unwilling to allow to Abraham the use of the private sepulchre of any one of them. In the version nothing more appears than that no one would forbid him to select the best burying-ground.

(4.) Gen. xlix. 26. Here there was no such "sheer trifling" in the criticism offered as the objectors complain of. The last clause of the verse reads thus in the English version: "They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." The Chinese version reads, rendered by the translators themselves, thus: "Formerly Joseph was removed from his bre-

thren. This blessing will revert to his head." Here it is expressly claimed by the translators that the phrase "crown of the head" may be "omitted, if required by the idiom of the language, without injury to the sense." Is then the parallelism of Hebrew poetry to be set aside? If so how many verses are there of which one half may be omitted "without injury to the sense?"

The above form a very small part of the passages which the work might furnish in illustration of this head, but these are sufficient.

## II. Instances of unwarrantable *additions* to the text.

(1.) Gen. xlix. 4. "Your numerous lusts were like the bubbling up of water. You went up to your father's couch and defiled it. Therefore you shall not excel among your brethren." So reads the Chinese version. It was objected that there was no authority in the original for inserting the words "numerous lusts." The reply to this is, "We give the words of Gesenius: 'Reuben! a boiling up of water art thou;' *i. e.* thou didst boil up like water with lust and passion, referring to his incest." When one asks for the authority of Moses, is it enough to give that of Gesenius? It will be perceived that here Gesenius' paraphrase is taken (not his literal rendering), a paraphrase is made of that, and the result given as the translation of the Hebrew. The words "among your brethren" are inserted without authority. The last clause, "he went up to my couch," is omitted, and the omission is justified by simply saying, it "is sufficiently expressed in the previous phrase, 'went up to his father's couch.'" The translators regard it as a high commendation of their work to say that a Chinese commentator, using their version, would be ignorant of the difficulty involved in the omitted clause!!

(2.) Exod. iv. 24, 25. The English version reads, "The Lord sought to kill him" (Moses). The objection made to the Chinese version was, that the expression "to kill him" was somewhat softened, the Chinese phrase employed not being exactly its equivalent. The translators contend that the phrase in question 置之死地 means "to put to death." I should hesitate to dissent from the opinion of scholars whose knowledge of Chinese is so much superior to my own. But being sustained in my opinion by native scholars, I venture with all deference to submit some considerations which seem to show that I have not mistaken its meaning. The phrase does not imply necessarily the actual death of the object to which it may refer, but only the being placed in the situation of being about to die, though death be eventually averted. I observe that in other places in rendering



the words, "shall surely be put to death," these translators uniformly omit the last character of the phrase employed with reference to Moses. Why is this, if the two phrases are precisely equivalent?

In the well-known passage quoted from Mencius, the sense I have given seems to be required by the context. The phrase 就死, means not to *approach towards death*, but to die. (See Prémare.) So the phrase 就死地 must be, not to go towards "deathly circumstances," but actually to be in them; that is, in the situation of being about to die, as was the case with the ox led to the slaughter. Yet the ox in question was not put to death, being rescued by the interference of the compassionate king.

The identical phrase in dispute may be found in the 95th section of the History of the Three States. It is there applied to an army hemmed in and cut off from supplies by a superior force. The speaker says, that if his army were thus placed in "deathly circumstances," they would fight so desperately that each man would be worth a hundred. Could they fight after being put to death?

(3.) Exod. xxxii. 23. The phrase "make us gods," is rendered "make us images (or an image) of Shángtí." The translators say the word "image" is here inserted by the authority of Gesenius, with whose name they couple that of the humble "objector" himself. I fear neither of these authorities will be considered by the public of sufficient weight to justify such a liberty. With reference to the insertion of the word "image" in Acts vii. 40, in the edition of the Delegates' Version printed at Ningpo, I have only to say that the book was printed, without alteration, just as it was received from the secretary of the Committee. Gesenius says *elohim* sometimes means "an idol," but does it therefore mean an image of Shángtí, or an image of the true God, when it stands alone? I had said that the use of "*shin*" here would correspond exactly with that of *elohim*. For this I am charged with "controversial untruth," and the objectors "fearlessly assert," from their own knowledge, and that of their teachers, that to say in Chinese "make us Shins," would be nonsense. I think there is good authority for reasserting my former assertion. *Elohim*, it is contended, here means an idol, or in other words an image. If then it should so happen that *shin*, like *elohim* also sometimes means an image or idol, most persons would admit that it could not be nonsense to use it here as the translation of *elohim*. But it is a fact, not to be controverted, that many native Chinese scholars, whose knowledge of the Chinese language may fairly be considered equal to that of any foreigner, do think that the word *shin*

sometimes means "an idol or image." In the Chinese Repository for January 1850, p. 31, may be found a communication in Chinese from the authorities at the Lewchew Islands to Dr. Bettelheim. They say, "you request us to remove the gods (*shin*) of the temple, and place them outside of it." It was the "images" that Dr. B. wished to remove, not the "spirits."

Another Chinese scholar, who lived some seven hundred years ago, was of the same opinion with those of the present day. This is Ch'ú fútsz', of whom Dr. Medhurst says, that "by fixing the sense of the standard writings of the Chinese, he has created as it were the mind of China." And again, "The opinions of Ch'ú fútsz' therefore constitute the orthodoxy of China, and all who differ from him are considered heterodox." This learned writer, whose special province it was to fix the sense of words and sentences, tells us that in his day "the images in the temples were called *shin*." See Medhurst's Theology of the Chinese, pp. 162, 172. It is true, therefore, after all, that *shin* corresponds to *elohim* in designating both the idol or image, and the imaginary being supposed to be represented by it. In this it agrees also with the English word "god," unless it can be shown that the "images in the temples" are "*spirits*." I think I may therefore claim to be acquitted of the charge of untruth of any kind. The plan of always writing the word *spirit* as an inseparable companion to the word *shin*, will hardly prove effectual in convincing intelligent readers that Ch'ú fú-tsz' was mistaken.

It may be inferred from their practice here, and their admission that to use Shángtí alone would be nonsense, that it is the intention of these translators to insert the word *image* in all similar cases. But there are many passages of which the sense must be totally lost by such an addition. For example, Jer. xvi. 20, "Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?" If they carry out the principle, they must make it, "Shall a man make images of Shángtí unto himself, and they are not Shángtí?" Shángtí must be, in spite of all that can be done or said, a proper name; and if it mean, as Dr. Legge contends, the true God, it is all the more objectionable as a translation of *elohim*. The meaning of this passage is that neither the images, nor the imaginary beings supposed to be represented by them, are proper objects of trust or worship. How different the complexion given to it by the insertion of the word *image*. What does it amount to then but saying, what every idolater might admit, that the *image* of God is not God. Shángtí being assumed to be the true God, there is no reference whatever to false gods—just the reverse of the true sense.



Again in Dan. xi. 8, we read, "And shall carry captives into Egypt their gods." Here there is a cutting satire. The very gods in whom they trusted for protection would be carried captive like themselves. The satire depends on the double-meaning of *elohim*. It is implied that when the "*images*" were carried away, there was nothing left to the idolater in which he could trust. If, however, the word *image* be inserted, the calamity is not the loss of their gods, but of the mere images.

III. Instances in which unjustifiable liberty is taken in altering the *form of expression*, and often the *sense* of the original.

(1.) Gen. i. 19. The words "Am I in the place of God," are changed into, "To recompense belongs to God. Does it belong to me?" For an entire change of the expression, no better reason is given than that Bush says the words "*seem to signify*" what has been inserted in the text instead of the words of Joseph. There is nothing surely in the idiom of the Chinese language to render it impossible to say, "Am I in the place of God," if one really wished to say it. It would be no more difficult than to say "am I in the place of Moses, or John, or any other person."

(2.) Ex. vii. 1. "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." After further consideration this is now rendered thus, as given in English by the translators themselves:—"Jehovah said to Moses, I have set you to be a ruler of Pharaoh, as God's vicegerent; and I have constituted Aaron to be a prophet to declare my words as your substitute." Here these translators again forget that they do not now occupy the place of the commentator. Kimchi and Grotius may both be right in the opinions quoted, but it is evident that the address to Moses was expressed in very different terms from those which are put into the mouth of the speaker in this version. The omission of the words "your brother" after Aaron, the translators would doubtless consider altogether too "trifling" to be noticed. Yet they condescend to notice in others, a typographical error in translating their own words, or a slip of the pen in writing a plural for a singular termination.

(3.) Exod. xviii. 9. The English renders, "Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians." The Chinese rendered into English reads, "Thereupon Jethro, when he knew that Jehovah had treated the Israelites with special kindness, and delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians, rejoiced exceedingly." It is plain that the

difference here is not simply, as the writers of the reply to my remarks assert, that between "goodness" and "kindness." The change in the form was not necessary, and "the harm" of adding the word "exceedingly" is, that the inspired writer (who should be allowed to speak in the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,") did not put it there.

(4.) Exod. xxiii. 21. The Chinese may be thus rendered:—"My messenger having come, that is, I having come, will not pardon your transgressions." The translators propose a rendering slightly modified, but that seems to require the insertion of another pronoun in the Chinese. They admit that the phrase "my name is in him" is of difficult interpretation, and that they are not themselves satisfied as to the meaning. Would it not be well in such cases to translate as closely as possible, word for word, that each reader may have the means of judging for himself? There would then be no risk of giving as the language of an inspired writer what he has never written. Two commentators are quoted, but the translation has not expressed the view of either of them, whatever rendering of the Chinese be adopted. Gesenius says it means "my name (divinity) is in him;" and Schroeder is quoted as rendering it "*instar mei est.*" There is surely some difference between both these, and "when my messenger comes, it is the same as if I came."

(5.) Exod. xxxiii. 19. The Chinese literally rendered reads, "whom I pity, pity them; whom I compassionate, compassionate them." The objection here is that the pronoun *I* is not expressed, and with the phraseology as it stands in this version, the pronoun *you* would most naturally be supplied by the reader, if I may be permitted to judge from the native scholars to whom I have shown the passage. The mere grammar of the sentence would admit either pronoun.

(6.) Gen. xlix. 21. The English version here renders:—"Naph-tali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words." The Chinese is, "Naphtali utters a joyful sound, like a hind let loose." In reply to the criticism on this passage, the translators ask, "Does he (the objector) believe that the sacred writer intended to say, that a hind is capable of uttering articulate sounds?" I ask in return, whether the translators think a literal rendering—the English version for instance—necessarily makes the sacred writer utter such an absurdity? It is plain that it is Naphtali, not the hind, that "giveth goodly words." It may be true that a hind let loose "utters a joyful sound," but that is not the proposition contained in this passage.



(7.) Exod. xx. 5. "I am a jealous God." Instead of this we have (to adopt the translators' own rendering of the Chinese), "I will by no means permit any other God to be put on a par with me." I am at a loss to understand how this can be called a translation at all. Recourse is again had to commentators, but again the sense of their renderings is not given. The original expresses a habit of mind—a feeling; but in this version it becomes simply an act of the will—a determination. There is perhaps a reference here to the common scriptural figure which represents the relation between God and his people as that of husband and wife, in reference to which idolatry is called adultery. Now there is such a feeling among the Chinese as jealousy between husbands and wives, and the feeling has a name. These translators object to the words hitherto employed that they "express the idea of *jealous*!! mean, envious, spiteful and malignant." The same objection might with equal reason be made to the Hebrew word. The verb from which the adjective is derived, and by which its sense is determined, often means to envy. This is the word used when it is said of Joseph's brethren that they "envied him." Nothing could ever justify the application of such language to God but inspired usage, but having this we need not hesitate.

There is undoubtedly a wide difference between "visiting iniquities" in the Second Commandment, and "afflicting with calamities" in this version of it. God often "afflicts with calamities" those who love, as well as those who hate him, but he does not judicially punish their sins in their own persons. I still think that the Hebrew distinctly expresses the idea which this version does not, that children suffer in consequence of "the sins of the fathers."

(8.) Gen. xiii. 10. I objected to a quotation from the Chinese Book of Odes, meaning "mutually to fly up and down," to express the idea of comparison. The phrase is well known to those who have read the Book of Odes, but it is known only as a quotation, and derives its meaning from the poetical context in which it is found. This however, I admit is chiefly a matter of taste. It *may* be unreasonable, but there seems to be an aversion, with many, to quotations of set phrases from the classics. It would certainly seem out of place to find quotations from Shakspeare in our English Bible.

(9.) Gen. xlix. 10. The Chinese may be rendered into English: "Judah shall possess power and establish laws for the people, and when the peacemaker comes all the people shall gather unto him." The translators object to the words "*and when*" in this rendering, and say, very correctly, that the Chinese character which is used means

*wait till.* But the clause is nevertheless connected with what follows, and not with the preceding clause, as it should be. It would read when corrected, "wait till the peacemaker comes, and all the people shall gather unto him."

(10.) Exod. x. 27. The expression "Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart," is rendered in this version, "Pharaoh hardened his heart, and Jehovah permitted it." This rendering is defended on the following grounds; 1st. From the usage of the Piel form of the Hebrew verb; 2d. From the authority of commentators and other translators; 3d. From the analogy of faith. It will be best to consider them in order. The signification of the Piel is commonly to give intensity to an action. It also has the power of so changing the signification of the verb that, according to Nordheimer, "intransitive verbs become transitive, as 'to learn;'—Piel, 'to teach;' 'to be unclean,' Piel, 'to be exceedingly unclean,' and hence to defile another, or merely to pronounce unclean." This is evidently all that Gesenius means when he says the Piel "often takes the signification expressed by 'to permit.'" In giving intransitive verbs a transitive form in English, we are often obliged to use an auxiliary word, the choice of such auxiliary being determined by the nature of the action expressed. To say that the Piel has sometimes the force expressed by *to permit*, is only saying that, in certain cases, where the intransitive is changed into a transitive verb by the use of the Piel, we are obliged in English to use the auxiliary *to let*, *to permit*. The cases, however, are exceedingly rare in which, even in this restricted sense, the force of the Piel can be accurately expressed by the auxiliary *let* or *permit*. In all cases in which the Piel form is used in this way, a result produced by the subject of the verb passes over to the object; active agency is implied—something more than simple permission. For instance, "to let live," is rather "to preserve alive," "to save one's life," or "to spare one's life." When we say in English, "He sails the ship," we mean something more than "he lets the ship sail." When a farmer says that in a certain field "he grows wheat," he does not mean merely that he "lets it grow." When one says "they harden bricks in the sun," it is implied that they use means to produce a certain effect, not that they merely abstain from interfering.

With the exception of the verb "to live," and in a single instance the verb "to grow," I believe no example can be adduced from the Scriptures in which, even as thus explained, the force of the Piel can be accurately expressed by "to permit." On the other hand, there are numerous instances of the use of the Piel in connections similar to



the passage under consideration, and often too the same verb that is used in speaking of Pharaoh, in which it can not possibly have any permissive sense. For instance, Jer. v. 3, "They have hardened their faces;" not "permitted them to become hard." Ezek xxx. 24, "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon;" not "permit him to strengthen his arms." In I. Sam. vi. 6, we are told that "the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts," the verb being in the Piel form. It is not, "permitted or suffered their hearts to be hard." The signification of the Piel therefore affords no ground for the rendering given in this version.

But if it were true that the verb has here the sense expressed by "to permit," there still can be no doubt as to what is the subject and what the object of the verb. In the rendering in question, Pharaoh is the subject of the verb: in the original Jehovah is the subject. This objection does not lie against Horne's rendering, quoted by the translators. He translates it, "The Lord suffered the heart of Pharaoh to be hardened." The difference between the two renderings is important. In the one case the hardening of the heart follows as a consequence of Jehovah's permitting it. In the other, the permission (the Chinese rather expresses the idea of refraining from interference) is represented as coming in after the act of hardening has taken place.

It is evident that on mere philological grounds, but little can be said in favor of this rendering, and much against it. This being the case, all that can be said by commentators as to the mode in which the effect on Pharaoh's heart was produced, can be of little avail in determining the translation. If, however, the authority of great names is to be weighed, whether of commentators or translators, it will be found that this rendering is in opposition to the sentiments of an overwhelming majority. It is in opposition to the Septuagint and Vulgate, and so far as I can ascertain, the ancient versions generally. I take this for granted, in reference to those which I can not examine, from never having seen them quoted in favor of the other rendering. It is in opposition also to all the standard modern versions to which I have access to; Luther and De Wette in German; Ostervald, De Saci, and Martin in French; Diodati in Italian; and Scio in Spanish. Dathe admits that in his text he renders *ad sensum*. In a note he renders, he says, *ad verbum*, thus;—"ego animum ejus obfirmabo." Gesenius in his lexicon renders in the same way. The reference to Edwards' sermon on Rom. ix. 18 is not to the point, since he is there explaining the text, not translating it. Hartwell Horne's rendering, as remarked above, is a very different one from the one now under

consideration, but it can not be regarded as of much weight, for he gives the signification of the Hiphil form, not the Piel, as the ground of his rendering, and therefore wrote under an erroneous impression.

Poole calls attention to the fact that in the first five plagues the hardening of the heart is attributed to Pharaoh himself; in the last five to God. Was there no design in this minute attention to the phraseology employed? In the Chinese version this distinction is laid aside. The effect is in every instance attributed to Pharaoh himself, the only difference being that in the latter case the clause, "Jehovah permitted it," is added. It is true in every case that God permitted it, but when the effect is directly ascribed to him, it is intimated that it was a punitive act—a consequence of judicial abandonment.

Dr. J. A. Alexander, commenting on the expression, "Why wilt thou harden our heart from thy fear?" (Is. lxiii. 17) where the verb is in the Hiphil, although he grants the frequent permissive sense of that form, yet expresses the opinion that the meaning here "can hardly be to suffer to grow hard;" and adds that this is rendered unnecessary by the frequency and clearness with which such an agency is ascribed to God elsewhere.

From the analogy of faith as little can be gathered in favor of this translation as from the other other points urged in its defense. Theological views should not at all affect a translation, except that where theological views are involved, peculiar care should be taken to adhere to the strict letter of the text. If a translator renders rigidly, it is competent for all to assign their own interpretation; but if he insert his own interpretation in the text, all others are excluded. Is this right? Many learned and pious men think that there is something more than mere permission implied in the language used respecting Pharaoh. Many of those who are directly interested in the Chinese version of the Scriptures are of this opinion. Can they be expected to approve or use a version from which their views are thus entirely excluded?

If there is any subject on which a translator should be specially solicitous to adhere exactly to what the inspired writers have written, it is that great mystery, God's agency in reference to evil. The question at issue here is, not what views are correct, but whether the scriptural mode of speaking on this subject shall be rigidly adhered to or not. Whatever explanation may be adopted of the language employed in speaking of Pharaoh, it is undoubtedly a common scriptural usage to say that God does what he permits to be done, or brings about in his providence by human agency. Thus, Is. xlv. 7, "I make peace



and create evil." Is. xxix. 3. "I (God) will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount." Jer. li. 39. "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken." The verb in the first clause is in the Kal form, and fixes the sense of that in the parallel clause, which is in the Piel. It is for the commentator to explain in what sense God can be said to "make them drunken," not for the translator. II. Sam. xii. 11. "I will give thy wives unto thy neighbor." In II. Sam. xxiv. 1, God is said to have moved David to number the people; but in I. Chron. xxi. 1, this is ascribed to Satan. No translator, however, would be justified in altering one of these passages to make it agree with the other. It surely can not be conceded to any translator, in any language, that he has the right of setting aside this scriptural usage whenever he may deem it expedient. Nothing can be plainer than that the Scriptures teach that God gives men up to blindness of mind, and judicially abandons them to wickedness, the effect of this being as certain and inevitable as though it were produced by a positive and direct act. Thus in Rom. i. 28, such an act of God is represented as a punishment of previous sin. "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

The analogy of faith, however, has not left us to mere inferences. We have the clearest statements on the subject. In Ps. cv. 25, we have this very act of hardening Pharaoh's heart described in language which can not be controverted. There we read that God "turned their heart (the Egyptians) to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants." Here the verb is in the Kal form, and admits of no appeal to any permissive sense.

There is another passage equally explicit and equally conclusive. In Rom ix. 18, we have an inspired comment on this passage in the history of Pharaoh, and to all intents and purposes, an inspired translation of the disputed phrase. The lesson which the Apostle draws from this history is God's absolute sovereignty over his creatures:—"therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." About the sense of the Greek verb there can assuredly be no doubt. Does not then, the authority of Paul outweigh that of Hartwell Horne or Dathe? Yet these translators have taken the same liberty with the Greek as with the Hebrew text. Their translation of the Greek is not very clear, even to some native scholars, who probably are not inferior in learning to those assistants for whom it is claimed that they are "the best yet procured in Sháng-

hái." As to the main point, however, there can be no mistake. It is not "whom he will he hardeneth," but, "to permit men to harden themselves." If this be not an alteration of the Apostle's language, I can not imagine what would be. The alteration seems to me to be so entirely unwarrantable, that I confess it is difficult to speak of it without using strong language. I should be sorry to say anything, however, which would imply any suspicion of the honesty of purpose of these translators. I have no doubt they have done nothing which they did not consider, not only justifiable, but best calculated to extend the knowledge of the Scriptures among the Chinese. Their rights of opinion are to be respected; but it surely is no interference with those rights, and is not to be regarded as a just ground of complaint, if others entertain other views, and express, either privately or publicly, a different opinion.

It is apparent from the passages quoted above, that if infidels are disposed to cavil, they must be met on better grounds than that of Horne's rendering of the passages which speak of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. That rendering, even if it could be sustained, will not relieve us from any difficulty, because other passages present the same difficulty in the most unequivocal language. In the article quoted above from the Princeton Review, the following sentiment is attributed to Trench, the recent commentator on the Parables:—"Give the language of the inspired writers with all strictness, and their theology will take care of itself."

If the principles of translation advocated by these translators be correct—if they are the best possible for rendering the Scriptures into the Chinese language, I trust they will prevail, and receive the sanction of the various Bible Societies. If otherwise, they will, it may be hoped, be abandoned. But whoever may be right, it is evident that a difference of opinion does exist and has long existed. It is much to be regretted that circumstances should have so long delayed a mutual understanding of the views severally entertained with reference to this important subject.

Some of the passages quoted in the pamphlet I have passed without remark, being willing to leave them just as they are there presented. I can not close without expressing my regret that I have been compelled to devote so many of these pages to merely personal matters. But my name having been brought before the public as it was, I had no choice but to make good my defense.

In conclusion, I would take occasion to commend this whole matter to the prayers of all who love the cause of Christ. Let them pray



continually that the Spirit of wisdom and grace may direct the minds of all who are engaged in translating the Holy Scriptures into the language of China.

