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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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### INDEX TO VOLUME XXXV.

The index to Volume xxxv of THE REVIEW has been printed in a separate folder and inserted in this issue. Published in this loose form, it may be pasted in at the end of No. 4 of Volume xxxv or bound together with the four numbers forming Volume xxxv—October, 1923, and January, April and July, 1924.

### REPRINT OF THE LATE DR. B. B. WARFIELD'S ARTICLE.

The article on "The Millennium and the Apocalypse," by the late Dr. Warfield, which appeared in the October number of THE REVIEW, has been published in pamphlet form by the

merits and its defects. But one will gain fresh stimulus from the use of any of them. The Authorized Version will live on a long time yet along with the new versions.

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DR. MOFFATT'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.\*

BY REV. EDWARD MACK, Ph. D., D. D., LL. D.,  
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In my early ministry an old minister once said to me: "Young man, read all the versions of the BIBLE within your reach. They are better interpreters than commentaries. Study the Bible through versions." And I have found that he counseled wisely. A new, or another, translation, which shows the way another man, or group of men, looks at the Bible, is the most helpful of interpretations.

In this sense, Dr. Moffatt's *New Translation of the Old Testament* will prove a valuable addition to the knowledge and appreciation of the Old Testament. There are many new points of view, many different angles of observation, and many striking settings for old scenes. Obscure or misunderstood portions of the Old Testament may be clarified by it for many readers.

But after finishing the book the reader puts it down with a feeling of disappointment, for it comes far short of the large promises made for it before its appearance. It will never be a classic, like the Authorized or the American Revised Versions, for it fails of the literary beauty of the former and the scholarly accuracy of the latter.

Wherein is the "New Translation" deficient?

(1) It displaces and rearranges the accepted text in an un-

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\*The Old Testament: A new translation—Volume I, Genesis to Esther. By James Moffatt, D. D., D. Litt., M. A. (Oxon), Professor of Church History, United Free Church College, Glasgow, Scotland.

necessary and confusing way. Whatever the critical attitude toward the Book of Genesis, it is generally agreed that the first part of verse 4 of chapter 2 stands now in the most satisfactory place. Dr. Moffatt unfortunately transposes it to the beginning of chapter 1, so violating his proposal to take the text generally as it is received, and so beginning his work with confusion. Likewise his rendering of Gen. 1:1, "When God began to form the universe," is a paraphrase, not a translation, and is both weaker and less adequate than the Authorized and Revised texts. Such familiar and classic chapters as "David and Goliath" (1 Sam. 17) and "David's Heroes" (2 Sam. 23), are mutilated by transpositions of verses without explanation. In a word, the effort to cast the Old Book in the mold of modern unstable criticism dooms its bid to be a classic and damns its claim to be an honest Bible.

(2) In the "New Translation" certain Hebrew idioms, rendered with grace and innocence in our accepted versions, are translated here with brutal vulgarity. The reader does not need to cover many chapters before he comes upon these gross forms.

(3) The author's effort to offer a translation in "effective and intelligible English," according to his preface, leads him into irksome affectation in his unnecessary changing of many very simple English words, which are universally understood by wise and simple alike. Reasons for many of these changes may be patent to British minds, but they are foreign to American usage. The substitution of "park" for "garden" in the Eden narrative is unnecessary, untrue to text and context, and savors of pedantry. "Vault" for "expanse," in the account of the second day of creation, is less accurate than the Revised Version, and is also untrue to the mental picture of the Hebrew author. The Book of Ruth becomes the victim of several infelicities in translation. In the account of Moses in Egypt, "stick" for "rod" and "thrash" for "beat" are poor Hebrew and worse English.

(4) The "New Translation" does not always commend itself for fidelity to the Hebrew original. For example, the same

word is used in the Hebrew text for the ark in which Noah weathered the flood, and the ark in which the infant Moses sailed into the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. But Dr. Moffatt translates the former as "barge" and the latter as "creel," a piece of pure affectation, a lame bid for arrested attention. If there was any one thing in which Moses was *not* put, it was a lopsided creel. At all events, "ark" is a good, simple word, without taint of colloquialism, found in every dictionary, visualized by every child. Why meddle with it? "Waist" for "feet," in Ruth 3:7, is totally foreign to the Hebrew text, and altogether quite a carnal misunderstanding of the figure of the text.

Detailed mention of many such inaccuracies, or blunders, is not possible in a brief review. The skill, accuracy and beauty of the author's "New Translation of the New Testament" led us to expect as much for the Old Testament. But in the latter, being on to him much less familiar ground, he often misses the mark and disappoints our expectations. For suggestion and interest the book deserves buying and reading. But if one wishes to read the Bible with scholarly accuracy and in intelligible English, he will possess himself of a Revised Version. If he wishes to have God's Word in beauty and accuracy alike, surpassing Dr. Moffatt, he will turn back to the Authorized Version.

The "New Translation" has been completed and published only as far as the Book of Esther. We shall await with keen, almost impatient, interest the appearance of the second volume. One can readily predict popularity, at least for a time, for both volumes, for the reader cannot escape the impression, as he reads along, of a straining, possibly subconscious, after popular reception. It is a book rather to print and to sell, and to use and to discard, than to have and to hold for good and for aye. It may pass for a translation, it will never be a Bible.