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Miscellanea

Moffatt's Translation of the Bible

(A Conference Essay)

By FRED H. ILTEN

Since the publication of the so-called King James Version of the Holy Scriptures in the year 1611, definite changes have taken place in the English language. Various words have become obsolete. The usage of others is entirely different from what it was 300 years ago. Since the King James Version is the Bible to be found in our churches and in the homes of our members, accurate information, readily accessible, concerning these matters is a necessity if our people are really to "search the Scriptures." Not that we in any way subscribe to the Roman Catholic view which states that the Bible is dangerous in the hands of the unenlightened layman. In the year 1079 Pope Gregory VII wrote to the King of Bohemia: "It is clear to those who reflect often upon it, that not without reason has it pleased Almighty God that Holy Scripture should be a secret in certain places, lest, if it were plainly apparent to all men, perchance it would be little esteemed and be subject to disrespect; or it might be falsely understood by those of mediocre learning, and lead to error." But take a passage like 1 Pet. 3:1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." What will people naturally think of when they hear or read the expression "the conversation of the wives"? The Greek word is *ἀναστρεφί*, meaning manner of life, behavior, conduct.

Using the King James Version just as it is will never lead anyone astray in respect to Christian faith or Christian life. Yet, to give the reader, and especially the average reader, a fuller and more correct understanding as this is contained in the Greek or Hebrew original and, incidentally, to do away with the need for a great many helps and explanations, a correct and adequate translation of terms such as that mentioned above would certainly be most desirable.

That this need is felt in our circles is evident in the synodical resolutions of 1941 and 1944 concerning the revision of the Bible. Then, too, there has been the recent appearance in our midst of works such as the *Concordia New Testament with Notes* and Dr. Graebner's *Annotated New Testament*. As educational standards are raised, as higher education becomes more general, questions will be put with ever greater frequency as to various terms used in the Scriptures. We mention also the gradually increasing attendance at Bible classes, through which our people are becoming familiar with many portions of Scripture very rarely or never made use of as sermon texts or even in general Bible reading.

More and more our people will come into contact with attacks directed against the Scriptures. We need but mention our university students. It is necessary that they have a correct and (in respect to language) modern translation of the Scriptures at their disposal.

What, then, of our modern versions, among them that of Moffatt? A committee report presented at the Saginaw convention, 1944, states in part: "Your Committee is not willing to recommend any of the new versions to our people and for the use of our congregations in public worship, since they, one and all, fall short of the standards which must be satisfied if an orthodox body of Christians is to place its stamp of approval upon such version. Where the translation might satisfy as to English style or diction, the editions have been subjected to radical changes to conform to the theories of a negative criticism, or they present arrangements, introductions, and footnotes inspired by such criticism." We feel that the committee must have read Moffatt just before writing that last statement.

I. What Has Moffatt Accomplished?

To some extent at least Moffatt was moved to produce his translation by the need of which we have spoken. He mentions a certain dissatisfaction with the version of 1611 that came to a head during the last quarter of the 19th century. (Introduction, p. XLI). For this he lists a threefold reason:

1. The archaisms of a masterpiece in Elizabethan prose had become either unintelligible or misleading;
2. The advance of scholarship made such a revision necessary;
3. The progress of textual criticism had reset the entire problem of the text.

His work is an attempt to represent the gains of recent research and at the same time to give a translation that is readable. (P. XLV.)

What has Moffatt achieved? For one thing, a fairly wide distribution. His New Testament and Bible have both gone through many editions. The one now before us is to be the final one as far as Moffatt is concerned. He has restudied nearly every sentence of the translation in the hope of rendering the work more effective and trustworthy. Then he states: "The net result as here printed may not amount exactly to a new book, but it is a revision which is as thorough as I can make it; and I mean it to be final." (P. VI.) The date: December, 1934. We have no definite figures as to the circulation of Moffatt's Bible and New Testament. But the number of editions would seem to indicate popularity. Some of the brethren have suggested that Moffatt is now being distributed largely by certain sects.

Moffatt's translation is readable. The story, in most cases, flows smoothly. The material is arranged in paragraph form, though the chapter and verse divisions of the King James Version

are retained. Moffatt has likewise retained the order of the various books as we have it in our recognized version. There are instances, quite a number of them, in which the translator has shifted individual verses, groups of verses, chapters, in accordance with his ideas of proper order. Sections where the readability of the translation can well be tested are for instance Luke 23:13-25; Acts 19:32-41; 2 Kings 7, 3-29 — passages selected almost at random.

As to the translation proper, there are times when Moffatt hits upon a truly happy rendition of the original in good English. Dr. Engelder gives Moffatt this compliment: "Moffatt's translation hits off some points very well: 1 Tim. 6:3: 'Anyone who teaches novelties and refuses to fall in with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine that tallies with godliness, is a conceited, ignorant creature.'" (*Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, p. 409.) We note that Prof. E. Reim, essayist at the Cleveland convention of the Synodical Conference, 1944, quotes Moffatt's translation in two instances: Phil. 2:5-8, and 1 Cor. 8:8. (*Proceedings*, 1944, pp. 28, 32). A few more examples of good translations: Heb. 11:3: "It is by faith we understand that the world was fashioned by the word of God, and thus the visible was made out of the invisible." Acts 17:26: "All nations He has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth, fixing their allotted periods and the boundaries of their abodes, meaning them to seek for God on the chance of finding Him as they grope for Him."

However, when it comes to reliability, that is another matter. We feel that this is due chiefly to the fact that Moffatt has absolutely no use for the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Apart from this, you will find so frequently that his version is not so much a translation as an interpretation. In fact, interpretation is his aim. He states: "A real translation is in the main an interpretation. . . . Its effectiveness depends largely upon the extent to which the interpreter has been able to see the original and to convey *his impressions of what he has seen.*" (P. VII.) This can be correctly understood; but Moffatt has often paraphrased rather than translated. To return to his view of the Scriptures, he calls the "theory of verbal inspiration" a "caricature," and states it as his firm conviction that "the revelation is communicated afresh to successive generations." Revelation is transmitted also through Christian experience, the word as written is simply a factor in the process. And not even a truly reliable factor. (Cf. *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, p. 414.)

II. The Old Testament

How, then, does Moffatt regard the Scriptures of the Old Testament? He tells us in the Introduction to his translation of the Bible. The Old Testament is a "collection of religious literature, thrown up in the course of the story of Israel as a nation." (P. IX.) In its present form not a single one of the books in this collection is earlier than the seventh or eighth century B. C. Some, as

Zechariah 9—14, and the Book of Daniel, were definitely not composed until the second century B. C. "Nearly all have been more or less edited, after their original composition; editorial manipulation of the text can be traced, in the Prophets as well as in the legal codes, and this applies to the poetry as well as to the prose." (P. IX.) The literary structure and the religion of the Old Testament have both been influenced by Egypt, Assyria, the East, and Greece. Israel was never indifferent to its past; songs had enshrined some of its earlier traditions about the clans, like the famous oracular poem preserved in Gen. 49. This poem was not written earlier than the age of David. It was the impetus given to the national self-consciousness by the Davidic monarchy which prompted the desire to embody the history in prose. (Pp. X—XI.) — Here think for a moment of the passage 2 Pet. 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." — Contemporary events were treated first, the result was Samuel and Kings, written probably during Solomon's reign. Then came the "natural desire to gather up the primitive traditions of the people, prior to the monarchy." This produced, independently, two narratives in the two later branches of the kingdom: 1. the Judahite (J), 2. (E), coming from the northern realm. Neither of these was earlier than the ninth century. Here the earlier rules and fortunes of the clans were presented with their beliefs and practices. Both started from the beginning; (J) began boldly and sublimely with the creation of the world, while the northern tale (E) started with Abraham. Moses, of course, never wrote, despite what Jesus says, John 5:46: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me." Also Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28; John 1:45.

As time went on after the northern kingdom had collapsed, these two literary relics were fused, probably with the idea of having one religious book for the united people. Therefore, instead of one version being chosen in preference to the other, we have repeatedly two more or less parallel versions of an event side by side, extracts from one being welded into the frame work of the other.

However, the fusion of (J) and (E) proved inadequate. In 621 B. C. a religious reformation along prophetic lines was started by the discovery of a fresh lawbook within the Temple, a book that is perhaps the nucleus of the present Book of Deuteronomy. This was of profound influence in the subsequent writings. "This Deuteronomic spirit of a more stringent monotheism can be widely traced in the subsequent literature, particularly in the editing of histories and in the recension of earlier codes." (P. XI.)

Another production which had enormous influence on practical life rather than on literature, was the special priestly code enforced by Ezra on the Jewish community about 444 B. C.

Out of sources such as these the composition known as the Pentateuch was compiled after the exile. Ezra's lawbook was either the Pentateuch in its present form or one of its sources, namely, a priestly code which combined the Law of God with history, starting, like (J), from the Creation, carrying on the story down to the death of Moses, and including in its contents the present book of Leviticus. In either case the Pentateuch, which was the lawbook of Nehemiah, is a composite production made out of sources old and new, which have been blended, brought up to date, and supplemented. (P. XII.) The concession is even made that certain fragments of legislation date from the period of Moses. The song of Deborah, the fable of Jotham, — these may be survivals of the premonarchical period. (Cf. Judg. 5 and Judg. 9.)

The children of Israel always had the idea that theirs was a unique destiny and that the special providence of God was over them. "These ideas are at the heart of the tales and traditions within the first five books of the Bible." (P. XII.) "That the early history of Israel is a perfectly accurate record of bare facts need not be supposed. The body is more than the raiment, and the idea more than the fact." "A nation does not forget, but neither does it remember accurately," Dr. A. B. Davidson says; quoted by Moffatt, p. XII. How much room does that leave for inspiration?

But to go on. Joshua is an "idealized version of the conquest." Judges is another, though rather less unhistorical, collection of stories which may have been told or recited for ages in public worship. The ordinary reader enjoys the tales, but the historian notes their artificial chronology. Ruth: "One has the feeling that, like Jonah, it was written by someone who stood apart from and against Jewish chauvinism, and some have overheard in it an indirect protest against the exclusiveness and rigidity of Ezra's age." "All Old Testament history," Moffatt concedes, "takes us very close to the actual events, even though the Hebrew text may be full of self-contradictions." (P. XIII.) He accepts Wellhausen's view that in the Book of Job, which is not later than the 5th century, "a problem of faith is treated by Syrians and Arabians just as if they were Jews." As late as the third century, the book of Ecclesiastes shows us "religion abandoning the theocratic ground altogether and becoming a kind of philosophy in which there is room even for doubt and unbelief," a doubt and unbelief that moved a pious editor here and there to interpolate cautions and protests in the text. (P. XIV.) The climax in the evolution of the Old Testament literature is reached in the Book of Psalms.

In the Old Testament Moffatt uses the term "The Eternal" for "Yahweh," which he claims to be "the prehistoric name given at the Exodus by the Hebrews to their God." (P. XX.) His chief reason for this is that it works in better in a book of lyrics like the Psalter in the case of a popular version. As an honest translator Moffatt feels compelled to distinguish one or two of the strata which have been fused and confused in the traditional text. Thus

the Judahite narrative (J) is printed in italics, material from the narrative originating in northern Israel (E) appears in single brackets. Certain passages both in italics and in brackets (e. g., Ex. 4:13-16), denote an extract from the combined edition of (J) and (E), prepared a century or two after they had begun to circulate separately. Passages in double brackets are either editorial additions or later interpolations. We wonder how all this is determined. But note that it is all set forth as definite fact, something concerning which there can be no question. Examples of such interpolations: Gen. 2:20; Gen. 3:21; Gen. 9:18; Gen. 22:15-18; Gen. 26:2-6; Lev. 14:9-32.

Now a few remarks as to the translation proper. In many instances we find his version to be, not a translation, but an interpretation. As we have stated, Moffatt considers this to be the duty of a translator. But one must remember that there is a difference between paraphrases and translations. To give just a few examples of translations that are mistranslations because they are interpretations: Deut. 4:9 is a warning against the worship of the heavenly bodies: ". . . lest thou . . . shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord, thy God, hath divided unto all nations under the whole heavens." A note from Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*: "The Lord had permitted them to remain in their foolishness as a punishment for turning from Him." Moffatt translates: "The Eternal, your God, has allotted them *for worship* to all nations under the broad sky." This passage is cited by Horton to prove that not everything said about God in the Bible is true. (*Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, p. 213.) — Gen. 1:11, 24. Here Moffatt translates the לְכִינִי and לְכִינֵה of these verses with "of every kind," "every kind of." We agree with Dr. Engelder: "That is an impossible translation. The only possible translation is 'after his kind.' What is the purpose of this falsification? Is it to ward off the smashing blow which the phrase 'after his kind' gives to evolution? Better stick to the old tactics and say: Because evolution is true, Moses made a mistake by teaching the contrary and using the phrase 'after his kind.'" L. S. Keyser: "The so-called translation of Dr. Moffatt cannot be trusted, because he so frequently misconstrues the Hebrew text in the interest of his higher criticism and evolutionary conceptions. Moffatt has doctored up the Hebrew text of Gen. 1:12. "Every" is not in the text. And the pronominal form of *his* is ignored." (Moffatt: "Trees yielding fruit of every kind, fruit with seed in it." King James: "And the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.") Cf. *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, p. 213. — Ex. 3:14 Moffatt renders: "God said to Moses: I will be what I will be; tell the Israelites that I will be has sent you." — Gen. 22:15-18. God's promise to Abraham after the offering of Isaac: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Moffatt translates: "And all nations on earth shall seek bliss like theirs." Also Gen. 26:2-6. — Micah 5:2: ". . . whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (literally: the days

of eternity), Moffatt renders: "One whose origin is of old, of long descent."—Job 19:25: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, for as the last He will arise on earth, and afterward will with my skin be surrounded this (body), out of my flesh shall I behold God," which is a literal translation, Moffatt renders thus: "Still, I know One to champion me at last, to stand up for me upon earth. This body may break up, but even then my life shall have a sight of God." Page through Moffatt; you will have no trouble in finding many more such examples.

III. The New Testament

Nor does the New Testament fare any better at the hands of Moffatt. These are his views: Jesus wrote nothing, and for a time His own disciples felt no impulse to write any account of Him. A new age and a new order were expected at any moment; Jesus was to inaugurate this soon and suddenly. Why write a biography of one who was to reappear from heaven before long? But as time went on the Palestinian Christians cherished more and more the recollection of outstanding events and sayings in His life, particularly the incidents of the last tragic week of His career, for so much depended on His death. The argument with Jews turned mainly upon His sufferings, which had to be adjusted to their traditional faith in a Messiah. The apologetic requirements of the early missionary activity led to the crystallization of memories about Him. In the preservation and compilation of these anecdotes about Jesus lies the first phase of literary activity among the primitive Christians. And this from no mere pious, sentimental motive. When challenged by the Jews to justify their faith and practice, they had to fall back upon what they remembered of the instructions of their Lord.

All that has survived of the primitive literature of the New Testament era is the work of Paul, who by means of letters kept in touch with the Christian communities he had founded. Paul was the first to think out the meaning of the Christian faith. This was forced upon him by his mission to Jews and non-Jews alike. He had to carry the Church through its first crisis, past the danger of remaining a Jewish sect. The intellectual forms in which he expressed his faith were not final at every point; there was a variety of interpretations of the Gospel, mainly stirred by his impetus. He was the one who inspired the emancipation movement which saved the primitive Church from a reactionary conservatism. The first man of letters in the early Church was Paul. Very few of the original twelve Apostles had occasion or ability to follow him along this line. Simon Peter wrote 1 Peter to a group of churches in the north of Asia Minor. A second epistle, probably composed early in the second century, managed after a while to gain a position in the canon. The Epistle of James is one of the enigmas of this collection. It is permeated by reminiscences of the Wisdom literature of Judaism. James was probably a simple Christian teacher, and the Epistle presupposes mis-

conceptions of Paul's teaching about faith. (P. XXVII.) Hebrews is characterized by a profound mystical philosophy of religion. The person and work of Christ are discussed in a unique vein of theological speculation, nearer to that of the Fourth Gospel. Jude represents another of the occasional tracts and homilies that came into circulation during the period which followed the career of Paul, although none of them exactly represents his theological position.

Then the traditions about Jesus, presupposed in the Epistles, came to be recorded in writing, and so we have the four Gospels and Acts. The first three Gospels are not independent narratives about Jesus; one has been re-edited by the authors of the other two. They tone down the frank realism which sometimes characterized Mark, even altering expressions to suit a slightly different estimate of some incident or saying. Neither of the two later Gospels was written to be read alongside of Mark, as is our custom. They were written to supersede it or to be read in quarters where it was unknown. (P. XXIX.) Mark's Gospel did not prevent Matthew's from appearing. Neither did Matthew's meet the full requirements of the Church. Luke is not satisfied with his predecessors, including Mark. He claims no special inspiration, merely asserting that he has taken pains to be accurate, orderly, and well informed. His omissions of material with which he must have been familiar are explained by his sense that some of these passages might be irrelevant if not actually misleading to his audience. The resemblances and differences, the discrepancies, the varying levels of historicity in the three Gospels form a problem of literary and intricate historical criticism. But it is much more important to recognize their common power. (P. XXXII.)

In the book of Acts, Luke reproduces some primitive traditions from hearsay, and he also uses written sources. Where he is well informed, and especially where he writes from his own observation, he is remarkably accurate.

The climax of the New Testament books is to be found in the Fourth Gospel. Here we have a nucleus of really primitive tradition. How far these and other graphic reminiscences go back to an eyewitness like the Apostle John is one of the problems that cluster round this deep, mysterious book. It is the outcome of long reflection upon the subject, a semiphilosophical interpretation of the Christian religion in biographical form. The author is "idealizing an historical figure" (Dean Inge). John, for the sake of reverence, omits some of the naive, frank expressions used by Mark.

The Apocalypse is a series of weird, symbolic visions, couched often in terms of Oriental fantasy, and depicting a struggle which ends in the return of Jesus in messianic power and the decisive overthrow of the antidivine power on earth, followed by a new universe of bliss and peace. The prophet sees in the Roman persecution of Christians for refusing to worship the emperor as

an act of loyalty the last inspiration of Satan. The Apocalypse is a latter-day pamphlet, summoning the faithful, especially in Asia Minor, to defy the authorities and rely on God. As time went on and the relations between the Church and State altered, considerable doubts were felt in some quarters about the right of such a manifesto to be read as Scripture. But since it was supposed to have been written by John the Apostle, and since its prophecies could be given an allegorical interpretation, the Church became reconciled to the book. It shows us, in the form of a magnificent, semipoetical rhapsody, the temper of primitive Christians who had to face the Roman policy of repression at the end of the first century.

The Greek text followed by Moffatt in his translation of the New Testament is that of H. von Soden of Berlin. Quotations or direct reminiscences of the Old Testament are printed in italics. Here too verses, groups of verses, and even chapters have been transposed. And here too translations that are in reality interpretations soon become evident. To list a few:

Luke 24:25 reads in the A. V.: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken" (*ἐνὶ καρδίᾳ*). Moffatt translates: "O foolish men, with hearts so slow to believe, after all the prophets have declared." *Ἐπί* with the dative denotes faith based on the things spoken by the Prophets. John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Moffatt: "The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine." — Gal. 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Moffatt: "For all of you who had yourselves baptized into Christ have taken on the character of Christ." — Titus 3:5-7: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior." Moffatt: "And he saved us, not for any good deeds we had done but from his own pity for us, by the water that means regeneration and renewal under the holy Spirit." Think of the following renderings in Moffatt's N. T.: Matt. 26:26: "Take and eat this, it means my body." Matt. 26:28: "Drink of it, all of you; this means my blood." 1 Cor. 10:16: "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is that not participating in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is that not participating in the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 11:29: "For he who eats and drinks without a proper sense of the Body, eats and drinks to his own condemnation." 1 Cor. 11:24-25: "This means my body broken for you; do this in memory of me. . . . This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood." Luke 22:19: "This means my body given up for your sake; do this in memory of me." A few words on Gal. 3:16. In this well-known passage the entire argument of the Apostle is based on a single word in the Old Testament and on its use in the singular and not in the plural. "Now, to Abraham and his Seed were the promises

made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Moffatt uses "offspring" in this passage. But turn to the Old Testament in Moffatt's Bible. Anyone who does that will ask: Where does Paul get his argument? "Seed" is translated as "descendants"; Gen. 26:4: "And all nations shall seek bliss like theirs." King James: "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 3:15: "And I will set a feud between you and the woman, between your brood and hers, they shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel." (Cf. *Hom. Mag.*, X, 233.) On what is St. Paul's argument to rest? The basis of the argument has been removed.

These, again, are but a few examples. Study Moffatt's translation with care, and many more will soon come to your attention. Though individual passages and chapters have been well rendered, matters such as these impair the usefulness of the entire translation.

IV. What Is the Effect Produced by Moffatt's Version?

What, then, of Moffatt's translation? It is bound to raise in the mind of even the average casual reader the question: Is the Bible really the Word of God? And in the mind of the sincere Christian the question: Can I really be sure that every word of the Scriptures is the inspired Word of God?

What will happen when our members pick up a copy of Moffatt's translation of the Bible? The Bible is opened at Genesis 1. The reader finds that the record begins with verse 4 of the second chapter. "This is the story of how the universe was formed. When God began to form the universe, the world was void and vacant, darkness lay over the abyss." The familiar words: "In the beginning," etc., are missing. The passage in Moffatt seems to leave room for the idea that the void and vacant world was there at the time when God began His work. The word "create" with all that the Christian has learned to associate with that term is missing. In verse 11 the reader already meets with the mistranslation that has been pointed out. In chapter 2 he comes to the beginning of a section, continuing into the third and fourth chapters, printed in italics. Even the casual reader will wonder as to the meaning of this. He will turn to Moffatt's Introduction, where he is told in considerable detail of (J) and (E), of Moffatt's ideas and theories as to the origin of the Scriptures. He cannot but note that verbal inspiration has no place in Moffatt's theology. In chapter 3 the Christian encounters the first promise of a Savior, the One who would crush the serpent's head. But here, as mentioned before, the seed of the woman has become a brood, and they shall strike at Satan's head, and Satan shall strike at their heel. How is the passage to be explained and how does it agree with what he has learned concerning it? In chapter 3 the reader comes to several verses in double brackets. He consults the Introduction and finds that these verses are to be regarded as editorial additions or as later interpolations. With

chapter 24 he comes to the first of several instances in which portions of chapters are moved from one position to another.

Will all this tend to strengthen the reader's faith in the word of Christ "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35)? It will rather make him uncertain as to all of Scripture. That may not seem so serious at the time. Yet what of the time when he suddenly finds himself in one of the emergencies of life where so much, yes, everything, depends on this, that the Word and promise of the Lord as recorded in Scripture be trusted implicitly? We need not give examples. To quote once more from Dr. Engelder's *The Scripture Cannot Be Broken*: "Those that listen to the voice of the seducers are the poorer for it. Everything that God put into the Bible enriches us. St. Paul, the faithful guardian of the Church's wealth, tells us: 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning' (Rom. 15:4). You may not know why God selected a particular incident for incorporation into Scripture and told it in just that particular way. Do not delete this portion of Scripture; the time may soon come when you need it for your nourishment. All that God presents to us in Scripture is nutritious. Strike out Gen. 1 as mere history? There are days when we find rich comfort in the truth that God created us and keeps us—created us for eternal life. Strike out the Imprecatory Psalms and the teaching of eternal damnation? The secure sinner absolutely needs to hear these passages. We need and want the whole Bible. It is an unbreakable, indivisible whole. If you break a piece from it here and a piece there, you lose the full blessing the whole Bible offers."

Moffatt, then, does not believe in verbal inspiration—this is reflected again and again in his translation. He has no true regard for the Bible as the inspired Word of God. His translation serves to raise doubt and uncertainty in the mind of the reader. In instances it leaves room for, or definitely suggests, false doctrine. In many cases it is not a translation but an interpretation. We subscribe wholeheartedly to the statement made in connection with the listing of Moffatt's New Testament in the Concordia Publishing House catalog: "Dr. Moffatt's translation is based on 'freedom from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration.' We recommend the book to none but advanced professional scholars, who will find much value in it." So, then, by no means recommend Moffatt. But in view of the fairly wide distribution of this translation be ready to give a clear-cut and soundly based opinion to inquirers. If, in using Moffatt's translation personally, you are brought to dig a bit deeper into the Hebrew and the Greek originals, the translation will serve a good and useful purpose.

Marshalltown, Iowa

