

**EMENDATIONS OF THE  
AUTHORISED VERSION  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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Emendations of the Authorised version of the Old Testament by Selig Newman

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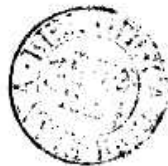
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THE AUTHORISED VERSION  
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OLD TESTAMENT.

BY SELIG NEWMAN,  
AUTHOR OF THE "ABRIDGED HEBREW GRAMMAR," AND THE  
"COMPLETE HEBREW AND ENGLISH LEXICON."



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## P R E F A C E.

As the title of this little yet laborious work (coming as it does from a Jew), is rather a startling one, and may, perhaps, add to the mistrust naturally entertained of a Jew's translation and exposition of certain passages of the Bible, so that some persons may, without investigation, condemn it at once as containing a deadly poison, I beg to assure the reader, that I originally undertook this work without the remotest intention of either attacking or defending any creed, but simply in order to redeem a pledge I have frequently given my numerous and pious Christian pupils—to point out and correct the mistranslations which exist in the authorised version of the Old Testament. Another object which I have had in view has been to make known to Bible-readers generally, the opinion of the learned Jewish commentators, both ancient and modern, on the many intricate passages dispersed throughout that book; and I am persuaded that whoever will refer to those passages whereon Jews and Christians are at issue, will be satisfied that I have acted up to my primary intention; for wherever I have been obliged to differ from the received readings which are considered to support Christianity, I have either avoided a comment altogether, or given as little of it as I possibly could to be understood; and had it been consistent with honesty, I would gladly have left them unnoticed

altogether. But leaving alone the very few passages, to my interpretation of which I am fully aware Christians cannot assent, there are very many others I have noticed, in which I am inclined to believe every competent judge will agree with me, that the translators were either decidedly wrong, or that where the meaning in the original is dubious, they have not given the happiest rendering. This I trust will be an apology for my intruding on the religious world; and I hope that the arduous task I have been induced to impose upon myself, and have performed to the best of my abilities, will not be unacceptable to many. It may, perhaps, even be the means of raising the question, whether it ever was agreeable to justice and religion, and especially, whether it be so now (in an age and country, when and where the greatest efforts are made for disseminating holy writ, and the number of its readers far surpass those of any other age and country), to put the Bible into people's hands, without previously, as much as lies in the power of fallible beings, to separate the chaff from the wheat; particularly since the former may prove dangerous to the infidel, by strengthening him in his unbelief, as well as to the believer, by raising doubts in his mind, of the authenticity of a book, which apparently contains so many incongruities. For example: Ex. xi. 2, 35, 36, reads according to the version, "One shall borrow of his, or her neighbour;" but the meaning of לַקֹּחַ, in the original, is not borrow, but ask; i. e. "One shall ask or demand." This is perfectly in accordance with justice: for if the Israelites could have stripped the Egyptians of all they were possessed of, it would have been far from remunerating them for the slavery they were kept in during centuries, without any cause, and that too, under great cruelties; whilst the permission or order to borrow without intending to restore, being a licence to defraud, could not have emanated from the fountain of justice.



Again, Lev. xxvii. 29, if  $\text{דָּוָה}$  were not rendered, as in the version, "devoted," but excommunicated, or accursed (as in Josh. vii. 1). then the infidel could not accuse the divine legislator, whose attributes are "merciful and gracious," of recommending human sacrifices. Another similar mistranslation is that of (Judges xi. 31): "and I will offer it" which is certainly enough to astonish one, at the barbarity of him who made the inhuman vow, as also of the whole Jewish nation, who could tolerate the accomplishment of it. It is true, in the margin this stain is wiped away, for there it is "or I will offer it," which, like the original, implies, if fit for it, it shall be offered, and if not, then he or she, shall be devoted to the service of God. But why, I ask, is this, together with as many other instances wherein the margin is correct, and the text incorrect, as would fill a large volume? Why, I ask, are they not only suffered to retain their places; but the generality of Bibles, in the hands of millions, to contain the one without the other? And it must be apparent, that those Bibles which have marginal readings, are of little benefit to most readers, who, from their ignorance of the original, are incapable of deciding whether the text or the margin be correct; more especially where the margin gives several meanings to one passage, which must involve them in doubts which to prefer. A few specimens will, perhaps, suffice to show how necessary it is, at least, for the marginal and textual readings to change places, if not for the former to supersede the latter altogether. Is. ix. 3, according to the text is, "not increased the joy," but in the margin it is the very contrary "to him thou hast increased the joy." The word  $\text{אֵל}$  which makes that difference, being the same as in Lev. xxv. 30, where the translators did not scruple to follow the Hebrew  $\text{קָרָי}$  reading, and properly render it, "that is in the walled city," whilst in Isaiah by the negative, "not increased," they make the

prophet contradict himself with the same breath; as he goes on to say, "They joy before thee."

Prov. xxv. 23. "The north wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." In the margin it is "The north wind bringeth forth rain, &c." Now, not only רָחַלֵּל generally means, to bring forth; but it is also known that in Palestine the north wind coming from the sea does not drive away, but brings forth rain, and thus the comparison is correct: namely, As the north wind brings forth rain, so does a whispering tongue (thus the Hebrew) bring forth an angry countenance, i. e. being suspected of backbiting.

Jerem. xx. 7. "Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." This certainly would have been an improper and indecent expression of the prophet respecting God. But in the margin it is as it should be: "Thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed."

So much in excuse for the sin\* of commission. Now for that of omission.

Firstly, not to increase the bulk of this work and enhance the expense, I have quoted just as much of a verse or phrase as I found necessary. It will, therefore, be indispensable in order to understand the difference in the two renderings, by rejecting the one and substituting the other, to look at the whole verse, and sometimes even at what precedes and follows it.

Secondly, I have omitted to notice those mistranslations where there is no difference between the meaning conveyed in them, and in an improved translation.

Thirdly, where the same mistranslation occurs in the same

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\* Sin it may be thought by some to presume to correct a translation, the superiority of which to most others, cannot be disputed.

book, at no great distance from each other, I have corrected the first only, and referred to the others.

Fourthly, I have omitted to notice the apparent mistranslations of passages about the true meanings of which there is a general disagreement among commentators, and which I, therefore, could not take upon myself to correct. These obscurities are caused by ellipses, redundancies, and transpositions of letters, words, and phrases, as well as by the interchange of some letters peculiar to the eastern languages, and which irregularities are mostly found in the minor Prophets, in Job, and in Chronicles. The description of the buildings of the temples of Solomon and Ezekiel are likewise not without difficulties, by reason of the parts of the structures and the manner of their constructions being at present little understood, and must, therefore, leave the translators in great uncertainty.

Lastly, the following few words, from their too frequent occurrence, I have omitted, and it may suffice to notice them here.

אלהים, the primary meaning of which is, "a mighty one," includes God as well as an angel, a judge, and a powerful, or godly man. A distinction ought, therefore, to be made: as 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. "for I saw gods," ought to be "I saw some mighty one." And so Gen. vi. 2. instead of "sons of God," it should be, sons of great or godly men, i. e. worshippers of God, in contrast to the daughters of the vulgar men, i. e. those who deified creatures, as appears from iv. 6.

תורה is always translated law, but the literal meaning of that word is, instruction, and thus it should be rendered mostly throughout Proverbs.

שאול is frequently translated hell, but there being no term in the Hebrew expressing the same as the word hell does in English, the word שאול should always be rendered grave, or lower world.