

WILLIAM CAREY

This year the 200th anniversary of William Carey's birth is being celebrated. Born on August 17th 1761, he went to India in 1793, where he remained until his death in 1834. Together with his associates Joshua Marshman and William Ward and a whole company of Indian helpers he was responsible for publishing the Scriptures in no less than 35 languages of India at the presses of Serampore. The whole Bible or a large part of it was translated into 9 languages, the complete New Testament into 21 languages and portions into 5 more. Perhaps his most notable versions are the Bengali Bible, of which he completed the New Testament within three years of his arrival in India, and the Bible in classical Sanskrit. We are grateful to the Baptist Missionary Society in London for making available the printed and handwritten correspondence of Carey which they have in their files, and to Mr. O. Béguin of the United Bible Societies for providing us with the selections printed and handwritten correspondence of Carey which they have in their files, and methods of Bible translation.

To his sister

22nd December 1796

"The translation of the Scriptures I look upon to be one of the greatest desiderata in the world, and it has accordingly occupied a considerable part of my time and attention."

To the Rev. Andrew Fuller (Secretary of the B.M.S.)

23rd March 1797

"I have been with the printer at Calcutta to consult him about the expense of printing the New Testament, which is now translated and may be got ready for the press in a little time. It has undergone one correction, but must undergo several more. I employ a Pundit merely for this purpose, with whom I go through the whole in as exact a manner as I can. He judges of the style and syntax, and I of the faithfulness of the translation. I have, however, translated several chapters together, which have not required any alteration in the syntax whatever: yet I always submit this article entirely to his judgment. I can also, by hearing him read, judge whether he understands his subject, by his accenting his reading properly and laying the emphasis on the right words. If he fails in this, I immediately suspect the translation; though it is not an easy matter for an ordinary reader to lay emphasis properly in reading Bengali, in which there is no pointing at all. The mode of printing, i.e. whether a printing press, etc., shall be sent from England, or whether it shall be printed here, or whether it shall be printed at all, now rests with the Society."

To the Rev. J. Ryland (a founder-member of the B.M.S. Board)

20th April 1808

"You mention some objections that have been made to our translations, as if they were the work of graceless Brahmans. We certainly do employ all the helps we can obtain: Brahmans, Mussulmans, and others, who both translate and sometimes write out rough copies,

and should think it criminal not to do so. But we never *print* any translation till every word has been revised and re-revised. Whatever help we employ, I have never yet suffered a single word, or a single mode of construction, to pass without examining it and seeing through it. I read every proof-sheet twice or thrice myself, and correct every letter with my own hand. Brother Marshman and I compare with the Greek or Hebrew, and Brother Ward reads every sheet. Three of the translations, viz. the Bengali, Hindustani and Sanskrit, I translated with my own hand; the two last immediately from the Greek, and the Hebrew Bible is before me while I translate the Bengali. Whatever helps I use, I commit my judgment to none of them. Brother Marshman does the same with the Chinese and all that he engages in, and so does Brother Ward.

"The idea that a translation made by a Brahman will be unintelligible to the mass of the people, is unfounded. Would you, if you were translating the Bible into English, despise the grammatical language and assistance of learned men, and make use of the dialect and orthography of the illiterate? And if you did, would it be better understood than the present English translation, which was the work of learned men? I feel my ground in all the languages derived from the Sanskrit; but perhaps may not have perfectly understood every passage, nor have always expressed the meaning in the happiest terms. Some mistakes also may have escaped my observation. Indeed I have never yet thought anything perfect that I have done. I have no scruple, however, in saying that I believe every translation that we have printed to be a good one."

10th December 1811

"I have of late been much impressed with the vast importance of laying a foundation for biblical criticism in the East, by preparing grammars of the different languages into which we have translated or may translate the Bible. Without some such step, they who follow us will have to wade through the same labour that I have in order to stand merely upon the same ground that I now stand upon. If, however, elementary books are provided, the labour will be greatly contracted; and a person will be able in a short time to acquire that which has cost me years of study and toil.

"The necessity which lies upon me of acquiring so many languages, obliges me to study and write out the grammar of each of them, and to attend closely to their irregularities and peculiarities. I have, therefore, already published grammars of three of them; namely, the Sanskrit, the Bengali and the Mahratta. To these I have resolved to add grammars of the Telinga, Kurnata, Orissa, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Nepalese and Assam languages. Two of these are now in the press and I hope to have two or three more of them out by the end of next year.

"This may not only be useful in the way I have stated, but may serve to furnish an answer to a question which has been more than once repeated: 'How can these men translate into so great a number of languages?' Few people know what may be done till they try and persevere in what they undertake.

"... To secure the gradual perfection of the translations, I have also in my mind, and indeed have been long collecting materials, for An Universal Dictionary of the Oriental Languages derived from the Sanskrit. I mean to take the Sanskrit, of course, as the ground-work, and to give the different acceptations of every word, with examples of their application in the manner of Johnson, and then to give the synonyms in the different languages derived from Sanskrit, with the Hebrew and Greek terms answering thereto; always putting the word derived from the Sanskrit term first, and then those derived from other sources. I intend always to give the etymology of the Sanskrit term, so that that of the term deduced from it in the cognate language will be evident.

"This work will be great, and it is doubtful whether I shall live to complete it; but I mean to begin to arrange these materials, which I have been some years collecting for this purpose, as soon as my Bengali dictionary is finished. Should I live to accomplish this, and the translations in hand, I think I can then say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'."

17th November 1813

"As to the translation and printing of the Scriptures, it goes as fast as so vast and multifarious a work can be expected to do. If I could learn languages faster it would be more rapidly got through the press; but some of the languages are very difficult and differ so widely from others as to occasion me much hard labour, for every translation goes through my hand except Burmese and Chinese."

To the Rev. A. Fuller

25th March 1815

"We have now five or six presses constantly at work, and must have one or two more. These, however, can be made in Calcutta. We have just finished a large edition of the Tamil New Testament and have begun the Singalese and Mr. Martyn's version of the Hindustani in the Persian character. These are printed for the Bible Society. We are now printing the Scriptures in Sanskrit, Bengali (Third Edition of the New Testament), Hindustani, Mahratta, Orissa, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Assam, Pashto, Balochi, Telinga, Burmese and Chinese, and we only wait till the workmen can cast the type to begin printing in Kurnata, Gujarata and Maldivian. Brother Chamberlain has taken his copy of the Brij Bhesha with him and we are daily expecting a pundit to assist us in the Nepalese.

"I was never so closely employed as at present. I have just finished for the press my Telinga grammar; the last sheet of the Punjabi is in the press; and I am getting forward with the Kurnata: indeed it is nearly ready for the press. I am also preparing materials for grammars of the Kashmiri, Pashto and Balochi languages; and have begun digesting those for the Orissa. The care of publishing and correcting Felix's Burmese grammar lies on me, beside learning all these languages, correcting the translations in them, writing a Bengali Dictionary, and all my pastoral and collegiate duties. I therefore can scarcely call an hour in a week my own. I however rejoice and delight in my work. It is clearing the way and providing materials for those who succeed us to work upon. I have much for which to bless the Lord. I trust all my children know the Lord in truth; I have every family and domestic blessing, and many more than I could have expected. The work of the Lord prospers. The Church at Calcutta is now become very large and still increases. The mission, notwithstanding its heavy losses, has been supported, and we have been enabled, within a year of a very desolating calamity, to carry our printing to a greater extent than before."

To the Rev. J. Ryland

19th August 1818

"We do the very best we can in every language, and then publish the translation which is from that moment open to everyone's animadversions; we publicly court, nay even solicit, observations on what is published, and in a subsequent edition avail ourselves of these observations whether good-natured or ill-natured, our object being the perfection of the translations. We have the fullest opportunity of knowing whether those already finished are correct and wherein their defects consist, as natives from every part of India are continually translating from them into their vernacular tongues. Where they translate wrong, I always suspect the version from which they translate, and of course, re-examine the passage, and I believe more faults have been detected by this than by all other methods put together."

From a report on activity in 1823

"... As each version has occupied from seven to twelve years, in its formation and its passage through the press, neither time nor means have been wanting to enable us to make up our own minds respecting the merits of each, long before it has been sent into circulation. We are ready to indulge the hope, therefore, that although all first versions must necessarily be imperfect, each of these already named is sufficiently accurate and perspicuous, to become, under the Divine Blessing, the means of salvation, as well as the Bengali, Sanskrit and Hindi versions which God has been pleased already thus to honour. But while we have this hope, we deem it important for second editions of these versions, to obtain from every quarter we

are able to give the opinion both of other natives and of Europeans respecting them, and, if possible, critical remarks on particular passages . . .”

From a memoir

August 1811

“It has long, therefore, occurred to some of us that the training up of a number of youths to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and of the languages of India, almost from their infancy, would be an auxiliary in this work, the value of which time alone can fully demonstrate. The advantages which youths trained from their infancy to grammatical studies, and at the same time habituated to *speak* the various languages of India, must necessarily possess beyond those who, perhaps, commencing grammatical studies late in life, have, still later, to acquire a foreign idiom, must be obvious to all. A seminary for training up youths so as to fit them for the work of translations in the various languages of Asia, has therefore been for some time in our contemplation. To this the consideration of another fact has greatly incited us: Translation, like many other employments, is a work for which experience alone can duly capacitate anyone. The result of many years’ experience may be communicated in a regular course of instruction, and although this will not form actual experience, it may prove a valuable preparation for the work, as well as inspire the mind with a love thereto. We have, therefore, laid the foundation of such a Seminary at Serampore, where youths are instructed in the Greek, Hebrew and Latin languages, while they are acquiring and perhaps conversing in the languages in which they may probably have to examine the translation of the Word of God . . . We can by no means assure ourselves that all these youths, when come to manhood, will apply to the work of translation; or that all of them will devote their talents expressly to religion: if a majority of them, however, should bend their attention to sacred literature, the end of thus training them up will be fully answered. In every undertaking of this nature, some risk of loss must be incurred. In choosing grown-up young men (could we procure them) the probability might be, that a great part of them would never have their minds so imbued with the love of philology as to become useful in translating the word; and in thus training up youths from their infancy to classical and oriental literature, the risk of a number of them preferring other pursuits is perhaps not greater, while the superior efficiency of those who may from inclination attach themselves to the work must be evident. Nor perhaps are we to account all those entirely lost to the great work of perfecting the translation of the Scriptures, who may prefer secular employments. They will still have acquired the ability of assisting in the work, and it is almost a necessary consequence, that they should feel an attachment to the studies of their youth. Thus, if business preclude their actual engaging in the work of translation, it may still leave

them opportunity for examining and occasionally improving those made by others; a work which the bent of mind given them by their youthful studies will make them esteem rather a recreation than a serious burden. Hence, if to a goodly number of efficient translators, who make the work the good business and delight of their lives, there be added a band of able coadjutors, scattered probably over the various parts of Asia, the work may be likely to be affected, even though only one half of the youths thus educated should prefer the winning of souls to the accumulation of wealth.

THE MEANING OF *THUEIN*

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

G. D. KILPATRICK

At Jn. 10:10 the commentaries for the most part are not clear how the Greek words translated "kill" (*thuein*) and "destroy" (*apollumi*) differ in meaning. Indeed they seem to imply that in this passage the two words mean much the same. The dictionaries suggest that *thuein* means no more than "to kill" here and as this is not the usual meaning of the word this suggestion requires further examination.

Thuein meant originally to burn incense, to make to smoke, but it soon came to be used for offering and sacrifice of which the worshippers partook. This remained its normal significance and in the passages which the lexica cited for the meaning "kill" apart from "sacrifice" (Eur., *Iph. Taur.* 621; Aristoph., *Lysist.* 1062; Herod. i. 126) the word has not lost its fuller meaning. It is still "sacrifice" as a way of killing for food.¹

In view of this pagan background it is not surprising that the term normally has the same meaning in the Greek Bible. In the LXX *thuein* renders the following four Hebrew words:

- (i) *zābaḥ* (some 96 times), "slaughter for sacrifice, slaughter for food"; the noun is the sacrifice in which the worshippers partake of the victim.
- (ii) *ṭābaḥ* "slaughter, kill for food" at 1 Sam. 25:11, Jer. 11:19.
- (iii) *qāṭar* "to make a sacrifice go up in smoke, burn a sacrifice", Ex. 30:7, 2 Chron. 25:14, 26:18 (2), 28:3, 34:25, Hos. 4:13, Jer. 1:16.
- (iv) *sāḥaṭ* "slaughter, kill for food, sacrifice," Ex. 12:21, Jud. 12:6 (v.l.), 2 Chron. 29:23 (3), 24, 30:15, 17, 35:1, 6, 11, Is. 22:13, 46:3, cf. 1 Esd. 1:1, 6.

From this list we see that *thuein* means in the LXX both to sacrifice and to kill for food. The intimate connexion between these

¹ For the Greek terminology see Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, xviii. 1,597f.