

**Julia Evelina Smith**

## **PREFACE**

*The Holy Bible: containing the Old and New Testaments. Hartford, Conn.: American Pub. Co., 1876. 892, 276 p.*

It may seem presumptuous for an ordinary woman with no particular advantages of education to translate and publish alone, the most wonderful book that has ever appeared in the world, and thought to be the most difficult to translate. It has occupied the time and attention of the wisest and most learned of all ages, believing, as the world has believed, that such only could give the correct rendering of the language in which the Bible was written.

Over twenty years ago, when I had four sisters, a friend met with us weekly, to search the Scriptures, we being desirous to learn the exact meaning of every Greek and Hebrew word, from which King James's forty-seven translators had taken their version of the Bible. We saw by the margin that the text had not been given literally, and it was the literal meaning we were seeking. I had studied Latin and Greek at school, and began by translating the Greek New Testament, and then the Septuagint, from which our Saviour quoted one or two texts which are not in the Hebrew Bible, and there is now said to be no Hebrew Bible extant so old as the Septuagint. We all had a strong desire to learn the signification of the proper names, and I wrote to a learned friend about it, and he advised me to study Hebrew, saying, "it was a simple language, and easily learned, there being but one book in the world, of pure Hebrew, which was the Bible." He added that, "then I could see with my own eyes, and not look through the glasses of my neighbors." I soon gave my attention to the Hebrew, and studied it thoroughly, and wrote it out word for word, giving no ideas of my own, but endeavouring to put the same English word for the same Hebrew or Greek word, everywhere, while King James's translators have wholly differed from this rule; but it appeared to us to give a much clearer understanding of the text.

It had never at that time entered my mind that I should ever publish the work, but I was so much interested and entertained to see the connection from Genesis to Revelation, that I continued my labors and wrote out the Bible five times, twice from the Greek, twice from the Hebrew, and once from the Latin—the Vulgate. These three languages were written over the head of our Saviour. They are now dead languages and cannot be altered. The whole construction is so complete, that it does seem to be work of inspiration, and the only communication from God to man, for all time. The work is given in types, in parables, and in dark sayings, a knowledge of which is gained, as all other knowledge is gained, by the desire of the heart to learn it. It may be thought by the public in general, that I have great confidence in myself, in not conferring with the learned in so great a work, but as there is but one book in the Hebrew tongue, and I have defined it

word for word, I do not see how anybody can know more about it than I do. It being a dead language no improvement can be made upon it. As for the Latin and Greek, I have no doubt many have searched deeper into the standard works than I have, but I think no one has given more time and attention to the literal meaning of the Bible text in these languages.

It is very possible that the readers if this book may think it strange that I have made such use of the tenses, going according to the Hebrew grammar. It seems that the original Hebrew had no regard to time, and that the Bible speaks for all ages. If I did not follow the tenses as they are, I myself should be the judge, and man must not be trusted with regard to the Word of God. I think the promiscuous use of the tenses shows that there must be something hidden, that we must search out, and not hold to the outward, for the "letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." It took me about seven years to accomplish the five translations, at least, I was engaged in it that length of time, not giving my whole time to it. I should probably have been much longer, had it come into my head that I should ever consent to have it published. There may be some little inaccuracies, like putting the verb to be, for is, in a few instances, but I think never has the sense of the Original Tongue been altered.

Glastonbury, March 23d, 1876

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**Julia Evelina Smith** (1792-1886) was one of the five daughters of Zephaniah Hollister Smith (who left the Congregational ministry after concluding it was against his conscience to receive money for preaching and had established a law practice instead) and Hannah Hadassah Hickock (described as "a remarkable woman .. an amateur poet, linguist, mathematician, and astronomer"). In 1869, Julia and her sister Abby attended a woman suffrage meeting in Hartford and were convinced "the women had truth on their side." They soon began to appear at the town meeting in Glastonbury, Connecticut (their home), to protest their property being taxed "without representation."

In 1876, Julia Smith published at her own expense a translation of the Bible which she had completed nearly twenty years before. Turning to the original Greek New Testament in 1843 to determine the authority for William Miller's prediction of the end of the world, she had concluded that the King James translation was not literal enough. In the next seven years, she translated "word for

word, giving no ideas of my own" the Greek New Testament and Septuagint, and, having taught herself Hebrew, the Hebrew Bible.

In 1879, at the age of eighty-seven, she married Amos Andrew Parker, who had sought her acquaintance after reading her Bible, and moved to Hartford, where she lived for the rest of her life. In 1884, she addressed the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association. Two years later she died and was buried with her sisters in Glastonbury.

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