

The fact that a young man grew up in a community where Aramaic is spoken today does not necessarily mean that he would have much understanding of the meaning of the language as it was spoken two thousand years ago. Every language is constantly changing. I wonder whether you have happened to notice that the very common present-day word "nice" does not occur at all in the King James Version of the Bible. According to the Oxford Dictionary this word meant "foolish" or "ignorant" 400 years ago. Three hundred years ago it meant "wanton" or "lascivious." It is indeed strange that today it should have become one of our commonest words to express an idea so different from what it meant just a few centuries ago.

The English language has greatly changed since the days of King James, and at that time it had already changed greatly from the time of Chaucer. It is only about 600 years since Chaucer lived (as compared with nearly 2000 years since the New Testament was written), but I would be greatly surprised if anyone living today, unless he has made a special study of Chaucer or of the English language as it was spoken 600 years ago, would be able correctly to understand what he wrote. The Aramaic that Lamsa learned as a boy represents a language that has vastly changed since the time of Christ.

In addition, it must be stated that all unprejudiced scholars agree that the Peshitta, which Lamsa claims to have translated, is itself a translation, regardless of what the so-called "Church of the East" may say to the contrary.

At certain points where Lamsa differs greatly from the King James Version I have myself examined the Peshitta and have found that it contains no warrant at all for his alleged translation. The only conclusion I have therefore been able to reach was that he simply altered the King James Version more or less arbitrarily without much reference to the Peshitta or to any other source.

The Holman Company has published the book in a very beautiful form, and it is indeed sad that it should have to be considered valueless. However, I believe that this is the case. I see no reason to consider its contents to be at all reliable, and many reasons for reaching the opposite conclusion.