

Personalia

With no common regret we record the death of Dr. Christian David Ginsburg, who passed away on March 7th, in his 83rd year. Born at Warsaw, he was educated at the Rabbinic College in that city, but embraced the Christian faith in 1846. Coming to England as a young man, he was for some time connected with the Liverpool branch of the London Jews' Society; gradually, however, he devoted himself more and more completely to those indefatigable studies which made him one of the most learned among modern Hebraists.

His earliest works appeared as far back as 1857, when he published *Historical and Critical Commentaries on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs*. His reputation was increased by further volumes—for example, on the Karaite Jews, on the Essenes, and on the Kabbalah—as well as by numerous and important contributions to Kitto's "Encyclopædia," Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Biography," and the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

Dr. Ginsburg's dominant interest, however, centred on Massoretic studies, and by his remarkable and exhaustive researches he has made accessible the vast stores of textual annotation and comment on the Hebrew Bible compiled by early Jewish rabbis. His most elaborate work was the publication and explanation of the Massorah, in a series of four huge imperial folio volumes, issued between 1880 and 1905. The final volume has not yet appeared, though we believe that much of it exists in manuscript.

In 1894 Dr. Ginsburg completed his first Massoretic-critical edition of the Hebrew text of the Bible, with an apparatus of variant readings. This was followed and completed, three years later, by a most valuable "Introduction to the Massoretic-critical edition of the Hebrew Bible," in which the learned editor described in detail the MSS. and early printed editions which he had collated or consulted. Both works were published by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

We have said enough to give some idea of the learning and industry of this remarkable scholar. But his versatile sympathies and omnivorous knowledge ranged over many fields—literary, political, and artistic, as well as Biblical. During his long career he became intimate with many distinguished persons—including the late Mr. Gladstone. He had an extensive acquaintance with the history of art; and his collection of Dürer and Rembrandt etchings and French line-engravings was not less magnificent than the collection of printed editions of the Scriptures, which he had spent more than half a

century in bringing together. A selection from these books, comprising many rare and early specimens, and including the only known complete set of the folio pre-Lutheran editions of the German Bible, was purchased by private subscription in 1909, and now enriches the Bible House Library as the "Ginsburg Collection."

It was in 1906 that Dr. Ginsburg came into more intimate relationship with the British and Foreign Bible Society, when he undertook under its auspices a new edition, greatly enlarged and improved, of his Massoretic-critical Hebrew Bible. To this task he dedicated the closing years of his life. The text is substantially that of the first edition of Jacob ben Chayim, printed by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-5. In the notes Dr. Ginsburg incorporated the results of his further collation of over seventy MSS. and nineteen printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. The publication of this laborious work began in 1907, and has followed the order of the Hebrew Bible. Down to the present time the Pentateuch, the Earlier Prophets and the Later Prophets have appeared; while of the Hagiographa, which form the concluding section of the Jewish canon, the Psalms have been published, and Proverbs and much of Job are in type. About five-sixths of the whole is thus complete. It is a pathetic circumstance that on the day before his death Dr. Ginsburg persisted in rising from bed and seating himself at his table, where he began for a short time to look at the Hebrew proof-sheets. Soon afterwards he lost consciousness, and passed away peacefully the next morning.

Dr. Ginsburg was one of the original members of the Committee appointed in 1870 to undertake the revision of the Old Testament in English, of which company his distinguished friend Dr. W. Aldis Wright is now the sole survivor. His devotion to the Bible, never merely scholastic, deepened in reverence and affection as years went on. We may add that between him and the Committee and Staff of the Bible House there was a warm and reciprocal regard. He accepted the post of Vice-President of the Bible Society in 1908.



The Deddington Auxiliary, Oxon, has sustained a heavy loss in the passing away of Miss Parker, its late treasurer, who had been connected with its work for over sixty years. In recognition of faithful and devoted service the Committee of the Society presented Miss Parker a few years ago with a specially bound Bible.

A Veteran Hebrew Scholar

By the Rev. John Sharp, M.A.

Editorial Superintendent

IN the *Bible in the World* for January, Canon Girdlestone referred in appreciative terms to the vast labour and skill which Dr. Ginsburg has expended in collecting and reconstructing the Massorah. As announced in the Summary of the Society's Report for 1905-6, presented at the Annual Meeting on May 2nd, Dr. Ginsburg has placed what he has culled from additional MSS. in the last twelve years at the Society's disposal with a view to improved editions of its Hebrew Old Testament. A few words on this veteran scholar and his works will be welcome to the Society's friends.

Christian David Ginsburg was born at Warsaw on Christmas Day, 1831, and was educated in the Rabbinic College there. He came to England in early life, and has made it his home, paying visits from time to time to the chief centres abroad where important MSS. of the Bible could be consulted. His attention was first given to the five Megilloth or Rolls (Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther), and he published critical editions of two of them, *The Song of Songs* in 1857, and *Cohemoth* or *Ecclesiastes* in 1861. There followed works on the Karaites, the Essenes, and the Kabbalah in 1862, 1864 and 1865. His first great work on the Massorah was the publication in 1867 of *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth* of Elias Levita in Hebrew, with an English translation and notes. Then followed in 1867 *Jacob ben Chayim Ibn Adonijah's Introduction to the Rabbinic Bible*, Hebrew and English, with notes. Second ed. 1867; *The Moabite Stone* in 1871; and a Commentary on Leviticus, 1882. Dr. Ginsburg has also contributed articles to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible," and Dr. Kitto's "Encyclopædia of Biblical Literature."

In 1870, when the revision of the English Bible began, Dr. Ginsburg was appointed one of the original members of the Old Testament Company of Revisers, and assisted in the task until its completion in 1884.

With 1880 began the issue of a colossal

work, "*The Massorah*, compiled from manuscripts, alphabetically and lexically arranged." Three imperial folio vols. were issued between 1880 and 1897. The first part of the fourth and final volume appeared last year. Funds are much needed to meet the expense of issuing the remaining part.

The object of this great life-work of Dr. Ginsburg is to provide materials for verifying to the utmost possible degree the original wording of that Sacred Book which has influenced mankind as no other book ever has done. Dr. Ginsburg has not hitherto attempted to amend the text itself, nor will he do so in the forthcoming editions or the Society. In his valuable "*Massoretico-Critical Text of the Hebrew Bible*," published in 1894 (with an Introduction in 1897), Dr. Ginsburg reproduced with the utmost possible accuracy the text printed for the learned scholar Jacob ben Chayim by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-5. This is generally recognised as the best foundation hitherto to be had for an edition of the Hebrew Old Testament. But Dr. Ginsburg has gathered and marshalled from many MSS. and sources materials bearing on the original text which were unknown to Jacob ben Chayim. His researches have brought to light here and there important alternative readings which can be presented in apparatus beneath the text with the authorities on which they rest. Scholars and editors in the future will have before them the most complete materials ever yet brought together for producing what they may conclude to be the truest text of the Inspired Volume. These materials will be found in their completeness in Dr. Ginsburg's big volumes of the Massorah. It will be only the alternatives of the first importance that can find admission to the forthcoming editions of the Hebrew Bible for the Society. But even so, all students will have cause for gratitude to Dr. Ginsburg; and to the Society which will put the latest and completest results of his prolonged labours, which have now lasted for forty years, within their easy reach.



DR. GINSBURG.

Photo by Elliott & Fry.

Matters of Moment



DR. GINSBURG AT WORK IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM, REVISING THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT.

The Committee of the Bible Society have sanctioned the appointment of the Rev. S. J. Cowdy, of the London Missionary Society, as Secretary in Bombay. The Rev. W. E. H. Organe, who, since the retirement of Mr. Douglas Green, has been temporarily holding this office, is returning to Madras, where he will succeed his father, the Rev. S. W. Organe, on the retirement of the latter at the end of this year.



The Bible Society has made arrangements for the issue of a new edition of the Hebrew Old Testament, and has secured for this purpose the services of Dr. Ginsburg, the famous Massoretic scholar, who will incorporate in it the results of his latest investigations. Our illustration on this page shows Dr. Ginsburg at work in the Catalogue Room, which has been placed at his disposal by the authorities of the British Museum, where he is able to have access to the valuable Hebrew manuscripts in its great library. Of these the Museum possesses over 1,400, and Dr. Ginsburg appears

surrounded by fifty of the most important of these treasures.



Mr. A. R. Stark, our Agent on the West Coast of South America, has recently returned from a three months' tour through his agency, including visits to Bolivia and Southern Peru. His last letter describes an enthusiastic meeting held at Oruro, Bolivia, in the very heart of South America, where the audience was so moved by the addresses that they suggested a collection should be made there and then on behalf of the Society. As there was no receptacle available, the people came forward and handed their contributions to the Agent, and then, in true Latin-American fashion, embraced him. The collection, which amounted to £3, was a generous response, for the audience were mostly poor Bolivian workmen, and it was made in appreciation of the fact that British workmen have contributed to sending the Bible into their homes in South America. On this tour Mr. Stark covered over 3,000 miles by steamer and over 1,000 miles by road.