

## OBITUARY.

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### DR. GINSBURG.

We regret to announce that Dr. Ginsburg died on Saturday morning at his residence at Palmer's Green.

Dr. Christian David Ginsburg was one of the most learned and also one of the most indefatigable of modern Hebraists. Born at Warsaw on Christmas Day, 1831, he was educated in the Rabbinic College in that city, but became a Christian in 1846. He came to England and was for a time connected with the Liverpool branch of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews; but as time went on he devoted himself more and more exclusively to literary work. In 1857 he published two historical and critical commentaries on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs; these are both remarkable for their thoroughness, and especially for the introductions containing very full sketches of the history of the interpretation of these books. In 1862 he published a volume on the history and literature of the Karaite Jews, in 1864 one on the Essenes, and in 1865 a volume on the Kabbalah, its doctrines, development, and literature. But his interest gravitated more and more towards Massoretic studies; and his subsequent publications related almost entirely to these. Thus in 1867 he published with an English translation, and copious explanatory notes, the "Massoreth-Ha-Massoreth" of Elias Levita, an exposition of the Massoretic annotations on the Hebrew Bible by a learned medieval Jewish scholar (1468-1549). In the same year there also appeared his edition, with a translation, of Jacob ben Chayim's introduction to the great edition of the Hebrew Bible published by him in 1524-5 at the famous Bomberg Press in Venice, in which, for the first time, the critical notes, known as the "Massorah," were collected and arranged from MSS. and printed.

Dr. Ginsburg afterwards applied himself assiduously to the great work of his life, the publication (in a fuller form than had been possible for Elias Levita) and explanation of the Massorah. In three huge folio volumes, compiled from manuscripts alphabetically and lexically arranged, consisting of nearly 2,000 pages, which appeared respectively in 1880, 1883, and 1885, he published, from MSS. which he had collated (including many only brought to light during the last 50 or 60 years), a series of Massoretic lists of words and readings

which had been drawn up by the care and skill of medieval Jewish scholars, dating (speaking roughly) from the eighth or ninth century onwards. A translation, with copious explanatory notes, of about one-half of these lists appeared in 1905; the second volume of the translation, though most of it, we believe, exists in MS., has not at present seen the light. In 1894 he published in two volumes a "Massoretico-Critical" edition of the Hebrew Bible, based upon the text of Jacob ben Chayim, with footnotes, containing various readings of MSS. and early printed Bibles, and also, from time to time, readings presupposed by the Ancient Versions. This edition was accompanied by a most valuable "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," extending to more than 1,000 pages, and containing full particulars (as far as known) of the rise and development of the Massorah, of the character and scope of the notes of which it substantially consists, and minute descriptions of the MSS., and early printed editions which he had collated for his edition of the Hebrew Bible. The publication of a second edition of his Massoretico-Critical Hebrew Bible was begun by Dr. Ginsburg in 1908; of this there have appeared at present the Pentateuch, the Books of Samuel and Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the minor Prophets. This edition is distinguished from the former by the very much larger number of MSS. and printed editions collated (74 of the former and 22 of the latter), and the notes are naturally considerably more extensive.

The learning and labour which underlie all Dr. Ginsburg's publications, but especially those dealing with the Massorah, are amazing; and Hebrew scholars owe to him an immense debt for the almost exhaustive completeness with which he has made the Massoretic material at present known accessible to them. The above works by no means include all that Dr. Ginsburg's learning and industry enabled him to accomplish for Biblical scholarship. He was one of the original members of the Committee appointed by Convocation in 1870 to undertake the revision of the Old Testament. He also contributed many articles to various Bible dictionaries and encyclopædias published in recent years. Dr. Ginsburg collected old Bibles in various languages. He was the possessor of a complete series of old German printed Bibles, which has been acquired by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and is now to be seen at the society's house in Queen Victoria-street.

Dr. Ginsburg was twice married; first, in 1858, to Miss Margaret Ryley Crosfield, of Aigburth, Liverpool, who died in 1867; and secondly to Miss Emilie Hausburg, of Penshurst, Kent. He had one son and four daughters.

In politics Dr. Ginsburg was a Liberal. He entertained a great admiration for the late Mr. Gladstone, who, on his side, had the highest respect for Dr. Ginsburg's learning and scholarship.