

A Great Hebraist: the Rev. C. D. Ginsburg, LL.D.

THERE has recently passed away one of our greatest Hebraists and a notable Hebrew Christian in the person of the Rev. Dr. Christian David Ginsburg.

Dr. Ginsburg was born in Warsaw in 1825, and embraced Christianity there in 1846 under the influence of missionaries from the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, then newly instituted. By this Society he was trained for Jewish Mission work, having among his fellow-students John Wilkinson and Isaac Salkinson, both well known for their labours in different spheres on behalf of Israel. He laboured as a missionary to the Jews first in London and then in Liverpool, but found a sphere for which his great Hebrew and Rabbinical learning admirably fitted him in Biblical scholarship, and notably in research devoted to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

He is probably best known in English-speaking Christendom by his learned and valuable articles on Biblical subjects in Kitto's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*—articles which are still a mine of accurate information to the student of Scripture. He began his literary career with two historical and critical commentaries on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, published in 1857. These were followed by a book on the Karaites and Essenes, and a book on the Kabbalah, its doctrines, development, and literature. In 1870 he was nominated a member of the Old Testament Company of Revisers, whose work was issued in the Revised Version of the Old Testament in 1884. But his great work, which can be appreciated only by Hebrew scholars, was the publication and explanation of *The Massorah*, which appeared in three huge folio volumes from 1880 to 1885. During the closing years of his life he devoted himself to the compilation of a Massoretico Critical Hebrew Bible, of which the British and Foreign Bible Society have been issuing instalments from time to time. Upon this work he was engaged until a few days before he died.

Like Adolph Saphir and Alfred Edersheim, who were eminent Hebrew Christians, Ginsburg became a naturalised Englishman, and identified himself with our social and political life. Like them, also, he was a Christian Jew whose contributions to Biblical learning have been of the greatest service to the Christian Church.