

FINNISH TASK OF MAKING NEW BIBLE VERSION FOR JEWS—MARKS EPOCH IN JUDAISM IN AMERICA

Translating the Old Testament Into English Occupied Seven Hebrew Scholars More Than Six Years—First Edition Will Be Published in the Fall

AROUND a long, broad table reaching almost from end to end of a conference room in the Jewish Theological Seminary sat a group of seven men. All of them were of scholarly aspect, a majority in the prime of life, although the experience of full maturity was evidenced by white hair and snowy beard here and there. The table itself was covered with books and papers—version after version of the Bible; volume after volume of commentaries thereon and other works of reference, while manuscripts occupied intervening spaces.

At 1 o'clock an active, alert, keen-eyed gentleman stood up at one end of the table and said:

"Our work is finished. The committee is adjourned."

There was a moment of silence and then the others quietly arose and walked out into the corridor beyond.

In this way did a group of eminent Jewish scholars bring to a close a work lasting more than six years, which, in the opinion of Jacob H. Schiff, will mark an epoch in the history of Judaism in America. The committee, seated around the far reaching table, had just finished the first translation of the Bible into English which has ever been made by authority of a group of Jewish scholars especially chosen and qualified for the task.

The various books of the Old Testament have been translated anew from the original Hebrew, and the translation has been revised. The finished manuscripts will be put into type as soon as possible, and then will come months of careful revision of the proof. It is expected that by October or November next the first edition of the new Jewish Bible will be ready for distribution.

In order fully to grasp the significance of this important matter one must remember that up to this time the only available Jewish Bible in the English language is that produced some sixty years ago by Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia. This is the Bible generally used for home reading, as well as in many synagogues, but for a long time it has not been deemed adequate because it was the independent work of a single individual mind, and furthermore because it lacked the stamp of authority which could only be given to the work of a regularly appointed committee of eminent scholars constantly consulting one another and the light of differently constituted minds upon the passage of that of the sacred writings.

As a matter of fact thousands of



Bible editors at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

Jewish families have been accustomed to read the Old Testament translations as found in the King James version and in the revised version of 1885. But everywhere has been felt the need of a translation from the original Hebrew text rendered into English by Jewish scholars familiar with Jewish spirit and tradition.

It may be said at the outset that the Bible just translated will differ in many respects from the King James and revised versions. No attempt has been made to touch the New Testament books. The committee confined itself to translating the Old Testament.

Differences will be found from the generally accepted arrangement of the Old Testament. For one thing, the Book of Daniel, instead of being placed among the prophets, as in Christian Bibles, will be left in the Hagiographa, where it is found in the Hebrew. Furthermore, there will be no chapter headings in the new Jewish Bible, such as translators introduced by means of italics in the King James and other versions. The committee of scholars that has just completed its work took no liberties with the Hebrew text, such as making additions or interpolations. For example, the Book of Isaiah will be printed without the following chapter headings, which were introduced by translators into the King James version:

Chapter II: Isaiah propheseth the coming of Christ's kingdom.
Chapter III: In the extremity of evils Christ's kingdom shall be a sanctuary.
Chapter IV: Ahaz is comforted by Isaiah, Christ promised.
Chapter XXVIII: Christ the sure foundation, is promised.
Chapter XXXV: The joyful flourishing of Christ's kingdom.

Chapter XLIX: Christ complaineth of the Jews. He is sent to the Gentiles.
Chapter L: Christ sheweth that the dereliction of the Jews is not to be imputed to him.
Chapter LXIII: Christ sheweth his power to save.
There were many reasons for making a new translation of the Hebrew text. Leading Jews of the United States felt that since the Leeser Bible was published more than half a century ago modern scholarship, through constant research, has been able to throw additional light on passages of the original text which tended toward greater accuracy in the rendering. The necessity for a new Jewish Bible in English was so generally realized that action looking toward it was formally taken as long ago as 1892. At that time a committee of three—the Rev. Dr. Marcus Jastrow, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf and Dr. Cyrus Adler—was appointed to outline definite plans of procedure.

A conference was held on July 30 and 31, 1893, at Atlantic City, and a report was adopted recommending that a new translation be made, to be based on Leeser's Bible; that the version be a translation of the Masoretic text and that the poetical portions "be printed in lines." Other recommendations were that the various books be assigned to different contributors for revision, and that Jews of Great Britain be invited to take active part. This report was adopted in March, 1894, and early in the following year steps were taken toward organization.

It was thought that the cost of publishing a first edition of the Bible in handy volume form would be about \$10,000, and Dr. Adler, after personal inter-

views, felt that the Jewish leaders of England could be counted upon to aid in the revision. A list of contributors to the Bible revision was drawn up and the committee of three, having finished preliminary plans, was, at its own request, discharged. Before long, however, the English Jews came to the conclusion that the Revised Version, accompanied by an explanatory leaflet which they had prepared, answered the needs of their community, and decided not to take part in the new project.

Dr. Jastrow reported in 1896 that a special committee, appointed to draft instructions for translators, had distributed the Biblical books among thirty-four contributors, and during the ensuing ten years the work was continued slowly, owing in part to deaths and resignations among those in active charge, but principally because of the complicated system adopted, necessitating a vast amount of correspondence. In spite of such discouragement the need was felt more keenly than ever of an adequate English translation, and about seven years ago the Central Conference of American Rabbis took up the matter and after considerable discussion, a conference was held at Washington between Dr. Adler, speaking for the Jewish Publication Society, and Dr. David Phillips, then president of the Central Conference.

As a result of all this preliminary effort, involving a multitude of details, the original plans were largely changed and a board of editors was appointed consisting of seven men and representing jointly the Jewish Publication Society of America and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. This board was to proceed at once with the work of

translation and revision. The members of the board constituting the committee which has just finished the work are President Solomon Schechter and Prof. Joseph Jacobs of the Jewish Seminary in New York, President Kaufmann Kohler of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati and Dr. David Phillips, a governor of that college; Dr. Cyrus Adler, president of Dropsie College, Philadelphia; Prof. Max L. Margolis of Dropsie College and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Schulman, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

It happened that when this committee was appointed Prof. Margolis was in Europe and in his absence he was unanimously chosen chief editor of the board, while Dr. Adler was elected chairman. Word was sent at once to Prof. Margolis, who returned to this country as soon as possible, and undertook alone the work of translating the entire Hebrew Scriptures, in accordance with the plan agreed upon—that the translation should incorporate the best results of Biblical scholarship of all ages, including commentaries, ancient and modern; the various versions prepared by Jews or under the influence of Jews; the manuscript translations in possession of the Publication Society, with particular regard to the work of standard Jewish expositors of the Bible.

Through singleness of purpose and incessant industry Prof. Margolis accomplished his enormous task in less than sixteen months, and since then the board of editors, sitting as a committee of revision, has held three meetings a year, usually of ten days each. The last meeting has just taken place at the New York seminary and the manuscripts are now ready for the printer.

In mentioning the reasons for this new translation Dr. Adler calls attention to the fact that since Jews in the English speaking countries of the world are now so numerous, it is both natural and appropriate that they should desire to possess an English translation of Scriptures of their own.

"The Bible is the Jews' own book," Dr. Adler continued, "produced by Jewish prophets, psalmists, historians and sages. And although this fact is not so widely known, all the translations and versions of the Bible are largely indebted to Jewish scholarship.

"For example, the Greek version known as the Septuagint, the first famous translation, was made by Jewish scholars, Jerome, the Church father, who translated the Bible into Latin, producing the version known as the Vulgate, did not fail to express his indebtedness to rabbis of his time. Luther's translation, completed in 1534, shows unmistakable traces of familiarity with the explanations of Rashi (1040-1105), one of the greatest of Jewish commentators.

"This principle holds true of the King James version, whose translators were indebted to Jewish interpreters and expositors of the Scriptures, and the so-called Revised Version of 1885 affords frequent evidence that the scholars who produced it made use of the keen explanations by the Italian exegete Samuel David Luzzatto, who lived from 1800 to 1857.

Not only have the Jews exerted a positive interest on many translators of the Bible, but at various times they themselves have translated the Hebrew Scriptures into languages which they spoke. Since the eighteenth century, when Moses Mendelssohn's widely known

First Which Has Ever Been Made by Authority of Men Especially Chosen and Qualified for the Work—New Testament Untouched

translation of the Pentateuch appeared in German, Jewish scholars of one country after another have rendered the Bible into French, Italian and other tongues. It is Leeser's version which has been in general use among English speaking Jews.

All these modern Jewish translations, however, have been made by individual scholars. It is expected that when the new work appears next autumn it will be accepted by English speaking Jews as the standard version of the synagogue.

Owing to the fact that proofs of the new Bible will be carefully examined and necessary changes made during printing, the revision committee has decided not to announce in detail any of the changes made which will differentiate the work from other translations. As each book was rendered into English by Prof. Margolis a manuscript copy was furnished to every member of the committee, and great care was used in the work of revision, comparisons being made at every point with all the best of the other versions in various languages. Commentaries were freely consulted, ancient and medieval, as well as modern, and thorough discussion in full committee followed every doubt or question that arose in the minds of the individual members.

Realizing the serious work on which they engaged the committee have from the first kept before them the aim not only of a faithful rendering of the Hebrew text into English but of the rendering of it into English that is worthy of dignity. As a rule, Elizabethan English has been chosen, and wherever feasible the King James phraseology has been adopted rather than that of the Revised Version.

As the work progressed year by year the expenses increased, and instead of costing \$10,000, as originally estimated, the first edition of the Jewish Bible will probably cost \$200,000. The first issue is issued eight or nine months hence, this sum including salaries, clerk hire, etc., as well as printing and binding.

Now that the Hebrew Bible itself has been completely translated and revised it is expected that work will be started on a full series of commentaries only second in importance to the Jewish Bible itself. The committee early foresaw the necessity for such commentaries to help the general reader to a clear understanding of the Scriptures and as far back as 1893 a commentary was issued on the Book of Micah, the interpreting text being written by Prof. Margolis. As the commentaries are undertaken each book of the Bible will be divided into sections, and each section will be preceded by a summary of contents. A complete index of contents will make known the general aspects of the Biblical book, such as its date, composition contents and spirit.

Four Balkan Nations. War Ended, Turning Their Attention to Extensive Railroad Construction

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

BELGRADE, Feb. 7.—Railroad building has begun in the Balkans. It is one of the first manifestations of the development which the different Governments promised not only in the interest of their own people but of the outside world. All of the States that but a few months ago were up in arms against Turkey or fighting one another are now actively preparing for the construction of roads which will bring their capitals and principal towns in touch with the sea on the south and with the great cities of Europe on the north. This means a new market for American rails and rolling stock and to the American tourist and traveler, always seeking new and untrodden paths, it means the opening up of the border of the Orient, a country with fascinating history that has hitherto been a forbidden land.

When M. Venizelos, the Greek Premier, was in Paris on his tour of the European capitals he witnessed the signing of a contract which realized one of his ambitions for his country. This contract was an undertaking by the Societe de Construction des Batignolles to build a road to link up the Athens-Larissa line with the Orient railway.

To Link Up Greek Lines.

It means, in other words, the linking up of the Greek lines with the European, a project that Turkey had many times succeeded in defeating. The Greek line will be extended from its present terminus, Zarah-Zereva, a few yards from the old Greek-Turkish border, to Gida, on the line between Salonica and Veria. The survey has already been completed, and the construction presents few engineering difficulties. The road is to be finished within ten months.

The traveler from Paris can then reach Athens in about sixty hours. He will go down the Vardar Valley, past Uskub and Koprulu, skirt the Gulf of Salonica and the foot of Mount Olympus and thence on through the plains of Thessaly to Athens and the Piræus. Besides this extension Greece expects to develop the interior of western Macedonia and Epirus by a railroad and to extend the Salonica-Monastir line through Janina to the Adriatic coast.

Rumania Has Big Scheme.

Besides this desire for a southern outlet, Rumania has made plans for a most extensive scheme of railway construction and improvement that will extend over several years. The Rumanian Assembly has voted a credit of \$20,000,000 for the purpose. The improvements so far planned are mostly links to existing lines and better communications with northern Europe. In the matter of the much discussed bridge over the Danube to connect Bulgarian and Rumanian railway systems

nothing definite has been done and it will apparently be some time before an agreement is reached.

It is doubtful if Austria will build, at the present at least, that once much desired road across Novi Bazar even if Serbia withdraws her objections and the rest of Europe consents to the scheme.

This situation has required so much of Serbia's attention that little has yet been done regarding her scheme for reaching the Adriatic. There seems no chance of her having control of a road through Albania, as has been reported, but there is good reason for believing that a road will be undertaken across the Montenegrin mountains to the port of Antivari.

The proposal for an east and west line across the Rumanian Empire, and the understanding with Rumania has been reached whereby a bridge is to be built over the Danube to link this line with the Rumanian line. The bridge is to be built at the village of Tziganech, nine miles above Gruiu. This will give direct communication between Bucharest and Belgrade and will also furnish to Rumania a Salonica outlet to the Aegean Sea.

BUMPER COTTON CROP IN INDIA.

INCREASE OF 14 PER CENT. OVER LAST YEAR IS REPORTED.

LONDON, Feb. 7.—India promises to have a bumper cotton crop this season. The latest estimate places the area under cotton at 23,500,000 acres, or 2,000,000 acres ahead of last year's figures, which means an increase of 14 per cent. On the other hand the total output is expected to reach 4,900,000 bales of 400 pounds each, against 4,300,000 bales last season. The estimate here is 22 per cent better.

The latest report on the crop in the Punjab is particularly gratifying. It shows the area sown as 1,799,100 acres, being 25 per cent more than last year. The yield is estimated at 490,000 bales of cleaned cotton, compared with 297,016 bales estimated in the corresponding forecast last year. In the native States the area returned as under cotton is 236,000 acres, an increase of 81 per cent. The output is estimated at 76,185 bales, or 52 per cent more than last year. In the Umballa division the area under cotton has increased by 61 per cent, and the estimated output by 97 per cent, as compared with last year. In Jullundur the area has increased by 44 per cent, and the estimated yield by 175 per cent. In Lahore the area has increased by 25 per cent, and the yield by 28 per cent. In Rawal Pindi the area has increased by only 4 per cent, but the yield is estimated to be 22 per cent better, while in Multan, with an increased area of only 7 per cent, it is estimated that the yield will be 100 per cent better than last year.

Edwin Ginn Chiselled in Marble in Rome Studio

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

ROME, Feb. 4.—The American sculptor Hendrik Christian Andersen, who has lived in Rome for nearly twenty years, is executing some good work which, however, is known to but few of his admirers. Mr. Andersen is modest and refuses to advertise his work. A large marble bust of Edwin Ginn, the American publisher who died recently and left by his will \$1,000,000 for the promotion of world peace, has just been executed by Mr. Andersen and sent to America.

Her present plans, as have just been set forth, are for reaching the goal of Salonica through another way. Neither, it is believed, will she build the road that was surveyed from the Serbian frontier across Bosnia to the Dalmatian coast. The Austro-Hungarian scheme for the improvement of Bosnia and Herzegovina

now includes the construction of a standard gauge road from Saman, on the Save, to the Adriatic coast, and the proposed gauge line from that place to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. This will provide a direct route between the Hungarian railway system and Dalmatia and encourage an increase of freight and passenger business between Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bulgaria's Task Difficult.

Bulgaria in her plans has much pioneer work to do. She has not only to build a railway through a rough wild mountain land, but she has at the same time to develop her own outlet at the sea. She is undertaking to construct a road from a point on the present Bulgarian railway between Semlin and Philippopolis southward to Portolagos. This latter point is to be the main harbor for Bulgarian trade on the Aegean. This project must have to the Balkan people a rare interest, for it will be the first outlet on a free sea, except the Montenegrin port of Antivari, that the Slavs of the Balkans have had since they were crushed by the Turks in the fourteenth century.

The line will pass near Hasovo and traverse the mountains into the valley of the Arda. It will then pass through Mastani and Nalbandar. From here there are two alternative routes, one to the east through Gumuljina to Portolagos, the other along the valley of the Kura Tonal to Portolagos. The new line will be about 110 miles long and will be finished in three or four years. Sofia will be by this route but 235 miles from the Aegean Sea, which is almost a hundred miles less than the distance to the Black Sea ports of Varna or Burgas.

Bulgaria hopes that eventually she will persuade Rumania to agree to a bridge across the Danube at either Nikopol or points A and B. From one of these points a great trunk line, by way of Tirova or Stara Zagora, may be formed to provide a natural outlet to the Aegean not only for Bulgaria and Rumania but also for western Europe and southern Russia.

STILL OBSERVE INDIAN RITES.

Wife Cremated With Husband Despite British Protest.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

LONDON, Feb. 7.—For nearly a hundred years the British have tried to suppress the ancient Indian rite of "sati," or the self-immolation of Brahmin and other high caste widows at the cremation of their deceased husbands. But from time to time a case is recorded and it is believed that there are many more cases which are never heard of.

From Calcutta there comes this week news of a case of sati at Myseningsh early in the month. The night after the death of a Hindu named Manojanjan his widow, a girl of 14, prepared a funeral pyre in a corner of her house unknown to any one, and rising early next morning she saturated her clothing with kerosene oil, ignited it and lay down on the pyre.

In a short time the whole mass was blazing, but a female relative succeeded in extinguishing the flames despite the protests of the girl, who was so terribly burned that she died a short while afterward.

Suttee, or sati, has prevailed in India for more than 2,000 years. Its origin has been the subject of much learned controversy, some authorities connecting it with the idea common to all primitive tribes that in the next world the dead chief or king needed the service or companionship of his wives and slaves, and his horses and dogs for the chase.

After centuries of dispute sati was revived in India in the sixth century of our

era, and rose to its height in western Bengal. In the eagerness to observe the rite, many a widow was overlooked and sati was permitted even when the husband died at a distance. In one case a woman whose husband was supposed to have died in a foreign land, but who with his turban, but soon after the tragedy the man turned up alive.

In the case of princes and potentates opportunity was afforded for wholesale suicides, as when a 300-year-old widow, with the body of Suleich Singh of Kashmir, and four wives and seven concubines perished with the Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The method of immolation by fire varied in different parts of India. In southern India the woman leaped into a fire pit in which her husband's body had been laid. In western India she was laid in a grass hut, and her husband's body was placed behind her head and feet, and the bodies were kept burning until the green wood fuel by relatives on either side.

Many attempts were made both by native princes and British rulers to abolish the custom, but with little success. Sati was permissible, but not compulsory, as in many cases it had too often been the relatives by this means reducing the number of claims upon the dead man's estate. In Ninal, where the custom was still in vogue, and directed that widows with young children should not be burned.

"RED HAND" GANG TAKEN.

Italian Police Succeed in Rounding Up Bandits by Buse.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

MILAN, Feb. 7.—Exploits of a murderous gang which infested the Apulian hills town of Gioia del Colle have been made public owing to the confession of two of the terrorists now under arrest.

The chief and founder of this "Red Hand Gang" is an ex-convict, Giovanni Conto, who, together with a couple of outlaws, Mastangoli and Martellotti, set about recruiting a band from among adventurous youths belonging to respectable local families.

Their crimes began in May last, when the residence of a prominent tradesman named Cofano was sacked and the man himself murdered, receiving thirty-six danger wounds.

About three months ago a young man belonging to a wealthy family, who identifies the police at present decline to disclose, was sworn in, and later was chosen by lot to murder another leading merchant, named Antonelli, the night of December 11 being fixed for the crime. Striking from his mission at the last moment, the youth hid himself in the house of relatives.

rounding Conto and the two ringleaders mentioned as their place of midnight meeting, which was a deserted workshop along the great new Apulian aqueduct. Conto remained stubbornly taciturn, but Martellotti and Mastangoli broke down under severe cross-examination and confessed their crimes in detail.

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STAMP TO PAY CUSTOMS DUES.

France Has Plan to Permit Importation by Mail.

PARIS, Feb. 6.—The French Government proposes to print a special international stamp for the payment of customs duties, and such an innovation will not only away with many of the difficulties of those who import their goods by post, but until a comparatively recent time goods as lace, tulle, embroideries and other light goods passed the customs duty of duty if sent in closed packages, the weight of which did not exceed 500 grammes. The Government considered the tax for stamps on registered letters was sufficient to cover the duties on such articles. But when the duties on embroideries and laces was raised recently, from less than 5 francs a kilogramme to 15 and 20 francs, the Government forbade the shipment of registered letters and parcels, and the importation had little effect and foreign exporters continued to send their goods by letter.

Some way had to be found to overcome the difficulties, and the decision was now reached to create a special international stamp, so that the duties on such articles as mentioned above can be paid away with many of the difficulties of those who import their goods by post.

WROTE PROTEST ON BANKNOTE.

Lord Cochrane's 1,000 Pound Bill to Be Preserved.

LONDON, Feb. 7.—The Royal Mint and Royal Bank of England have been very interesting historical souvenirs of the late Lord Cochrane, the first of the one thousand pound Bank of England note which Lord Cochrane had secured his release from prison in 1812. The note bears the following inscription: "I, the undersigned, have deposited this note in the Royal Bank of England, and I hereby certify that it is a genuine note of the Bank of England, and I have signed the name of the Bank of England on the back of the note, which has been subscribed by the public in two cent subscriptions."

Sarah Bernhardt Has Own 'Festivals.'

PARIS, Feb. 6.—Long before she received the Legion of Honor Medal, Sarah Bernhardt instituted a decoration of her own, which she gave as souvenirs to artists accompanying her on her tours. She has her own artists and her own artists with precious stones and jewels. She has her own artists and her own artists with precious stones and jewels. She has her own artists and her own artists with precious stones and jewels.