

are not equivalent in semantic value, and (2) introducing a stylistic form which is contrary to the value of the original.

Translating is not a technique for producing strings of supposedly corresponding words. Rather, it consists in reproducing the closest natural equivalent, first in meaning and secondly in style.

A New Edition of the Hebrew Old Testament

It is ninety-two years since the British and Foreign Bible Society published its first Hebrew Bible. It is known as the Letteris Bible, and it has been printed again and again and again. It has had a great vogue, and because of its clear and shapely type, it has been a favourite among Jews and Christians alike. The late Chief Rabbi Hertz preferred it to all other editions and he used it in his five-volume commentary on the Pentateuch and the Haftorahs.

Meir Halevi Letteris was born in Austria in 1800 and died in Vienna in 1871. He was descended from an Amsterdam family of printers, was for some years a "reader" in printing houses in Berlin and Presburg, librarian in the Oriental Department of the Imperial Library, Vienna, and had a great reputation as a translator and writer of Hebrew songs. In 1852 he prepared a two-volume Hebrew Bible on the basis of the text of Van der Hoogt. The 1866 Letteris Bible is partly a revision of the 1852 text, but is influenced largely by MS. Erfurt 3.

In the first decade of this century the Society published a text edited by C. D. Ginsburg. This text was a revision of a text he edited for the Trinitarian Bible Society in Vienna in 1894. Both texts were based on the first edition of Jacob ben Chayim's text, printed by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-5, being the second edition of the Rabbinic Bible. The Ginsburg Bible contains readings of 75 manuscripts and 19 editions up to the 1524-5 Bomberg Bible. Dr. Ginsburg took no note of the first hand of any manuscript, and followed almost entirely Jacob ben Chayim's recension, which was believed by all until latterly to represent the true Masoretic text of Ben Asher. The Ginsburg text never achieved popularity, partly because of the size of the volumes, which were rendered quite cumbersome because of all the variants which were listed, and partly because Ginsburg seems to have thought that he could decide on the sounder reading simply by a majority, irrespective of the history and type of the manuscript or edition.

Masoretic studies have been transformed in latter years by the researches of Professor Paul Kahle, the editor of the text of the third edition of the Kittel Bible, published in 1937 by the Württemberg Bible Society. This third edition of the Kittel Bible has its text based on the Leningrad MS. which Dr. Kahle holds to represent the master-codex of Ben Asher himself.

In 1933 the Society decided to publish a new text to replace the

Letteris text, the plates of which were worn beyond the stage of useful service. The task was entrusted to Dr. Norman H. Snaith, who is Old Testament and Hebrew Tutor of Wesley College, Leeds, and is Principal of the College. He was the 1957 President of the Society for Old Testament Study, and the 1958 President of the Methodist Conference. He has written many books, especially a series of studies for students of portions of the Hebrew text of the Bible. The copy was ready for the printer a few months before the outbreak of the war, and indeed the first proofs had been read. But the difficulties of the war and of the postwar period, and the difficulties of reading the proofs, have caused considerable delay.

The text of this edition is not a revision of the Letteris text; and it is entirely independent of the Ginsburg text. It is based on the first hands of Spanish Hebrew manuscripts to be found in the British Museum, especially Or. 2625-7 and Or. 2375, together with the Shem Tob MS. which was in the library of the late David Sassoon. It is not an eclectic text, except to the extent that these three manuscripts have been used to correct vagaries in any one manuscript due to errors or idiosyncrasies of individual copyists. These manuscripts, like almost all Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible, have been "corrected" to the Ben Chayim text, so that even if Ginsburg was concerned about first-hands and second-hands, he doubtless would have regarded them as worthless. It is the first-hands of such Spanish manuscripts as these that are those regularly preferred by Norzi in *Minchat Shai*, and the editor of this new text maintains that they represent the true Ben Asher tradition. It will be found that the text of this new edition is close to that of Professor Kahle. Dr. Snaith has not based his text to any degree on that of Dr. Kahle. He has worked on a different basis, and the fact that the resultant texts are so similar proves that Dr. Paul Kahle is right in his beliefs concerning the true Ben Asher text.

The major difference between this edition and that of Dr. Kahle is that here the Masoretic traditions as to spacing, etc., have been followed as closely as possible. There is no Masorah and, following the Society's policy, no footnotes except the official Masoretic notes. The Readings from the Law (Sedarim) are all marked, together with the traditional divisions of each Seder into seven portions, and all the Readings from the Prophets (Haftaroth) are indicated. In addition, following the custom of the old Amsterdam Bibles, there is a table of the proper Sedarim and the corresponding Haftaroth for all Sabbaths and Special Days throughout the year according to the customs of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. Extreme care has been taken in respect of the accents, both in the prose books and in the verse books, and in the latter in particular the conflation of accents has been corrected. Editor and printer have been to great pains to place the accents throughout in precisely the correct position.

When type-setting was begun, advantage was taken of a development introduced by the Monotype Corporation permitting the mechanical composition of pointed Hebrew type.

The cost of this book, bound in leather cloth on boards, maroon or blue, is 17s, 6d (postage not included).

סְרִיסִים בְּהִיבֵל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ 8
טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יִהְיֶה שְׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת
בְּיָמָי:

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2 א וַנְּחַמְנוּ נַחְמוּ עִמָּי יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: דִּבְרוּ עַל־לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם
וּקְרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי מָלְאָה צָבָאָה כִּי נִרְצָה עֲזוּבָה כִּי לָקַחְהָ
מִיַּד יְהוָה כַּפְּלִים בְּכָל־חַטָּאתֶיהָ: 3 קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמֶּדְבָּר
פְּנֵי הַרְף יִהְיֶה יִשְׂרוּ בְּעַרְבָה מְסֻלָּה לְאַלְהֵינוּ: 4 כָּל־נְיָא
יִנְשָׂא וְכָל־הַר וְנִבְעָה יִשְׁפְּלוּ וְהָיָה הָעֵקֶב לְמִישׁוֹר וְהַרְכָּסִים
לְבִקְעָה: 5 וְנִגְלָה כְּבוֹד יְהוָה וְרָאוּ כָל־בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי 6
יִהְיֶה דְבַר: 7 קוֹל אָמַר קָרָא וְאָמַר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל־
הַבָּשָׂר חָצִיר וְכָל־חֶסֶדוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה: 8 יְבֵשׁ חָצִיר נִבְּל
צִיץ כִּי רוּחַ יְהוָה נִשְׁבָּה בּוֹ אֲכַן חָצִיר הָעָם: 9 יְבֵשׁ חָצִיר
נִבְּל צִיץ וּדְבַר־אַלְהֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם: 10 עַל הַר־נֹבֶה
עַל־יֶדֶי מְבַשְׂרֵת צִיּוֹן הָרִימִי בְּכַח קוֹלֶךָ מִבְּשַׂרְתָּ יְרוּשָׁלַם
הָרִימִי אֶל־תִּילְדֵי אִמְרֵי לְעַרְבֵי יְהוּדָה הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 11 הִנֵּה
אֲדוּנִי יְהוָה בְּתַנְק יְבוֹא וְזָרְעוּ מִשְׁלָה לּוֹ הִנֵּה שָׁכְרוּ אֱתוֹ
וּפְעַלְתּוּ לְפָנָיו: 12 בְּרַעַה עֲדְרֻו יִרְעָה בְּזָרְעוֹ יִקְבֹּץ טְלָאִים
וּבְחִיקוֹ יִשָּׂא עֲלוֹת יִנְהַל: 13 מִי־מִדָּ בְּשַׁעֲלוֹ מִים וְשָׁמַיִם
בְּזַרְתָּ תִכֵּן וְכָל בְּשָׁלֵשׁ עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁקַל בְּפָלֶס הָרִים
וְנִבְעוֹת בְּמַאֲזָנִים: 14 מִי־תִכֵּן אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה וְאִישׁ עֲצָתוֹ
יִדְרִיעֵנוּ: 15 אֶת־מִי נוֹעֵץ נִבְיָנָהוּ וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ בְּאַרְחַ מִשְׁפָּט
וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ רְעִית וְהַרְף תְּבוּנוֹת יִדְרִיעֵנוּ: 16 הֵן גּוֹיִם כְּמַר מִדְּלִי
וּכְשַׁחַק מַאֲזָנִים נִחְשְׁבוּ הֵן אֵיִים כְּדָק יִטּוֹל: 17 וּלְכַנּוֹן אֵין הִי
בְּעַר וְחִתּוֹ אֵין הִי עוֹלָה: 18 כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם כְּאֵין נִגְדוּ מֵאַפְס
וְחָהוּ נִחְשְׁבוּ־לוֹ: 19 וְאַל־מִי תִבְמִינוּן אֵל וּמַה־דְּמֹת תַּעֲרֹכוּ־
לוֹ: 20 הַפֶּסֶל נִסְף חָלָשׁ וְצַהֲרָ בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעְנוּ וְרַחֲקוֹת כְּסָף
צוֹרֶף

מ. 1. v. הספרת ואתחנן