

DR. GINSBURG AND THE SHAPIRA MANUSCRIPT.

The funeral of Dr. Christian David Ginsburg, who died at his residence at Palmers Green, on Saturday, took place yesterday afternoon at Southgate Cemetery. The vicar, the Rev. C. F. Peploe, conducted the service in the parish church. Among the mourners outside the family were Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., Mr. Barwick (Keeper of the Biblical section, British Museum), Mr. John Henderson, and Mr. W. M. Crook, representing the National Liberal Club, of whose committee Dr. Ginsburg was a member, the Rev. J. Ritson, and the Rev. A. Taylor (secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society), the Rev. A. Darlow, the Rev. J. Sharpe, and the Rev. H. E. Holmes, also of the Bible Society.

One of the most interesting incidents in Dr. Ginsburg's career was his exposure in August, 1883, of the fraudulent Shapira manuscript of part of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The manuscript, which purported to give an authentic account of the journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness and differed in many respects from the accepted text, was offered to the British Museum for £10,000, but Dr. Ginsburg pronounced it to be a clumsy forgery, the work, probably, of four or five hands. Shapira committed suicide in the following year, and Dr. Ginsburg afterwards bought the manuscript for a few shillings at Sotheby's.

The reasons which led Dr. Ginsburg to his conclusion were based, partly on the appearance of the strips of leather on which the text was inscribed and partly on the internal evidence of the manuscript itself. The leather slips showed signs of having been cut from the lower margin of disused synagogue scrolls, which exist in great numbers in public libraries throughout Europe. Shapira had himself, in 1877, sold some to the British Museum and among other similarities it was found that the width of these slips corresponded exactly with the height of the slips on the forged manuscript.

Dr. Ginsburg thought that the person who compiled the text was not acquainted with the archaic characters in which it was written, and dictated it to amanuenses, who reproduced faults of pronunciation that showed that the author was a Jew of Northern Europe.

To give the document an appearance of antiquity the Moabite Stone was used as a guide by both author and scribes. As it was expressed in a leading article in *The Times* of August 27, 1883, "The scribes have copied, with a very suspicious fidelity, the writing and the arrangement of words for which the stone furnishes an example. That the Book of Deuteronomy was selected as the subject of the fraud can be readily explained. The theory has been started that the five books of Moses, and especially the last, are by no means as ancient as they profess to be; that they were in fact made up at a comparatively late date, with the help of previously existing documents," of which no separate remains are to be found.