

VINE OF DAVID • REMNANT REPOSITORY

# **Critical Observations on My Hebrew New Testament**

**Franz Delitzsch**



VINE OF DAVID

Vine of David is a publishing arm of the ministry of First Fruits of Zion dedicated to resurrecting the voices of Messianic pioneers and luminaries. If you would like to assist in the publication of these voices from the past you can sponsor the translation and publication their important works please visit [www.vineofdauid.org](http://www.vineofdauid.org) for needs and opportunities.

This volume has been digitized by Google®. The contents of this file are public domain, and may not be sold or used for profit.

## **Vine of David**

PO Box 649, Marshfield, Missouri 65706-0649 USA

Phone (417) 468-2741, [www.ffoz.org](http://www.ffoz.org)

Comments and questions: [www.ffoz.org/contact](http://www.ffoz.org/contact)

First Fruits of Zion: [www.ffoz.org](http://www.ffoz.org)

Vine of David: [www.vineofdauid.org](http://www.vineofdauid.org)

THE  
EXPOSITOR.

EDITED BY THE REV.

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A.

*THIRD SERIES.*

Volume IX.

*WITH ETCHED PORTRAIT OF REV. PROFESSOR CHEYNE.  
BY H. MANESSE.*

London :  
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,  
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXIX.

*[All rights reserved.]*

(יִקַּב מִחֻצְבֵיךְ, cf. יִקַּב חֶלֶב, Isa. v. 2), so now save us who encompass (the altar) with green branches singing, *Ana Va Ho Hoshiana*" (cf. v. 25). The transference of this thought to the Eucharist may be seen in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. ix. (see Taylor's edition, p. 68 ff). "And as touching the Eucharist, thus give ye thanks. First, concerning the cup: We thank Thee, O our Father, for Thy holy vine of David Thy child, which Thou hast made known to us in Thy Child (παῖς) Jesus. . . ."

The Psalms of the Hallel thus gather into one Thanksgiving all the thoughts of all the whole year's Feasts, a fitting Service for that great night when all was fulfilled in the one "Pure Offering" "for the life of the world."

It may be interesting to observe that, of the Hallel Psalms, our Church appoints Psalms cxiii., cxiv., and cxviii. for Easter Day; now Psalm cxiii. is a *Passover* Psalm, cxiv. a *Pentecost* Psalm, and cxviii. a Psalm of *Tabernacles*. Thus the "Queen of Festivals" gathers in all that was foreshadowed by the three great Jewish Feasts.

ED. G. KING.

## IN SELF-DEFENCE: CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON MY HEBREW NEW TESTAMENT.

### I.

THE late Isaac Salkinson, missionary of the British Society, whose Hebrew translation of the New Testament has now appeared in its second edition, and is circulated among the Jews with extraordinary zeal, was personally well known to me, was indeed an intimate friend. We became acquainted with one another in 1870, when we met at a conference of missionaries and friends of the Jewish Mission, and were at once attracted toward each other. Salkinson had then completed the translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but had not discovered a Hebrew equivalent for the English title. He did not at that time venture upon any suggestion, but subsequently he determined to entitle his rendering, וַיִּגְרַשׁ מִגַּן־עֵדֶן, "He sent forth from the garden of Eden." In fact "Paradise Lost," in the sense in which it was used as the title of the English poem, could not be reproduced in Hebrew. This must have been specially

difficult for Salkinson, who would eschew the phrase נִרְעָרָן יֵאָמַר as non-biblical.

In April, 1855, an attempt had already been made by Salkinson to produce a new translation of the New Testament. A specimen of such a rendering was published under the title, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans translated into Hebrew*. I gave expression to my opinion of it in my monograph of 1870, entitled, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer in das Hebräische uebersetzt und aus Talmud und Midrasch erläutert*. In that paper I heartily admitted the masterly style of this Hebraist, but took exception to his method of translation in aiming too much at a biblical elegance and classical diction, and so leading to the use of phrases that did not literally represent the text. And there too I laid down the principle that the translation should not avoid rabbinical expressions, if they supply the words and formulæ in which, without undue straining, the New Testament Greek can be made intelligible to those who employ the post-biblical literature.

My own work upon a new Hebrew translation of the New Testament had been completed and all my preparations for publication had been made as early as the year 1870, but the actual issuing of the book was delayed till the spring of 1877. During all these years I was anxiously seeking for a publisher who should undertake the responsibility of the whole work, and then at last the British and Foreign Bible Society stretched out to me its helpful hand. By this time Salkinson also had again taken up the work of translation. I doubt not that my own rendering would have gained considerably had we carried on this common work together, although after a careful survey and examination of all doubtful passages my judgment still remains unaltered. I look upon it now as quite natural that the man who had won great applause by his translations of the *Urania* of Tiedge, the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, and some

plays of Shakespeare would not be able easily to bring himself to take the place of a worker under me. I have the letter which he then wrote me, inclosing a new translation of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which has not before been published, although the reckless way in which this "beautiful Hebrew New Testament" has been eulogised might have tempted me to make it known. An article in the January number of the *Quarterly Record* of the Trinitarian Bible Society for 1886 quoted a Jewish opinion, according to which "the work of Delitzsch, in comparison with the work of Salkinson, is like a miserable tent compared with the palaces of kings"!

Quite another spirit was shown by Salkinson in his criticism of my work. He admitted the force and importance of the principles on which I proceeded, and claimed only recognition of the relative value of his own divergent views upon the question. The letter will be thoroughly satisfactory and conclusive with all who are really acquainted with the subject, as showing clearly the special characteristics of the two translations and affording ample materials for forming a judgment. I give it here without alteration or abridgment.

"35. REIVNER ST., LANDSTRASSE, VIENNA,  
*June 11th, 1877.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I was on the point of answering your kind letter, besides giving an explanation in anticipation of your question on the card, and waited only for the inclosed specimen, which I got just now. With regard to your query, you will remember, after your publication of the Epistle to the Romans, that I offered you my co-operation in continuing and carrying out the version; but you then informed me that you had the materials of the whole book already, which required only correction and revision. Accordingly, out of the high respect and true Christian affection which I cherish for you, I made a self-denying resolution, and determined to let you have the whole field free. When I recently saw a statement to the effect that your work is accomplished and is being published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, I was very glad for your sake and for the sake of your great work and thought. And now has my time

come to gratify my old desire. It so happened that just then a friend of the committee of the British Society proposed that I should be employed in writing a Talmudic Christology. I answered that I would prefer first to make a new Hebrew version of the New Testament. To this the committee agreed, and I now commenced my task with the epistles. My plan is to take a good share of liberty in regard to words and phrases, and to be faithful only to the sense and spirit of the text, which must neither be added to nor taken from in anything. Its principle is that of the maxim, 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,' and so I hope to be able to make a tolerably pure Hebrew version. There will of course be a few exceptions, like the abstract noun להוּתָא, which you find in the specimen, and other words of a like nature; but they will not affect the whole.

"You are perfectly correct in saying that when the New Testament writers wrote their Greek they had still the Hebrew of their day in mind; but then I want to translate the sense and not to use the words: and so, when I find the apostles writing *ἀπὸ κρίσεως κόσμου*, I render it by the idiomatic phrase יוֹסֵם: בְּרָא אֶתְּמֵן וְיִסְמִים. Now the apostle himself can have no objection to see his idea expressed in good old Hebrew.

"I confess to you too, that the man to whom the gospel has become the power of salvation will prefer a literal translation, just as he would prefer that a love-letter sent to him in an unknown tongue should be rendered to him *verbatim*. But we must remember that our New Testament is intended chiefly for our unconverted brethren. Therefore it may be of some service to have it in a style which the Jews have not yet forgotten to appreciate, that is, the biblical Hebrew.

"In the inclosed specimen you will see at a glance what kind of liberty I take: מְלֶאכְתֵּיָהּ for apostleship. מְלֶאכְתֵּיָהּ is the literal rendering, but in the absolute state it does not occur. Hence it does not sound pretty, and I therefore added an intensive particle יָהּ as in שְׁלֵהֶבְתֵּיהָ, which makes no difference in the real sense. If the reader translates מְלֶאכְתֵּיָהּ 'Divine apostleship,' he will not err, since the apostle himself tells us that this office he got from God. In ver. 9 I added וְנִפְשִׁי to the word בְּרוּחִי, because the idiom requires that בְּרוּחִי in the construction of the verse should not stand alone. Hence the synonymous נִפְשִׁי is added, which makes no alteration in the meaning. Now all the liberties in this chapter could be avoided, but as there will be places where such liberties, and even more, will be absolutely necessary, I therefore put forward this chapter as a specimen, and would be glad to have your opinion, whether I have not overstepped the limits of the boundary.

"Now I hope, as I have sympathised and do sympathise with your work, so will you with mine, and even encourage it if possible; thus

making it manifest that we have learned of the evangelists, who each wrote the same story, not in rivalry but to serve the same common Master. I would like to say a great many things, but time forbids.

“I. E. SALKINSON.”

After Salkinson had wellnigh concluded his labours as a translator of the New Testament, and had prepared the first draught of it—only the Acts of the Apostles had not been completed—his unexpected death brought sore bereavement on his family, and put a sudden stop to the work that had been so dear to him. I hastened to express my warm sympathy for the sorrowing widow, Mrs. Henrietta Salkinson, and I made offer to her of my assistance. In reply she wrote me on June 14th, 1883, when amongst other things she said: “I do assure you that never in my dear husband’s mind was there the least desire that his work should be made a rival of yours, but he regarded this work as the task of his life. I have heard him repeatedly say, ‘God has given me talent for translating, and I must use it for His glory.’ And there are indeed in almost every language several translations of the New Testament, and so too in the Hebrew language there may surely be different translations existing alongside of one another, from which every one may choose the version that most perfectly satisfies his tastes and his needs.”

These are golden words, which I should like myself to take to heart, and shall be greatly delighted if Salkinson’s translation should obtain numerous Jewish readers and should be the means of leading many to the conviction that Jesus Christ is Israel’s noblest son, the holiest and divinest Man and the Servant of the Lord, who has offered Himself up for His people and for the whole world of sinners; and I consider it a providential circumstance, a gracious dispensation of my God, that the new translation has appeared before my departure. I have received from it a new impulse in the revision of my own work, and I openly



acknowledge that the discovery of the imperfections of my own work has been greatly increased since the year 1885. Yet at the same time I am still thoroughly convinced of the soundness of the principle which I followed in my translation of rendering the New Testament into Hebrew of such a kind as the sacred writers would themselves have employed had they thought and written in Hebrew. There are several passages, though the number is by no means great, in which Salkinson has made in his version what we might style a more happy hit. Nevertheless continued study of the New Testament and of biblical and post-biblical Hebrew, especially of the Hebrew syntax, and the careful consideration of critical reviews which in rich abundance lie before me, have led me ever more and more to the humbling conclusion that I am still very far short of reaching the ideal of a Hebrew counterpart of the Greek New Testament.

A new reprint of the 32mo edition of my work has just now appeared. Although the edition has been electrotyped, I have been able to make various improvements in it by having some plates recast and occasional corrections made in some of the other plates. Including the octavo edition, which appeared in the year 1885, this new 32mo edition may be reckoned the ninth. The octavo edition has not been electrotyped, and it is to be followed by a tenth edition, for which Hebrew types more in accordance with the national pattern than those previously employed will be provided. It is my earnest prayer that God may preserve my life so long that I may be able to give expression to my most mature convictions in this tenth edition. It will be not merely a revision of my translation, but a new translation.

And now I shall point out a few instances to show how much still remains to be done in order to the perfect performance of the task, and only as a preliminary example I give what follows. The imperial name *Kaïσap* occurs in the New Testament no less than twenty-eight times. My

translation as well as that of Salkinson's, with two striking exceptions, in Luke iii. 5, Philippians iv. 22, renders this *Kaïōap* by הַקִּיָּסָר. But as in the New Testament Greek this word *Kaïōap* is always found without the article, and is therefore treated as a self-determining proper name, so it would seem that the Hebrew קִיָּסָר in the Talmud and Midrasch is also always employed without the article. In every case then the article should be removed. But how will this principle affect such a phrase as מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם? In the case of these two words we find that in the oldest synagogal literature שָׁמַיִם has not the article, whereas in my translation, as well as in Salkinson's, the phrase is throughout written מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם. Is the article also in this instance to be dispensed with? We shall seek to answer this question in our next paper.

FRANZ DELITZSCH.

---

EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS IN PHRYGIA.

A STUDY IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

III.

THE inscriptions which constitute the foundation of this study belong to what is, as a general rule, the least interesting and the least important class of ancient epigraphic remains—the commonplace epitaph. In the epitaphs of Asia Minor especially a dreary monotony is the rule. A number of formulas are stereotyped, and long series of inscriptions repeat one or other of them with very little variety beyond that of names and dates. During my first journeys in Asia Minor these wearisome epitaphs were a severe trial to my patience, and it seemed almost useless to take the trouble of copying them. Time was precious, and work was pressing, and it was hard to waste minutes or hours in getting access to and copying such uninteresting and valueless

*CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON MY HEBREW  
NEW TESTAMENT.*

II.

PROFESSOR E. SCHUERER in an article on "The Idea of the Kingdom of Heaven as set forth in Jewish Writings," in the *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie* for 1876, has endeavoured to show that מלכות שמים in post-biblical Jewish literature is quite the same as מלכות האלהים, *kingdom of God*. In his *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, second edition, vol. ii., p. 171, he repeats his statement and confirms the result of his careful inquiry. One of his chief arguments is this, that as מלכות השמים never occurs, but in every case simply שמים without the article, it is like a proper name which is determinate in itself. With the exception of הקדוש ברוך הוא, *the Holy One, blessed be He*, there is no name of God more commonly used than שמים. Everywhere in the two Talmuds and in the Midrashim we meet with phrases like the following: ירא שמים, *fearing God*; מורא שמים or יראת שמים, *the fear of God*; שם שמים, *the name of God*, etc. What Josephus says about the Pharisees' doctrine of predetermination and liberty is confirmed by the Talmudic maxim, "All is in the hands of Heaven save the fear of Heaven"; that is, piety or impiety depends upon man's own will. This reads in Hebrew: הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים (*Berachoth*, 33b). And what in this utterance is called יראת שמים is elsewhere more exactly defined as קבל מלכות שמים, *reception of the kingdom of heaven*; or קבל עול מלכות שמים, *taking up of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven*. Everywhere from the Mishna down to the Jewish Siddur or Prayerbook מלכות שמים is quite a common phrase, whereas מלכות השמים never once occurs.

It cannot indeed be proved that in biblical Hebrew

heaven is ever used as the name of God. But in the book of Daniel we seem to have something like the transition to this use of the word. There in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chap. iv., in one sentence, vers. 23, 29, we have the phrase, "the Most High ruleth," followed by the equivalent phrase, "the Heavens do rule," where שמיא with indifferent article is used. And if we turn our attention to the term "*kingdom of heaven*," we shall find that there is only one passage in the New Testament<sup>1</sup> in which "heaven" is employed as an equivalent of "God"; viz. in the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke xv., where the penitent says to his father, Πάτερ, ἤμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιόν σου, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight*. Evidently he intended to say, to express ourselves talmudically according to *Sanhedrin*, 27a, that he had been רע לשמים ורע לבריות, that is, *bad toward God and toward men*. The Hebrew equivalent here is לשמים ולפניך. The fact that the Greek text has εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν and not εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς might have afforded a valuable hint as to the correct rendering of the phrase. Nevertheless both in Salkinson's Hebrew New Testament and in my own it has been rendered by לשמים with the article. This is an error that requires correction.

On the other hand, the translation of the New Testament phrase βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, though peculiar to the Hebrew-Christian gospel of Matthew, and never interchanged with βασιλεία τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, by the Hebrew phrase מלכות השמים is perfectly correct and quite irreprehensible, because ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is really, though not logically, the same as ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ of the other evangelists, and is by no means identical with מלכות שמים of the synagogue. I refer my readers to the article in Cremer's *Biblico-*

<sup>1</sup> For Luke xviii. 13 is not to be regarded as a case in point. There εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν signifies "up to heaven," and is rendered in my version לַשָּׁמַיִם, and by Salkinson לְמַרְוֹם.

*Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, especially to the fifth edition of that work in the German, published in 1888. The evangelical notion is fuller and deeper and wider. The *kingdom of heaven* (heavens) is the new system of the world, appointed and governed by God in His Christ, a new system of heavenly origin, of heavenly nature and universal extent, comprehending as well the heavenly as the earthly world, and some way transforming the earth into heaven as the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven."

In the translation of *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* however, we are presented with a case altogether different from the question of the translation of *Καῖσαρ*. The Hebrew rendering קיסר, must be given, just like the Greek rendering *Καῖσαρ*, in every case without the article. I know of only a single instance in the Talmud in which קיסר has the post-positive Aramaic article; namely, in the *Aboda zara* 10b, where the question is raised, מאי הוי דההוא קיסרא דהוה, *What is the matter with that emperor who was*, etc.? But even in this case there are certain manuscripts, such as that of Munich, which give קיסר, and that too is the rendering of the celebrated extract of the Talmudic Haggadoth (*Stories and Sentences*) entitled "En-Jacob."

As the emperor is always rendered קיסר, not הקיסר, and God always שמים, not השמים, so we may conclude that the Hebrew equivalent for *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* is not חיי העולם, but חיי עולם. This too is another point in which my translation is in need of improvement. Salkinson has quite correctly used חיי עולם without the article. The question, however, now presents itself as to whether this rendering is sufficient as an equivalent for the determinate phrase *ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή* or *ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος*. The discussion of this point must be reserved for our third paper.

## III.

In the biblical Hebrew, and likewise in the biblical Aramaic, the noun עולם, of the same form as חותם, a signet ring, means in every case a period of long endurance (*αἰών*), and in no case the temporal world (*κόσμος*). There is only one passage, and that in *Ecclesiastes* iii. 11, a book belonging to the very latest age of biblical Hebrew, in which with any show of plausibility "the world" might be given as the equivalent of העולם. But even there the rendering of the margin of the Revised Version, "Also He hath set eternity in their heart," is preferable to that of the text. The idea of the writer is: The thought of eternity, the yearning after infinity, is implanted in the human soul.

The biblical usage allows us without the slightest risk of ambiguity to say not only חיים עַד-הָעוֹלָם (Ps. cxxxiii. 3), but also חיי העולם, as well as חיי עולם (Daniel xii. 2). Indeed in the seventh verse of this same chapter of Daniel God is called חי העולם, He who liveth for ever, or eternally.

On the contrary, in the post-biblical Hebrew, both as spoken and written, a clear and well-defined distinction was made between חיי העולם, *life of the world*, and חיי עולם, *eternal life*. When used to denote eternity, עולם never has the article. The Hebrew translator of the New Testament cannot forbear using עולם as a homonym for *αἰών* and *κόσμος*, and must, for that very reason, the more carefully observe that difference in usage just indicated between העולם, *the world*, and עולם, *eternity*. It is quite right to translate ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς (John vi. 51) by בעד חיי העולם, as is done in Salkinson's version and my own; πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου (1 Cor. ii. 12) by רוח העולם, as is also done in both; τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου (1 John iii. 17) by נכסי העולם (where Salkinson more biblically, as he thinks, but not so properly, renders הון בארץ); and in Christ's inter-

cessory prayer, *ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου* (John xvii. 16), by **אֵינְנִי מִדְּהָעוֹלָם**, as is done in both. But the equivalent for *αἰώνιος ζωή* is **חַי עוֹלָם**. This is the rendering given to the phrase in my translation of Matthew xxv. 46, Luke x. 25, John xii. 50; but I confess ingenuously that my lamented friend has been more consistent than I have been in the regular omission of the article in such cases.

There are several passages however in which the Greek text has *ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή*, or *ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, or *ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος*. Now in such instances, where the notion of eternal life is conceived of in so determinate a way, it is quite necessary that the grammatical form of expression should be correspondingly determinate. The translator may indeed seek to get over the difficulty by using **חַי נְצַח** or **חַי עַד**, because **נְצַח** and **עַד**, in the sense of "the everlasting," "the eternal," never take the article, but without it have the idea of determinateness in themselves. But this device is, after all, only a half measure, which does not succeed in removing altogether the ambiguity. We have a better expedient, of which Salkinson has not made any use; while I myself have made a very liberal use of it, but, unfortunately, very seldom in the proper place. In John xvii. 3 we read, *αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή*. For this distinctly assertory form of the original Salkinson substitutes the interrogatory phrase, **וְכֵּן חַי עוֹלָם**, and *what is eternal life?* In my translation, on the other hand, **וְאֵלֶּה הֵם חַי הָעוֹלָמִים** is not only literal, but, as I am about to show, unquestionably idiomatical.

The benediction, **בְּרַכָּה**, which ought to be repeated by any one who undertakes to read the book of the Thorah, has in *Massecheth Thorah* xiii. 8 the following ancient form: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast given us a law from the heavens," **חַי הָעוֹלָמִים מִמְרוֹמִים**, "*the eternal life from the heights.*" When closing the book he says, "Blessed be the Lord, who has given us a law of truth, and has

implanted in us חיי עולם," or, according to another reading, חיי העולמים.

The same tendency to vacillate between חיי עולם and חיי העולמים is to be found at the close of the treatise of the Mishna entitled Tamid, which deals with the daily morning and evening sacrifices. There the inscription of the ninety-second Psalm, "A Song for the Sabbath Day," is interpreted, "*for the day which is entire Sabbath and rest for eternal life.*" The text of the Mishna here varies between ומנוחה לחיי עולמים and ומנוחה לחיי העולמים. The Mishna on which the Palestinian Talmud rests, edited by W. H. Lowe from the unique Cambridge manuscript (1883), has ומנוחה לחיי העולמים; and in this form the phrase is received into the blessing used at the table (see Baer, *Abodath Israel*, Siddur with Commentary, p. 561). Yet, even in this case, the reading fluctuates, and an old text issued at Treves in A.D. 1525 gives חיי עולמים, without the article.

The result of the investigation is, that ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, wherever it is necessary to express distinctly the determinateness of the phrase, can be idiomatically rendered by חיי העולמים, and that ζωή αἰώνιος can be rendered either by חיי עולם or חיי עולמים; but that חיי העולם for "eternal life" is equivocal, or not agreeable to the usage of post-biblical Hebrew, nor even, it appears from Daniel xii. 2, to that of biblical Hebrew.

FRANZ DELITZSCH.