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THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO HEBREW IN THE EYES OF FRANZ DELITZSCH: PHILOLOGY, MISSION, THEOLOGY

Franz Delitzsch had a brilliant academic career. After receiving his Habilitation in Theology from the University of Leipzig in 1842 at the age of 29, Delitzsch held professorships in Faculties of Protestant Theology at the University of Rostock from 1846 to 1850, at the University of Erlangen from 1850 to 1867 and from 1867 until his death in 1890 back at the University of Leipzig.¹ He became most known for his numerous academic works on the Old Testament, namely his commentaries on Habakkuk (1843), the Song of Songs (1851), Genesis (1852), the Psalms (1859, 1860), Job (1864), Isaiah (1866), Proverbs (1873), and the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes (1875). In addition, he published several books on post-biblical Judaism: a wide-ranging book *On the History of Jewish Poetry* (1836),² an edition of the Karaite book *’Ēš Hayyim* by Aharon ben Elia.³ Delitzsch also published properly theological works: *A System of Biblical Psychology* (1855),⁴ and *A System of Christian*

¹ Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch*, 65–119. For a more concise description, see Delitzsch’s short autobiography which exists in two different English translations in Hilprecht, “Franz Delitzsch. Autobiography,” 212; and in Curtiss, *Franz Delitzsch*, 84.

² Delitzsch, *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poësie*.

³ Delitzsch, ed., *’Ēš Hayyim*. See Lasker, “Moritz Steinschneider,” 357–358. I thank Daniel Lasker for drawing my attention to this work by Delitzsch.

⁴ Delitzsch, *System der biblischen Psychologie*. In the introduction to this book, Delitzsch explains: “under the name of biblical psychology I understand a scientific representation of the doctrine of Scripture on the psychical constitution of man as it was created,

Apologetics (1869)⁵; as well as a volume of personal prayers entitled *The Sacrament of the True Body and Blood of Jesus Christ: Confession and Communion Prayers* (1844);⁶ and much more.⁷

Alongside his academic work, Delitzsch dedicated much effort to the mission to the Jews. In his book *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum* published in 1838 when Delitzsch was 25 years old, he wrote:

It is in order to preach to you the gospel of Christ crucified, and for no other purpose and with no other motivation, that I have begun to learn your languages and to examine your literature. And now too, apart from the supreme purpose of my studies which is to serve the church of God, I know no other goal than to exhort you untiringly, with confident reasoning, to accept Jesus Christ, the one whom you rejected.⁸

In 1863, Delitzsch founded the journal *Saat auf Hoffnung: Zeitschrift für die Mission der Kirche an Israel* (Seed in Hope: Journal for the Church's Mission to Israel), which he edited until 1886 and in which he frequently wrote.⁹ He also wrote a longer missionary treatise entitled *Ernste Fragen an die Gebildeten jüdischer Religion* (Serious Questions to the Educated Members of the Jewish Religion [1888]).¹⁰

In Delitzsch's *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum* from 1838, we also find the first mention of Delitzsch's plan to produce a new Hebrew translation of the New Testament. In this book, following his critique of the existing Hebrew translations of the New Testament,¹¹ Delitzsch offered a Hebrew translation of the Hymn to Love from 1 Corinthians 8:1–13.¹² This translated text was given the title "Probe einer neuen hebräischen Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments, von ***" (Sample of a new Hebrew translation of the New Testament, by ***). Delitzsch actually set to work on his transla-

and the ways in which this constitution has been affected by sin and redemption." *A System of Biblical Psychology*, 16.

⁵ Delitzsch, *System der christlichen Apologetik*.

⁶ Delitzsch, *Das Sacrament*.

⁷ For a bibliographical list of Delitzsch's works, see Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch*, 470–494. A brief and useful description of Delitzsch's writings may be found in Driver, "Professor Franz Delitzsch," 197–201.

⁸ Delitzsch, *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum*, 8; Trans. Smend, "A Conservative Approach" chap. 18 of *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume III From Modernism to Post-Modernism (The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries). Part 1 The Nineteenth Century – a Century of Modernism and Historicism*, 516.

⁹ See Jean Carmignac's introduction to *Die vier Evangelien*, IX.

¹⁰ Leipzig: Centralbureau der Instituta Judaica (W. Faber).

¹¹ Delitzsch, *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum*, 277–312.

¹² Delitzsch, *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum*, 313–314.

tion some twenty-six years later, in 1864.¹³ He began by translating what he considered to be the “Jewish-Christian Books of the New Testament”: The Gospel of Matthew, the Epistle of James, the Epistle to the Hebrews and Revelation,¹⁴ all of which he had finished by June 1865. In 1870, he published his translation of the Epistle to the Romans, with a forty-page introduction presenting his translation project.¹⁵ And in May 1874, Delitzsch wrote that his translation was completed and ready for press. A year later, in 1875, the British and Foreign Bible Society agreed to publish the translation, which finally came out in 1877. Only a few months after the publication, however, Delitzsch wrote to the British and Foreign Bible Society: “My translation seems to me a very incomplete work still. The second edition will remove many incorrectnesses, adjust many hardnesses and uneven(n)esses, and reproduce the original text more faithfully and clearer here and there.”¹⁶ And indeed in the following years, Delitzsch worked continuously on improving his translation, and published revised versions of it every year or two.¹⁷ In his revision work, Delitzsch benefited from remarks regarding his translation that he received from both Christian and Jewish scholars, among whom we may mention Jacob Levy of Wroclaw, author of influential dictionaries of Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew,¹⁸ David Kaufmann, professor at the Rabbinical Seminary of Budapest and owner of the famous Kaufmann collection, and Samuel Rolles Driver, eminent Hebraist of the University of Oxford.¹⁹ In 1890, after the publication of ten successive editions of the translation and shortly before his death, Delitzsch entrusted his friend and colleague Gustaf Dalman with the completion of the preparation of an eleventh revised edition, which was published in 1892.²⁰

In this article, I will examine how Franz Delitzsch himself conceived of what he called “one of the greatest and holiest tasks of my life,”²¹ that is,

¹³ On the advancement of the translation, see Dalman, “The Hebrew New Testament,” 145–147.

¹⁴ Delitzsch, “Eine Neue hebräische Übersetzung,” in *Eine Uebersetzungsarbeit von 52 Jahren*, 18.

¹⁵ Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer*.

¹⁶ Letter from 14 November 1877, quoted by Carmignac, *Die vier Evangelien*, XVI.

¹⁷ Data on the different editions may be found in an article by Gustaf Dalman quoted in Carmignac, *Die vier Evangelien*, XXVII.

¹⁸ See Brisman, *History and Guide*, 104–105.

¹⁹ The names of other scholars whose remarks Delitzsch consulted are mentioned in Carmignac, *Die vier Evangelien*, XVII–XVIII, XX–XXI; and in Dalman, “The Hebrew New Testament,” 145–146.

²⁰ Dalman, “The Hebrew New Testament,” 146–147.

²¹ Delitzsch’s letter to the British and Foreign Bible Society, quoted in Carmignac, *Die vier Evangelien*, XIV.

the making of his Hebrew translation of the New Testament, on which he worked continuously for more than twenty-five years. I will attempt to elucidate his conception on the basis of his writings regarding his translation, and I will also show how his conception influenced the translation work itself.

The Two Aims of the Translation

In many of his writings on his translation, Delitzsch stated that this endeavor had two aims: a practical one and a scientific one. Hence, in the first paragraph of the introduction to his translation of the Epistle to the Romans, a paragraph entitled: “Der praktische und wissenschaftliche Zweck” (The Practical and Scientific Aim), Delitzsch explained the nature of these two aims. He wrote:

The great practical aim we had before our eyes is to provide to Israelites knowledge and experience of the New Testament writings in a more attractive, easier, more thorough manner than before ... We hope that the persuasive power of the Gospel will prove effective on one or the other of these noble spirits who will read it in the Hebrew tongue, but we leave this up to God and renounce all unworthy tricks in order to force such an outcome. But the practical aim is combined with a scientific one ... A translation of the New Testament into Hebrew ... does not only presuppose an understanding of the New Testament text, but it also furthers its understanding by rethinking it in the same language that governed the thinking and the thought-expression of the holy writers even though they wrote in Greek.²²

Hence, the practical aim Delitzsch attributed to his translation was for it to be used in the mission to the Jews, whereas the scientific aim was to recon-

²² “Der große praktische Zweck, den wir dabei im Auge haben, ist der, dem Israeli-ten Kenntniß und Prüfung der neutestamentlichen Schriften in anziehenderer, leichter, gründlicherer Weise als bisher zu ermöglichen. (...) Daß an einem oder dem andern dieser edleren Geister das in hebräischer Zunge redende Evangelium seine Ueberzeugungskraft bewähre, hoffen wir, überlassen es aber Gott und entsagen allen unwürdigen Künsten, solche Erfolge zu erzwingen. Mit dem praktischen Zwecke aber verbindet sich ein wissenschaftlicher (...). Eine Uebersetzung des Neuen Testaments ins Hebräische ist nun zwar keine solche Erweiterung des sprachwissenschaftlichen Gesichtskreises, aber sie leistet ungleich mehr als das, weil sie nicht blos, wie die Uebersetzung in andere Sprachen, gründliches Verständniß des neutestamentlichen Textes voraussetzt, sondern selber das Verständniß desselben fördert, indem sie ihn in die Sprache zurückdenkt, welche das Denken und den Gedankenausdruck der heiligen Schriftsteller trotz dem daß sie griechisch schrieben beherrschte.” Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer*, 8–10. I thank Fränz Biver-Pettinger for helping me to translate this text.

struct the Hebrew that underlies the New Testament writings.²³ Both of these aims may be clarified by other statements made by Delitzsch.

As for the practical aim, we find in Delitzsch's writings three reasons for which he thought that a Hebrew translation of the New Testament may be useful for the mission to the Jews. First, he claimed that Jews all over the world know Hebrew and may therefore read the New Testament in this language. Thus, Delitzsch wrote: "... any person of the present time understanding the Hebrew language and able to speak it to some extent can have intercourse with the Jews of Asia and Africa, yea, of all parts of the world. Therefore it was most important that the New Testament should be translated into Hebrew, so that the Jews of the immense Russian empire, as well as the Jews from Spain to China, the Jews of Arabia, Malabar and Burmah, might be able to read the same."²⁴

Second, he believed that a Hebrew version of the New Testament was necessary in order for the Jews to view the New Testament as tightly connected to the Hebrew Bible. This may be deduced from the following statement by Delitzsch: "And the New Testament, as the new Thora, the complete half of God's revelation, must be translated into Hebrew; if we intend to make it a reading book for the Jews of all countries and a constituent part of the worship of the future Israel ..."²⁵

Third, he believed that reading the New Testament in Hebrew will make Jews perceive it as Jewish. Thus, he wrote: "We have cause to say, that our translation has contributed somewhat to bring the New Testament nearer to the Jews, as a prominent work of their literature."²⁶ And also: "But there are also others who feel that the history of Christianity's emergence is a piece of the history of their own people, that it puts us in one tent, to which even a few sparse notes from Talmudic and Midrashic literature point back, and that it is proper for the thinker and the researcher that the new religion came from Israel ..."²⁷

Now, as for Delitzsch's idea that the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew consists of reconstructing the language that underlies the New

²³ Delitzsch also mentioned the two aims of his translation in *Saat auf Hoffnung* 1865, part. i, 62, translated into English in Curtiss, *Franz Delitzsch: A Memorial Tribute*, 74; Delitzsch, "Das letzte Wort. 29. Januar 1890," in *Eine Uebersetzungsarbeit von 52 Jahren*, 30–33, translated in Curtiss, *Franz Delitzsch: A Memorial Tribute*, 77–78; "Announcement of a Second Edition of the Heb. New Test. By Prof. Franz Delitzsch," Carmignac, *Die vier Evangelien*, XVI.

²⁴ Delitzsch, "The Hebrew New Testament," 136.

²⁵ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 31.

²⁶ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 6.

²⁷ "Aber es gibt auch Andere, welche fühlen, daß die Entstehungsgeschichte des Christenthums ein Stück der Geschichte ihres eignen Volkes ist, daß sie uns in eine Zeit versetzt, bis in welche nur einige spärliche Notizen der Talmud- und Midrasch-Literatur zurückreichen, und daß es dem Denker und Forscher ziemt, die von Israel ausgegangene neue Religion (...)" Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer*, 9.

Testament writings, this relied on his wider views regarding language use in Judea at the turn of the era, and more precisely, regarding the languages used by Jesus and his disciples. Hence, Delitzsch thought that Hebrew was widely used by Jews at the time of Jesus both in writing and orally, namely in what he called “the higher form of speech”. He stated this in the following passage: “The Hebrew remained even after the exile the language of Jewish literature ... The Aramaic dialect of Palestine ... was the language of daily life, the vulgar language, in which the people and also the learned were wont to converse and to hold controversies ... the holy language continued to be the language of the higher form of speech ... Knowledge of Hebrew was then as now universal among the educated of the nation. Aramaic, on the contrary, was understood only by a small part of the Diaspora.”²⁸ In the rest of this passage, Delitzsch attempted to substantiate this view on the basis of a variety of evidences from ancient Jewish and Christian writings.

In light of his conception of the linguistic situation in Judea at the turn of the era, Delitzsch thought that Hebrew was the main language used during the historical events described in the New Testament books. He wrote: “The Shemitic woof of the New Testament Hellenism is Hebrew, not Aramaic. Our Lord and his apostles thought and spoke for the most part in Hebrew.”²⁹ And: “Jesus Christ is prophesied in this language.”³⁰ Moreover, he believed that not only the oldest oral tradition was in Hebrew, but also some of the original writings of the New Testament. He stated this explicitly regarding the Gospel of Matthew: “Since Matthew wrote his Gospel for Hebrews in Hebrew, the New Testament writings began according to ancient tradition.”³¹ And elsewhere: “it is quite unlikely that Matthew wrote in Aramaic ...”³² It is also possible that Delitzsch had a similar conception regarding the three other books that he called the “Jewish-Christian books of the New Testament”: the Epistle of James, the Epistle to the Hebrews and Revelation.³³ Finally, Delitzsch thought that even the New Testament writers who wrote in Greek were thinking in Hebrew, the “language that,” according to the passage quoted previously, “governed the thinking and the thought-expression of the holy writers even though they wrote in Greek.”³⁴

²⁸ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 30–31.

²⁹ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 31.

³⁰ “Jesus Christus ist in dieser Sprache geweissagt.” Delitzsch, *Wissenschaft, Kunst, Judenthum*, 281.

³¹ “Damit, dass Matthäus sein Evangelium für Hebräer hebräisch schrieb, hat nach alter Ueberlieferung das neutestamentliche Schrifttum begonnen”. Delitzsch, “Eine neue hebräische Uebersetzung,” in *Eine Uebersetzungsarbeit von 52 Jahren*, 19.

³² Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 30.

³³ Delitzsch, “Eine Neue hebräische Übersetzung,” in *Eine Uebersetzungsarbeit von 52 Jahren*, 18.

³⁴ Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer*, 10.

Delitzsch thus intended for his translation to be a reconstruction of the original Hebrew words uttered by Jesus and the Apostles, of the original Hebrew text of some of the New Testament books, or of the Hebrew mental form of the New Testament writings as they were conceived by their authors. And these he thought would be formulated in what he called a “peculiar Hebrew” that was a mixture of biblical and rabbinic, or, as he called them, post-biblical elements. He wrote: “... it was my plan to reproduce the New Testament in that peculiar Hebrew, without affected elegance, in which it has been thought and would have been written by the New Testament writers themselves, that is, without intentionally avoiding post-biblical words and phrases.”³⁵ And Delitzsch believed that the reconstruction of the Hebrew substrate of the New Testament could be achieved by “continued study of the New Testament and of biblical and post-biblical Hebrew, especially of the Hebrew syntax.”³⁶

Delitzsch’s Translation Technique

After having seen Delitzsch’s aims for his translation: the missionary aims of connecting the New Testament to the Hebrew Bible and of making it look Jewish, as well as the scientific aim of reconstructing in it the mixed biblical-rabbinic Hebrew that underlay, in his view, the text of the New Testament writings, we should note that these aims structured Delitzsch’s translation technique and shaped the translated text itself. What Delitzsch attempted to do throughout his translation was to render the contents of the New Testament writings using biblical and rabbinic words, expressions and phrase structures that are as “genuine” as possible, that is, as close as possible to the ones found in the Hebrew Bible and in rabbinic literature. This is easiest to illustrate through the philological comments that Delitzsch made in relation to the production and revision of his translation and that he published on different occasions as scholarly works.³⁷ Several examples will be given of his efforts to bring the language in his translation as close as possible to the language of the Hebrew Bible or to that of rabbinic literature.

³⁵ Delitzsch, “The Hebrew New Testament,” 137.

³⁶ Delitzsch, “In Self-Defence,” 140.

³⁷ See his series of articles entitled “*Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*. Ergänzungen zu Lightfoot und Schöttgen” published in *Zeitschrift für die gesamte lutherische Theologie und Kirche* from 1876 to 1878; *The Hebrew New Testament of the British and Foreign Bible Society: A Contribution to Hebrew Philology*; “In Self-Defence: Critical Observations on my Hebrew New Testament”; and the series of articles entitled “*Neue Beobachtungen über hebräische Spracheigentümlichkeiten*,” published in *Theologisches Literaturblatt* from 8 November 1889 to 10 January 1890.

First, in a booklet describing the changes that were introduced in the fifth edition of his translation, Delitzsch offers the following remarks:

Matth. XVI. 24 אִישׁ אֶם־יִחָפֵץ *if any man will*. The revised text has כִּי אִישׁ like Lev. XXVII. 2. It sounds more biblical.³⁸

2 Cor. VIII. 22 הַרְבֵּה פְּעָמִים *oftentimes*. The biblical Hebrew says always פְּעָמִים רַבּוֹת, now presented by the revised text.³⁹

1 Petr. I. 13 וְקִוְיָה קִוּוּ *and hope perfectly* (τελείως). I am now informed, that the *infin. intensivus*, when combined with an imperative, always follows it, therefore וְקִוּוּ קִוְיָה ...⁴⁰

In these three examples, as in many more, Delitzsch explains that the changes he made were designed to make the Hebrew of his translation correspond more closely to the language of the Hebrew Bible. And we may note Delitzsch's utmost precision and attention to detail in this quest, as he reflects at length on complex and sometimes very technical issues related to vocabulary, syntax, vowel-points and cantillation accents.⁴¹

Other remarks made by Delitzsch attest to his efforts to bring the Hebrew of his translation close to that of rabbinic literature. Hence, he explained that, in Acts 14:2, in the phrase וְהִקְעִיסוּ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹת הַגּוֹיִם נֹגֵד הָאֲחִים – “and they made the souls of the Gentiles angry *against* their brethren,” he replaced the preposition נֹגֵד – “against” with the preposition עַל – “on”, since “in the postbiblical literature עַל כָּעֵס is frequent for ‘to be angry at one’, e. gr. *Aboda zara* 54^b.”⁴²

Elsewhere, he wrote that the phrase “ἐξέπορεύετο ἥχος περὶ αὐτοῦ” – “a sound went out regarding him” in Luke 4:37 corresponds to the Mishnaic expression: “יֵצָא קוֹל עָלָיו”, which has the same meaning and which Delitzsch chose to use in the translation.⁴³

And regarding the phrase: “And lead us not into temptation” in the Lord's Prayer, Delitzsch vehemently claimed that it should be translated using the rabbinic expression הֵבִיא לִידֵי נִסְיוֹן – “to bring into trial”, which appears in two places in the Babylonian Talmud and is included in the Shaḥarit prayer⁴⁴:

³⁸ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 8.

³⁹ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 12.

⁴⁰ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 15.

⁴¹ E.g. Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 7, 10, 13, 14, 16.

⁴² Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 11.

⁴³ Delitzsch, “*Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*. III Lucas,” 596. In fact, Delitzsch used this rabbinic expression only in the two first editions of his translation. He later replaced it with an expression from the book of Esther: וְשָׁמַעַן הוֹלֵךְ (Est 9:4).

⁴⁴ b. Ber. 60b; Sanh. 107a.

The words uttered by the Lord's mouth were without any doubt וְאֵל־תְּבִיאֵנוּ לַיְדֵי נִסְיוֹן. And what nobler task can a translator of the N.T. have than to think back (zurückdenken) the words of Jesus, which were transmitted in Greek, in the original Hebrew or Aramaic?⁴⁵

This example shows again that, according to Delitzsch, the use of rabbinic sources may enable one to find the actual words spoken by Jesus.

Delitzsch's Theological View on the Hebrew New Testament

In spite of all of his efforts invested in the production of the translation and of the long collaborative work on its revision, Delitzsch wrote as late as 1889, after the publication of nine consecutive editions of his translation: "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."⁴⁶ And even a month before his death, he wrote on January 29, 1890: "The main contribution with which I wished to close my life, was the completion of a fresh revision of the Hebrew New Testament more thorough and complete than ever before, corresponding to the high ideal which I had placed before me, – a final edition, the utmost which my intellectual power and length of life would permit."⁴⁷

Delitzsch claimed then that he did not reach his *ideal* of a Hebrew New Testament, and other statements he made show that this ideal was not merely a metaphor. This seems clear in the following passages that he wrote several years earlier, in 1883:

I am far from presuming that I have realized the ideal. A true and satisfactory version of the N. T. is a thing of the future, and only will be produced, when the new Thora of the Gospel has been received into its heart of hearts by the regenerated remnant of Israel.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "Die Londoner Uebers. hat וְאֵל־תְּבִיאֵנוּ לַמִּסָּפָה, was die Zeitschrift *The Hebrew Christian Witness*, Januar 1875, mit Recht a *sorry substitution for the expression* לַיְדֵי נִסְיוֹן *in the preceding version* nennt. Denn die Worte im Munde des Herrn lauteten ohne allen Zweifel וְאֵל־תְּבִיאֵנוּ לַיְדֵי נִסְיוֹן, und welche höhere Aufgabe könnte ein Uebersetzer des N. T. haben als die griechisch überlieferten Worte Jesu in die ursprünglichen hebräischen oder aramäischen zurückzudenken?" Delitzsch, "*Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*. I. Matthaeus," 403.

⁴⁶ Delitzsch, "In Self-Defence," 140.

⁴⁷ Curtiss, *Franz Delitzsch: A Memorial Tribute*, 77. This is an English translation of a passage from Delitzsch, "Das letzte Wort. 29. Januar 1890," in *Eine Uebersetzungsarbeit von 52 Jahren*, 30.

⁴⁸ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 29–30.

But it shall come to pass in the last days, that they shall acknowledge Him whom they have so long despised. Israel will then become confessor and interpreter and apostle of the New Testament, and the new Thora, which is gone forth out of Zion, will then be gloriously transfigured into the holy tongue. Jacob shall then take root, Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit.⁴⁹

Delitzsch believed then that, in an eschatological future, the Jewish people will become Christian and accept the New Testament, and that, at that time, the New Testament will be transfigured into Hebrew by divine intervention. It may be noted that he seems to have considered his own efforts for the conversion of the Jews and for the production of a Hebrew New Testament as a manly approximation to the future actions of God.

* * *

To conclude, I would simply like to remark that Franz Delitzsch's views and method of work on his Hebrew translation of the New Testament illustrate how cutting-edge philological knowledge and abilities, a zeal for the mission to the Jews and profound and original theological speculation all combined in structuring the activity of this nineteenth-century German Christian Hebraist.

Summary

In this article, I examine the way in which Franz Delitzsch envisioned his masterpiece translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, first published in 1877. I focus on the aims Delitzsch attributed to his translation and on the way in which the translation project was embedded in the wider views held by Delitzsch as a Hebraist and a theologian. Furthermore, I show how Delitzsch's conception of his endeavor structured the translation work itself.

Keywords: Christian Hebraism, Jewish-Christian relations, Translation studies, Eschatology

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⁴⁹ Delitzsch, *The Hebrew New Testament of the British*, 33–34.

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