

LITERATURE

Ethiopian Bible Odd and Colorful, Scholars Are Told

THE Bible of Ethiopia's Christian warriors, believed to date in translation from fourth or fifth century A.D., is written in colorful and sometimes expurgated language.

So the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis was told by Prof. Moses Bailey of Hartford Theological Seminary.

Citing oddities of the Ethiopian Bible, Prof. Moses said:

"The Garden of Eden, or Garden of Voluptuousness, as it is called in Greek as well as Hebrew, is nicely expurgated as the "Garden of Pleasantness."

In the creation story, where Hebrew and Greek versions state that God made a firmament or dome over the earth, the Ethiopian translator said God made a roof. Presumably this would mean a thatch roof, the common kind of the country, Prof. Bailey explained.

Prof. Bailey is teaching one student the Ethiopian language at the Hartford Seminary, and thus Columbia University is not the only institution offering

a course in Ethiopian, as has been stated.

Nomadic wanderings of Bible patriarchs and tribes are translated in Ethiopian by a word meaning either to journey or to be free. Wandering and freedom are one and the same, to the Ethiopian, Prof. Bailey explained. A common name for Ethiopia itself is the Land of Freedom, Bher Ge'ez, and the classical speech is the Language of Freedom.

Once, in the Ethiopian Bible, the word for freedom is used of insanity to describe David's feigning madness. To the Ethiopian it was a sort of mental wandering.

"Just as a French Bible is quite another book from an English Bible, so the Ethiopic presents its own picturesque world, even though it is a fairly literal translation of the familiar Greek," Prof. Bailey said.

The Ethiopic version is important to Bible scholars because it was translated early from the Greek, and helps to show what the early Greek text was like.

Science News Letter, January 11, 1936

ARCHAEOLOGY

Art Reveals Ancient Jews Used "Visual Education"

FROM documents coming to light, and from paintings and mosaic floors unearthed in ruined synagogues, ancient Jews are revealed in a new light as artists.

"The Jews are credited with establishment of the Public School System, introduced by the High Priest Joshua ben Gamala in 64 A.D.," said Dr. Paul Romanoff of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

"The art in the synagogues, the murals and mosaics, will now credit the Jews with the introduction of one of the modern methods in education—visual instruction."

Dr. Romanoff addressed scholars attending the meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.

The religious pictures, he finds rea-

son to believe, were used to illustrate subjects studied in schools in the synagogues or in adjacent buildings.

"The universal belief that Jewish Biblical and Rabbinic law prohibits the cultivation of art is erroneous and unfounded," declared Dr. Romanoff. "Art in ancient times having been a medium of pagan worship, the Jewish religion naturally evinced an aversion to it. It can be definitely established that in the third century of our era murals and mosaics with human figures were legally permitted in Palestine by the outstanding Rabbis and heads of Jewish Academies."

The date when murals and mosaics were legally permitted can be fixed, he said, by a recently discovered fragment of the Palestinian Talmud published by

Prof. Epstein of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Jews were allowed to portray human figures on synagogue walls in Palestine in the middle of the third century. Mosaics were permitted at the end of the third century. In private houses such adornments had been in use for some time before that. And in Babylon, Jewish artists had begun to paint Old Testament scenes on synagogue walls near the end of the second century. Ruins of a synagogue in Dura on the Euphrates have revealed some of these well preserved Bible scenes painted 244 A.D.

References in ancient writings indicate that Jews were permitted to own sculptural art as early as the second century.

"Statues worshipped by pagans could be used by deforming them a little, such as the breaking off of a finger tip or the tip of an ear," said Dr. Romanoff.

Jewish sculptors in Palestine even engaged in modelling figures of pagan deities, he added.

Science News Letter, January 11, 1936

PHYSICS

Detonator Caps Develop Enormous Energies

EXPLOSIONS of the detonator caps used to set off dynamite blasts develop unbelievable energies and do very strange things, Dr. R. W. Wood, professor of physics at the Johns Hopkins University, told fellow-researchers at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In experiments which he described, tiny pellets of copper no bigger than the head of a pin were driven through a couple of telephone directories, and one of them, fired downward into a crock of water, shattered it into a dozen pieces.

Prof. Wood was interested in the investigation of these violent explosives through the tragic death of a prominent Baltimorean's wife. She opened a furnace door to inspect the fire, when a blasting cap, accidentally left in the coal by a miner, exploded. It drove a pinhead-sized pellet of copper through her breastbone, severing a large artery and causing her death in a couple of minutes.

The tiny fatal missile, when recovered at the autopsy, had a peculiar shape. It was pear-shaped, with a flange or skirt of thin copper extending around it. Prof. Wood's subsequent experiments showed that this curious shape was caused partly by the deformation of the end of the cap's copper shell, partly