

## Deissmann's 'Bible Studies.'

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THE appearance in English of Deissmann's famous *Bibelstudien* (1895) and *Neue Bibelstudien* (1897) is an event of unusual interest. Of course there are few scholars who would care to confess that they had not read the books in the original, for they undeniably belong to the exceedingly small class to which the much-abused term 'epoch-making' properly belongs. But there are many who do not read German, and many of those who do would probably admit that the language is a perpetual irritant. (Why were not German industry and acuteness bestowed on the speakers of any other language, except perhaps Russian and Chinese? I know a German Ph.D. who finds French easier reading than his native tongue, and the knowledge emboldens me to explode thus after years of suffering!) But this is by the way, serving to point my own gratitude to Dr. Grieve. He has made the book read like an original English work; while its faithfulness is guaranteed not only by the lucidity of the work translated but also by the co-operation of Dr. Deissmann himself in the revision of the proofs.

I shall not attempt here to give a table of contents, but only to show in a few words why this book holds so unique a position among recent biblical works. Deissmann was not of course the original patentee of his central thesis, but he is the first to seize upon the new material that the last decade has provided, and use it in a way which gives us a wholly new and indispensable tool for the study of the Greek Bible. We can appreciate the peculiar freshness of Deissmann's insight even when he is laying under contribution the Inscriptions, a source which has been available for generations, though of course new discoveries are continually being made. But the use of the papyri is the most characteristic feature of the book. Here the material has been accumulating during the last ten years with bewildering rapidity.

<sup>1</sup> *Bible Studies*. Contributions, chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions, to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity. By Dr. G. Adolf Deissmann, Professor of Theology in the University of Heidelberg. Authorised Translation by Dr. Alexander Grieve. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901.

How rapid the growth has been is best realized by observing that in the four years since Deissmann's *Neue Bibelstudien* was published there have appeared four goodly volumes of papyrus texts from Drs. Grenfell and Hunt,—apart from the theological *Amherst Papyri*,—while the Berlin papyri have grown from one and a half volumes to two and a half big folios; moreover, the *Inscriptiones Maris Ægæi*, from which Deissmann gathers great spoil, are now in three volumes instead of one. The classical world is more or less inclined to be disappointed that the rubbish-heaps of Oxyrhynchus and the Fayum have yielded great masses of old receipts, private letters, wills, incantations, *et hoc genus omne*, and so little to go with the treatise of Aristotle and the poems of Sappho and Bacchylides. With Deissmann to guide him, the biblical student will not sigh for recovered fragments of classical literature. The trivial, utterly unliterary fragments from Upper Egypt, in which we see the ancient world in undress uniform, have an instructiveness of absorbing interest. For they give us, as nothing else can, the vernacular used in daily life by the earliest readers of our New Testament. In Deissmann's fascinating pages we are shown scores of familiar biblical words and phrases which now turn out to have been part and parcel of the ordinary vocabulary of later Greek. One after another, idioms which we have regarded as 'Hebraisms,' and words which have been classed as 'Biblical Greek,' show themselves in everyday scribblings of Greek-speaking Egyptians or in formal and laboured inscriptions of Greeks from Asia Minor or the islands, who had assuredly not formed their style on the Septuagint. It follows that the New Testament, except where it is actually translated from Semitic originals, is written in the normal language of the Greek world, heathen and Jewish alike, with differences in its style according as its various writers approximated more to the vernacular or to the literary style of the day. As papyri multiply, the remaining specimens of 'Biblical Greek' may be expected to dwindle, and 'Hebraisms' to be more and more restricted in their range.

It is possible that in the delight of the new dis-

covery we may be in danger of going a little too far, and repeating in a more scientific style the extravagances of the Purists of old. If we read the Greek writings of men accustomed to think in Latin,<sup>1</sup> we find Latinisms; and every comparative philologist is familiar with like phenomena in other fields. The denial of Hebraisms, therefore, or the minimizing of them, in the New Testament writings where a direct Aramaic or Hebrew original is not in question, must depend upon the extent to which Greek was a native tongue to the writers. If it was with them an *acquired* tongue, they were sure to fall into 'Hebraisms' now and then. Most of us know some cultured foreigner, domiciled for many years in England and speaking English with perfect ease and fluency. Is their English ever *quite* free from Gallicisms or Germanisms, as the case may be? Except, therefore, in the case of writers like St. Paul and St. Luke, who must have spoken Greek from infancy, the question of Hebraisms is bound up with the question whether Palestine was really bilingual. If it was not, and Greek was definitely learned by the best educated people, in late boyhood or in mature life, there simply *must* have been Hebraisms in their Greek; and the absence of these goes far, if established, to prove that Greek was perfectly familiar to ordinary Galilæans from early days. I shall neither advocate nor quarrel with the conclusion here, but it is as well for us to see whither we are being led.

Let me turn awhile to 'lower criticism,' in which I find very little to say. I notice '4th cent. A.D.' on p. 188 for 'B.C.', and *Σελεύκον* for *Σελεύκου* on p. 312. In a few cases we should have been grateful to the translator had he accommodated his references to English editions of foreign books. Cremer is translated, though not from the last edition. So are Blass's *Pronunciation* and Buttmann's *N.T. Grammar*. The references to Winer, where not to the new edition by Schmiedel, are to Winer-Lünemann.<sup>1</sup> But this is little altered from the *sixth* edition, which Dr. Moulton edited in English; it is quite wrong to say (p. xv) that his work '= 3rd German edition.' On p. 192 there might have been a reference to Buresch's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Viereck, *Sermo Græcus quo senatus populusque Romanus usi sunt* (Göttingen, 1888), *passim*.

very important article, 'Τέροναν,' in *Rhein. Museum*, xlv. 193-232: this, however, is an omission of the author and not the translator.

Finally, I may note the very welcome information that Professor Deissmann has more Bible Studies in store for us. I very much hope they will be translated *pari passu*, so that English readers may not have to wait; it will be a very strange and disappointing thing if the reception given to the present volume should not encourage this suggestion. As it stands, the book hardly justifies the inference the reader naturally draws from the statement that it contains 'Dr. Deissmann's most recent changes and additions.' There are changes and additions, but there is no attempt to incorporate systematically the work on new material, for this (as already stated) is to go into a new book. In many places the new material will involve no small amount of change. I have summarized in the *Classical Review* for February 1901 a mass of points from the papyri, nearly all bearing upon the accidence of N.T. Greek, for which purpose I have examined the papyri published up to date. One or two trifles will show how this new material affects statistics. Deissmann (p. 183f.) quotes only *one* example of *ἀραβίων*, and *eight* of *ἀραβών*; I have *twelve* of *pp* and *eleven* of *p*. The occurrences of the noun *ἐλαιώνων* (p. 208) are about doubled when the newly published texts are brought in; and for *ἐλ μὴν* (p. 206 f.), instead of only *two* quotations there are *six*, none later than the first century A.D. It may be worth while to add that fuller statistics as to *ἐάν* for *ἄν* after relatives and conjunctions reinforce strikingly the conclusions suggested on p. 204 f. I find *ἐάν* only four times in papyri B.C., against eight cases of *ἄν*; but in the first century A.D. it is 25 against 7, and in the second 80 against 9, after which there is a sudden drop in the popularity of the construction. It seems clear that *ἐάν* was normal during the first two centuries, *ἄν* being perhaps mainly literary. These specimens of grammatical gleanings<sup>2</sup> after Deissmann, in papyri which were not accessible when he wrote, will perhaps serve to suggest how much is left for the acute observer himself to reap in unharvested fields. We shall all hope that his new sheaves will be gathered soon.

<sup>2</sup> A few lexical points are collected, together with a summary of grammatical results, in the *Expositor* for April.