

August Dillmann.

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I.

I THINK it one of the greatest privileges of my life that I was able to spend a whole semester at the feet of that great master in Israel, the late lamented Dr. Dillmann. And this privilege was almost lost, for it was but two and a half years ago, when I accepted my present position, that I stipulated before fully starting at Nottingham to spend five months in Germany. Four of these, viz. April to August, were spent in attending classes at the Berlin University, and it was then I came in contact with the subject of this sketch, though I had seen Dr. Dillmann at Stockholm when the Oriental Congress was held there in 1889, and at my very first sight of him I was greatly impressed by his noble, commanding presence. On the 4th of July last our master and our friend died, leaving behind him a splendid example of industry, care, and conscientiousness! Even as a moral influence, I reckon my too brief studentship under, and friendship with, Dillmann among the most powerful and helpful of my life. Never did any other teacher make me—who am also a teacher, though how far behind him!—so ashamed of myself and so wishful and resolved to aim at better things.

Dr. Dillmann's full name was Christian Friedrich August Dillmann. He was born on the 25th day of April 1823, in a Würtemberg village of the name of Illingen. When but five years old, his father undertook to instruct him in the principles of German and Latin grammar, and for four years he remained at home under his father's tuition.

In 1832, when nine years old, he was placed in the home of the Protestant clergyman at Dürrenz near Illingen, and he prosecuted his studies under this man's guidance for three years.

In 1835, in the twelfth year of his age, he was removed to Stuttgart, the capital city of his native province. Here he worked hard and made much progress at the Gymnasium.

A year later finds him in the ancient Cathedral School of Schœnthal, called then and now the 'Würtemberg Lower Seminary' ('Niedereres Seminar von Würtemberg'). He continued at this school

from October in the year 1836 to September 1840, when he matriculated at the University of Tübingen. For the next five years he remained at the University, working hard and successfully. It will be thus seen that the whole course of his instruction was carried on in his native kingdom of Würtemberg, in the south-west of Germany.

Notwithstanding the fact that both Paulus and Baur were natives of Würtemberg, this province has for years been one of the most evangelical and religious in the Fatherland. It has sent forth far more ministers and missionaries than any other part of the Continent of the same size. It bore this character in Dillmann's boyhood, and that devoutness and attachment to the Bible and its teaching, so marked in after years, were in no small measure due to the early influences amid which he grew. The University was, however, in a bad way, at least about the time when Dillmann entered it. The late Dr. Schaff was a student of it from 1837 to 1839, and in his first published English book (*Germany: its Universities, etc.*, Philadelphia, 1857) he writes that during these years 'more than half of the theological students were tinctured more or less with Hegelian pantheism and destructive criticism' (p. 95).

In 1844 he passed his theological examinations with unusual distinction, winning a prize offered for the best essay on 'Catechetics,' and securing a valuable scholarship given by the City of Tübingen for the best theological student.

During his stay at Tübingen, Baur was in the height of his popularity. How far young Dillmann came under his influence I cannot say. But there was another man teaching at the University whose influence was very deep and permanent upon him, I mean Heinrich Ewald. From 1824, when, at the instance of his former teacher Eichhorn, he returned to his native town of Göttingen, up to 1837, Ewald had taught at the University as repent, as extraordinary or as ordinary professor.¹

¹ In the German universities the ordinary professor receives full pay from the State, in addition to fees; he is also a member of the faculty, and may be elected on the

The political events of 1837 led to his resignation, whereupon he came to England, meeting Rowland Williams and others. In the following year, 1838, Ewald accepted an invitation to be ordinary professor of theology at Tübingen, and he remained at his new home until in 1848 he was recalled to Göttingen by the King of Hanover. It was during this ten years' professorship at Tübingen that Dillmann was a student of theology and latterly of Oriental languages at the University, and in Ewald the ardent student found an accomplished scholar, a penetrating seer, an unflagging worker,¹ and an enthusiastic teacher. No one acquainted with the teacher and the subsequent career of his pupil can fail to see the immense power which Ewald wielded over Dillmann. Those who knew Dillmann, his habits of life, and especially the main lines of his teaching, will, if they have also a knowledge of Ewald, need no illustration of what I have said. It is impossible in the short space at my disposal to enter more fully into this matter. I will rest satisfied with the statement that, apart from Ewald, I cannot conceive how, humanly speaking, the Dillmann that I knew could have come to be.

Dillmann worked under Ewald from October 1840 to September 1845, when his career at the University came to a close.

Before quitting Tübingen, he won a prize offered for the best essay on 'The Formation of the Old Testament Canon.'

senate and to the rectorship. The extraordinary professor has the honour of being called professor, and besides receiving the fees, has usually some pay from the State; but he is ineligible for faculty, senate, or rectorship. The private docent (Berlin) or repetent (Tübingen) has no pay except the fees, neither may he call himself professor. He is, like the extraordinary professor, ineligible for the faculty, etc. But he is not a private coach, except in rare cases; and, indeed, his method of teaching is exactly the same as that of the professor.

¹ As illustrating Ewald's industry, I may mention two facts. The venerable Dr. Samuel Davidson told me some months ago that when once visiting Ewald at Göttingen, the latter rose each morning at four or five o'clock, and worked nearly all day. One morning he gave up wholly to showing Dr. Davidson about—the first time, he told his visitor, he had ever made such a sacrifice. Professor Land of Leyden, the friend and fellow-student at Göttingen of Dr. Nöldeke of Strasburg, once told me that the latter was absent on one occasion from class. Ewald asked him to explain his absence, whereupon Nöldeke said he was ill. Ewald said, 'That is no reason for being away; you will get well as soon in class as in bed. When I am ill I never absent myself from my classes or even from my work.'

In October of this year he entered the ministry, and became assistant pastor of the Lutheran Church at Sersheim, near to his native home; but his growing love for Semitic studies led him to resign his pastorate in the following May, when he returned to Tübingen, and in the very month he left Sersheim he took his Ph.D.

Dillmann had thus, like Julius Müller, and unlike the large majority of German theological professors, some experience in ministerial work; and, although in his case it was short, the gain of it to teacher and students was undoubted.

He had for some time given special attention to Ethiopic, and he resolved to publish the Ethiopic version of *Enoch*. In order to obtain a text as accurate as was possible, he spent two years visiting the libraries of Paris, London, and Oxford.

In 1847-48 he published catalogues of the Ethiopic MSS. which he had been able to examine. In 1851 he issued the Ethiopic text of *Enoch*, and two years afterward appeared his translation and Commentary. For his other Ethiopic works, see the bibliography at the end; but mention must be made at this point of his Ethiopic Grammar (1857) and Lexicon (1865), which Ernst Curtius described when receiving Dillmann into the Berlin Academy of Science as 'Monumente deutscher Geisterkraft' ('Monuments of German intellectual power'). They have never yet been surpassed or even equalled; and when it is remembered that Dillmann had no better books to aid him than the Lexicon (1661) and Grammar (1702) of Job Ludolf, his success in this much neglected field is astounding. He introduced a new era into Ethiopic studies, and for the first time placed the grammar of this language on a scientific basis. For many years before his death he was acknowledged to be the greatest Ethiopic scholar living; and no one would more willingly have accorded him this honour than the distinguished English Ethiopic scholar, the Rev. R. H. Charles, M.A., author of *The Book of Enoch translated from Professor Dillmann's Ethiopic Text* (1893).

But I have been anticipating events.

In July 1848, the very year of Ewald's return to Göttingen, Dr. Dillmann, now twenty-five years old, accepted the post of repetent in Hebrew and its cognates at his own University. Three years later, *i.e.* in 1851, he became private docent in theology, and in 1853 professor extraordinary in the same faculty.

In 1854 he succeeded, at Kiel, Justin Olshausen, the accomplished author of Commentaries on Job and Psalms, and of an unfinished but brilliant and still useful Hebrew grammar, who must not be confounded, however, with his brother Hermann, whose Commentaries on the New Testament are well known, and whose death, at the early age of forty-five, was such a loss to New Testament scholarship. This was far away from Dillmann's southern home. In fact, the remaining years of his life—forty years as they proved to be—were to be spent in Northern Germany. At Kiel, as extraordinary professor in the philosophical faculty, he remained for ten years, teaching Hebrew, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Sanscrit, which in the German universities are included under philosophy. What better preparation for the future Old Testament exegete can be thought of than this ten years' teaching of the Old Testament language and its cognates—even Sanscrit for comparative purposes would be helpful!

In the year 1862 the University of Leipzig conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Theology. In 1864, ten years after his first settlement at Kiel, he removed to Giessen to be professor of theology. Here the well-known Dr. Stade was among his pupils. In 1869 that stalwart champion of Old Testament traditionalism, Dr. Hengstenberg, passed away. For years he had been an enormous influence in the theological movements of Germany. The theological faculty at Berlin was packed with his nominees, though, as in the case of Vatke, there were some who gave him much trouble. I was once told by a German scholar that no one had 'the ghost of a

chance' of obtaining any post in the theological department of Berlin unless he subscribed to Hengstenberg's views, and contributed to his magazine.¹ Dr. Dillmann was invited to fill this important chair, and he accepted the post, occupying it throughout the next quarter of a century with extraordinary faithfulness and ability. At the first he was looked upon as advanced, and in many quarters he was regarded with suspicion. In comparison with his predecessor, and for that time, he *was* advanced; but though in the successive editions of his Commentaries he made more and more concessions to the school of Graf, Wellhausen, and Kuenen, he was for many years looked upon as conservative in his attitude. And I can testify, from words which I heard him speak in private, that this was the view he himself took of his position.

Dr. Dillmann was elected to be Rector of the University in 1875. At the time of his death he was Dean of the Theological Faculty. In 1881 he was President of the International Oriental Congress held at Berlin. At different periods in his professorial career he declined invitations to the Universities of Marburg, Zürich, Halle, Vienna, and Tübingen. He was thrice invited to be ordinary professor at Tübingen, his own University, but in each case he declined. He was honoured by being elected a member of the leading learned societies on the Continent, in England, and in America.

¹ The *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*. In each year the January numbers were for the most part filled with the editor's survey. This used to be called Hengstenberg's 'Thronrede,' or 'Address from the Throne.'

The Expository Times Guild of Bible Study.

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enrolled as members do not require to renew the promise every year; and it is always understood that it is not to be held binding if unforeseen circumstances prevent it from being carried out. Names of new members should be sent to the Editor, Kinneff, Bervie, N.B.¹

The parts of Scripture selected for the Session 1894-95 are the Book of Zechariah and the first

¹ Members are requested to write their names distinctly; to say whether Rev., etc.; and to mention their degrees.