Deissmann, in his very interesting and bahnbrechende Bibelstudien (1895) and Neue Bibelstudien (1897) has shown how much light is thrown upon biblical Greek by a study of the language used in the inscriptions of the centuries immediately before and, still more, after Christ, that is to say, the language used by the ordinary population, as distinguished from the literary tongue. In Bibelstudien (p. 280 ff.) he rightly remarks on the relation of the Christian expression in the New Testament to the official language which established itself in the cultus of the emperors, such as the use of αὐτῶν, ἡ θεία δόματα, εὐοτίσεως, κυρικός (Neue B.S., p. 44 ff.). In my Church in the Roman Empire before 170 (1893) and St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen (1895), I had attempted to follow a similar path, though more on the side of action and life than on that of mere language. But, in this subject, word is correlative to action and life: the Christians were creating a new language corresponding to the new world of thought and life which was being built up for them and by them, but they did not divorce themselves from the world around them. Partly consciously, but far more in an unconscious way, they adapted their work to the life and standard of their age, and used the same devices for administration and organization which the Roman rule had worked out for itself.

The importance of studying the inscriptions of the Greek-speaking cities of Asia is twofold. In the first place, they are the only memorials which we possess of the language which Paul and Luke learned to speak in their childhood. We should be glad to possess any of the writings of Athenodorus, who was living and probably lecturing on philosophy at Tarsus when Paul was young, or of the other older Athenodorus of Tarsus, from whose writings Seneca quotes the comparison of life to a warfare, the advice to 'ask God for nothing that you cannot ask openly,' and perhaps also the counsel 'so live with men as if God saw you; so speak with God as if men heard you.' Being denied that, we must content ourselves with such fragments as the inscriptions afford about the society, life, law, religion, and philosophy of the time and lands in which the Pauline Churches were founded. The training of scholars in Greek has been always too much confined to the older and greater Greek literature and to the Christian books. Hence it is the difference between pagan Greek and Christian Greek which is most apparent to them, and most dwelt upon by them. They mark off 'New Testament Greek' as if it were a special and separate language, the same in the mouth of Luke the Greek as of John the Jew. They assert that phrases and words are peculiar to Christian Greek, which the epigraphists are familiar with as part of the everyday speech of the Greek Asian cities. Deissmann shows how an end is about to be put to this sort of thing.

In the second place, the epigraphic documents are the best training for the interpretation of the New Testament writings in one aspect, viz. their relation to the life of the time. Pure literature of the highest type, like the great Greek classics, on whom we are trained, is not closely bound to the circumstances of contemporary life; it becomes the heritage of the whole world, because it seizes the permanent facts of life and lays little stress on the evanescent and occasional; hence it can be appreciated on its permanent and its greatest side by one who disregards its relations to contemporary facts. No book can become part of the world's literature, unless it can be appreciated without minute study of contemporary society and life. The more dependent a literary work is on an elaborate commentary, explaining to later generations of readers the allusions, the less chance it has of living. The more it succeeds in setting before all readers men and thoughts which are sufficient in themselves and go direct and

1 Dr. Deissmann has not observed that Canon E. L. Hicks had preceded him in illustrating the language of the New Testament from the inscriptions of the Greek cities (see two excellent papers in the Classical Review, 1897, pp. 41, 42). But it is only very rarely that a German scholar notices anything that is done in Britain.

2 St. Paul the Traveller, p. 354.

3 Philosophy, as, e.g., the doctrine of the Epicurean philosopher of Olympos, in Lyca, engraved on a series of blocks (Bulletin de Corresp. Hellénique, 1897).
unaltered to the eyes and mind of all readers, the
more fitted it is to become part of the literature
of all ages and all men. Now, the New Testament
books, while they possess in a wonderful degree
the quality of emphasizing the permanent aspects
of life and thought, are also, to a very remarkable
extent, occasional works, written with a special
eye to the circumstances and needs of the moment,
assuming in the readers perfect knowledge of the
whole practical situation, and explicitly stating
only what has to be added to the existing and
assumed facts. In this latter respect they resemble
the inscriptions. To explain any inscription to a
modern reader, or to understand it oneself, it is
necessary to bring clearly together in imagination
the entire situation in which the inscription was
placed; those to whose eyes it was originally addressed were assumed to be familiar with the
whole circumstances and conditions; and these the
modern reader has to re-create for himself. Practice
in interpreting inscriptions is therefore the best
training for interpreting one side of the New
Testament writings; they help to fill in the back­
ground on which the action of the New Testament
takes place.

This interpretation of inscriptions must be
imaginative and re-creative. The restoration of a
defective inscription often depends on the revivi­
fication in fancy of the situation in which
the writer of the mutilated text was. The
same creative imagination is needed to read the
history of Luke and the Epistles of Paul; and
those who have restricted themselves to the
exegesis of the written letter (which is fairly
adequate for the literary, philosophical, and part
of the religious side), as it is practised by the
scholar sitting in his study and not looking beyond
its wall, are apt to scoff at the imaginative recon­
struction of the epigraphist as purely fanciful and
as lacking solid basis. They say that the recon­
structor thinks he can hear the grass growing; his
firm hold of the essential details of the record as
the skeleton round which imagination has to
build up the circumstances in order to make the
whole picture, they stigmatize as Micrologie;
but it may be doubted whether they are not
sometimes just a little disposed in their study
to direct their imagination to the recorded facts,
and the painful minuteness to the surrounding
situation.

Deissmann’s work will do good service if it leads
professional theologians to study the inscriptions,
even though their immediate purpose in doing so
should be purely verbal.

In several points, as, for example, in that which
is quoted in our first paragraph, and in the discus­
sion of Σαῦλος ὁ καὶ Παῦλος, Deissmann expresses
practically the same views which have been stated
by me more on the side of administration and
practical work. But there is one department of
epigraphy which he has omitted almost entirely,
though it throws much light on his special subject,
—I mean the votive or hieratic inscriptions of the
non-Hellenic religion of Asia Minor. The analogy
of this religion and religious expression with the
Christian forms has been often in my mind while
writing about Paul; and in the present paper it is
proposed to make a detailed comparison of the
points of analogy.

Deissmann in one case (Bibelstudien, p. 77) refers to the fact that words like ἀγίος, ἱερός,
δῖκαιον, γνώμαι, ἄγαθος, εὐσέβεια, θρησκεία, ἀρχι-
τέρειός, etc., were familiar to the Asia Minor Chris­
tians before they began to read the Septuagint,
and puts the question, whether they used such
words in their Christian expression because they
read them in the Greek Bible, or because they knew
them in their home language. But his remarks
on this point are vague and general in character.
The inscriptions which we propose to consider
enable us to look more exactly at the usage in
regard to a few important words common to pagan
ritual and Christian expression.

I. Character of the Hieratic Inscriptions.

This class of votive inscriptions has been found
chiefly in the explorations of the last twenty years.
They are the work of the less educated and
more superstitious classes of society in Asia Minor,
of those persons who had little share in Greek ideas
and literature, and often only a very scanty know­
ledge of the Greek language. The inscriptions
belong to the first three centuries of our era; and the
formulae are so persistent that they evidently form
part of a technical religious language, originated by
the priesthood (a more educated class) not much
later and probably earlier than the Christian era.
They are found chiefly in two districts, which lay
off the main lines of trade and development, and
which therefore longer retained the native Oriental
and non-Hellenic style; one of these was the
Lydian Katakekaumene, with its ten cities, and the other was the Phrygian country round Dionysopolis, which was still organized on the old Anatolian village system, without any city after the Greek style except Dionysopolis, an unimportant and unprogressive place.

Besides these two chief centres there were many others, which may hereafter yield much information, when Asia Minor is once more brought under cultivation, and the archaeological wealth that lies below the surface is disclosed—provided that there are any educated persons to copy the inscribed stones, as they are taken from the earth (a duty in which many Greek residents take honourable part), before they are wrought up again into new constructions. But at present very few votive inscriptions of the kind treated in these pages are known in the rest of Asia Minor.

An instructive inscription was erected in duplicate at Laurium, in the south-east of Attica, by a Lyceian slave named Xanthos, probably in the late second or the third century after Christ. He founded a hieron of the Anatolian god, Men Tyraamos, and drew up a code of regulations for the worshippers. Finding some difficulty in expressing himself in Greek, he made a second copy, which varies a little from the other: one is distinctly better than the other, but the better copy omits entirely the prohibition against a murderer engaging at all in the worship of the God: the murderer is permanently impure, whereas the impurity incurred by other faults enumerated lasts only for a certain number of days. This text is almost the only one of those studied in the following paper that is referred to by Deissmann (see Neue Bibelstudien, p. 52).

It will be plain to every reader on the one hand how close is the analogy in language between these hieratic inscriptions and the Christian teaching, and on the other hand how broad and absolute is the contrast between them. There is only one inscription as to which the thought of Christian origin could for a moment rise to the mind of any ordinary human being; and that is an inscription of three words—verb, preposition, and proper name—ἐλογούμενος Ἰπταμενεία Ερμοφέλου; and there the doubt is possible only because of the emptiness of the text. Obviously there is no opening for hesitation as to the Christian or pagan origin of any inscription, if anything beyond a single vague generality is contained in it. The words common to the inscriptions and the Christian documents are many and important; but when several of them come together in a Christian writing they have a depth of meaning and an individuality that mark it off unmistakably from a pagan composition.

Let us turn aside for a moment to apply this result to the controversy that has raged in Germany as to the origin of the epitaph of Avircius Marcellus. Here we have a document of considerable length, which describes the most sacred and fundamental points in Christian teaching and belief. It contains not a single word which is not common to paganism; every single point and detail in it can be paralleled from some pagan document or other, as has been proved with much ingenuity and learning by several writers. Misled by this fact, many profound and distinguished theologians have maintained that the epitaph is a pagan composition. But they that have eyes to see and a mind to feel perceive that the life and spirit of this document moves in a Christian medium and on a Christian level of thought. The scholars who maintain its pagan origin have, by looking at the details, blinded themselves to the life and character of the whole; they have forgotten that in thought the whole is different from, and greater than, the sum of its parts; they see the parts, and they miss the whole; they handle the component materials, while they, are blind to the life that animates these elements and makes them into a unified organism. Yet these same scholars, who show themselves so little able to recognize an original Christian document when it is placed single and complete before their eyes and judgment, entertain no hesitation as to chopping up various books of the New Testament; they trust their judgment implicitly as to the origin of every paragraph, almost of every sentence; they distinguish unerringly (but never to the satisfaction of any rival critic) the varying origin of each sentence, and tell exactly the decade—almost the year in some cases—when each paragraph or sentence was written, and what was the attitude and intention of the writer.

They should first convince us that they can

1 See Acta S. Pionii (1st Feb. p. 43) and Histor. Geogr. As. Min. p. 132.

2 I refer not merely to those who have publicly written on the subject, but also to others, who have privately indicated their views, though I must not name them, until they choose to make their opinion public.
distinguish a Christian document from a pagan before they ask us to believe that they can distinguish a Christian document of one decade from one of another. Are they not in the latter case missing the life while they cut up the single sentences, just as they miss it in the former case?

The resemblance of the hieratic language to that of Paul (and in almost an equal degree of Luke) is especially striking. It is characteristic of Paul’s teaching that he should take up the religious terms that were peculiar to his hearers and readers, and give them back with a deeper import: ‘What ye ignorantly worship, that declare I unto you.’ A large number of the characteristic Pauline words and terms were already familiar to his Gentile converts; and Paul never sought to destroy, but only to direct and develop the germs of religious feeling among them.

There is also a marked analogy in the inscriptions to the Old Testament language and tone. The religion of Asia Minor is practically identical in character with the primitive Semitic idolatry, out of which the Hebrews rose, into which they were always tending to glide back, which was the un-tutored expression of their religious nature, upon which the religion given by Divine revelation to them had to be built up; and therefore the analogy is just what might be expected. It shows itself in many expressions and words and thoughts. Yet along with the analogy there is that essential difference, which makes those who are most struck with the analogy in certain points most profoundly convinced that by no ordinary and natural process of purification and elevation could the primitive Semitic religion develop into the Jewish religion. Nothing can explain the difference except an external factor, the direct action of a Divine power from above on the inert and unintellectual religious ritual of primitive Semitism. In saying this I am merely repeating what my first guide in these matters, Professor Robertson Smith, has often said in private conversation and also in his published works.

In many cases the word which is used in common in the pagan and the Christian language is the natural Greek term, which might be used by the Christians, even if it had not been used by the pagans. But the essential point is that the terms which had become technical in paganism were not avoided. Paul must have known what religious sense had been taken from such words as αἰώνιος, σωτηρία, ἐξιμολογέωμαι, εἴχαριστός τῷ θεῷ, εὐλογία, καθάρος, etc., by those to whom he was writing, and he deliberately uses them. On the other hand there were terms which he never uses, because they implied idolatry; the religious words he adopts and deepens, the words that were too closely connected with idolatry he avoids (St. Paul the Trav. p. 146 f.). Take, for example, the words connected with ἱερός, ἱερων, ἱερεύς, ἵρως, ἱεράτεια, ἱεράτσιον, ἱεροθύντος, ἱεροπρεπής, ἱεροσυνείδης, ἱεροσύνεξ, ἱερομαχία, ἱερομνήμων. Paul uses ἱερόπτυχος, ἱεροσυνείδης, ἱερών, ἱερός, each one. The two former occur in allusions to pagan ritual, which shows that he fully appreciated the idolatrous associations of these words. The other two, ἱερών and ἱερός, occur together in a description of the practice at the temple in Jerusalem (1 Co 8:16).

Otherwise Paul pointedly avoids the whole group, except that ἱεροπρεπής and ἱερός are used in a Christian way in Tit 2:5, 2 Ti 3:15, and (as if to bar the argument that only the Pastoral author and not the real Paul used such terms) he has ἱερομνήμων in Ro 15:16. On the other hand, some words of this group (not ἵρως) are frequently used throughout the rest of the New Testament; they are used almost exclusively in relation to Jewish ritual, but are found in a distinctly Christian application (evidently under the influence of the Septuagint) in 1 P 2:9, Rev 1:6 5:10 20:6, and often in He, and later the Christian use became much more frequent. But λειτουργός, λειτουργία, λειτουργεύω, which had chiefly a political sense in pagan society, are used freely by Paul (Ro 13:6 15:16, 27, 2 Co 9:13, Ph 2:17, 25, 30); still more commonly does he use διάκονος, διακοινία, for though διάκονος is used occasionally to designate officials in pagan temples, yet the characteristic connexion of the name was not with idolatry.

For convenience of arrangement I divide the hieratic inscriptions into classes, but this division cannot be carried out thoroughly. Those of one class shade off by imperceptible degrees into other classes, and constantly require to be illustrated by those of another class. But some order is necessary in this exposition; and classification is the only way in which order can be attained.

Except the peculiar case of Xanthos’s inscriptions, which are two drafts of the foundation deed of an amateur hieron, the series of documents here discussed were engraved on stelai, or on tablets, or on altars, dedicated at the hieron of Artemis-Leto and Apollo-Lairbenos, near Dionys-
polis, and at the hieron of Artemis-Anaitis and Men Tiamou or Tyrannos, at Satala, in the Lydian Katakekaumene. A very large proportion of these end with the word ἐυξή (governed by some such verb as ἀνεθηκεν or ἀνέστησεν understood), 'So-and-so dedicated his prayer.' The strict sense of ἐυξή, a prayer and vow, to these Anatolian peasants must be kept in mind.

II. PRAYER AND VOW.

In the pagan conception, the relation of God and man is quite one of trade and business. The worshipper has a request to make of the god. He vows that if the god grants his request he will pay the god such and such a requital for his gift. The prayer, or request for aid, is necessarily coupled with a vow or promise of payment. The two elements, prayer and vow, are mutually complementary, like lock and key: the one is useless and meaningless without the other; where the one is mentioned, the other must always be understood.

The word ἐυξή, which is so common in these inscriptions, indicates, like votum in Latin, both elements, the prayer and the vow; and sometimes the one is more prominent in thought, sometimes the other.

The idea of payment vanishes almost entirely in the Christian teaching. The object of all men is salvation, and the way or the word of salvation is taught in the Christian documents, δῶς σωτηρίαν (Ac 16:17), λόγος σωτηρίας (Ac 13:38). The exact familiar phrase, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας, occurs in 2 Co 1:6, and περὶ σωτηρίας (the preposition is found, though rarely, in pagan inscriptions of this kind) in Jude v.8.

Prayers and vows are also found on account of general bodily health, or the health of some part of the body, ὑπὲρ ὑγείας, ὑπὲρ ὑγείας τῶν ὄφθαλμων, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ποδός, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὀλοκληρίας τῶν ποδῶν, or on behalf of one's property, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἡμίονου, ὑπὲρ τοῦ κολασθέντος βοῶς.

The verb ὑγιαίνω and the adjective ὑγιής are used occasionally in a religious sense in the Epistles to Titus and Timothy, διδασκαλία ὑγιαίνων, λόγον ὑγίης, λόγοι ὑγιαίνουτες (I Ti 1:10 6:3, 2 Ti 1:18 4:3, Tit 1:13 8); comp. 2:2).

A remarkable phrase occurs in an inscription of the Katakekaumene. In the year 96 A.D., on the first day of the year, Menandros paid his vow to the Meter Taszene, φυλακτήριον λαβὼν. In the sense of 'amulet' φυλακτήριον is common in the magical papyri; and the Jews wore on the left arm and forehead as phylakteria strips of parch­ment inscribed with texts of Scripture (Mt 23:5).

Except in reference to this Jewish custom, the word could not be expected in the New Testament. It is interesting to find that phylakteria were given by the goddess to her worshippers: probably this amulet, given on the first day of the first month, was intended to be efficacious for a whole year.

There were cases in which the worshipper did not recognize when his prayer was granted, and omitted to pay his vow. In this case the god reminds him, and demands payment (see sec. x.).

1 Almost always the less accurate form ἄγια is used.
2 The inscription (copied by me in 1884) has been published by Dr. Buresch in his Aus Lydien (1898, p. 83). He has failed to understand the date, which is [ἀπὸ τοῦ Δείων Νο(μοπλή), 'On the first day of Deios, the first month.']