

Some Exegetical Studies.

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THE editor wishes a few papers in which Exegetical Studies are interwoven with literary or historical illustrations. I begin with a foreword.

Every preacher should be a genuine lover of New Testament Greek. If so, verily he shall not miss his reward. From the first, he will have a keen intellectual enjoyment; for the Greek tongue is the most beautiful and perfect instrument of thought yet invented by man. Some Greek words and phrases will yield him such a delight as the friend of Nature has when he examines a clean shell, a fresh flower, or a ripe berry. Nor will he need to go far afield for helpful illustrations; for all the New Testament writers imitate their Master in His love of Symbols. Suggestive metaphors lurk under very many of the great words of Scripture, though they are often concealed by our version. Moreover, the preacher has special comfort and hope in employing the very images of Holy Scriptures. This style of Bible study brings with it unflinching freshness and attraction. Witness the success of the late Dr. Andrew Bonar, even down to the close of his long life. And it is likely to arrest the attention of the careless. Brownlow North used to say that men were often brought into the Kingdom when surprised by a flash of new light from a familiar text. The patient exegete will agree with Thomas Boston, whose frequent exclamation was, 'Adoro plenitudinem Scripturæ.' He has often the joys, and sometimes also the honours, of discovery: he has his 'surprises,' his 'finds,' his 'beauties,' his gems and jewels of exposition: now and again he may 'strike oil,' or come upon a vein of pure gold. He should not think that everything has been said and that he has come too late. He should have the spirit of that South African millionaire who died lately. When he arrived at the Cape, a diamond miner advised him to go back at once, as the country had been swept clean of diamonds. The new adventurer pushed on, and soon made his fortune. Æschylus said that his plays were just morsels from the Homeric Banquet: the best expositors offer us only morsels from the Banquet of Holy Writ.

We have three happy and pregnant names for

the scholarly study of the Bible: Exegesis, Exposition, and Hermeneutics. Words of the same family as Exegesis and Hermeneutics are found in the Greek New Testament. Exegesis (ἐξ, ἡγέομαι), in its secondary or metaphorical sense, means the drawing or leading or bringing out. It suggests a great stock or store on which one can draw, a treasure out of which one may bring forth things new and old. It also reminds us that all one has to do is to draw: one needs not to create, or piece out, or blend, or modify. The best scripturalist, says Luther, is the best divine. Jacob at the well of Haran was a true exegete: he rolled away the great stone from the well's mouth and drew out the sweet, cool water for the thirsty sheep. If half-memories don't mislead, Bengel, prince of exegetes, likens himself to Jacob at the well—a very happy illustration. Joseph also was a good exegete when he brought the garnered grain from the royal storehouses and fed the famished Egyptians. And so was Melchizedek when he brought forth bread and wine for the war-worn Abraham and his men. And so were the disciples when they carried forth the miraculous bread which grew by being given away. The dictionaries tell us that to 'exege-se' means in classical Greek to interpret dreams, oracles, or omens. Daniel was thus exegete and divine to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The ancients counted him the best divine who best divined.

The word *Exposition* illumines our subject. The French use it for a great public exhibition. The exhibitor exerts all his ingenuity to set forth his exhibit to the greatest possible advantage, and advertise it as widely as possible. Through gates of beauty he conducts the admiring spectator to the halls which contain the masterpieces of modern art. Melancthon described Justus Jonas, his typical preacher, as a man who could vividly explain and clearly express the words of the text, and set them out for the market. A shopkeeper said lately that he had doubled his sales by exchanging gas light for electricity. He who can surround the truth with a brilliant light is a genius; for he makes the familiar new, and the common marvellous,

as if it were a fresh revelation. The setting out of our ideas for the market requires us to place them in a clear light. This is a great part of the problem with every exhibitor of truth. *Virtutem videant. Voir, c'est avoir.* Many a gospel-hearer is like the chained man in Plato's Bunyan—in the allegory of the cave. His back is to the cave's mouth, and his light is from a fire behind him, which throws upon the floor in front of him the quivering shadows which he mistakes for substances. The cave has an echo, which is the only sound the bond-slave hears. The preacher wishes to have these chains knocked off, so that he may guide his pupil from cave-light to starlight, from starlight to moonlight, and from moonlight to sunlight at noon, so that, no longer the dupe of appearances or opinion, he may walk at liberty amid sunlit realities, far from the pale realm of illusions and shows.

Plato says that his cave-dweller, upon beholding the sun, would fall down and praise God for having made so glorious an object. He expects him to be mastered at once by its self-evidencing light. All this appeals directly to the preacher who strives to exhibit Christ as the Light and Life of men. Plato also tells us that the truth-seeker, emerging from his dim cave, would be dazzled and bewildered. His weak eyes at first would be able to look upon only the shadows in the water; but by and by they would gather

strength, and become strong enough, eagle-like, to welcome all the direct splendours of noon. Here the allegory fails. The Word has been made flesh, and thus the divine light has been softened and attempered to our weak vision. Moreover, the Spirit who reveals the object, at the same time ennobles the organ. Light and eyesight are His twin gifts.

As *Exegesis* suggests the matter, and *Exposition* the manner, so *Hermeneutics* suggests the aim of preaching. It used to be a favourite word, but it has now grown old-fashioned. It is worth our while to get back to its root. It is derived from the Greek Hermes, who was often identified with the Roman Mercury. He was the swift-winged messenger or herald of Jupiter. He was very friendly to men, and he bore a sacred branch as the emblem of peace. The word hermeneutics thus reminds us that the preacher is to play the part of a sacred Hermes. He is clothed upon with an authority greater than his own, and sent on an errand of divine mercy. He has to do with God's truth as a definite message to individuals. He is concerned with persons as well as with propositions. He is an ambassador who beseeches men to be reconciled to God. Tholuck, as his biographer informs us, in poor health, for fifty years did his work joyfully, like Mercury, the celestial messenger, with wings to his feet.

The Still Undeciphered Hittite Inscriptions.

IN REPLY TO PROFESSOR JENSEN.

BY PROFESSOR FRITZ HOMMEL, PH.D., LL.D., MUNICH.

FOR years I have followed most carefully the attempts of Professor Jensen to decipher the Hittite inscriptions, and have gone into the details of these more thoroughly perhaps than any other Orientalist, even Professor Reckendorf included. And from the very first it was clear to me that even if Professor Jensen was right with his Syennesis key, yet the Indo-Germanic Armenian hypothesis was out of the question. But even before the appearance of Leopold Messerschmidt's 'Bemerkungen zu den hethitischen Inschriften' (in the *Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesell-*

schaft, Berlin, 3 Jahrg., 1898, No. 5),—a pamphlet which, strangely enough, is not mentioned by Professor Jensen,—it was for me an established fact that even the Cilician personal name Syennesis (which as a mere title is nowhere demonstrable) cannot be the key. At least Professor Jensen's reading of the group, which he rightly recognizes as a title, x-y-z-x (and nominative ending), as S²-n-s- (*i.e.* *Syennesis*), is merely a still undemonstrable *possibility* so long as there are other possibilities whose conceivability Professor Jensen in his certainty of victory has plainly not taken