

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

EDITED BY THE SECRETARY.

VOL. XLIV.



LONDON :

(Published by the Institute, 1, Adelphi Terrace House, Charing Cross, W.C.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1912.

524TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD (BY KIND PERMISSION) IN THE

LECTURE HALL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS,
MONDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 1912, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE CHAIR WAS TAKEN BY THE REV. CANON GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following elections were announced :—

MEMBER.—Walter Henty, Esq.

ASSOCIATES.—The Dowager Lady Pearce and Rev. J. Stuart Holden, M.A.

The CHAIRMAN in introducing the lecturer, the Rev. George Milligan, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism at Glasgow University, said : There are two things that are interesting to all housekeepers, one is pottery and the other is paper. Even the children are interested in paper about Christmas time because it so often wraps up their Christmas presents, but very few people know the ancestry of paper or pottery. Now, however, archæological science has fixed its attention on broken pottery and fragments of paper ; pottery as old as the days of the Roman Emperors and paper older still. I think when we regard the records of the Palestine Exploration Fund we find that the study of broken pottery is becoming a science, and that there are strata in pottery as in the earth's surface. When you go from pottery to paper you do not find strata, but you find matters of great interest. Two things which we have taken the most interest in in this connexion are the census taken by the old Roman Emperors, and the language in which the old papyri are written. You get there the language of some of the earliest days of Christianity. Dr. Deissmann's enthusiasm has so carried him away that he almost refuses to recognize anything which should be called Hellenistic, because he knows what we call Hellenistic should be called the popular language of the people. After all, however, we cannot forget that Judæo-Greek, which is another name for Hellenistic, means Jewish thought in the Greek language. As Rabbi Duncan said, the

Jews thought in Hebrew but talked in Greek, so that you must interpret their Greek language with the aid of Hebrew. I have the very great pleasure of introducing Dr. Milligan, from Glasgow, Professor of Biblical Criticism in that great City and University, who has come down from his northern regions to give us a little light on this most intricate question.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

THE GREEK PAPYRI: with special reference to their value for New Testament study. By the Rev. GEORGE MILLIGAN, D.D.

THE most significant fact in the modern study of the New Testament is the recognition that it has a history, and consequently that its several books can only be fully understood in connexion with their surroundings or the special circumstances that called them forth. Everything, therefore, that throws light on the outward conditions of the New Testament writers is of value. And it is just here that we are in a peculiarly favourable position to-day. In the past, archæological discovery has been mainly concerned with the Old Testament, but now the light it sheds has been extended to the New Testament, and is largely derivable from the immense number of texts on stone, on earthenware, and on papyrus which recent discoveries have brought within our reach.

It is only with the papyrus texts that we are at present concerned, and for their preservation we have to thank the marvellously dry climate of Egypt. The first finds were made at Gizeh as far back as 1778, but it was not until 1877, when several thousands of papyri were unearthed at Crocodilopolis, or Arsinoë, the ancient capital of the Fayûm district, that public interest was fully aroused. The work of exploration was afterwards extended to Tebtunis, Oxyrhynchus, and other likely sites, with the result that we have now thousands of these texts in our hands.

Some were discovered in the ruins of old temples, others in the cartonnage of mummies; but the greater number were found in what were literally the dust or refuse heaps on the outskirts of the towns or villages. The old Egyptians, instead of burning their waste-papers, as is the custom amongst ourselves, were in the habit of tearing them up and throwing them out on these heaps, where, thanks to a covering of desert sand, they have lain in safety all these years.

Of the character of these papyri I shall have something to

say directly, but it may be well to explain first what papyrus is, and how it was prepared. It was the ordinary writing material, the paper of the time, and was made from the papyrus plant which then grew in great profusion in the Nile. The pith of the stem was cut into long strips, and a number of these were laid down vertically to form an outer layer. Over this a second layer was placed horizontally. And then the two layers were hammered or pressed together to form a single sheet, which, when it had been smoothed over with ivory or a shell, was ready for use. If more space than a single sheet afforded was required, a roll, which might be of any length, was formed by fastening a number of single sheets together.

Of the papyri now available a considerable number contain literary texts, both of works previously known, and of others, of which hitherto we have possessed only the titles. Amongst these new texts are fragments of Sappho and Pindar, the *Constitution of Athens* by Aristotle, the *Mimes* of Herodas, and the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides. But the great bulk of the papyri are non literary, and their contents are of the most miscellaneous character, reports of legal proceedings, wills, contracts, accounts, and so forth, and in addition a large number of private letters, often of the most artless and self-revealing character.

Let me give you an example, a letter* written in 1 B.C. by a certain Hilarion to Alis, his sister, and also, probably, according to the custom of the period, his wife. It runs as follows:—

“Hilarion to Alis, his sister (wife), heartiest greetings, and to my dear Berous (Βερούτι τῇ κυρίᾳ μου) and Apollonarion. Know that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not worry if, when all the others return, I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech of you (ἔρωτῶ σε καὶ παρακαλῶ σε) to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages (ὀψώνιον λάβωμεν, cf. II Cor. xi, 8) I will send them to you. If—good luck to you!—you bear offspring, if it is a male, let it live; if it is a female, expose it. You told Aphrodisias, ‘Do not forget me.’ How can I forget you? I beg you, therefore, not to worry.

“The 29th year of Cæsar, Pauni 23.”

(Addressed) “Hilarion to Alis, deliver.”

Simple though this letter is, it is very significant. To the paleographer its value is undoubted, seeing that it is exactly

* Full particulars regarding this, and most of the other documents quoted in this lecture, will be found in the lecturer's *Selections from the Greek Papyri*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

dated by year and month. To the historian it throws a sad side-light on the social customs of the time. And even to the New Testament student it, along with similar documents, presents indirectly not a few points of great interest and importance. Before, however, proceeding to these, let me indicate some of the direct contributions which the new discoveries have made to our knowledge of the sacred writers and their times.

Amongst these must be reckoned the recovery of a large number of fragmentary texts of our Biblical writings, some of which are older in point of date than any previously available. This, in the Old Testament field, the famous Papyrus Nash, now in the Library of Cambridge University, presents us with a manuscript text of the Decalogue, which must have been written five or six hundred years before the oldest Hebrew manuscript now in our possession, and which, with certain variations, in the main confirms the accuracy of the text we find in our Hebrew Bibles. Similarly, when we pass to the New Testament, we have now recovered fragmentary portions of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke belonging to the end of the third century, and a papyrus roll containing a considerable part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is generally assigned to the early years of the fourth century. Of much the same date is a leaf with the first seven verses of Romans, written in large rude uncial characters, which the discoverers, Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt, pronounced to be a schoolboy's exercise. Dr. Deissmann, however, in his *Light from the Ancient East* (p. 232), adopts the view that the papyrus really served as an amulet for the Aurelius Paulus who is named in the cursive writing beneath the New Testament text. We know from other sources how widely the early Christians used amulets as a protection against harm, and this may well be an additional example of the practice. In any case the simple and rude character of the writing is of interest as showing how widely by this time the New Testament writings had penetrated amongst all classes of the population. And in this same connexion we may note in passing the recent recovery of certain leaves of such small dimensions that they point to the existence of pocket editions of various parts of the canonical and uncanonical writings of the day.

Amongst these uncanonical writings, special mention may be made of the so-called *Logia* or Sayings of Jesus. In 1897, Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt discovered at Oxyrhynchus the leaf of a papyrus-book containing eight Sayings, several of which

closely resembled certain Sayings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Others, however, were new, such as the famous fifth Saying—"Jesus saith, Wherever there are (two), they are not without God (*ἄθεοι*), and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there shalt thou find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." Six years later a similar leaf from a papyrus-book was found, this time containing five Sayings, of which it must be sufficient to quote the first. "Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he find, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the Kingdom; and having reached the Kingdom, he shall rest." The exact amount of authority to be attached to these Sayings is still a matter of eager discussion amongst scholars; but, in the main, they may be regarded as embodying a more or less genuine account of certain words of our Lord, which had been handed down by tradition, and had been collected for purposes of devotion or instruction.

Other documents which have awakened a wide-spread interest are the census returns, or house-to-house enrolments, of which a large number have been recovered. As these returns are dated, it can now be conclusively established that the enrolments followed a cycle of fourteen years, and though no return has yet come to light earlier than the year A.D. 19-20, it is generally agreed that the whole system was originated by Augustus as early as 10-9 B.C. Let me give you an example of one of these returns. I shall take it from the year A.D. 48, as we have a very complete example belonging to that year.

"To Dorion strategus . . . from Thermoutharion, the daughter of Thoonis, with her guardian Apollonius, the son of Sotades. There are living in the house which belongs to me in South Lane . . . Thermoutharion, a freedwoman of the above-mentioned Sotades, about 65 years of age, of medium height, dark complexioned, long visaged, a scar on the right knee. Total, three persons.

I, the above-mentioned Thermoutharion, along with my guardian, the said Apollonius, swear by Tiberius Claudius Cæsar Augustus Germanicus Emperor, that assuredly the preceding document makes a sound and true return of those living with me, and that there is no one else living with me, neither a stranger, nor an Alexandrian citizen, nor a freedman, nor a Roman citizen, nor an Egyptian, in addition to the aforesaid. If I am swearing truly, may it be well with me; but if falsely, the reverse.

In the ninth year of Tiberius Claudius Cæsar Augustus Germanicus Emperor, Phaophi . . ."

Closely connected with these returns, and of still greater interest for the New Testament scholar, as one of the many proofs which are accumulating from all sides to confirm the accuracy of St. Luke as an historian, is an extract from a rescript by a Roman Prefect in Egypt in the year A.D. 104, ordering all persons to return to their homes in view of the census about to be held in the seventh year of Trajan. The original document, which is now preserved in the British Museum, is unfortunately much mutilated, but there can be little doubt as to the correct reading of the passage which concerns us. It runs as follows:—

“Seeing that the time has come for the house-to-house census, it is necessary to compel all those who for any cause whatever are residing out of their homes to return to their own homes, that they may both carry out the regular order of the census, and may also attend diligently to the cultivation of their allotments.”

The analogy here presented to Luke ii, 1–4, is obvious, and shows that Herod, when he issued his command, was acting under Roman orders.

I can only refer to one other of the new finds as throwing light on the history of early Christianity. All have heard of the great Decian Persecution in A.D. 250, in which, in order to save their lives, certain recusant Christians obtained certificates, or *libelli*, as they were called, from the magistrates to the effect that they had sacrificed in the heathen manner. Of these *libelli* no fewer than six have been found, and it is deeply touching to be able to look upon these frail papyrus leaves, with their direct evidence of the human weakness of those to whose acts they bear witness. The one which I am about to quote has been published by Dr. Hunt among the *Rylands Papyri*, and the different handwritings of the different parties concerned are still clearly discernible on the original document. Here it is in Dr. Hunt's translation:—

“To the commissioners of sacrifices from the Aurelia Demos, who has no father, daughter of Helene and wife of Aurelius Irenæus, of the Quarter of the Helleneum. It has ever been my habit to sacrifice to the gods, and now also I have in your presence, in accordance with the command, made sacrifice and libation and tasted the offering, and I beg you to certify my statement. Farewell.

(2nd hand.) I, Aurelia Demos, have presented this declaration. I, Aurelius Irenæus, wrote for her, as she is illiterate.

(3rd hand.) I, Aurelius Sabinus, prytanis, saw you sacrificing.

(1st hand.) The first year of the Emperor Cæsar Gaius Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius Pius Felix Augustus, Pauni 20."

From this, the direct value of the new discoveries in supplying us with new and original documents, it is more than time that we turned to their indirect significance for the New Testament student. This comes out in many ways. I can only indicate a few of the more important:—

1. The papyri help us to picture to ourselves what must have been the *outward appearance* of our New Testament autographs.

A short Pauline epistle, such as the Epistle to Philemon, would occupy a single sheet of papyrus, measuring from 5 to 5½ inches in width and 9 inches to 11 inches in height; while in the case of the longer epistles, a number of these sheets would be fastened together to form a roll. When finished, the roll would be rolled round upon itself, fastened with a thread and sealed, and then the address was written on the back. If the general practice of the time was followed, that address in the case of the New Testament writings would be of the briefest, all the more so because the private messengers to whom they were entrusted would be fully informed as to writers and recipients. For preservation, rolls, after being read, were fastened together in bundles, and laid in arks or chests. And it will be readily seen how unsigned rolls, laid in the same place and dealing with cognate subjects, would in some cases come to be afterwards joined together as if they formed parts of one work, while in the case of others questions of authorship and destination might readily arise.

In accordance again with the ordinary custom of the day, and various hints thrown out in themselves, there can be little doubt than many of the New Testament writings were in the first instance written to dictation.

Just as in innumerable papyrus letters we find the statement "I, So and So, wrote on behalf of So and So," because he was too illiterate to write for himself, or could only write slowly, so we can understand how St. Paul, burdened as he was with daily work and innumerable other cares, would gladly avail himself of the assistance of some friend or follower in the actual labour of transcribing his Epistles. And once we have realized this, it becomes a further very important question, What was the method of the Apostle's dictation? Did he dictate his letters word for word? Or was he content to supply

a rough draft, leaving the scribe to throw it into more formal and complete shape? In all probability his practice varied, and it may well be that the differences in diction and style in the Pauline writings, which a certain school of critics are apt to make so much of, are due in part at least to the employment of different scribes, and the amount of liberty that was left to them.

Of the variety of readings that soon arose in connection with the New Testament writings I shall say only this, that it can be explained to a great extent by the very nature of the material on which the original writings and the early copies were written. Papyrus, if a very durable, is also a very brittle substance. And as the result of frequent handling, many breaks or *lacunæ* would arise, which the copyists would have to fill up by conjecture or by an appeal to the context. And when we add to this consideration the fact that these copyists were not professional scribes, and that the writings themselves were not at first regarded as of so sacred or authoritative character as to make even deliberate changes of text impossible, it is easy to understand how the worst corruption of the text of our New Testament writings can be traced to the first century of their transmission.

2. Passing from the outward form of the New Testament writings to their *literary character*, we are at once met with the fact that by far the greater part of these consist of epistles or letters. It was a mode of writing which at the time had come to be widely used for purposes of instruction and edification, and in which St. Paul and other of our New Testament writers found a vehicle ready to their hands admirably adapted for the personal and practical ends they had in view.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the general plan of the Pauline Epistles is often closely moulded on that of the simple, homely letters which the desert sands have restored to us. An example will again make this clearer. Let me read to you a letter written in the second century after Christ by a soldier to his father, to announce his safe arrival in Italy, and to tell those at home how he is faring.

“Apion to Epimachus, his father and lord, heartiest greetings. Above all, I pray that you are in health and continually prosper, and fare well with my sister and her daughter and my brother. I thank the lord Serapis that when I was in danger at sea he straightway saved me. When I entered Misenum I received my travelling money from Cæsar—three gold pieces. And I am having a good time. I beg you, therefore, my lord father, write me a few

lines, first regarding your health, secondly regarding that of my brother and sister, thirdly that I may kiss your hand, because you have brought me up well, and on this account I hope to be quickly promoted, if the gods will. Give many greetings to Capito, and to my brother and sister, and to Serenilla, and my friends. I send you a little portrait of myself at the hands of Euctemon. My (military) name is Antonius Maximus. I pray for your good health. The Athenian Company . . . Give this to (the office of the) first cohort of the Apamæans to Julianus, paymaster from Apion, so that (he may forward it) to Epimachus his father."

Now, when we leave out of sight the wholly different character of the contents, you will notice that the general plan of his letter—(1) Address and Greeting, (2) Thanksgiving and Prayer, (3) Special Contents, (4) Closing Salutations and Benediction—is exactly the plan which as a rule St. Paul follows in his Epistles. And the point is of importance, as I have already indicated, as emphasizing that in these epistles we are dealing with living documents, written to meet immediate and pressing needs. And consequently that, in order to understand them, we must do our utmost to picture to ourselves the persons alike of their writers and first readers.

3. This same point comes out again very clearly in the light which our new discoveries throw on the *language* of our New Testament writings. It has now been conclusively established that this language is in the main the ordinary vernacular Greek of the day, and consequently these humble papyrus documents and letters often give a fresh reality and significance to many well-known New Testament words and phrases. A good example is afforded by the word which St. Paul uses to describe the attitude of his Thessalonian converts in view of the Parousia of Christ. He speaks of them, according to our English version, as "behaving themselves disorderly" (II Thess. iii, 7), and some commentators have thought that he was pointing to serious moral misconduct on their part, but the use of the same verb in a contract of apprenticeship of the year A.D. 66 in the sense of "playing truant," shows that what the Apostle has really in view is a neglect of daily work and duty. The Thessalonians were so excited over the thought of the Parousia, which they believed to be close at hand, that they were failing to show that quiet attitude of confidence and work which their Lord would expect of them when He came. And similarly it is interesting to learn that the very word Parousia, which we have come to use as a kind of technical term for that Coming,

was in use at the time to describe the "visit" to any district of a king or great man. Consequently it points to Christ's Parousia not so much as a Return, but as a Coming, a Presence, which not even His absence from sight for a little while had been able really to interrupt, and which, when fully re-established, would last for ever.

So, again, Bishop Lightfoot's graphic translation of Gal. iii, 1, "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was *posted up, placarded* before you," receives fresh confirmation when we find the parents of a wayward son giving orders that an order or proclamation should be *placarded* (*προγραφῆναι*) to the effect that no one any longer should lend him money, while the verb used to describe the conduct of the lad in the body of the document, "living riotously" (*ἀσωτεῖόμενος*), at once recalls the corresponding description of the prodigal in the Gospel, who wasted his substance "with riotous living" (*ζῶν ἀσώτως*, Luke xv, 13).

Examples might easily be multiplied, but these are sufficient to show how much may be learned from the most unexpected quarters regarding our New Testament vocabulary.

4. The same applies to the help which the papyri afford in restricting the *general surroundings* of those to whom in the first instance our New Testament writings were addressed.

From no other source can we gain so clear an idea of the conditions under which Christianity arose with reference to the humbler classes of the population. These—among whom the new teaching found many of its earliest and warmest adherents—are deliberately ignored by the historians of the time. But now it is just the life of these common people which these frail papyrus leaves, written with their own hands, bring before us with almost startling vividness.

Notices of birth, of death, contracts of marriage, deeds of divorce, actions for assault, arrangements for village festivals, etc., all let us see the men and women of the day, as it were, in the flesh; while their letters of repentance and mourning, their inquiries for help from oracles and dreams, show that, even if they were "much addicted to religion," the religions of the day were powerless to meet their deepest needs.

To prove this, I cannot do better than read to you one or two of these documents. I have referred already to one poor prodigal son, here is the actual letter of another (see p. 76), in which he pours out his sorrow and repentance to his mother. The last part of the letter has been torn across, and yet I think you will feel that these broken lines and sentences are almost more pathetic than if they were complete.

“Antonis Longus to Nilis his mother, heartiest greeting. Continually I pray that you are in health. Supplication on your behalf I direct each day to the lord Serapis. I wish you to know that I had no hope that you would come up to the metropolis. On this account neither did I enter into the city. But I was ashamed to come to Karanis because I am going about in a disgraceful state (*σαπρῶς*). I wrote you that I am naked (*γυμνός*). I beseech you, therefore, mother, be reconciled to me (*διαλλάγητί μοι*). Furthermore, I know what I have brought upon myself. Punished I have been, in any case. I know that I have sinned (*οἶδα, ὅτι ἡμάρτηκα*). I heard from Postumus, who met you in the Arsinoite nome, and unreasonably related all to you. Do you not know that I would rather be a cripple than be conscious that I am still owing anyone an obolus . . . come yourself . . . I have heard that . . . I beseech you . . . I almost . . . I beseech you . . . I will . . . not . . . otherwise . . .”

Or take this letter, in which a woman named Irene seeks to comfort a friend who has lost a son :—

“Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good cheer! I was as much grieved and wept over the blessed one as I wept for Didymas, and everything that was fitting I did and all who were with me . . . But truly there is nothing anyone can do in the face of such things. Do you therefore comfort one another.”

Apparently a bereavement she herself had sustained leads Irene thus to mourn with those who mourn. But how sadly conscious she is of the little she can do! Nothing of the consolation of I Thessalonians iv, 14-18. Nothing of “the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (see II Corinthians i, 4).

A sidelight of a different character is afforded by a specimen of one of the amulets which, as we have seen, the early Christians were in the habit of wearing. This one was discovered by Professor Wilcken, of Leipzig, at Heracleopolis Magna in the year 1899, and is assigned by him to the sixth century after Christ. It was apparently worn round the neck, and may be translated as follows :—

“O Lord God Almighty, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and thou, O holy Serenus. I, Silvanus, the son of Sarapion, pray and bow my head before Thee, begging and beseeching that Thou mayst drive from me Thy servant the demon of witchcraft . . . and of enmity. Take away from me all manner of disease and all manner of sickness, that I may be in health . . . to say the prayer of the Gospel (thus): Our Father, who art in

heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth. Give us to-day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, even as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the glory for ever. . . . O Light of light, true God, graciously give Thy servant light. O holy Serenus, supplicate on my behalf, that I may be in perfect health."

These, then, are specimens of our new discoveries. And enough, I hope, has been said to show of what living and varied interest they are. If they do nothing else, they at least make the past live, and show us in the flesh the men and women amongst whom Christianity found its earliest converts. There may not unnaturally, in view of their romantic character, be a tendency in certain quarters to exaggerate the importance of the new discoveries. At the same time I am convinced that they have a very real message for us, and that the more they are studied the more will they be found to throw light of a very clear and enduring kind on the outward circumstances and conditions under which our New Testament books were written.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN after the address said: Ladies and Gentlemen, we have had a great treat. We have all learned many things. We have learned what a treasure may be in a broken piece of pottery, and it is a curious thing that the *Palestine Exploration Magazine*, which came out to-day, shows the connection between papyri and ostraka. Mention has been made of a lady's "marriage lines," and all the presents made to her by her expectant husband are named; alongside of this we read of some kindred discoveries made in Gezer in the way of pottery. I am very glad that Dr. Milligan spoke of the "so-called *Logia*," and emphasises the "so-called."

Lieut.-Colonel ALVES asked if the Greek of the New Testament, commonly called "Hellenistic," and which he had seen described as "Greek with three centuries of a Hebrew education," was that of ordinary daily use, as contrasted with that used by the great Greek classic writers.

Archdeacon POTTER asked if the extracts from the Epistle to the Romans and other New Testament writings found in the Papyri supposed to date from the third century have on comparison with our existing MSS. dating from the fourth century, the Sinaitic and

Vatican, been found to agree with them in the main, or are there any important variations ?

Mr. E. R. P. MOON : What were the proportions of literary or non-literary output written, at the period under review, upon vellum and parchment on the one hand, and on papyrus on the other, in Egypt ? ”

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE asked if the Lecturer thought St. Paul's large letters were due to his weakness of sight or tendency to blindness.

In proposing a vote of thanks, Colonel MACKINLAY said : It is my pleasing duty to propose a hearty vote of thanks to our learned lecturer. The Council of the Victoria Institute frequently find a difficulty in obtaining subjects for papers, which are fully in accord with its chief objects and aims, which are to make use of all the available results of science and investigation in the elucidation of the Holy Scriptures.

But the subject this afternoon is most suitable, the handling of it has been extremely interesting and instructive, and we owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Milligan for the great help he has given us. I have much pleasure in moving that we offer him our sincere thanks.

Dr. THIRTLE said : It affords me great pleasure to second the resolution. If in regard to such researches as have been explained this afternoon our obligation to the German scholar, Dr. Deissmann, is great, none the less is it true—and beyond question true—that, as *English* scholars or students, we owe a heavy debt to Professor Milligan. Possibly some who have heard to-day's lecture may not be aware of the devotion with which Dr. Milligan has pursued this subject for many years past. To such, and indeed to all, I earnestly commend his volume, recently issued, *Selections from the Greek Papyri* (Cambridge University Press), a work which should be in the hands of any who require a manual introductory to the important subject now before us. I may also remark that, in collaboration with Dr. J. Hope Moulton, of Manchester University, the Professor has, for several years past, been contributing to *The Expositor* a series of "Lexical Notes from the Papyri" ; and thus he has done much to place within reach of students a profoundly interesting body of material, supplemental in a rich degree to that supplied by the best modern Lexicons of the Greek New Testament.

As one who has followed these matters with some diligence, I must confess to a feeling that, in regard to this phase of New Testament study, the present are really good days in which to live! From the most unexpected quarter there has come to us light which invests the study of the New Testament with a new and lively interest—in fact, in some respects, a quite surprising interest. We are now able to lay aside certain lexical helps of a generation ago, which, though ingenious, were largely speculative and far from satisfying, and we have the comfort of placing our feet on the rock-bottom of linguistic assurance. Now, as never before, we are able to study the words of Christ and His Apostles in the light of the every-day life and feelings of the common people to whom their ministry meant so much. And, moreover, we are ever expecting an increase of knowledge from the same quarter—a zest-giving experience to which our fathers and grandfathers were utter strangers.

May I hazard a brief reflection? Surely one message of the Papyri is that the New Testament is a living book—a book of divine instruction, given in human words and phrases. Though there is nothing commonplace about the Gospel, yet it was assuredly promulgated in commonplace conditions. Hence the constituent books of the New Testament were not written by professional scribes and given to the world on material of great commercial value; but rather they were written by men of practical feeling and religious purpose, who sent their thoughts abroad in the simple speech of the people, written on material such as served the work-a-day purposes of non-literary communications. In a word, the New Testament shows itself to be essentially a book for the people—not so much a volume for the library shelf, as a budget of reading for the hands of men and women, to be copied and circulated, to be translated and diffused, even as these operations continually engage the energies of our modern Bible Societies.

Dr. MILLIGAN, in reply, said: I feel that it is I who owe you thanks for listening to me for such a long time. With reference to the questions that have been asked, I may say that Hellenistic Greek is a somewhat vague term, but, generally speaking, it refers to the later Greek that was in use throughout the Græco-Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian Era. And the important point for our present purpose to notice is, that recent discoveries

have conclusively proved that it was this Greek, not in its literary, but in its more colloquial or popular form, that, as a rule, was used by our New Testament writers. As regards Archdeacon Potter's question, it is the case that our new fragments, so far as they go, in the main confirm the text which we find in the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices. Again, to pass to Mr. Moon's question, I must content myself with saying that, during the period under review, papyrus was undoubtedly the principal writing material in use in Egypt for literary and non-literary purposes. Parchment, though already long in use in a rough form for scribbling and other purposes, does not appear to have been generally employed for literary works till about the fourth century. As to what we are to understand by the "large letters" of Gal. vi, 11, it seems to me that they may be very readily explained as the ruder, less practised writing of the man who wrote but little, as compared with the more cultured hand of the scribe who wrote the body of the Epistle. We have no evidence that St. Paul suffered permanently from defective eyesight. Acts ix, 18, seems to point to a complete cure of the blindness caused by the Damascus vision, and the thorn in the flesh from which he afterwards suffered need not, notwithstanding Gal. iv, 15, have had anything to do with the actual state of the Apostle's own eyesight.



LETTER FROM A PRODIGAL SON TO HIS MOTHER, OF THE SECOND
CENTURY A.D. See p. 71.

For the photograph from which this is produced we are indebted to the Director of the Royal Museums, Berlin, to whom our thanks are cordially extended.—Ed.