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FRANZ DELITZSCH.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY; WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY PROFESSOR HERMANN V. HILPRECHT, PH. D.,
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

February 23, Dr. Franz Delitzsch, *professor ordinarius* of theology in the University of Leipzig, entered on the seventy-fifth year of his age. There is scarcely another German or American theologian at the present time who has gained so great and widespread a reputation as has this venerable scholar, both in his own country and among other nations. For nearly half a century he has worked as an academical teacher, as a productive writer, and, chief of all, as the principal leader of the Jewish Mission. Students from all parts of the world have sat at his feet and come under his powerful influence. Even to-day, when he has reached and passed the usual boundaries of human life, his always over-crowded lectures, in the vast rooms of the flourishing Saxonian University, exercise the same attraction to his pupils as in that former period of his life when he, von Hofmann, Thomasius, Harnack, and other eminent men, raised the University of Erlangen to the seat of Lutheran theology and to the centre of scholarly life and faithful religious confession. This fact, which seems strange according to the general rule and experience of great academicians, finds its only reasonable explanation in his singular and unique personality. Indeed, that may well be added which cannot always be truly said of other scholars: Delitzsch has become old; but his teachings have remained fresh and young; and the notes of his lectures have not grown musty on the shelves of a fast-closed shrine. The man, with his natural disposition and talents of mind and heart,—the Christian, with his rich gifts of grace in faith and love,—and the scholar, with his thorough knowledge and his sharp faculty of judgment acquired by severe study and a restless activity of many years,—unite, in beautiful harmony, in Franz Delitzsch. For this very reason, the question sometimes raised, whether Delitzsch has proved greater as a man, or Christian, or scholar, can only be answered by the fact that, in the learned Hebraist and exegete, the faithful believer in Christ, with his unchangeable reverence for the Word of God, and the talented man, with his peculiar style, his expressive and vivid language, his speculative flight of thought and his poetical feeling, cannot be separated from each other.

Still, I will not try myself to describe Delitzsch's person and character, his life and his work. Professor S. D. F. Salmond rejoiced us last year with a short but excellent sketch of his Leipzig friend in *The Expositor*.¹ Another survey of the life and work of this scholar, written in Hebrew, and accompanied by a very fair four-fold poem celebrating the venerable friend of Israel, was dedicated to

¹ See *The Expositor*, edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, M. A. (London: Hodder & Stoughton. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.), No. XVIII., June, 1886, pp. 456-471. The etched portrait, however, which accompanied the article of Professor Salmond in the same number, was very imperfect. A really good likeness of Franz Delitzsch (32 x 43 centimeters) was issued in phototype 1885, by the *Centralbureau* of the *Instituta Judaica* (W. Faber) Leipzig, Thalstrasse, and may be obtained from there for M.1.50.

Delitzsch on his seventieth birthday (1883), and afterwards published, with his permission, by A. M. Stengel, under the title "Words of Truth and Love."¹ Shorter or longer articles and notes regarding Delitzsch's activity and success in the Jewish Mission will be found in several periodicals.²

Comparatively few persons, however, in Europe or in America, are aware that Professor Delitzsch himself some years ago wrote some personal remembrances of his life,—as far as I know, the only biographical notes from his pen ever given to the public. The author tells only the most important events in his life, briefly and simply. Nevertheless, this autobiography contains several things which do not occur in any of the above mentioned sketches. For this reason, and out of regard for the general interest taken on this side of the ocean in the person, the life and the writings of Delitzsch, I herewith submit my translation from the Norwegian into English of this autobiography, hitherto confined to a small circle of readers.

The cause of the writing of this autobiography is easily told. The editor of a small Norwegian religious paper, *Missions-Blad for Israel*, to the columns of which the Leipzig professor has contributed some other articles, asked Delitzsch for an outline of his life, intended to be an illustration of the likeness in the number for April, 1883. In acknowledgement of the faithful services of the Norwegian church in the field of Jewish Missions, and out of gratitude for their important support afforded in the bringing out of his translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, Delitzsch fulfilled the wishes of his dear friends, and sent the following sketch:³

"I was born in Leipzig, February 23, 1813, and was baptized March 4, in the church of St. Nicolai at the same place. My father, who was a native of Leipzig, had at this time, and while I was a boy, a shop where he dealt in second-hand goods, a so-called frippery. This brought him in very little; and I passed an arduous childhood. My father died April 4, 1836, fifty-four years old.

"My benefactor from childhood was a Jew, called Hirsch Levy; he lived with us, and dealt in books. If it had not been for him, I could never have succeeded in studying. First, I went to a boys' school, and after that I attended the free

¹ The exact title of the little interesting pamphlet (p. 32) is דברי אמת ואהבה אשר רחש לבי בשנה העברה, שנת 1883, כחדש השני הוא פֿעברואר, בשלשה ועשרים יום בו, עת מלאות שבעים שנה ליום הולדת איש רב תבונות, דגול מרבבה לוחם כגבור מלחמת האמת והצדק וכאחד מגדולי ישראל יד ושם לו בחכמת ישרון וספרותו, דורש שלום עם ישראל וטובתו, הלא הוא החכם המפואר הישיש הנכבד פֿראַפֿעססאָר פֿראַנץ דעליטש בעיר ליפסיא.

יצא לאור בשנת } טהר—לב וְדָיִם }
 יסוף יָמִים—חַיִּים } { לפ"ק.

ליום מלאות לו אחת ושבעים שנה מאת א. מ. שטעננעל.

Wien, 1884, at the author's personal expenses, II., Rembrandt-Str. 4.

² A brief essay, "Franz Delitzsch in his relation to Israel," written by me for *The Lutheran Church Review*, edited by Rev. Professor H. E. Jacobs, D. D. (Philadelphia, The Alumni Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary) will appear in its second number, April, 1887.

³ Very appropriately the editor of the *Missions-Blad* remarks, in a note added to the lines of Delitzsch, pp. 51-54: "We have not been able, nor thought it proper, to send out missionaries among the Jews; but we have shared in the sending of the greatest missionary since the ascension of our Lord, the Holy Scriptures. What an honor for our 'low church' and for our people, to have had a part!"

school, of the town, where, at this time, Plato was director, and Dolz vice-director. Here I became a decided rationalist. I felt myself drawn to God; but the person of Jesus Christ was to me involved in utter darkness. I went to the university to study philosophy and philology; and while seeking for truth, I became absorbed in the systems of the great German philosophers; Fichte especially captivated me.

"But one of my university fellows, called Schütz, who had found the Saviour, and loved him, worked incessantly to bring me to believe. I resisted a long time; but this very day I could point out the place (in one of Leipzig's streets) where a light from above put me into the same state as Thomas when he exclaimed 'My Lord and my God!' Henceforth I became a theologian, and familiar with students who had been awakened by the mercy of God. There were also domestic circles of believers in Leipzig, where now I felt quite at home. The years from 1832 to 1834, my last three years at the university, were the happiest of my life; they were the spring of my spiritual life, the days of my first love.

"I also became associated with the missionaries of the Jews, Goldberg and Becker, who, in carrying on their work, visited the fairs of Leipzig. It was these two men who first taught me to love that people from which the Saviour descended, and taught me to pray for the conversion to Christ of those who had betrayed him. Now, when I am called 'the celebrated Hebraist,' it sounds strange when I say that the missionary Becker gave me the first rabbinical instruction; but so it was. I had brought some knowledge of Hebrew with me from the gymnasium; and this language became my favorite study. My studies of the Rabbinic began with the reading of the tract 'Or le'êth eres' (Light by eventide), with the missionary Becker.

"I found in my benefactor Hirsch an object for work. My interest in him brought not early but ripe fruit. May 10, 1843, my dearest benefactor was baptized; and two years after he passed away in peace.

"For seven years (from 1835 to 1842) I led the devotional gatherings in a circle of believing friends. Some of the members are still alive; they stand, thank God! firm in faith; and when we meet, we confess that our anchor still holds in the old ground. Thus practically occupied on the one hand, I devoted myself, on the other, entirely to the study of Hebrew and of the Old Testament. This led me to Rosenmüller's¹ school, and then in particular connection with Fleischer² and with my dear Paul Caspari.³ Our aim was the same; and although

¹ Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller, son of the not less famous Johann Georg Rosenmüller, who died as professor of theology in Leipzig, 1815, studied and taught afterwards as *privat-docent* (1792), *professor extraordinarius* (1796) and *professor ordinarius* (1813-1835) of the oriental languages in the University of Leipzig. As academical teacher, he effected more through his great influence in personally advising and forwarding students in their work than through his attractiveness in the class-room. Rosenmüller's literary fertility is known. Of his numerous writings, "Das alte und neue Morgenland" (6 volumes, Leipzig, 1818-20) and "Scholia in Vetus Testamentum" (ed. ult. XI partes in 23 voll., 1820-35) are the most important. See article "Rosenmüller" in Herzog's Real-Encyclopædie, 2. ed., vol. 13, pp. 69 seq.

² H. O. Fleischer, Ph. D., D. D., LL. D., *professor ordinarius* of oriental languages in the University of Leipzig, and the greatest living authority in Arabic philology. As writer, he is well known by his edition of "Beidhawii Commentarius in Coranum," 2 volumina, Lipsiae, 1846-48, and by a great many essays of high value published in various scientific papers. Although more than eighty-five years old, Professor Fleischer still enjoys good health, devotes himself to literary work, and gathers round him a circle of advanced students and scholars, to whom he delivers his learned and attractive lectures.

³ C. Paul Caspari, Doctor and Professor of theology in Christiania, Norway, and President of

we were of different natures, we conceived an affection for each other, becoming intimate friends. And now, seeing this friend of mine among the representatives of the Norwegian church and of the Norwegian mission, I praise the merciful guidance of God.

“Up to this point I have not mentioned my mother. She was a daughter of a musician in a little town between Leipzig and Halle. When she became a widow, and was alone in the world, she started a little second-hand book-store; and even after I was elected professor, my mother still dealt in old books. This contrast grieved me much. But she wished to be independent, and for that she could not be blamed. She was an honest woman; she was respected and beloved by all who knew her. She took very little pleasure in this world; and when she died in my arms, December 7, 1857, she was happy to pass away. I am not the only one who visits her tomb from time to time. She was a faithful cross-bearer, to whom the words ‘Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much’ (Lk. vii. 47) may well be applied.

“I have often been asked for my biography; but I have never yet been so communicative as now in the case of my Norwegian brethren. My after life and work are easily told. In the year 1842 I ‘habilitated’ myself in Leipzig with a thesis on the prophet Habakkuk.¹ My communion-book² originated from the devotional gatherings which I conducted; and in my youthful enthusiasm for the Jewish literature, I wrote my book the ‘History of the post-Biblical Jewish Poetry.’³ In the year 1846 I became professor in Rostock, 1850 in Erlangen, and 1867 in Leipzig, where I now hope to stay until my blessed end. In Erlangen I founded, in the year 1863, a journal devoted to the Jewish Mission, *Saat auf Hoffnung*. My Hebrew New Testament, which was issued in 1877, is now to be printed in the fifth edition.⁴ It is owing for the most part to the generosity of the Norwegian brethren, that this publication was made possible.

“I made the acquaintance of my wife by means of our devotional gatherings. Her mother and brother confessed Christ. We were married April 27, 1845. The fruit of this marriage was four sons. The oldest, Johannes, died while *professor extraordinarius* of theology, February 3, 1876, just as he had finished the editing

the Norwegian society for Jewish missions, is known both as a Semitic scholar by his useful “*Arabische Grammatik*” (4. edition issued by August Müller, Halle, 1876), and as a profound and reliable investigator in early Christian church history by his “*Ungedruckte, unbeachtete und wenig beachtete Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols und der Glaubensregel*” (3 volumes; Christiania, 1866-75), by his “*Bibelske Afhandlinger*,” and by his “*Eine Augustin fälschlich beigelegte Homilia de sacrilegiis*” (Christiania, 1886).

¹ Afterwards published in book-form under the title “*Der Prophet Habakkuk*,” ausgelegt von Franz Delitzsch, Leipzig, 1843.

² “*Das Sakrament des wahren Leibes und Blutes Jesu Christi, Beicht- und Kommunionbuch.*” It was first published in 1844, and reached its seventh edition in 1886 (Leipzig: J. Naumann). Together with other works of Delitzsch, it has been translated into Norwegian.

³ “*Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie*” vom Abschluss der heiligen Schriften Alten Bundes bis auf die neueste Zeit. Leipzig, 1836.

⁴ The fifth edition having been sold speedily, a sixth followed at the end of 1884. In the following year (1885) an entirely revised octavo edition, with larger letters, was issued by Dr. Delitzsch, out of regard to the wishes expressed in Kischinew that the New Testament might be uniform with the Hebrew Old Testament by the British and Foreign Bible Society. As to the superiority of Delitzsch’s last (octavo) edition in comparison with the version of Isaac Salkinson, published after his death at the expenses of the English Trinity Bible Society, 1885, see the articles “*Delitzsch’ und Salkinsons Hebräisches Neues Testament*” in *Theologisches Literaturblatt* (edited by Prof. Dr. C. E. Luthardt, Leipzig), Nos. 45, 46, 47, pp. 431, 447, 455; and “*Two Hebrew New Testaments*” (by Rev. Prof. S. R. Driver, D. D.) in *The Expositor*, April, 1886, pp. 260 seq.

of Oehler's *Symbolik*.¹ He lies buried in the Evangelic church-yard in Genoa. His brother, Ernst, had already died January 17, 1872; he had served as assistant surgeon in the Franco-German war from its beginning to its end. Not until a long time after the conclusion of peace could he return. After a long illness, he succumbed from an acute pulmonary attack. His grave is in Leipzig. My two youngest sons are still alive. The older of them, Hermann, has an appointment with the general German Credit-bank; and the youngest, Friedrich (born September 3, 1850), *professor extraordinarius* of Assyriology,² is at present at the British Museum in London, where he continues his studies in the preparation of a Babylonian-Assyrian dictionary.

"I completed my seventieth year February 23. Although I dislike ovations of every kind, I was made more of than I could almost bear. But also many blessings have been showered upon me, especially from missionary societies abroad; and those blessings sound as sweet in my ears, as the lullaby sounds to the child, when it is lulled to sleep."

AMERICAN EXPLORERS IN PALESTINE.

BY PROFESSOR E. C. MITCHELL, D. D.,

Cambridge, Mass.

The historical method has come to be generally accepted as essential to a true science of interpretation. To know what writers mean, we must know who they were and what were the circumstances and conditions under which they wrote.

It is equally true that historical inquiry, to be thorough and trustworthy, must be based upon some geographical knowledge. To comprehend events we must have some idea of localities. To appreciate actions we must accurately conceive of the situation. To estimate character, motives, methods of thought, habits of expression, we must know the surroundings.

□ This general principle is especially applicable to the science of biblical interpretation. So large a part of Sacred Scripture is in its nature historical, and so much of this history is dependent upon geographical conditions, that a prime requisite for obtaining any just idea of the sense is to know the place and the

¹ He published, in addition, "De inspiratione Scripturae Sacrae quid statuerint patres apostolici et apogetae secundi saeculi," by which writing he qualified, in 1872, as a university teacher. But he died before he could finish his work on the Doctrinal System of the Roman Catholic church ("Das Lehrsystem der römischen Kirche," vol. I., 1875).

² Friedrich Delitzsch, to whom, as far as I know, all the present professors of Assyrian in the universities of the United States are indebted as a teacher, was elected, in 1885, *professor ordinarius honorarius* of Assyriology and of the Semitic languages in the University of Leipzig. The next result of his investigations in London, which lasted from March to October, 1883, was a series of articles which appeared in the *Athenæum* under the title "The importance of Assyriology to Hebrew lexicography," afterwards published in pamphlet-form as "The Hebrew language viewed in the light of Assyrian research" (London: Williams & Norgate, 1883) and "Die Sprache der Kossäer" (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1884). According to the statement given on p. 24 in the latter work, the above mentioned dictionary has now been finished for more than two years. We are, therefore, entitled to hope that Friedrich Delitzsch, having issued in the mean time the third edition of his "Assyrische Lesestücke" (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1885), and his "Prolegomena eines neuen Hebräisch-Aramäischen Wörterbuchs zum Alten Testament" (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886) will this year begin the publication of his often promised and long expected Assyrian dictionary.