



**Light from the ancient East;: The New Testament
illustrated by recently discovered texts of the
Graeco-Roman world,**

Adolf Deissmann

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Excerpt from Light From the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World

This translation of my friend Deissman's Licht vom Osten has been made from the second edition (curiously called "second and third") of the German work (Tubingen, 1909). The genesis of the book, which was first published in May, 1908, is described in the author's Preface; its success may be judged from the shortness of the time that elapsed before a second edition was required. Arrangements for the English translation were completed before the book was three months old, and a preliminary advertisement appeared in the Athenaeum as early as October 10, 1908. It is not the fault of the publishers that the English version is ready a year later than was expected. There was a miscalculation to begin with, and the work of translation proceeded more slowly than had been estimated. Well, "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" The delay has brought compensations. The English reader now has the book in its revised and enlarged form, including nine illustrations that were not in the first edition (Figs. 22, 23, 25, 29, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50). These facsimiles have their value not only for the learned, who (by taking pains: see p. 362, n. 1) can spell out most of the old writing, but also for the unlearned. Everybody can gain from them, as the author says (p. 147), some idea of the inimitable individuality of each single papyrus letter. "That autograph Letter, it was once all luminous as a burning beacon, every word of it a live coal, in its time; it was once a piece of the general fire and light of Human Life, that Letter!"

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