

Moulton's New Testament Grammar.¹

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THIS volume is a contribution to the scientific study of the New Testament, whose importance can scarcely be exaggerated. Dr. Moulton possesses a unique equipment for his task. Nurtured in an atmosphere of devotion to the best ideals of learning, an expert in Comparative Philology, and an unwearied student of the language of the New Testament, he was pre-eminently fitted to interpret the significance for exegesis of the rich material afforded by the remarkable discoveries of Egyptian papyri, and the minute investigation, within recent years, of the later phases of the Hellenic tongue. In his preface he makes ample acknowledgment of the labours of his brilliant German predecessors, Professors Deissmann and Thumb. Indeed these scholars have cordially supported him in the execution of his work. But they would be the first to recognize the independence of Dr. Moulton's investigations. Readers of the *Classical Review* and the *Expositor* know that he has earned the right to speak with authority on the language of the papyri. He has kept thoroughly abreast of the minute research devoted to the grammar and vocabulary of the *Kovῆ* writers and the inscriptions. At every stage in the discussion, his intimate acquaintance with the work of great philologists like Brugmann and Delbrück lends a peculiar fascination to the treatment.

The aim of this volume of *Prolegomena* is clearly stated. It is to present 'a general sketch of Hellenistic language and the position of the New Testament writers in its development.' In a second volume, the author hopes 'to provide a succinct and systematic *grammar*, including a complete accidence, which will state the facts of Hellenistic Greek so as to need no dependence on grammars of the earlier language' (p. x). Dr. Moulton's aim in the first part of his treatise has been attained with consummate success. There is not a dull page in the book. The alertness and vitality of the author communicate themselves to the reader.

¹ *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Based on W. F. Moulton's Edition of G. B. Winer's Grammar.* By James Hope Moulton, M.A.(Cantab.), D.Lit.(Lond.). Vol. I. Prolegomena. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906. Pp. xiv, 274. Price 8s. net.

And every here and there the subject is lit up by a quiet humour.

The standpoint which gives the present work its distinguishing characteristics may be described by the conclusion which its author, in common with Deissmann and others, has reached as the result of careful and patient research: "'Biblical" Greek, except where it is translation Greek, was simply the vernacular of daily life' (p. 4). Dr. Moulton has applied this fundamental principle in his examination of the New Testament language with a thoroughness which marks a new epoch in the investigation of the subject.

To give some samples of his work, let us take the question of so-called 'Semitisms.' How far does the Greek written by Jews show the influence of Hebrew or Aramaic? We know what a prominent part the 'Semitism' has played in New Testament commentaries, grammars, and lexicons, up to the present time. But the area of genuine examples has been, to an extraordinary degree, curtailed by more accurate acquaintance with vernacular Greek. In discussing the details, Dr. Moulton carefully distinguishes between 'Semitisms' in the vocabulary and those which belong to syntax. These, in turn, must be kept apart from Semitic usages 'due to translation, from the Hebrew of the O.T. or from Aramaic "sources" underlying parts of the Synoptists and Acts' (p. 13). In the first-mentioned class it is astonishing to find how many supposed Hebraistic words and constructions, as, *e.g.*, the constant use of the interjection *idou*, some abnormal cases of instrumental *en*, even the co-ordination of sentences with *καί* in place of hypotaxis, have complete parallels in the papyri. Eccentric prepositions such as *ἐνώπιον* and *ἀνὰ μέσον* have had to be excluded from the list of N.T. Semitisms (p. 99). Even the rare dative represented by such phrases as *ἀκοῇ ἀκούσατε*, regarded for so long as modelled on the Hebrew infinitive absolute, has doubts cast on its origin. 'The Greek translator, endeavouring to be as literal as he could, nevertheless took care to use Greek that was possible, however unidiomatic' (p. 76). And this brings us to our author's

opinion as to the extent to which genuine Semitisms appear in the works of men whose native speech was Semitic. The Greek which they wrote 'brought into prominence locutions, correct enough as Greek, but which would have remained in comparatively rare use but for the accident of their answering to Hebrew or Aramaic phrases' (p. 11). This is surely a very sane canon to lay down. It can never again be ignored by students of the N.T. language. In discussing Translation Greek, Dr. Moulton practically restricts himself to the grammatical Hebraisms of Luke, the only N.T. writer in whose works the problem is a complex one. His conclusions as to the Semitisms of Luke are thus summarized: 'We find (1) rough Greek translations from Aramaic left mainly as they reached him, perhaps because their very roughness seemed too characteristic to be refined away; and (2) a very limited imitation of the LXX idiom, as specially appropriate while the story moves in the Jewish world' (p. 18). The bearing of (1) upon the literary criticism of the Synoptists is, of course, obvious.

While this volume professes to contain nothing more than *Prolegomena*, it surpasses most of the formal grammars in the suggestiveness with which it treats grammatical details. After giving some very instructive notes on the *history* of vernacular Greek, in which he shows that there was scarcely any dialectic difference between the Greek of Egypt and that of Asia Minor, Italy, and Syria, and that consequently, for the purposes of N.T. study, 'Hellenistic Greek may be regarded as a unity' (p. 40), Dr. Moulton devotes a brief chapter, packed with matter, to the Accidence. Here we may note, in passing, how the spelling *ἐάν* for *άν* after *ὄς*, *ὅπου*, etc., found almost invariably in the great uncials of the N.T., and belonging mainly to the first and second centuries A.D., indicates that here those uncials 'faithfully reproduce originals written under conditions long obsolete' (p. 43). The accuracy of the uncial tradition is further corroborated by the prevalence of person-endings belonging to the sigmatic (-σα) aorist even where the root-forms of the 'strong' aorist remained in use (p. 51). In this section the author points out how frequently the question of pronunciation must be a factor in deciding between variant readings. Thus, e.g., 'by the time *κ* and *β* were written, *ο* and *ω* were no longer distinct in pronunciation' (p. 35). A case in point

is the choice between *ἔχομεν* (which has overwhelming MS. authority) and *ἔχομεν* in Ro 5¹. Some modern commentators have strained the sense of the passage to suit *ἔχομεν*. We regret to find that Dr. Moulton joins them, interpreting the verb as a 'durative' present = 'let us enjoy the possession of peace' (p. 110). But this is quite alien to the context. Paul is not exhorting. He is expounding with firm conviction. The whole verve of *δικαιωθέντες* is lost unless *ἔχομεν* be read, not to speak of the succession of strong indicatives which follow. The idea involved is essentially un-Pauline.

The remainder of the book is occupied with the syntax of nouns, pronouns, prepositions, etc., and (very fully) verbs.

A very interesting section is that on the decay of the dative case owing to the encroachment of prepositions, belonging to that process which has reached its culmination in a language like our own (pp. 60-68). In this connexion we may note how enormously the prepositions *εἰς* and *ἐν* have enlarged their sphere of influence. The prominence of the latter in the N.T. is no doubt greatly due to the vagueness which came to be associated with the use of the simple dative. Hence *ἐν* becomes, in Dr. Moulton's phrase, 'a maid-of-all-work' (p. 103). A few of its N.T. uses, as, e.g., its *mystic* sense in Paul (so carefully investigated by Deissmann in his well-known monograph, *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*), seem, as yet, to have no parallels in vernacular documents. But such can now be produced for many difficult usages with *ἐν*: e.g. Ac 7¹⁴, Mk 4⁸ (so WH, no need for Wellhausen's *ἐν*), where *ἐν* = 'amounting to'; Lk 2⁴⁹, *ἐν τοῖς* = 'in the house of'; 1 Co 14¹¹, *ἐν ἐμοί* = 'in my judgment'; Lk 22⁴⁹, 1 Co 4²¹, *ἐν* = 'armed with' (so that instrumental *ἐν* does not require to be explained by Hebrew *ב*). We are glad to find the author emphasizing the fact that in many N.T. passages no real distinction can be drawn between *εἰς* and *ἐν* 'without excessive subtlety.' This is the kind of hair-splitting which has so often marred the pages of over-refining commentators like Westcott. Dr. Moulton gives a good instance on p. 235, quoting Jn 1¹⁸, *ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον*: 'the combination . . . of rest and motion, of a continuous relation with a realization of it' (Westcott). In our judgment, no greater service has been done by the investigations of our author and his fellow-labourers than

to dismiss this type of comment for ever from the realm of scientific exegesis.

The interchange of εἰς and ἐν in the later language is graphically illustrated by the fact that in modern Greek στό with the accusative (= εἰς τόν) actually takes the place of the obsolete dative (p. 63).

We wish we could dwell on the luminous handling of various important matters which we have noted. A great deal of wearisome discussion, e.g., would be saved if expositors attended to Dr. Moulton's dictum on the Article that 'in all essentials its use is in agreement with Attic' (p. 80). Predominant N.T. usage shows that the noun is generally anarthrous when joined to a preposition. The author holds that 'for exegesis, there are few of the finer points of Greek which need more constant attention than this omission of the article when the writer would lay stress on the quality or character of the object' (p. 83). We should be inclined to say that even here there is always danger of pedantic exegesis.

Passing on to the verb, we can do no more than call attention to the very satisfactory treatment of the so-called 'participle of subsequent action.' It is gratifying to find that Professor Ramsay's examples of what he conceives to be real subsequence, as, e.g., the daring interpretation of κωλυθέντες in Ac 16^b, are ruled out of court (pp. 133-134). Another very instructive paragraph is that on Aoristic Perfects in the N.T. Dr. Moulton will not admit any 'except under very clear necessity' (p. 143). Thus, at one stroke, he sweeps away the examples found in He 7¹³ 9¹⁸ 11¹⁷ as being simply a marked feature of the writer's style 'to describe what "stands written" in Scripture.' Those in the Apocalypse (ἐἴληφεν and εἴρηκα), as having no 'apparent reduplication,' may have been regarded by the writer as real aorists. The form ἔσχηκα which Paul seems to

use in a genuinely aoristic sense (2 Co 2¹³ 1⁹ 7⁵, Ro 5²), resembling as it does such aorists as ἔθηκα and ἀφῆκα, lent itself from force of circumstances to this usage. For, as Dr. Moulton points out, 'there is no Greek for *possessed*, the *constative* aorist, since ἔσχω is almost (if not quite) exclusively used for the ingressive *got, received*' (p. 145).

A capital example of the adequacy and attractiveness of Dr. Moulton's method is to be found in the section on οὐ μή (pp. 187-192). Here he brings out the noteworthy fact that two-thirds of the instances occur in the Gospels, and almost all of these are from the actual words of Christ. These, along with quotations from the O.T., practically exhaust the occurrence of οὐ μή in the N.T. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to say, with the author, that 'since these are just the two elements which made up "Scripture" in the first age of Christianity, one is tempted to put it down to the same cause in both—a feeling that inspired language was fitly rendered by words of a decisive tone not needed generally elsewhere' (p. 192). Very fresh and illuminating are the pages on prohibitions (where the distinction between present imperative and aorist subjunctive is aptly sketched, p. 122), on imperatival participles (pp. 180-182, most important for exegesis), on the use of the optative in N.T. and contemporary literature (pp. 194-199), and on the participle in periphrastic tenses (where the canon which we found to apply to Semitisms is usually valid, pp. 225-227). It ought to be noted that the N.T. student may incidentally learn from this book a great deal of interesting comparative philology (see, e.g., pp. 128, 164-165, 169, etc.).

Besides ten pages of additional notes in small type, the book is provided with three full indexes, embracing quotations, Greek words, and subjects. The printing is most accurate. We have noticed misprints on pp. 15, 18, 91, 119, 138, 178, 179.

The Master Mystic.

BY THE REV. CLAUD FIELD, M.A.

MYSTICISM has been much in the air lately, but hardly any mention has been made of one who is perhaps the greatest of all mystics—Jalaluddin Rumi. It is in his writings, if anywhere, that we must look for an eirenicon between Moham-

medanism and Christianity. He was born at Balkh in Central Asia early in the thirteenth century, and died in 1272, when Dante was a child of seven. The collocation is suggestive. Dante, of course, had never heard of the Persian