

*THE PHILOLOGY OF THE GREEK BIBLE:
ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE.¹*

IV.

NEW TESTAMENT PHILOLOGY.

We concluded our third lecture with a short mention of the beginnings that are just being made in the exegesis of the Greek Old Testament. The exegesis of the Greek *New Testament* can look back upon a history of many centuries. The fact, however, that the New Testament as distinguished from the Greek Old Testament possesses an international exegetical literature of its own which promises soon to attain unmanageable dimensions, is not necessarily a proof of a revival of interest in its philological investigation. The more recent commentaries, indeed, leave much to be desired from the philological point of view.

How greatly the exegesis of the New Testament is able to profit by the progress of classical archaeology in the widest sense is shown by the writings of Sir William Ramsay,² the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans by Hans Lietzmann,³ the Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew by Th. Zahn⁴ and by W. C. Allen,⁵ and the Commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians about to be published by George Milligan.

¹ These lectures were delivered in the Summer School of the Free Churches, at Cambridge, in July and August, 1907. In writing them I allowed myself the use of part of an address given by me at Giessen in 1897. The lectures were translated for me by Mr. Lionel R. M. Strachan, M.A., Lector of English in the University of Heidelberg.

² See above.

³ Hans Lietzmann, *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. iii., pp. 1-80, Tübingen, 1906.

⁴ Theodor Zahn, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. i., Leipzig, 1903; zweite Auflage, 1905.

⁵ W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew*. Edinburgh, 1907. (The International Critical Commentary).

Any further discussion of the enormous output of Commentaries in the last few years is beyond our present scope. Nor is this the occasion to review the work accomplished in New Testament textual criticism, important as it is to the New Testament philologist and tempting as it would be to speak of it here in Cambridge, where great traditions in textual criticism have been inherited and made greater by men and women of distinguished learning.

We may, however, mention in the first place as a book of great value to the New Testament philologist the Concordance to the New Testament by W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden.¹ A revised edition of an older work, the excellent Concordance of Bruder,² is also being prepared by Schmiedel.

But the most remarkable fact that strikes us on reviewing recent work is that, after a long period of stagnation in the grammatical department, we have had in the last twelve years three new Grammars of the New Testament, by Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel, Friedrich Blass, and James Hope Moulton, and that the publication of a fourth, by Ludwig Radermacher, is impending.

Schmiedel's book claims only to be a revised edition (the eighth) of G. B. Winer's Grammar.³ The old Winer, when first published was a protest of the philological conscience against the caprices of an arrogant empiricism. For half a century it exercised a decisive influence on exegetical work—which is a long time for any Grammar, and for a Greek Grammar in the nineteenth century a very long time indeed.

¹ *A Concordance to the Greek Testament according to the text of Westcott and Hort, Tischendorf, and the English Revisers.* Edited by Rev. W. F. Moulton and Rev. A. S. Geden. Edinburgh, 1897.

² *Ταμειον των της Καινης Διαθηκης λεξεων sive Concordantiae omnium vocum Novi Testamenti Graeci, primum ab Erasmo Schmidio editae, nunc secundum critices et hermeneutices nostrae aetatis rationes emendatae, auctae, meliori ordine dispositae cura C. H. Bruder, Lipsiae, 1842; editio stereotypa quarta, Lipsiae, 1888, sexta 1904.*

³ See above.

While most warmly appreciating its merits we may yet say, without prejudice to the truth, that it has had its day. If you use the old edition of Winer now—and it is still to some extent indispensable—it is possible to find yourself thinking that what was once its strength constitutes also the weakness of the book. And I believe the feeling is not without foundation. Often you feel that something is represented as regular where there is no such thing as regularity, or uniform where the characteristic individuality of the single fact calls for recognition. In short you receive too much the impression of a “New Testament idiom” as a sharply defined magnitude in the history of the Greek language.

If in speaking of Schmiedel's new Winer I may be allowed to begin with an objection, it is a fault, so it seems to me, that there is still too much Winer and too little Schmiedel in the book. This applies, however, only to the introductory paragraphs, where Schmiedel has allowed much to remain that is afterwards tacitly contradicted by his own statements. On the whole the new edition—or new book, as it is really—marks a characteristic and decisive turning-point in New Testament philology. The phenomena of the language of the New Testament are exhibited conscientiously, and as a rule adequately, in relation with the history of the Greek language. The sources accessible to Schmiedel, especially the inscriptions and papyri, are made exhaustive use of. Unfortunately the majority of the papyrus discoveries did not come until after the appearance of Schmiedel's *Accidence* in 1894. Such preliminary studies as existed for the philologist were used by Schmiedel, and, sad to say, there were not many. All the more must we admire the industry, the faithfulness in detail, and the eye for the great connexions traceable in the history of language, to which the book bears witness. Schmiedel's minute accuracy is well known. It does one's heart good in this false world to meet with such trustworthy quotations.

It is a pity that Schmiedel has not yet been able to complete the work ; but as a splendid Greek scholar, Eduard Schwyzer, of Zürich, the grammarian of the Pergamos inscriptions, has been recently engaged as a collaborator, it may be hoped that " Winer and Schmiedel " will not have to remain a torso much longer.

In his review¹ of Schmiedel's *Accidence* Friedrich Blass was not so warm as he might have been in acknowledging the merits of the work. In his own *Grammar*,² however, he openly acknowledges that he owed very much to Schmiedel.

And, indeed, without Schmiedel's book Blass's *Grammar* would not have been possible. In the review mentioned Blass observed that the gulf between theology and philology was noticeable here and there in Schmiedel, and by saying so invited the use of the same standard on his own *Grammar*. Now in my opinion the separation between theology and philology is altogether without justification in this field of research, and the controversy that occasionally flares up is most regrettable. But as things are at present, the professed Greek scholar who takes up the study of the Bible has generally the advantage of a larger knowledge of the non-Biblical sources of the language, while the theologian is better acquainted with the Biblical texts and their exegetical problems. Prejudiced though it may sound to say so, my impression on comparing the two *Grammars* was that Schmiedel's defects in philology were slighter than those of Blass in theology. To speak in the language of mankind that knows no Faculties, as regards the positive interpretation of the texts of the New Testament Schmiedel is the more stimulating, so far as can be judged from the first instalment of his *Syntax*.

¹ *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1894, xix. col. 532-534.

² See above. Translated into English by H. St. J. Thackeray, London, 1898 ; 2nd ed., 1905.

A Grammar must not be wanting in cheerful willingness to leave some things undecided. It must be seriously recognized and admitted that there are such things as open questions. That Blass theoretically held this view is shown by the following chance remark in his Grammar.¹ "The kind of relation subsisting between the genitive and its noun can only be recognized from the sense and context; and in the New Testament this is often solely a matter of theological interpretation, which cannot be taught in a Grammar." But this principle, so extremely important methodologically, is not always followed. In passages where it is certain that the phraseology is peculiar, and where the exegetical possibilities are equal, Blass often comes and smooths away with his grammatical plane something that seems like an irregularity but is really not so.

Beginners in exegesis are apt to content themselves with what they find by help of the index of texts in Blass. That is certainly not at all what Blass intended, but it is probably the consequence of what must be complained of as the theological deficiency of the book. A Grammar, especially when it bears the name of a famous philologist, is easily regarded by the average person who uses it as a compendium of all that is reducible to fixed laws and therefore as absolutely dependable. If Blass could have brought himself to rouse up energetically this easy-going deference of the youthful reader, as he might have done in many parts of the Syntax, his book would have gained decidedly in value as a book for students.

I count it as one of the excellencies of the book that in the introduction the author adopts a definitive attitude on the question of "New Testament" Greek. In spite of the title, and in spite of some occasional relapses (which must not be regarded too seriously) to the method formerly cham-

¹ Zweite Auflage, p. 97, § 35, 1.

pioned by Blass, it is made plain that there is no such thing as a special "New Testament" Greek, and that therefore the claim of the New Testament to have a special grammar of its own can only be based on the practical needs of Bible study. As was only to be expected from Blass, the book contains many fine observations in the details. The Syntax, however, is decidedly the weakest part of the book. The comparatively small number of examples from secular sources is particularly striking there. On the other hand—and this undoubtedly deserves our thankful attention—Blass makes ample use of the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Clementine literature. This is putting into practice the excellent remark in his grimly humorous dedication to August Fick, where he writes: "The isolation of the New Testament is a bad thing for the interpretation of it, and must be broken down as much as possible."

In very different fashion the latest of the grammarians, James Hope Moulton,¹ has broken down the isolation of the New Testament. He introduces himself modestly as inheritor of the work of his late father, W. F. Moulton, whose English edition of Winer's Grammar² had for almost forty years favourably influenced exegetical studies in England and America. His aged mother, who compiled the copious index of texts for him as she had done forty years before for her husband, may symbolize to us the personal continuity between the elder and the younger generation of grammarians. The son has inherited firstly the scholar's instinct for research, united with fervent love of the New Testament. He has further inherited the solid foundation of the book itself, Winer and Moulton's Grammar. But he was also equipped with a modern training in Greek, and by his own industry he has created on that foundation an entirely new

¹ See above.

² Edinburgh, 1870.

book. In the second edition, therefore, which was called for within a few months, the title has rightly been simplified.¹ The first volume bears the descriptive title of *Prolegomena*; a second volume, containing the grammar proper, is yet to follow. With intentional avoidance of systematic severity and concision the nine chapters of the *Prolegomena* aim at making clear by a selection of especially striking linguistic phenomena the general character of the Hellenistic cosmopolitan language and the position of the New Testament in the history of that language. These chapters are partly based on earlier publications of the author's in the *EXPOSITOR*, and his articles in the *Classical Review* are also made use of. What the learned doctrinaire may carp at as a fault in the character of the first volume, is for the reader, and especially for the young reader, a great advantage. The opinion that a Grammar can only be good if it is dull, is completely refuted by these *Prolegomena*. You can really read Moulton. You are not stifled in the close air of exegetical controversy, and you are not overwhelmed in a flood of quotations. The main facts and the main questions are always seen distinctly and formulated clearly. It is an important work, in many points stimulating to research, and it should leave one great conviction behind it, namely, that the New Testament, from the linguistic point of view, stands in most vital connexion with the Hellenistic world surrounding it. The earlier grammatical treatment of our sacred Book was above all dominated by a sense of its *contrast* with the surrounding world, and the new method, conceived and followed more energetically by Moulton than by Schmiedel and Blass, emphasizes above all the *contact* with the surrounding world. The last word has not yet been said about the proportion of Semiticisms. A large

¹ *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, by James Hope Moulton, vol. i., *Prolegomena*, Edinburgh, 1906.

number of misconceptions in earlier exegetists come from failure to notice the fact that the speech of the people in Greek and in non-Greek languages had many points in common. Thus many phrases which strike both the classical Greek scholar with his public school and university training and the divinity Hebrew scholar, and which they triumphantly brand as Semiticisms, are not always Semiticisms, but often international vulgarisms, which do not justify the isolation of "New Testament" philology.

Excellent indices—only the Greek one is too modest—afford a convenient summary of the results of the Prolegomena. The list of papyri and inscriptions quoted shows the author's wide reading and makes it possible to use the New Testament as a source for the study of papyri and epigraphy. The accuracy of the printing and the beautiful get-up of the book are very pleasing. The only thing that caused me misgivings was the praise given to a German scholar who had lighted by chance upon the papyri and there seen what of course would have been seen by anybody else.

It is to be hoped that the publication of these three great works, to be followed, as already mentioned, by a fourth, does not mean that the grammatical study of the New Testament will come to a standstill for a time. There are plenty of detached problems, both in accidence and syntax; for example, it seems to me that a close examination of the syntax of the prepositions and cases, especially in St. Paul, would be particularly desirable and fruitful.

In his inaugural lecture at Manchester last year on "The Science of Language and the Study of the New Testament,"¹ Moulton gave a short sketch of the present state of New Testament problems.

Edwin A. Abbott's *Johannine Grammar*,² a special

¹ Manchester, 1906, pp. 32.

² E. A. Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, London, 1906.

Grammar of the writings of St. John, which appeared recently, is a work of great merit. I have not yet been able to examine this book, nor the same author's *Johannine Vocabulary*,¹ but I can rely upon the opinion of James Hope Moulton, who praises the book highly and would only have liked to see in it a closer acquaintance with the facts of late Greek.

Two detached investigations, not, however, purely grammatical, are contained in two Heidelberg dissertations presented for the licentiate in theology, by Arnold Steubing² on the Pauline concept of "sufferings of Christ," and by Adolph Schettler³ on the Pauline formula "Through Christ." The latter especially is very instructive, and by proving that St. Paul in that formula always means the risen Lord constitutes a great simplification and deepening of our conception of the personal religion of St. Paul.

An American book from the earlier years of the modern period of research, Ernest de Witt Burton's *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*,⁴ deserves honourable mention, while the two very detailed grammatical works of the French Abbé, Joseph Viteau,⁵ entitled *Études sur le Grec du Nouveau Testament*, must be used with great caution. Burton's book has moreover been recently

¹ E. A. Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary*: a comparison of the words of the Fourth Gospel with those of the three. London, 1905.

² Arnold Steubing, *Der paulinische Begriff "Christusleiden,"* Darmstadt, 1905.

³ Adolph Schettler, *Die paulinische Formel "Durch Christus,"* Tübingen, 1907.

⁴ E. de Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, Chicago, 1893; 2nd ed., London (Isbister), 1893; 3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1898.

⁵ Joseph Viteau, *Études sur le Grec du Nouveau Testament. Le Verbe: Syntaxe des Propositions.* (Thèse.) Paris, 1893.—*Étude sur le grec du Nouveau Testament comparé avec celui des Septante: Sujet, Complément et Attribut.* Paris, 1896. (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, fasc. 114.)

translated into Dutch by J. de Zwaan,¹ a Dutchman, who enriched it with good additions of his own. As a proof that also the Roman Catholic Church in German lands is at least not wanting in good will to assist in this grammatical work I may mention two "Programms" by Alois Theimer,² an Austrian schoolmaster, on the prepositions in the historical books of the New Testament.

The greatest task for the philologist of the New Testament is again a Dictionary. Excellent in the main as was Wilibald Grimm's revision³ of Wilke's *Clavis Novi Testamenti Philologica* (as may be seen especially in the much more correct English edition by Joseph Henry Thayer), and much as Cremer's *Lexicon* has improved in the course of years, both these works, Grimm and Cremer, to say nothing of others, are no longer adequate. We now have the right to expect of a Dictionary that it shall take account of the results of modern philology, and that it therefore in particular shall not ignore the splendid additions to our knowledge due to the discoveries of the last twenty or thirty years. As far as the inscriptions are concerned, both Grimm and Cremer might have derived much information from them, and it is regrettable that they did not do so. Already a large number of words formerly considered "Biblical" or "New Testament" can be struck off the list on the authority of inscriptions, papyri, or passages in authors that had escaped notice.

It used to be a favourite amusement of the older lexico-

¹ J. de Zwaan, *Syntaxis der Wijzen en Tijden in het Grieksche Nieuwe Testament* . . ., Haarlem, 1906.

² *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Sprachgebrauches im Neuen Testamente*, Programm, Horn in Niederösterreich, 1896 and 1901.

³ C. G. Wilke, *Clavis Novi Testamenti Philologica*, Dresdae et Lipsiae, 1841, 2 vols.; another, Roman Catholic edition, *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in libros Novi Testamenti*, by V. Loch, Ratisbonae, 1858; another Protestant edition by C. L. W. Grimm, Lipsiae, 1868, vierte Auflage, 1903; translated by J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Edinburgh, 1886; New York, 1887.

graphers to distinguish words as specifically Biblical or New Testament, and the number of such words has been enormously overestimated. Even Kennedy¹ calculates, from the lists in Thayer's Lexicon, that among the 4,800 to 5,000 words used in the New Testament (omitting proper names), about 550 are "Biblical," that is, words "found either in the New Testament alone, or, besides, only in the Septuagint. That is, about twelve per cent. of the total vocabulary of New Testament is 'Biblical.'" But this estimate will not bear close examination.

Many of these 550 words are quoted by Thayer himself from non-Christian authors, and though these authors are often post-Christian, there is no probability of their having learnt the words from the New Testament or from the mouth of Christians. A large number of other words have since then turned up in the inscriptions, papyri, and ostraca, and as regards the rest we must always ask in each case whether there is sufficient internal reason for supposing the word to be a Christian invention. Where one of these words is not recognizable at sight as a Jewish or Christian new formation we must consider it as a word common to all Greek until the contrary is proved.

The number of really new-coined words is in the earliest Christian period very small. There can hardly be more than 50 Christian new formations among the round 5,000 words of the New Testament vocabulary, that is, not 12 per cent. but 1 per cent. Primitive Christianity was a revolution of the inmost life of man, but not a revolution of the Greek lexicon—so might we, as modern philologists, vary the old witness of St. Paul, that "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20). The great enriching of the Greek lexicon by Christianity did not take place till later, in the ecclesiastical period, with its enormous

¹ P. 93. See above.

development and differentiation of the dogmatic, liturgical, and legal vocabulary. In the religiously creative period the power of Christianity to form new words was not nearly so large as its effect in transforming the meaning of the old words.

The New Testament lexicographer will therefore have to make himself familiar above all with the great range of sources for the Greek popular language from Alexander the Great to Constantine. His field is the world—that world which from the most ancient seats of Greek culture in Hellas and in the islands, in the little country towns of Asia Minor and in the villages of Egypt, as well as from the cosmopolitan trading centres on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, presents us year by year with memorials of itself, i.e., with actual documents of the living language which was the missionary language of St. Paul.

Studies such as those of E. L. Hicks in the *Classical Review*,¹ James Hope Moulton's lexical work in the *EXPOSITOR*,² Theodor Nägeli's *Examination of the Vocabulary of the Apostle Paul*,³ Wilhelm Heitmüller's book⁴ on the formula "in the name of Jesus," Gottfried Thieme's Heidelberg dissertation on *The Inscriptions of Magnesia on the Maeander and the New Testament*,⁵ Wendland's essay on the word Saviour (σωτήρ),⁶ have all by this method obtained accurate results and laid the foundations for the future new Lexicon. Georg Heinrici⁷ in his examination of the Sermon

¹ See above.

² Vol. i., 1887, pp. 4-8, 42-46.

³ April, 1901; February, 1903; December, 1903.

⁴ W. Heitmüller, *Im Namen Jesu*, Göttingen, 1905.

⁵ G. Thieme, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mäander und das Neue Testament*, Göttingen, 1906.

⁶ *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1904, v., pp. 335-353.

⁷ Georg Heinrici, *Die Bergpredigt . . . begriffsgeschichtlich untersucht*, Reformationsfestprogramm, Leipzig, 1905 (and as vol. iii. of Heinrici's *Beiträge*, Leipzig, 1905).

on the Mount from the point of view of the history of ideas has made valuable contributions by drawing materials from the old philosophical and ethical writers. Baljon¹ also, at least in the Appendix to his Dictionary, was able to incorporate some of the results of recent investigations. It will also be possible for synonymic studies to receive a new impetus from the new sources. Archbishop Trench's² well-known work is the classical representative of the older philological method. Though in many points out of date, it is still the best work on New Testament synonymy, and a selection from it has just been published in a German translation by Heinrich Werner.³ The German *Synonymy of New Testament Greek* by Gerhard Heine⁴ is quite elementary.

Any one who shall in future pursue studies in synonymy based on an intimate knowledge of the late Greek popular language, will without doubt come to the conclusion that the stock of concepts possessed by Primitive Christianity was much more simple and transparent than used formerly to be assumed. The concepts have hitherto been too much isolated; for example, the differences between "Justification," "Reconciliation," and "Redemption" in St. Paul have been much more strongly emphasized than the relationship which before all things is recognizable between them. In particular the personality and the piety of the Apostle Paul appear much more compact and more impressive, if, avoiding the failings of the doctrinaire method as commonly employed in Germany by the Tübingen School

¹ See above.

² R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Cambridge, 1854; 7th ed., 1871, last edition 1906.

³ *Synonyma des Neuen Testaments*, von R. Ch. Trench, ausgewählt und übersetzt von Heinrich Werner. Mit einem Vorwort von Prof. D. Adolf Deissmann. Tübingen, 1907.

⁴ Gerhard Heine, *Synonymik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Leipzig, 1898.

and their opponents, we consider him against the background recoverable from the new sources of the Graeco-Roman world as the great hero of the faith from the East.

Finally, there is great need for critical studies of the style of the separate books of the New Testament. In Eduard Norden's book¹ on *The Artistic Prose of the Ancients* will be found a number of fine observations, although his whole procedure in connecting the New Testament with Greek *artistic* prose is not correct. The greater part of the New Testament writings is not artistic prose but artless popular prose; which, however, is often of greater natural beauty than the artificial products of the hollow rhetoric of post-classical antiquity. The words of Jesus and many utterances of St. Paul and the other apostles are either instinct with a calm, chaste beauty that is æsthetically worthy of admiration, or else they are written with truly lapidary force, worthy of marble and the chisel. The importance of the New Testament in the history of style rests on the fact that through this book the language of natural life, that is, of course, language as it lived upon lips specially endowed by grace, made its entry into a world of outworn doctrine and empty rhetoric. It was a great mistake of Friedrich Blass² to try to represent St. Paul as an adherent of the Asian rhythm, so that, for example, the Epistle to the Galatians would be supposed to be written with due observance of the rhythmical rules of art. This error ranges Blass with a number of older writers by whom the Apostle Paul was praised for his great knowledge of classical literature.

Primitive Christianity—this is one of the main results of the modern philology of the New Testament—Primitive

¹ Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom vi. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, Leipzig, 1898.

² F. Blass, *Die Rhythmen der asianischen und römischen Kunstprosa*, Leipzig, 1905. See *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1906, xxxi., col. 231 ff.

Christianity in its classical epoch is set in the midst of the world, but it still has very little connexion with official culture; indeed, as an energetic and one-sided religious movement it is distrustful in its attitude towards the "wisdom" of the world.

It rejects—this is the second result of our inquiry—it rejects, in this epoch, all the outward devices of rhetoric. In grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and style it occupies a place in the midst of the people and draws from the inexhaustible soil of the popular element to which it was native a good share of its youthful strength.

In opposition to its later developments towards dogma, differentiation, and complexity—and this is the third result—in opposition to these later developments it is, in that classical epoch, in spite of the glowing enthusiasm of its hope, entirely simple and forceful, intelligible in its appeal to the simple and the poor in spirit, and therefore appointed to a mission to the whole world.

Modern New Testament philology, therefore—I may say in conclusion—does not mean any impoverishing of our conceptions of the beginnings of our faith. On the contrary, although apparently concerned only with the outward form of the New Testament, it opens up new points of view as regards its inward meaning, deepening our knowledge of Primitive Christianity and strengthening our love of the New Testament.

And if this study has brought together a band of workers from all Protestant countries on one common field—workers whom enthusiasm for Christ and His Cause and the desire for knowledge have united in one great brotherhood—then the philology of the New Testament, with this international alliance in work, is helping in little to fulfil the great hope of the New Testament "that we may all be one in Christ."

ADOLF DEISSMANN.