

The student will notice that with the words of the New Testament are associated conceptions derived from Greek thought, and others derived from the Old Testament. Each of these currents of thought must be carefully explored.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the complicated construction of the long sentences needs careful attention. Each sentence should be patiently analysed. Notice the main assertion or exhortation, and then the subordinate clauses grouped around it. The participial clauses deserve special attention; for their logical relation to the main clauses is only slightly indicated by the grammatical construction. The emphatic words should be carefully observed; for these will frequently indicate the Apostle's line of thought.

The best commentary is, on the whole, in my view, that of Meyer, translation published by Clark. This I cordially recommend to every student of the Greek Testament. It is marked by accurate grammatical scholarship, and by delicate exegetical tact. Ellicott's *Commentary* is also very useful for its careful study of minute grammatical details. With these excellent works, no modern expositions can be compared.

But no commentary must supersede personal mental grappling with the actual text of the Epistle. For this reason it is undesirable to multiply commentaries. What is most needed is immediate and sustained contact with the word's and thought of the writer.

With the methods and aids mentioned above, the student will endeavour to follow the thought of St. Paul, to grasp the ideas which he designed his words to convey to the minds of his readers. And he will do more than this. Each Epistle is a window through which we can look into the mind of the Great Apostle, a mirror in which we can see reflected his conception of the Gospel and of Christ. To reproduce this conception is the real aim of all intelligent study of the Bible. To this end we must group together St. Paul's various teaching on each several topic, and thus endeavour to reproduce his thoughts as they grouped themselves in his own mind. Each

Epistle thus studied will increase our knowledge of the theology of St. Paul. And, by combining the results derived from each Epistle, we shall gain something more valuable than can be learnt from any one Epistle, viz. the broad and deep thought about the Unseen which underlay all his Epistles, and of which each one is a partial embodiment.

We shall go still further. In the various documents of the New Testament we shall find different types of teaching. The outward differences, and the deep underlying harmony, of these types will assure us that the elements common to all are in very truth the actual teaching of Christ.

We shall do well to keep ever before us, in all our study of the New Testament, this its ultimate aim.

Once more. Our study of the teaching of St. Paul will afford evidence, in the wonderful harmony of its various parts and its harmony with other New Testament teaching, in its close relation to supposed facts,—e.g. the death and resurrection of Christ,—and in its fitness to supply our own spiritual need, that the supposed facts are real, and the teaching is true. Thus our grammatical study of the Greek Testament will contribute both to Systematic Theology and to the Evidences of Christianity.

The prominence given to this practical application of New Testament exegesis is a special and distinguishing feature of my own commentaries. In my earlier volumes I have given special attention to the meaning of the words used by St. Paul; in all of them I have endeavoured to trace his line of thought, and to bring out its value as an evidence of the truth of the gospel; and in the volume lately published on the Epistles to the *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, and *Colossians*, I have endeavoured, after a careful exposition, to reproduce St. Paul's conception of the Church, of Christ, and of the Gospel.

Of all the letters written by St. Paul, of all the products of human thought, there is none better fitted to raise us above the tumult around, to sit with Christ in heavenly places, than the sublime Epistle to the Ephesians.

Note on Gen. i. 2, 3.

"Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

THIS passage is the consummation of the whole revelation of the grace of God. And in face of the objections made to the early chapters of Genesis, it is worth while to notice, as an encouragement to faith, this continuity and completeness of the revelation made in the history of the old world before the flood.

I. DARKNESS.—Notice the stages of the history. Chap. i. contains the story of the *Creation* (of the world and life). Chap. ii., the *conservation* in God's providential arrangements. Chap. iii., the *corruption*. Chap. iv., the *consequence* immediate on the corruption, viz., the violation of family life. Chap. v. is a *cemetery*, showing the further developments of the corruption, and containing one bright tombstone (v. 24). Chap. vi., the *conflict* between

God and sin. Chap. vii., the *condemnation* of the world for sin.

II. GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT.—In each chapter we have a promise of brightness coming. In i., by the creation of light; in ii., by the picture of paradise; in iii., by the promise of the Messiah, vers. 15, 21; in iv., by the accepted sacrifice; in v., by the hope of immortality (v. 24); in vi., by the building of the ark; in vii., by the safety in the ark.

III. AND THERE WAS LIGHT.—Our general thanksgiving sums up the chapters in this aspect. We may thank God for Creation (i.), preservation and blessings of this life (ii.), the redemption of the world (iii. 15), the means of grace (iv. 4), the hope of glory (v. 24). And then we may pray God to enable us to serve Him in our lives, by walking in holiness and righteousness, of which we have an example in Noah (vi., vii.).

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