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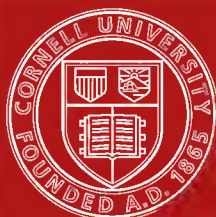
The science of language and the study of



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Manchester University Lectures. No. 4.

The Science of Language
and the Study of the
New Testament

SHERRATT & HUGHES

Publishers to the Victoria University of Manchester

Manchester : 27 St. Ann Street

London : 60 Chandos Street, W.C.

*The Science of Language
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New Testament*

BEING THE INAUGURAL LECTURE
DELIVERED ON JANUARY 30th, 1906

BY

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Manchester*

MANCHESTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1906

A.239516

The Science of Language and the Study of the New Testament.

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By JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A., D.Lit.,
*Greenwood Lecturer in Greek Testament, University of
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THE history of this Lectureship, in connexion with which I have the honour of appearing before you to-night, illustrates the many-sidedness of Greek Testament study. In other English Universities it has been the close preserve of the clergy, and has been associated with the special type of learning which finds its chosen field in the ponderous tomes of early Christian literature. But the Greenwood Lectureship has had a very different history. Founded sixteen years ago, by the munificence of Mr. C. J. Heywood, it bears the name of a layman, one who is not likely to be forgotten so long as this University is faithful to the ideals of its great Principal. But it does not merely perpetuate the memory of Principal Greenwood. It is intended to keep up the study of a subject he loved to teach. I have heard old pupils of his speak with peculiar warmth of the Greek Testament class Dr. Greenwood used to take, one which had no definite relation to degree courses, but consisted of students of all kinds, drawn together by the enthusiasm of his teaching, and the love of the subject which they shared with the unprofessional teacher. No wonder the University chose another layman to take charge of the subject when Dr. Greenwood's voice was heard no more! I feel that my election quite rudely breaks the succession—though, indeed, I may plead that Dr. Wilkins's *Alma Mater* and my own would have regarded us as equally unclerical had we sought her permission to teach theology within her walls. My safest defence will be to

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prove that I am joined to my predecessor by a close tie which ensures continuity of aim. My personal friendship with Dr. Wilkins began a very long time ago, for he took charge of me when I first "went up" to Cambridge. He was a brilliant undergraduate, and I was a youth of thirty-four (months). His tutorship at that time only lasted from King's Cross to Cambridge station, nor do I remember the classical lore with which he no doubt improved my mind; but the occasion was the beginning of a friendly relation which survived even the test of his examining me for a London degree. My removal from Cambridge to Manchester came just after his physical breakdown had cut short the activity to which this University owes an ineffaceable debt. But when Dr. Wilkins could no longer teach Latin, he still clung to his Greek Testament work, and continued, so far as shattered health allowed him, to take charge of the subject he loved best of all.

As a natural sequel to what I have been saying of my predecessor, I should like to keep my advertised subject waiting a minute or two longer while I explain how I propose to interpret the duties of this office. A portion of the Greek Testament is, happily, a subject for the Final B.A.; and the establishment of the Divinity degrees will no doubt make this option popular with many who contemplate theological studies when they have graduated in Arts. But I shall be very far from satisfied if my class in connexion with this set subject includes only those who take up Greek Testament because of its importance for the profession to which they are dedicating their lives. The New Testament is the layman's Book; and every man and woman to whom its teaching appeals may be earnestly invited to study it in its original form. The linguistic equipment necessary before such study can be profitable is easy of attainment; and the gains of the study, even in its elementary stages, are out of all proportion to the labour

involved. I shall therefore hope to find the subject attracting men and women students who have no professional object in view; and I should like to see many attending the class who are contemplating no degree examination at all. But this last category mostly comes under the second division of my proposals for the conduct of the Lectureship. There are, I believe, many of the general public who would like to take up this study for its own intrinsic interest and importance. They may have no opportunity or even wish to get up a New Testament Book for examination. But they could follow an attempt to interpret such a Book for its own sake, based upon the Greek text, but freed from technicalities, and in the main intelligible even to those who have nothing but the English before them. To gather together a weekly class of this kind is an ambition I very sincerely cherish; and I hope to begin it next October, if in the meantime I can find out under what conditions it can be made most generally useful.* Perhaps some of those present to-night may help me here by their suggestions on such points as the hour at which the class—presumably an evening class—might best meet. I can only say that I shall welcome any expressions of opinion which may assist me in my wish to popularise, as far as I can, the great subject of which this University has made me a custodian. The Greenwood Lecturer is no longer, I am thankful to say, the only or the chief representative of New Testament study in this place. If I can do anything to open the door of Professor Peake's class-room to some whose imperfect equipment might otherwise have kept them outside, I shall feel that I have sufficiently justified my appointment, and done both the students and the University a service for which they will thank me.

But it is time to turn from this preface to the subject which has been announced. I wish to describe to-night, as well as I can, the road by which both my predecessor and myself came to the study of the Greek Testament.

* The subject will be "The Words of Jesus," as recorded in the common elements of the First and Third Gospels, cf. below, p. 16.

The mere fact that it is not the beaten track may in itself be a definite advantage to those who travel upon it. Almost any subject of research may be furthered not a little by the advent of students who come to it from more or less distant fields. They will have to be fully alive to the dangers inseparable from their lack of training along the regular lines. But this disadvantage will often be more than compensated by the polarising of the light, the testing of conclusions, hitherto assumed as axiomatic, by the introduction of criteria drawn from experience in other branches of study. However this may be in general, there can be no question as to the truth of the principle when applied to theology. In a country like Germany, where specialism has gone much further than it has in England, the somewhat narrow training of the professional Biblical critic has sometimes led to extreme one-sidedness, which cried aloud for broader views, for healthy common sense, for knowledge of other fields of research, to correct its extravagances and to sift its results. It is very significant that some of the most effective stimulus that New Testament study has received for years past has come from men who have won their laurels in very different subjects. Professor Friedrich Blass has brought his unparalleled knowledge of the whole range of classical Greek, his refined taste and critical acumen, to illuminate the great literature which many classical scholars have despised because in the interval of four centuries the Greek language dared to grow. Professor W. M. Ramsay has contributed an astonishing amount of new light from the investigations of an archæologist who knows Asia Minor as it never has been known. And now the veteran Julius Wellhausen has turned from the Old Testament researches which will always be associated with his name, to help in the fascinating task of reconstructing the original Aramaic records on which our Gospels are built. And so with many another honoured name. Historians, philosophers, experts in physical science,

students of ancient law, pioneers in the infant sciences of anthropology and comparative religion—there is plenty of room for all of them in the inexhaustible task on which every generation starts afresh, of interpreting for the times the Book that has re-created the world.

If this is so, there may be room for contributions from students of the Science of Language. For some reason or other, we as a tribe have had to put up with an extraordinary amount of contumely from devotees of sciences which pride themselves on superiority. The withering scorn with which Jülicher speaks of “the philologist Blass” will serve as a good example. “Mere grammar” figures in every popular denunciation of the system of instruction pursued in our Public Schools; and it is abundantly clear that if boys could only be diverted from the soul-destroying work of learning declensions and conditional sentences, and properly taught how to make sulphuretted hydrogen, the educational millennium would soon be here. And yet these evangelists of nobler studies are only enabled to preach by the use of Language; and the words and constructions they use have, if only they knew it, a history as fascinating as that of any microbe, and capable of treatment as rigidly scientific. It would be easy to spend most of my time to-night upon a plea for the Science of Language in general, but I must resist temptation. My immediate duty is to show how we may bring linguistic study to bear upon the elucidation of the New Testament. The subject is a wide one, and I can only briefly indicate some of its heads to-night, postponing to more frequently recurring occasions the practical application of the principles I endeavour to lay down.

The Science of Language has two main divisions, according as it deals with isolated words or with words in a sentence. The former embraces Etymology and Accidence, the latter Syntax. In the first division we may dismiss Accidence with a few words. It is a subject which pain-

fully interests the beginner, who can do but little to the interpretation of the text he is studying until he is able to parse the verbs with approximate accuracy. The history of the forms themselves, as traced by the comparative method through ancient and recondite languages to the prehistoric speech of our ultimate common ancestors, is an extraordinarily interesting pursuit, but hardly one after which the tiro in Hellenistic Greek will turn aside. But the study of Etymology, to judge from the pages of the commentators and the columns of Grimm-Thayer's New Testament Lexicon, must have no small importance for the accurate delineation of the words the meaning of which we seek. Perhaps scientific Linguistic here will act mainly in a negative direction. Generations of examiners have displayed insatiable curiosity as to the etymology of the Hellenistic word for *sheep*. But even when the expected (and probably mythical) answer is given, that it means "the creature that goes forward," I do not know that we have discovered much which clarifies our hazy ideas respecting an animal that only etymology regards as progressive. How familiar we are with the supposed fact that *sincere* means "without wax"! But if I cast doubt on a hoary superstition to-night, the agnostic condition into which I bring you will not lessen the clearness of your understanding as to the meaning and the virtue of "sincerity." Scientific Linguistic may have to show that very many dictionary etymologies are little more than irresponsible guess-work; but, after all, this does not affect the really important questions we have to ask, as to the meaning of words during the historical period of Greek, and the principles which must guide us in delimiting their development-history. Even research into the prehistoric meaning of words may sometimes help us to fix their meaning in Christian Greek, if it be carried on with judgement; but it is not often that it yields results worthy of the trouble taken. On this side our work will mostly

be to clear away the useless statements out of obsolete text-books that still deface the works on which our students depend for the interpretation of New Testament words. Linguistic science can, however, do something with words which have come into being within the separate life-history of Greek. It can examine the principles of word-formation, and the development and uses of suffixes. Thus there is the most important term *Paraclete* as used by St. John. The old translation, "Comforter," was based on ignorance of the fact that the form must be passive when derived from a transitive verb: if therefore the meaning "comfort" be selected among the senses attached to the verb, we must understand *Paraclete* to mean "one who is comforted." Many illustrations might be given to show how necessary it is that lexical investigations, which have so constantly to be responsible for determining the meaning of a passage in the New Testament, should be controlled by adequate knowledge of linguistic science, and particularly of the department of Semantics, the as yet rather neglected study of the principles governing the changes of meaning in words.

In this study of words and their meanings I may remind you how rich a vein has been opened within the last ten years by the discovery of innumerable documents proved to be written in the very idiom of the Greek Bible. I was attempting a year ago in this place to depict the revolution in New Testament lexicography due to Deissmann's discovery that the non-literary Egyptian papyri coincide closely in the form of their Greek with the language of Paul and Luke and John, hitherto supposed to be a Greek wholly without parallel outside the area of Jewish writers. I do not intend to go over this ground again to-night, but will make this my transition to the larger subject which comes next. The discovery of Deissmann was mainly worked out by him in the field of lexical research. He took Greek Biblical words, found parallels for them in the

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papyri, and showed how the meanings previously assumed to be peculiar, due to literal translation from Hebrew or Aramaic originals, were in reality current in the ordinary daily speech of people who had never heard a word of Semitic in their lives. What Deissmann proved from vocabulary, has now been established beyond controversy in the larger sphere of grammar, and gives us our most conspicuous illustration of the service which the Science of Language can render to New Testament study.

Let me pause here, then, to explain the nature of a revolution—for it is no less—which has taken place in our views of New Testament Greek within the past ten years. The history of interpretation shows many succeeding phases of theory, but one doctrine at least was regarded as established beyond controversy, the isolated character of Biblical Greek. Gallant efforts were made by the "Purist" school to show that the New Testament was really written in Greek which could be supported from one period or another of the vast literature of Hellenism. But even the absurd excesses of their opponents, the "Hebraist" school, failed to discount their utter failure. Real parallels to the idiom of the sacred writers could not be found, not even in Jewish authors like Philo or Josephus, nor in the Greek Fathers of the post-apostolic ages. It was natural that a theory should be framed to account for these strange facts. It began with the Septuagint, that marvellous pioneer translation of the Old Testament by which nameless Jewish scholars of Egypt tried to make their Scriptures intelligible to the world of Hellenism, as well as to their countrymen who could not understand the already obsolescent Hebrew. The translators themselves frequently failed to interpret the Hebrew rightly; and, as modern examinees often do under similar circumstances, they took refuge in a barbarous literalness which caused the translation to be as unintelligible as the original. In

many more places they pursued the same policy through sheer reverence for the text: like the successive translators of our English Bible, they shrank from eliminating words and phrases, characteristic of the Hebrew, but entirely functionless in the language of the translation. Take, for example, the perpetually recurring “It came to pass” in our Bibles. Hebrew has an idiomatic formula used in narrative, by which the finite verb is preceded by what is literally “And it was, and . . .” Thus, if Luke ii. 1 were put into Hebrew, it would run “And it was in those days and there went forth a decree.” Obviously the English of this is, “Now about that time a decree was promulgated”; and idiomatic Greek would equally require a sentence on those lines. But the Septuagint translators would not sacrifice the characteristic idiom of the Hebrew, and they forced it into a Greek that was about on the same footing as our own “It came to pass that . . .” This translation-Greek became familiar in a few generations to those who used exclusively the Greek Bible; and New Testament writers followed it much as English writers of devotional literature follow the phraseology of the Authorised Version, even where it differs entirely from the English current to-day. Then there was another force at work. The Apostles and Evangelists were assumed to be men who thought in Aramaic, the ordinary language of Palestine; and their Greek was accordingly the result of a translation process, even where they were not definitely rendering words that had been spoken in their native tongue. Hence arose a peculiar form of Jewish Greek, naturally unparalleled outside the circle of Biblical writers. It was a “language of the Holy Ghost,” as a pious German scholar put it, never profaned by common use, and as alien from the ordinary language of life as the religious dialect of English which is based upon our Bible.

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Now it has been the work of the Science of Language during the past ten years to remove this theory of Biblical Greek almost entirely from its established position. The researches of Deissmann showed the vocabulary of the Greek Bible to be simply that of every-day life, differing in no important respect from the language of men of equal education in Egypt, Asia Minor, or Greece. The hint thus given has already been exceedingly fertile in results. The most recent commentators are writing with a tableful of papyrus collections at their side, and the word-indices are being well thumbed. But this is not all. Searching the papyri for their vocabulary soon shows that their grammar likewise is that of the New Testament writers, when we bring into comparison writers of approximately equal culture. In other words, the "Biblical Greek" is isolated no more. The "language of the Holy Ghost" is simply the language of daily life all over the Greek-speaking world, which was nearly conterminous with the Roman Empire. That the Holy Ghost spoke in the language in which the largest possible number of people could understand Him, is a conclusion obviously in accord with the whole method of Revelation as we can see it. Nor can we fail to realise the immense significance of the fact that Christianity came to the civilised world just at the time when unity of government and unity of language had been established from one end of it to the other. For Greek was the world-language of the time, with a dominion as widely established as that of English to-day, and as marked an internal unity of structure. Along Roman roads, under the protection of Roman law, the first missionaries of Christ carried their Gospel to people of every race, all of them capable of understanding sufficiently well the Greek in which the message was given. By the time that the Empire became hostile, and still more when Babel had invaded the unity of its common speech, the power of the Gospel was too firmly

established to need such aids to its progress. The sciences of History and Language unite to show how wonderfully timed was the appearance of Him who brought to mankind the revelation of a Father in heaven.

Without trenching further on the ground covered in the lecture of a year ago,* to which this is a kind of sequel, I want to show the nature of the new tools with which the labours of the grammarians have enriched the New Testament student. What I have just been describing goes to show that we must expect to find our lights upon Biblical Greek, not as hitherto mainly in the narrow circle of Jewish language and ideas, but in the immense field of Greek as spoken and written throughout the Gentile world. I do not, of course, mean to say that Semitic influences are not to be found in the Greek of the New Testament. But we are able to delimit them much more closely, and hold the balance more evenly between the Greek and the Semitic. A considerable part of the New Testament is based upon translations from the Aramaic. St. Mark's Gospel, which forms one of the two main sources of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's, tells in rough, unpolished Greek a story which the writer had heard and told so often in Aramaic that he was virtually translating in a large proportion of his narrative. Most of you probably heard Dr. Sanday's extremely suggestive account, in his lecture of last Tuesday, of the conditions under which the writers of our first and third Gospels may be supposed to have worked. He showed how either they themselves, or an educated scribe whom they followed, smoothed away the literal and unidiomatic turns of expression by which St. Mark had represented the Aramaic of St. Peter's original words. Wellhausen's recent study of the subject prompts us to believe that in the famous manuscript of the Gospels and Acts, Codex Bezae, which is the special treasure of our

* See *Theological Lectures* (Manchester University Press, 1905), pp. 161—175.

Cambridge University Library, we have a form of St. Mark which lies even nearer to the Aramaic: it might even turn out that the hypothetical copy from which Dr. Sanday derives our ordinary text of the Gospel had been itself to some extent revised by some one whose Greek was a little more idiomatic than the Evangelist's own. But this by the way. Aramaic, of course, underlies other parts of the New Testament as well. Though it is almost certain that our Lord and His Apostles understood and used Greek, there can be no doubt that the "Words of Jesus," which formed the other great source of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, were originally spoken in Aramaic, just as Papias tells us they were first written down. The native dialect of Palestine accordingly supplies a very large part of the New Testament, translated into Greek which we now know is hardly ever really foreign to Greek colloquial style, but which often would betray itself as a translation. The literalisms of our English Bible illustrate this phenomenon very well. We very rarely use the interjection "Behold" in ordinary speech, and normal late Greek speech did not use it much more than we do. In those parts of the New Testament which come from Aramaic sources, or are written by men (like St. James) who continued to use Aramaic as their ordinary language, we find this "behold" extremely often. There is a curious parallel in Shakspeare, who makes his Welsh Captain Fluellen perpetually use the phrase "look you"—correct English, and not uncommon still in the Dales—simply because it translated Welsh interjections which adorned his speech abundantly when he was at home. We find a very few places in which something entirely un-Greek has been admitted by bald literal translation, like "saved Noah the eighth person" in the Authorised Version of 2 Peter ii. 5. The other kind of Semitism, due to the copying of phraseology which had passed into religious style from

the over-literal Septuagint version of the Old Testament, was especially prominent in the writings of the Gentile Luke, as Dr. Sanday reminded us last week. But St. Luke very markedly drops this style when his narrative passes away from Palestine into the Gentile world, where he felt it was less appropriate. Here, and in the Epistles generally, except where there is definite quotation from the Old Testament or an Aramaic saying of Jesus, we are able now to assert that the language is absolutely normal Greek as spoken throughout the Roman world. Papyri and inscriptions, preserving the language of conversation, instead of the largely artificial language of books, which were till lately our only source for the knowledge of later Greek, have shown us that the ingenuity of the "Hebraist" school was almost all wasted, that grammatical usages formerly assumed to be barbarous, lifted straight out of Hebrew and Aramaic, were part and parcel of the daily language of men whose native dialect was as far from the speech of Canaan as from that of Timbuctoo.

It is not quite easy to give illustrations of this momentous change in our definitions, one which you can easily see must very often alter seriously our conception of the meaning of the Greek Testament; but perhaps I may find one or two which can be made clear without straying into technicalities. The use of the preposition *in* is a very good example. This exactly translates the Hebrew and Aramaic *bē* in a large proportion of its usages, but the latter is used also to express the instrumental *with*, for which the Greek preposition was no more appropriate than our *in* would be. No wonder therefore that when St. Paul wrote "Shall I come to you *in* a rod?" grammarians assumed he was merely mistranslating Hebrew. But it happened that in a volume of papyri which Drs. Grenfell and Hunt published three years ago, there were half-a-dozen examples of the phrase "*in* swords," "*in* sticks," where literary Greek of all ages would have expressed the

instrumental sense by a dative without preposition. We are able to understand the use of *in* now from study of the late Greek vernacular. It was always a very common preposition, as we should expect. A diligent German grammarian, Dr. Helbing, tells us that it occurs 6,031 times in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, and 17,130 times in twelve voluminous historians of the post-classical age. These figures are not much more than half of those which the same patient enumerator assigns to *into* in the twelve post-classical writers. But in the New Testament the case is very much altered, for *into* occurs only 1743 times, but *in* 2,698. (I hasten to disclaim any credit for rivalling Dr. Helbing in industry, for happily a concordance gives the New Testament enumerator a most unfair advantage!) This great increase of the use of *in* is abundantly paralleled in the papyri. *In* goes with the dative in Greek, and in the vernacular language we find the dative falling more and more out of use as the centuries went on: it is obsolete in the genuine vernacular of to-day. But in the first century A.D. we find the dative very much alive. It was used so freely that it ultimately ceased to be useful, and died as we might say of fatty degeneration. A case that could mean almost anything could not be trusted out alone; and we cannot be surprised that nursemaid *in* and nursemaid *with* frequently shirked their proper work and meddled with each other's province in attending to their troublesome charge. I may quote two papyri of the second century B.C., which in saying "weakened with hunger" use respectively the simple dative and the dative with *in*, though the phrase is otherwise identical. I have said enough to show that the use of *in* to express the meaning of *with* has nothing to do with Hebrew. A very short study of the New Testament in the original will suffice to show how important to the exposition is a correct account of this little word, so that the new light here is something to be thankful for.

The example I have been giving will serve to illustrate Hebraisms that disappear under the new treatment, in this case with one or two exceptions in which we must still recognise the influence of an all too faithful translator. On the other side I ought to give an example of the kind of Semitism which (within limits) we have to retain in places where direct translation has taken place. There are a good many languages which either never possessed or have lost the reflexive pronoun, and are consequently obliged to fill the gap with a noun. To express the metaphysical conception of the *self* or *Ego*, primitive minds have to apply material conceptions as well as they can; and the *breath* is naturally the favourite one, among savages to-day as among the great nations of history in their earliest development of thought. Thus what we express by *self*—a word of doubtful original meaning—Sanskrit expressed by *âtman*, and Hebrew by *nephesh*, both of which meant “breath.” In both these utterly unrelated languages this word could express on the one side the mere reflexive, and on the other the idea of the soul, life, or self. It was this word which Jesus must have used when He said: “What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his *life*” or “*soul*?” This involves translating the Aramaic by the Greek word from which we derive our *psychical*, itself originally meaning “breath” like the others, but in the language of Greek thought long developed into a much more recondite idea. Now notice that when St. Luke takes over this saying he substitutes “lose or forfeit his own *self*,” using the ordinary reflexive. You can see at once that it makes all the difference here whether we regard this phrase as native Greek, or interpret it as St. Luke (or rather, probably, his immediate source) did, by going back to the meaning of the Aramaic in which the saying was given. “To lose one’s *soul*” is a phrase which careless modern readers pass by as a sort of theological conception they are content to

ignore. "To lose one's *self*," though it really means the same thing, has a comprehensiveness and a freedom from religious technicality about it which is much more calculated to appeal to the modern mind.

Having thus sketched the newer view of Biblical Greek, in its relation to the Greek of the outside world, I pass on to define more exactly the materials with which the grammarian is now able to contribute his share to the understanding of the apostles and evangelists. Of the papyri I have already said almost enough. I need only add a few words as to the wide differences of culture that are found in the documents. We open a papyrus and we may find a well written, correctly spelt private letter from a highly educated man. It is not expressed in the artificial literary style in which the writer would compose a treatise or a poem. The difference is familiar enough to us. We may find a good illustration in the pages of Macaulay's *Life*, in which extracts are given from the historian's diary, noting for his own use what he saw in Londonderry. There the biographer adds the corresponding passages as worked up in the *History*. But our papyrus may just as well be a problem of writing, spelling and grammar, which only the expert can interpret, and that only by the aid of a lively imagination and wide knowledge of the life of the farmers, the temple recluses, the schoolboys of the lower standards, in the half-Hellenised Egypt of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Between these extremes we have intermediates of every grade. The study of these varied documents—perhaps most of all that of the most illiterate—throws a flood of light on the direction of development in the vernacular of the Greek world. Now when we turn to the New Testament, we find varieties of culture, not as wide indeed as these, but sufficiently marked to make it imperative on us to take each author by himself, assigning him his place on the "grammatometer" which we may construct by the aid of the papyri. At the top stands the

author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—authoress, I should prefer to say, following with Professor Peake Harnack's ascription of the letter to Priscilla. It is spoken Greek, answering fairly well to the English which we should hear in the pulpit from a great extempore preacher: the archaisms of Greek written style are avoided as much as the lighter colloquialisms of daily life. On about the same level stands St. Luke, with the Hellenist's instinct of style, the only New Testament writer to use the archaic "potential optative," by his time only found in books—and yet in following his sources ready to incorporate their characteristic roughnesses, and even to add on his own account Greek which a Gentile would not have used, copying the style of the Greek Bible. Then there is St. Paul, dictating his letters to the breathless amanuensis, with never a thought of style or literary ornament, but pouring forth a rapid stream of conversational Greek as spoken by a highly cultured man who has used the language all his life. At the other end of the scale we see St. Mark, and the author of the Revelation. The latter, like many of the writers of papyri, has very imperfect ideas of the use of cases and genders. He will put nominatives to stand in apposition to genitives or other cases, on much the same principle as an imperfectly cultured Englishman—following Shakspeare, by the way—will say "between you and I." How our "grammatometer" may be used in what is called "higher criticism," may be seen when we reflect that the author of *Revelation*, if he is also the author of the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, must either have improved his Greek in the meantime by several years' residence in a Greek city where he could no longer use Aramaic in daily conversation, or in composing the Gospel must have left the actual expression of his thought to better Hellenists than himself. To decide between these, and the third alternative of separate authorship, the literary critic must call in the grammarian to take his humble share.

Next to the papyri we take the inscriptions, a familiar field for two or three generations now to the student of the classical language, but only recently taken up systematically as an aid to the work of New Testament exegesis. The pioneer work of our own Canon Hicks in this field will not be overlooked here. Inscriptions have a disadvantage in comparison with papyri, in that they do not generally belong so completely to the language of daily life. But they come, in perpetually increasing numbers, from every part of the Greek world, and give us invaluable help in showing the essential homogeneousness of the world-language as spoken in widely distant countries. The possession of the papyri and the inscriptions enables us now to use with new understanding the immense mass of Greek literature. We have the permanent features of the language traced in the classical period, in the later literature, and in the vernacular; and the value of the post-classical writers is immensely enhanced for us by the fact that new criteria enable us to distinguish between purely literary archaisms and genuine elements of popular speech which the literary man has not succeeded in pruning away. The new-born scientific interest in the later history of the Greek language has prompted systematic research even in the literature of the Byzantine age, into which a classical scholar of fifty years ago could hardly dip without risking his reputation. And—more astonishing condescension still!—first-class philologists like Thumb and Krumbacher and Kretschmer in Germany, and Hatzidakis in Athens, are registering the grammar of the vernacular Greek of to-day, and its dialectic variations as spoken by uncultured artisans and rustics in different parts of Greece and Asia Minor. The importance of Modern Greek for the study of the New Testament received practical recognition, almost for the first time, at any rate in England, in my father's edition of G. B. Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, which appeared thirty-

six years ago. Since then our materials have greatly increased, and with them has increased our knowledge of their importance. Eliminating the artificial Greek of books and newspapers, and putting aside elements in the popular speech derived from Turkish or other alien sources, we find in the Greek of to-day a lineal descendant of the vernacular of the first century of our era; and the folk-songs of modern Hellas, or the Gospels as translated into the vulgar tongue by Pallis, form an aid to Greek Testament study which no grammarian can afford to ignore.

It is now time that I should give a few illustrations of the practical working out of these new methods. Most of the examples which present themselves are too technical for exposition here; but there are a good many which are clear in themselves and can be appreciated without my attempting to expatiate on arcana of grammatical lore. I was speaking just now of the help which grammar may give to higher criticism, and may begin with one or two points by way of supplement under this heading. The question of the unity of books in the New Testament is one in which the grammarian must have his say, as well as the critic of style. A decisive answer as to the problem of the Third Gospel and the Acts, as to whether these books are from the same hand, and that the hand of the diarist whose "We-document" in the latter half of Acts forms one of the pivots of New Testament criticism, could probably be given best by an exhaustive comparison of a number of syntactical usages as seen in these various sections of the writings attributed to the companion of St. Paul. If I may judge from the incidental examples which have come my way, the verdict will be unmistakably on the side of the tradition. A criterion which may possibly prove of importance, in determining the geographical *provenance* of New Testament writers, is supplied in a recent suggestion by Professor Thumb, of Marburg. He

points out that the infinitive of ancient Greek still survives in the modern Greek of Asia Minor, while, as is well known, it has entirely vanished from that of Greece itself. Now in the ancient vernacular we find some writers showing a strong tendency towards the use of the clause with *that* which ultimately supplanted the infinitive in European Greek, while others retain the infinitive by preference. If we can show that this and other dialectic variations within Modern Greek were already in existence nineteen centuries ago, and if we can delimit their geographical distribution for that time, we shall evidently possess a useful test by which to decide (for example) whether St. Luke came from Philippi or Antioch, or whether the Fourth Gospel was written by one who formed his Greek in Ephesus.

And now for one or two points of undiluted grammar. An interesting and sometimes very important feature of Hellenistic, as compared with classical Greek, is the rapid decline of grammatical resources for distinguishing between duality and plurality. In Homer and in the great Attic writers we find a separate Dual Number still surviving in nouns, pronouns and verbs. It answers to that which may be seen in Sanskrit and Old Persian, and in the Gothic of the fourth century A.D., in which Wulfila made the Bible speak for the first time to a people of our own Teutonic stock. I am personally inclined to conjecture that the Dual arose in a pre-historic age when our ancestors—like a good many savages of the present day—could not count beyond two. But long before the Indo-Germans had divided into Aryans proper, Kelts, Italians, Germans, Greeks, Slavs, and the rest, they had developed a much more advanced arithmetic; and they used up the old Dual for the special purpose of describing things that go in pairs. This was evidently a mere luxury of language, and we cannot wonder that the Greek dialects of Asia Minor, like Latin, and modern languages generally,

let it drop as a superfluity. In the Common Greek, the genesis of which I briefly described in my lecture of a year ago, the Dual and all its works had utterly vanished. But this was not all. Like English, Greek had whole categories of words the differentia of which depended on the distinction between duality and plurality. There were words answering to our own adjectives *whether*, *either* and *other*, and several more which, like these, contemplated the antithesis of two individuals or two classes. There were also the great categories of comparative and superlative; for, of course, the word *greater* implies comparison with one other individual, or with all other individuals regarded as a whole, while *greatest* implies at least three items among which comparison is made. Now when we study the papyri, we find that dual words of all these classes have lost their special distinction. They have either become obsolete, wholly or partially, or are used indiscriminately for dual and plural alike. The superlative has practically vanished, except in what is called the *elative* sense, to express “*very great*,” etc. In the case of *former* and *first* it is the comparative which has all but disappeared, so that St. John (i. 15 and xv. 18) says *first* where he means *before*. All this was unsuspected twenty-five years ago; and the Revisers then scrupulously inserted margins, such as “Gr. *first in regard of me*,” for the text “before me,” and “Gr. *greater*” where English idiom had forced them to say “the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” “the greatest of these is love.” We can now dispense with such notes and accept the text as a truly literal rendering. In the first words of the *Acts*, the author reminds Theophilus of his “former treatise;” but since the Greek has “*first*,” Professor Ramsay argued that St. Luke must have meant to write a third. Whether that be so or not, it is clear we cannot use this argument to prove it. There is actually one place in *Acts* where even the word *both* can hardly be understood except by

the assumption that it means *all*. I doubt whether here (xix. 16) we have what St. Luke wrote; but it is noteworthy that in other places this highly educated writer defies the classical distinction. In Luke vi. 29 he keeps without demur the word for "the *other* cheek" which to Demosthenes or Plato would have suggested our possession of at least three cheeks apiece; and in the Parable of the Sower he uses the dual word for *other*, of *four* alternatives, where his source, St. Mark, had been classically correct. This important change in the language is interesting to us, because it is so closely paralleled in present-day English. The Revisers were bound by their rules to keep the utterly obsolete phrase "Whether of the twain," in Matt. xxvii. 21. But it is significant that the original answers to "Which of the two:" the Greek which in both words corresponds to our archaism would not be found in spoken language much after the fourth century B.C. In the matter of comparison, we all know we ought to say "the better of the two," but "the best of them all." Are you all prepared to lay hand on heart and declare that you never said and never will say "the best of the two"? If conscience smites you at my enquiry, I can reassure you from personal observation among cultured people: you sin in excellent company, and I am not afraid to prophesy that posterity will be on your side. I myself, a professional grammarian, spoke of "four alternatives" just now! Well, I would say it again without a blush; for I feel quite certain that when in some distant epoch a new Dr. Grenfell digs up this lecture, he will point out to an admiring world that the dark ages of the twentieth century produced at any rate one mind that could penetrate futurity, and speak in the tongues of men as yet unborn!

Pursuing a little further this desultory selection of grammatical points which may be illustrated without becoming abstruse, I may pause a moment on another

phenomenon of Number, the relations of *we* and *I* in the letters of St. Paul. Among the various suspect traits which the late Professor van Manen discovered in the letter to Philemon was "a surprising mixture of singular and plural in the persons speaking . . ." Nobody takes poor van Manen seriously now; and scholars with a reputation to lose would be very hard up for a subject if they undertook to impugn the genuineness of *Philemon*. But the sentence just quoted from the Dutch "hyper-critic" will serve to introduce the remark that papyrus letters dispel any "surprise" we might have felt in St. Paul's mixture of *we* and *I*. Without the excuse of the journalist, who has to multiply himself to make his readers appreciate the mighty consensus that his single opinion represents, or the author, who is too modest to let his printer invest in a new fount of capital *I*'s, the humble epistolographers allowed *we* and *I* to chase each other over their pages without rhyme or reason. Such a sentence as "Having heard (*singular*) that you are out of sorts, we are distressed," will serve as a short sample. It seems safe to say that future critics will not spend much ingenuity on the task of finding associates to justify the frequent *we* of St. Paul. There are one or two other matters I might mention from the grammarian's chapter on pronouns, but I must be content with merely instancing some typical points from the verb. Take the painful statistics by which laborious grammarians have shown the difference between the moods which may express the desire of a speaker that those he addresses should do what he describes. We have here all the gradations between a blunt authoritative command and the most cringing entreaty. Statistical research among the Attic Orators has shown that a speaker desirous of conciliating the sovereign people made chary use of the imperative, and shunned it entirely in his exordium. The sophist Protagoras even blamed the divine bard him-

self for beginning the *Iliad* with an imperative, "*Sing, heavenly Muse.*" The petitions which fill so large a part of the papyrus collections are even more careful to let no rude imperative jar on the ear of king or governor, from whom their writers hope to gain redress for wrongs done. There is therefore all the more emphasis visible in the royal imperatives of Him who "spake with authority," and of His ambassadors who gave their commands on faith and morals in His name. The imperative mood has an interesting consequence attached to it when turned into a prohibition by prefixing the negative. There are two main forms of prohibition in Greek. One, with the present imperative, has been shown to mean generally "Stop doing," "Don't do what you are doing now"; while the other is a warning against doing it in future time. It is rather startling therefore to hear St. Paul use the first of these forms when he bids his converts "Lie not," "Be not drunken with wine," or St. James when, "before all things," he exhorts Christians to "Swear not at all." We seem to gather that the first generation of Christianised heathens were subject to all the ethical perils which missionaries deplore among their eagerly gathered converts from heathenism to-day.

I pass before I close to the mention of another department in which the Science of Language has help to offer the student of the New Testament. Hitherto I have been referring only to grammatical researches within the limits of the Greek language, which can be and have been carried out by scholars knowing little of languages outside. But in undertaking to speak to-night of the Science of Language, I did not intend to confine the term to researches that concerned one language alone, even though that language were Greek, the queenliest tongue ever spoken on this earth. Greek is but one branch of a great family of speech, to which our own English belongs; and it is not reasonable to suppose that Greek can be per-

fectly understood without taking into account the seven other main branches that radiate from the same original. The best scholars working upon the two other sacred languages of the Christian Scriptures are exceedingly active to-day in the study of the cognate tongues. Professor Hogg's Assyrian class within these walls—on the successful establishment of which we justly pride ourselves not a little—is not attended only by those who want to read mercantile, religious, or mythological clay tablets from Nineveh or Babylon: the light which Assyrian can throw upon the cognate Hebrew and Aramaic probably bulks at least as large in the student's mind. The history of Greek scholarship in this country shows, unfortunately, no such readiness to admit the sidelights which can be drawn from the investigation of other Indo-Germanic tongues. Comparative Philology has rarely been asked for an opinion by exegetes and theologians; and the exceptions are usually in the relatively infertile field of etymology, where the guesses of German philologists belonging to the last school but two are still complacently quoted as final. Even among classical Greek scholars, few seem as yet aware that the last quarter of a century has witnessed a revolution which has made the Science of Language as much an exact science as chemistry, except for the element which has to be referred to psychology. The history of Greek on its structural and syntactical side can now be understood as never before by the unveiling of the pre-historic processes which made it what it was. In Winer's famous *Grammar*, already referred to, which finally left its author's hands just fifty years ago, the account of the Genitive begins with the statement that the case was "unquestionably the *whence-case*, the case of *proceeding from or out of*." Even at that date it may seem strange that "John's coachman" should have been compelled by the exigencies of grammar to "proceed from or out of" his employer. But the

most elementary knowledge of comparative philology tells us that the Greek genitive is a "syncretic" case, formed by the coalescence of the real "whence-case," the ablative, and the genitive proper, identical with our possessive. The period of arbitrary empiricism in grammar, in which usages are tortured into irrational agreement with a baseless first principle, is ended at once by the application of the comparative method. Greek cases have been made intelligible by the labours of syntactical experts like Delbrück, who interpret an abnormal-seeming usage by parallels drawn from Gothic or Zend, from Old Irish glosses or from the folk-songs of Lithuanian peasants now dwelling by the Baltic shores. And it is clear that everything which shows us how to get hold of the development-history of a case must touch at many points the interpretation of the New Testament itself. One more example must suffice to show how important are the contributions which this comparative study of allied languages may offer to the theologian, or the plain man who tries to follow the words of Scripture in their original form. Within the last few years philologists have been busy examining the "kind of action" belonging to the tenses and the conjugation stems of verbs, and the effect produced upon it by compounding the verb with a preposition. In the latter part of the subject we need go no further than English to get information which will make the rationale of Greek compound verbs far clearer. (In this case Slavonic is more valuable still.) We have evidently travelled far from the days when Greek and Latin were the only languages worthy of study, and when the comparison of these very widely and deeply differing tongues was the only relief there was to the examination of each within its own limits exclusively. The results of all this work—mostly, as usual, done in Germany—have not yet come into our grammars, but they throw an immense amount of light upon the complexities of the

Tenses. How important this is for the right understanding of hundreds of practical texts in Gospels or Epistles, a very short study will suffice to show.

I need hardly add, in bringing my plea to a close, that this sketch of what grammar and philology may contribute to the understanding of Scripture is not intended to exalt one method at the expense of another, to turn anyone away from the more often trodden paths by which the end may be attained. No one man can treat so vast a subject with the expert's thoroughness from all sides; and the very existence of a Faculty of Theology, a partnership of workers whose strength lies in very different spheres, is witness to the many-sidedness of the subject which has been so lately added to the studies of this University. I may be told that I represent the humblest side of Theology, the mere mechanical interpretation of words and sentences whose profound thoughts must be correlated and expounded by greater sciences than "mere grammar." Be it so: I am not careful to answer in this thing. If grammar be humble, it is at any rate indispensable; and in this capacity I may claim to hold the key of the gate past which the critic, the historian, the theologian, the philosopher cannot advance till grammar has withdrawn her veto. There may be many who have hitherto shrunk from essaying to enter the path I have been describing. They think that with the English Revised Version to help them, and good commentaries to consult, they can learn as much as they need for practical purposes of the wonderful literature on which so much of our country's moral and intellectual greatness is based. And, of course, this is entirely true. But yet there are very many things which no translation can supply and no commentary make live before us as the study of the original can make them. I asserted at the outset that the labour of learning enough Hellenistic Greek to profit from Greek Testament study is small relatively to the greatness of the gain. May I prove it by

a fact from experience? Five or six years since, going to preach in a growing Midland town, I was taken to see an almost helpless cripple, living in a little cottage on parish relief—he could only move one hand and could do nothing to maintain himself. I found that someone had given him a little grammar of New Testament Greek, by the aid of which he had worked through several chapters of St. John. And every week there came to that humble cottage fresh recruits to a band of young men who received there lessons from the Book of books, interpreted by a better commentary than money can buy, and took thence an inspiration which made their church a power among the people around. The illustration with which I have commended the study of Greek carries with it the reminder of the intangible requisite without which even such reading is barren. But I am sure that if by the mere provision of the necessary instruments for the work I can open up to fresh students the way into these artless pages which have changed the face of the world, I may leave it to them to find that grammar may become the minister of gifts which examinations cannot measure nor degrees certify. With that hope I would take up the work which has come to me from men whose memory will always be cherished here, earnestly trusting that the deficiencies of the worker will be made up to the students by the unique greatness of the subject on which we are to spend our labour.*

* For nearly all the matters sketched in the above lecture reference may be made to the writer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. i. (Prolegomena), just published by Messrs. T. and T. Clark.

