

**A COMMENTARY, CRITICAL
AND GRAMMATICAL,
ON ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649461219

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Cover @ 2017

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CHARLES J. ELLICOTT

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COMMENTARY,
CRITICAL AND GRAMMATICAL,
ON ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS,
WITH A
REVISED TRANSLATION.

BY
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AND
In Introductory Notice,

BY
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ANDOVER:
WARREN F. DRAPER.
BOSTON: CROSBY, NICHOLS, LEE & Co.
NEW YORK: JOHN WILEY.
PHILADELPHIA: SMITH, ENGLISH & CO.
1865.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1869, by

WARREN W. DRAPER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Andover:

Electrotyped and Printed by W. F. Draper.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

THE Commentaries of Professor Ellicott, modest and unassuming as they are in tone, really mark an epoch in English sacred literature. They are as different from other English commentaries as De Wette's are from the Germans who preceded him; and what De Wette has been to German exegesis, Ellicott is and will be to the English. I speak of scholarship and mode of exhibition mainly; but the remark is also true in another respect, for, as De Wette was in his time the soundest and most favorable type of German rationalism as applied to the exposition of Scripture, Ellicott now most fitly represents the clear common sense and reverential piety so happily characteristic of the best biblical expositors in the English church. Protestant Germany only could have produced a De Wette, and Protestant England only, an Ellicott.

It is the professed object of both these writers, by a severe and purely grammatical analysis of the language of the sacred penmen, to ascertain precisely the ideas which they meant to convey; and to express the results of this analysis in the simplest and briefest manner possible, without reference to theological systems, or ecclesiastical prepossessions, or practical inferences. This method must lie at the foundation of all true exegesis, and, to those who receive the Bible as the word of God, must form the basis of all Christian theology. Yet it is a method very seldom followed with any good degree of strictness, and it is not a method which is generally particularly interesting to theologians and preachers. It differs from the usual style of commentary as pure wheat differs from mer-

chantable flour. Though the ascertainable purity of the wheat is acknowledged to be a great advantage, there is the trouble of grinding it before it can be made into bread. Theologizing and sermonizing commentary, though everywhere intermingled with the speculations and prepossessions of the commentator, is generally preferred to a severe and strictly linguistic exegesis, because, though less pure, it furnishes the material more ready for immediate use. But which method is it that really takes the Bible as the sufficient and only authoritative rule of Christian faith and practice, and follows out to its legitimate results the fundamental principle of Protestantism? There can be but one answer to this question; and it is this, the only truly biblical and Protestant method of commentary, which Professor Ellicott has conscientiously, consistently, and successfully pursued.

It is the crowning excellence of these commentaries, that they are exactly what they profess to be, *critical* and *grammatical*, and therefore, in the best sense of the term, *exegetical*. It is no part of the author's object to theologize or to sermonize, or to make proof-texts, or to draw inferences or to repel them, but simply to interpret the language of the sacred writers; and this object he accomplishes. He first, with the utmost care and the most conscientious laboriousness, gives the reader a correct text, by means of a widely extended comparison of original MSS., ancient translations, and the best editions. The amount of hard work evidently expended on this part of his undertaking is, to one who knows how to appreciate it, almost appalling. His results are worthy of all confidence. He is more careful and reliable than Tischendorf, slower and more steadily deliberate than Alford, and more patiently laborious than any other living New Testament critic, with the exception, perhaps, of Tregelles. Having thus ascertained the text, he then goes to work lexically and grammatically upon every word, phrase, and sentence which it offers; and here again is everywhere seen the real *labor limæ* of the untiring and conscientious scholar. Nothing escapes his diligence, nothing wears out his patience. His exegetical conclusions are stated briefly and modestly, and with the utmost simplicity.

His references to other opinions and other writers, and to all the requisite authorities, are abundantly copious for the purposes of the most thorough study. The marginal indications of the course of thought are exceedingly judicious and helpful; and the full translations given at the close of each Commentary harmonize with all the other parts of the work. Here the constant marginal quotations from the older translators give the reader the best possible opportunity for an extensive comparison, which would otherwise, in most cases, be quite impossible, for want of access to the books.

The reader will be gratified to learn something of the history of the unpretending scholar who has already done so much, and who gives promise of so much more. CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT is of an old Devonshire family, a branch of which early emigrated to America, and still has descendants here. He was born in 1819, the son of Rev. Charles Spencer Ellicott, Rector of Whitwell in Rutlandshire. He studied at the grammar schools of Oakham and Stamford, and afterwards entered St. John's College, Cambridge, of which society he became a Fellow in 1844. In 1848 he married and took the Rectorship of Pilton, in Rutlandshire, which he held till the beginning of 1856; when, for the sake of having access to large public libraries, he resigned his living and returned to Cambridge. In 1858 he was appointed one of the select preachers before the University, and prepared and published a volume of sermons on the "Destiny of the Creature" (Rom. 8: 19 ff.). He received the same appointment again the next year, and was also made Hulsean Lecturer. In this capacity he delivered a course of lectures on the connection of the events in the life of Christ, which are now in press, and will soon be published. In 1858, also, he was appointed to succeed Professor Maurice in the professorship of Divinity at King's College, London, which office he still holds. On the 20th of February, 1860, while on a journey from Cambridge to London, in fulfilment of the duties of his office, he came very near losing his life by a shocking accident on the Eastern Counties Railway. Three persons in the same compartment with him

were instantly killed, and he had both legs broken, and his arm and head were severely scalded. His life was saved by his throwing himself upon the bottom of the carriage at the moment when the shock was greatest. He has now recovered from his injuries and is pursuing his work with undiminished zeal and success. He has already published on all the epistles of Paul, except Corinthians and Romans, and these he has now in hand, and will in due time complete.

The American publisher will issue the successive volumes, as rapidly as circumstances will permit, in the same order with the English (the next being the epistle to the Ephesians), till the whole series is in the hands of our scholars. It is to be hoped also that the American publishers of Alford's work on the Greek Testament will speedily complete that, as the last volume is now in press in England. It is a different kind of commentary from Ellicott's, though equally useful in its own way. It includes the whole of the New Testament, and has more of what critics call *introduction* in the shape of extended and elaborate *prolegomena* to the several books, and is designedly of as popular a cast as, from the nature of the case, a scholarly commentary on a Greek book can be. The two works cannot at all interfere with each other. Both are an honor to the English theological literature of the present generation; each in its own sphere supplies an urgent want; and they both ought to be accessible to American students at as cheap a rate as possible.

C. E. STOWE.

THEOL. SEM., ANDOVER, MASS.
Aug. 20, 1860.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following commentary is the first part of an attempt to elucidate St. Paul's Epistles, by systematically applying to the Sacred Text the present principles of grammar and criticism.

It is the result of several years' devotion to the study of biblical Greek, and owes its existence to the conviction that, in this country, the present very advanced state of philology has scarcely been applied with sufficient rigor to the interpretation of the New Testament. Our popular commentaries are too exclusively exegetical,¹ and presuppose, in the ordinary student, a greater knowledge of the peculiarities of the language of the New Testament than it is at all probable he possesses. Even the more promising student is sure to meet with two stumbling-blocks in his path, when he first maturely enters upon the study of the Holy Scripture.

In the first place, the very systematic exactitude of his former discipline in classical Greek is calculated to mislead him in the study of writers who belonged to an age when change had impaired, and conquest had debased the language in which they wrote;—his exclusive attention to a single dialect, informed, for the most part, by a single and prevailing spirit, ill prepares him for the correct apprehension of writings in which the tinge of nationalities, and the admixture of newer and deeper modes of thought are both distinctly recognizable;—his familiarity with modes of expression, which had arisen from the living wants of a living language, ill prepares him correctly and completely to understand their force when they are reproduced by aliens in kindred and customs, and strangers, and even more than strangers in tongue. Let all these diversities be fairly considered, and then, without entering into any more exact comparisons between biblical and classical Greek, it will be difficult not to admit that the advanced student in Attic Greek is liable to carry with him prejudices, which may, for a time at least, interfere with his full appreciation of the outward form in which the Sacred Oracles

¹ I must explain the meaning in which I use this word when in contradistinction to "grammatical." By a *grammatical* commentary, I mean one in which the principles of grammar are either exclusively or principally used to elucidate the meaning: by an *exegetical* commentary, one in which other considerations, such as the circumstances or known sentiments of the writer, &c., are also taken into account. I am not quite sure that I am correct in thus limiting "exegetical," but I know no other epithets that will serve to convey my meaning.