

**THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL  
COMMENTARY. A CRITICAL AND  
EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON  
THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES**

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The International Critical Commentary. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James by James Hardy Ropes

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EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON  
THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES**



The  
International Critical Commentary  
on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and  
New Testaments.

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THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES

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EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES

BY

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EDINBURGH

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## PREFACE.

**A** COMMENTARY like the present draws frankly from its predecessors, just as these in their turn used materials quarried by earlier scholars, whom they do not name on each occasion. The right to do this is won by conscientious effort in sifting previous collections and reproducing only what is trustworthy, apt, and instructive for the understanding of the text. If new illustrations or evidence can be added, that is so much to the good.

So far as I am aware, the solution I have given of the textual problem of 1<sup>17</sup>, the "shadow of turning," is strictly new. It is a matter of no consequence in itself, but acquires interest because it bears directly on the relation of the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, and because Dr. Hort candidly recognised this reading of **Σ** and **B**, as hitherto understood, to present a grave, although unique, obstacle to his and Dr. Westcott's theory.

To some other discussions, of the nature of detached notes, in which material is freshly or fully collected, I have ventured to call the reader's attention in the Table of Contents. It may also be not improper to remark that the account of extant ancient commentaries on James in Greek and Latin (pages 110-113) runs counter to some recent statements.

The explanation offered of "thou" and "I" in 2<sup>18</sup>, which seems to me to solve the problem of that passage, is not strictly new, but has been overlooked in most current works on the epistle. In the light of modern geographical knowledge the reference in 5<sup>7</sup> to "the early and latter rain" gains a greater importance than has generally been observed.

The summary of the epistle (pages 4*f.*) may make more

clear and intelligible than I have been able to do elsewhere the measure of unity which the epistle shows, and the relation of its parts.

A marked defect of this commentary, although one not peculiar to it, is that its rabbinical illustrations ought to be fuller. The glaring technical inconsistencies in the mode of referring to such passages as are cited will betray at once that they are drawn from various secondary sources and not from original and systematic research. It would be a great service to New Testament scholars to provide them with a new and adequate set of *Horae hebraicae*, and nowhere is the need so great as in James and the Gospel of Matthew.

These two writings are sources from which a knowledge of primitive Palestinian Christianity can be drawn, and they represent a different line of development from that of the Hellenistic Christianity which finds expression in Luke, Paul, and John. The grounds of the distinction are other than those which the Tübingen School believed to have controlled early Christian history, but they are no less clear or far-reaching. A just understanding of these tendencies requires a sound view not only of the origin and meaning of the Epistle of James, but of its history in the church. And here the critical question is that of the Shepherd of Hermas. The view stated below that Hermas betrays no knowledge of James and is not dependent on him was forced on me, I am glad to say, by the study of the facts, against a previous prejudice and without at first recognising where it led; but it is in truth the key to the history. If Hermas really read the Epistle of James so often that he knew by heart its most incidental phrases, now working them into his own writing and again making them the text for long expansions, the place of the epistle in early Christianity becomes an insoluble riddle.

The notes on textual criticism in the commentary are intended to treat chiefly those selected variants which make a difference in the sense; the materials employed do not ordinarily go beyond the apparatus of Tischendorf. I hope later to treat the criticism and history of the text of James in the light of all the

evidence, including as nearly as may be the whole body of extant minuscule Greek manuscripts.

To many friends who have helped me in countless ways and from great stores of thought and knowledge I would gratefully express the obligation that I owe them.

JAMES HARDY ROPES.

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