New Testament Exegesis

Lecture # 1.   The Character of Biblical language.

I. Introduction
   A. An understanding of language is fundamental to interpretation.
   B. Language therefore is designed (?)
      1. Primarily to convey meaning...and nearly all other "uses" are contingent on this. Perhaps the simplest way to demonstrate the expedient nature of this is to see how:
         a. it is used to render abstracts concrete
         b. and conversely render concrete abstract.
      2. Secondarily to preserve culture and this development is always a "looking backward" sort of movement.
   C. The question that meets us is one of understanding. How is language understood? This is best answered in terms of the character of language itself. This involves seeing, hearing, and knowing of things discussed in the language medium.
   D. We are prone to say, against this background, that language is one and that it is understood (utilized) in a common sense. The language of the Bible therefore, in character, does not differ from any other language-usage. Its only real difference lies in mechanics. This suggests that it is understood in the same sense whereby all languages are understood. On this basis we assume:
      1. The integrity of the Bible
      2. The perspicuity of the Bible
      3. The adequacy of the Bible.

II. The variety of expression in the Bible (noting that its language is chiefly to convey meaning)
   A. Brief observation of its literary expression:
      1. Songs
      2. Histories (Biographies, narratives)
      3. Autobiographies
      4. Didactic presentations (letters)
      5. Dramatic presentaion
      6. Apocalyptic portrayals.
   B. Breif observation on the literary devices:
      1. The speech figures
         a. Simile 1 Pet. 2:2
         b. Metaphor 1 Pet 5:2
         c. Metonomy Eph 5:8
         d. Synechdoche Eph 6:12
         e. Litotes 1 Cor 13:4-8
         f. Personification Rev. 20:13
         g. Hyperbole Acts 19:10
         h. Apostrophe 1 Cor 15
            (Lesser speech figures --meiosis, hypocatastisis. etc. might be mentioned) (see euphemism)
      2. The speech modes
         a. irony
         b. satire
         c. fable
         d. parable
         e. allegory