intRopuCTION.] THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. (en. 1.   
   
 Christian antiquity we will adduce the testimony of Jerome :—‘T will   
 instance Paul, whom as often as I read, I seem to hear not words, but   
 thunders. The words seem simple, and like those of an innocent and   
 rustic man, and one who knows not how to lay nor to avoid snares ; but   
 whichever way you look, they are thunders. He keeps close to his   
 argument, he catches all that he touches: he turns his back, that he   
 may gain the victory: he pretends flight, that he may kill.’”   
 38. After having stated, and visited with severe and deserved censure,   
 the disparaging estimate formed by Riickert in his Commentary, and   
 criticized in a friendly spirit the other extreme, taken by Rothe and   
 Gléckler, of regarding all ellipses, broken sentences, and defects of   
 style, only as so many hidden but intended excellences, Tholuck pro-   
 ceeds :   
 “We have then this question to ask ourselves: with what ideas as to   
 the ability of the Apostle as a writer ought the believing Christian to   
 approach his works? And what is the result, when we examine in   
 detail the Epistles of Paul in this bearing? The Fathers themselves   
 frequently confess, that the whole character of Christianity forbids us   
 from seeking classical elegance in the outward style of the New Testa-   
 ment :—as the Son or Gop appeared in His life on earth in a state of   
 humiliation, so also the word of God. In this sense, to cite one example   
 out of many, Calvin says (on Rom. v. 15) :—‘ See how often he repeats   
 the great distinction, and in every one of these repetitions there is some   
 clause without its corresponding sequence, or some leaving out of neces-   
 sary matter. These are indeed faults of style, but detract nothing from   
 the majesty of heavenly wisdom which is delivered to us by the Apostle.   
 Nay, rather, it has been the special providence of God, that these loftiest   
 mysteries should be delivered to us under contemptible humility of   
 words: that our faith might rest not on the power of human eloquence,   
 but on the efficacy of the Spirit alone.’ But it must be borne in mind,   
 that this our concession with regard to the formal perfection of the   
 apostolic writings has its limits: for were we to concede that imper-   
 fection of form amounted to absolute informality, the subject-matter   
 ttself would be involved in the surrender. If the aim of the apostolic   
 teaching is not to be altogether frustrated, we can hardly object to the   
 assumption, that the divine ideas have been propounded in such a form,   
 that by a correct use of the requisite means they may be discovered, and   
 their full meaning recognized. Assuming this, it is impossible to form   
 so low an estimate as Riickert’s of the style of the Apostle: while at   
 the same time we cannot see that the believing Christian is entitled to   
 assume in him an academic correctness of syllogistic form, a conscious   
 and perfect appreciation of adequacy of ‘expression, reaching to the use   
 of every particle. If we are to require these excellences from an   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 apostolic writer, why not also cntire conformity to classical idiom of   
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