

## A HEBRAIC CONSTRUCTION IN THE APOCALYPSE.

DR CHARLES'S monumental commentary on the Apocalypse undoubtedly marks an epoch in the interpretation of that difficult book. Among other services which he has rendered to New Testament scholarship, not the least important is his cogent proof that the writer of the Apocalypse phrased his language on a Semitic model, and that his Greek can only be rightly understood by a Hebrew scholar. This fact is richly illustrated in many points of detail; and of these perhaps the most illuminating—from the point of view of accurate translation—is his discovery<sup>1</sup> that the idiomatic Hebrew construction, in which a participle is reinforced by a finite verb, is exactly reproduced in the Greek of the Apocalypse. Discussion of this point is to be found on p. cxlv of the Introduction, and again on p. 15 of the Commentary (note on i 5, 6). On p. cxlv he quotes Dr Driver's *Hebrew Tenses*<sup>2</sup>, § 117 (by error reference is given to § 163)—'it is a common custom with Hebrew writers, after employing a participle or infinitive, to *change the construction*, and, if they wish to subjoin other verbs which logically should be in the partic. or infin. as well, to pass to the use of the finite verb. Thus Gen. xxvii 33 וַיִּבְרָא יְצִיר הַצֶּמֶר הוֹדוּתָא θηρεύσας θήραν καὶ εἰσεγγέκας (lit. ὁ θηρεύσας θήραν καὶ εἰσεγγέκε).' After explaining the construction, Dr Driver gives classified instances; and these I here set forth in full, together with a literal translation which is intended to make the usage clear to N. T. scholars who are unacquainted with Hebrew.

(1) 'Wherever the participle . . . asserts something indefinite or undetermined—wherever, therefore, it may be resolved into *whoever, whenever, if ever, &c.* (ὅς ἄν, not ὅς, ἐπειδὴν not ἐπειδή, &c.)—we find the *perfect* with *consecutive* employed'.

Exod. xxi 12 וְיָמַת אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִמְכֹּר 'The smiter of a man (= Whosoever smites a man), and he dies'.

Exod. xxi 16 וְיָבֵךְ אִישׁ אֶת אֶתְמֹלֶתוֹ 'One stealing a man (= Whosoever steals a man), and sells him'.

<sup>1</sup> I say 'discovery' in view of Dr Charles's statement (p. 15) that in none of the cases in point has the construction been recognized as Hebraic by any commentator. In the present discussion I mention that I have noted the same construction in two passages in the Fourth Gospel, viz. i 32, v 44. Observation of the identity between the Greek and the Hebrew construction does not imply exceptional insight, but should leap at once to the eye of any N. T. student who is a Hebrew scholar. If, as seems to be the case, it has hitherto failed to be recorded, this is one point among many others serving to emphasize a fact which is too commonly overlooked, viz. the impossibility of doing justice to the N. T. without a first-hand linguistic knowledge of Semitic. It will be noticed that, in some of the passages in question, A. V. has instinctively rendered correctly, while R. V. has erroneously altered the rendering.

Num. xix 13 וְלֹא יִתְחַטֵּא . . . כָּל־הַגִּיַע בְּמַת 'Every one touching a dead person . . . and does not purify himself'. LXX, following the Heb. construction, *πᾶς ὁ ἀπτόμενος τοῦ τεθνηκότος . . . καὶ μὴ ἀφαγυσθῆναι*.

Jer., xxi 9 וְנָפַל עַל־הַבְּשָׂרִים הַיּוֹצֵא 'The one going forth, and falls unto the Chaldaeans'.

Jer. xxii 14 וְקָרַע לוֹ חַלּוֹנֵי . . . הָאוֹמֵר 'The one saying (= Who says) . . . and cuts himself out windows'.

Exod. xxxiv 7 וְנָקָה לֹא יִנְקָה 'Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, &c., and by no means counts guiltless' (*sc.* the guilty). So LXX *καὶ δικαιοσύνην διατηρῶν καὶ ἔλεος εἰς χιλιάδας, ἀφαιρῶν ἀνομίας κτλ. καὶ οὐ καθαρῶν τὸν ἔνοχον*.

Isa. v. 23 מְצַדִּיקֵי רָשָׁע עֲקֵב שָׁחַד וְצַדִּיקֵים יְסִירוּ מִפָּנָיו 'Justifying the wicked for a bribe, and the righteousness of the righteous they take away from him' (= 'Who justify . . . and take away').

Isa. xliv 25, 26 מִפֶּר אֹתוֹת בְּדִים וְקִסְמִים יְהוֹלֵל מְשִׁיב חַכְמִים אַחֲזֹר וְדַעְתָּם 'Frustrating the tokens of boasters, and diviners He makes mad; turning wise men backward, and their knowledge He makes foolish; confirming the word of His servant, and the counsel of His messengers He accomplishes' (= 'Who frustrates . . . and makes, &c.').

Ezek. xxii 3 וְעָשְׂתָה גִלּוּלִים 'A city shedding blood . . . and makes idols' (= 'that sheds . . . and makes').

Ezek. xxxiii 30 וְדַבְּרִי־דָבָר אֶת־אֶחָד וְג' 'The children of thy people—those speaking together of thee . . . and each speaks with another, &c.' (= 'who speak together, &c.').

Hab. ii 12 בָּנָה עִיר בְּדַמַּיִם וְכוּנֵן קְרִיָה בְּעוֹלָה 'Building a city through bloodshed, and he founds a town through iniquity' (= 'Who builds . . . and founds').

Ps. xviii 34 מְשַׁנֵּה רַגְלִי בְּאֵילוֹת וְעַל בְּמַתֵּי יַעֲמִידֵנִי 'Making my feet like the harts', and on my heights He sets me' (= 'Who makes . . . and sets').

Ps. xviii 35 מְלַמֵּד יָדַי לְמִלְחָמָה וְנַחְתָּה קֶשֶׁת נְחוּשָׁה וְרוּעַתִּי 'Teaching my hands for the battle, and my arms bend a bow of bronze' (= 'Who teaches . . . so that my arms bend, &c.').

(2) 'Where, on the contrary, the participle . . . asserts an actual concrete event, we find the following verbs connected' with it by the *imperfect* and 'I.'

Gen. xxxv 3 לֹאלֵל הֶעֱנָה אֹתִי בְיוֹם צָרָתִי וַיְהִי עִמָּדִי 'To the God—the one answering me in the day of my distress, and was with me' (= 'who answered . . . and was with me').

Gen. xlix 17 b הַנֹּשֵׁךְ עֲקָבֵי סוּסִים וַיִּפֹּל רֶכְבּוֹ אַחֲזֹר 'The one biting the

heels of a horse, and his rider fell backward' (= 'That bit . . . so that his rider fell'). LXX δάκνων πτέρναν ἵππου, καὶ πεσεῖται ὁ ἵππεὺς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω.

Num. xxii 11 וְגַם הַיֵּצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם וְיָבֵא וְגַם 'The people—the one coming forth from Egypt, and has covered the face of the land' (= 'that came forth . . . and has covered').

Isa. xiv 17 שָׁם תִּבְלַל בְּמִדְבָּר וְעָרָיו הָרָס 'Making (= Who made) the world like a wilderness, and overthrew its cities'. LXX ὁ θεὸς τὴν οἰκουμένην ὄλην ἔρημον, καὶ τὰς πόλεις αὐτοῦ καθεῖλεν.

Isa. xxx 2 הַלֹּכִים לְרַחֵם מִצְרַיִם וְפִי לֹא שָׁאַל 'Those walking (= That walk) to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at My mouth'. LXX οἱ πορευόμενοι καταβῆναι εἰς Αἴγυπτον, ἐμὲ δὲ οὐκ ἐπερώτησαν.

Isa. xliii 7 כָּל־הַנִּקְרָא בִשְׁמִי וְלִבְבוֹדִי בְרָאתִיו 'Every one called by My name, and for My glory I have created him' (= 'who is called . . . and whom I have created').

Jer. xxiii 31 f הַלִּקְחִים לְשׁוֹנֵם וְיִנְאָמוּ נֶאֱמַר . . . נִבְּאֵי הַלְמוֹת שֶׁקֶר . . . וְיִסְפְּרוּ 'Those taking their tongues . . . and have said, He saith; . . . prophesiers of dreams of falsehood . . . and have recounted them' (= 'Who have taken, &c.').

Amos v 7 הַחֹפְכִים לְלַעֲנָה מִשִּׁפְט וְצַדִּיקָה לְאָרֶץ הַנְּחֹז 'Those turning (= who have turned) justice to wormwood, and have cast down righteousness to the earth'. LXX ὁ ποιῶν εἰς ὕψος κρίμα, καὶ δικαιοσύνην εἰς γῆν ἔθηκεν.

Amos v 12 צַדִּיק צַדִּיק לְקַח כֶּסֶף וְאֶבְיוֹנִים בְּשַׁעַר הַפֶּתַח 'Afflicting the just, taking a bribe, and the poor in the gate they have turned aside' (= 'That have afflicted, &c.').

Amos ix 6 הַבּוֹנֵה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעְלֹתָיו וְאֶגְדָּתוֹ עַל־אָרֶץ יִסְדָּהּ הַקָּרָא לְמִי הֵימָּן 'He building in heaven His upper chamber, and His vault upon earth He has founded it; He calling to the waters of the sea, and has poured them, &c.' (= 'Who has built, &c.').

Prov. ii 17 הַעֲזַבְתְּ אֹהֶבָה נְעוּרֶיךָ וְאֶת־בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיהָ שָׁכַחָה 'She forsaking the companion of her youth, and the covenant of her god she has forgotten'.

! with the imperfect.

2 Sam. v 8. Text corrupt.

Dan. xii 12 אֲשֶׁר־יִחְמַקֶּה וְיִגְעֵה וְגַם 'Happy the waiting one (= he who waits) and attains, &c.'

Besides these cases, Dr Driver cites, in a small print 'Observation', a number of miscellaneous cases, viz. Amos vi 1 b, 3, v 8, 9, vi 6, viii 14, ix 5, 6, Isa. xxix 15, 21, lvii 3, Jer. xlvi 19.

In cases in which LXX copies the Heb. construction, the rendering has been given above. Normally the Greek either resolves the participle into the finite verb (e. g. Exod. xxi 12 Ἐὰν δὲ πατάξῃ τις τινα καὶ ἀποθάνῃ), or the following finite verb into a participle (e. g. Isa. v 23 οἱ δικαιοῦντες . . . καὶ . . . αἴροντες). It is not likely, therefore, that occurrences of the construction in the Apocalypse are due to LXX influence.

Such occurrences, collected by Dr Charles, are as follows:—

Apoc. i 5 τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς . . . καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς, 'Unto Him that loveth us . . . and hath made us'. A. V. renders the sequence correctly. R. V. 'Unto him that loveth us . . . ; and He made us'—incorrect.

Apoc. ii 2 τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶ. A. V. correctly 'and are not'. R. V. 'and they are not', with redundant 'they'.

Apoc. ii 9 τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν.

Apoc. ii 20 ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφήτην, καὶ διδάσκει, 'That saith . . . and teacheth'. R. V. 'and she teacheth', after semi-colon—incorrect.

Apoc. ii 23 ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐρευνῶν . . . καὶ δώσω 'I am He that searcheth . . . and will give' (or—if καὶ δώσω represents the translation of a perfect with 1 consecutive in a frequentative sense—'and giveth').

Apoc. iii 9 = ii 9.

Rev. vii 14 οἱ ἐξερχόμενοι . . . καὶ ἔπλυναν, 'that came out . . . and have washed' (so A. V.). R. V. 'and they washed'—incorrect.

Rev. xiv 2, 3 ὡς κιθαρῳδῶν κιθαριζόντων . . . καὶ ᾄδουσιν, 'As of harpers harping . . . and singing'. A. V. 'and they sung'. R. V. 'and they sing'—wrong.

Rev. xv 2, 3 ἐστῶτας . . . ἔχοντας . . . καὶ ᾄδουσι, 'standing . . . having harps . . . and singing'. A. V., R. V. 'And they sing' (after full stop)—wrong.

To these Dr Charles might have added Apoc. xiii 11 ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον . . . καὶ εἶχε, 'another beast coming up . . . and having', &c.

I happen lately to have been working at the language of the Fourth Gospel, and have independently, and before seeing Dr Charles's work, noted the same construction in two passages, viz. i 32 Τεθεάμαι τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον . . . καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν 'I saw the Spirit descending . . . and abiding upon Him' (not, as in R. V., after semi-colon, 'and it abode upon Him'); v 44 λαμβάνοντες . . . καὶ οὐ ζητεῖτε 'receiving . . . and not seeking.'

There are, however, two other passages in the Apocalypse which Dr Charles seeks to bring under the same construction, viz. i 18 καὶ ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός, and xx 4, where, rejecting οὔτινες before οὐ προσεκύνησαν as an editorial gloss, he would make the sequence to be

τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων . . . καὶ οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον. It is in order to show how contrary this explanation is, in each case, to the genius of Hebrew thought that I have given a full survey of the O. T. illustrations of the construction.

It will be noticed that, in all the instances cited by Dr Driver (with possibly one exception) the finite verb expresses *the proper sequence of the action denoted by the participle*. This may be actually a sequence in time, so that the ו connecting the finite verb with its antecedent expresses the sense 'and then', or, as introducing the direct result, 'and so'; or, a sequence in description in which, though the fact described may properly speaking be coeval with its antecedent, it follows naturally in the gradual unfolding of the picture (this is especially frequent in description of types of character). We do *not* find cases in which the sequence describes an event *actually prior in time to its antecedent*. For these quite a different construction would be employed. Such, however, are the two cases which Dr Charles would bring under the same head as the passages already noticed.

His principal discussion of i 18 occurs in the note on i 5 (p. 15) already referred to, where he marshals the legitimate illustrations of the Hebrew construction under discussion. His words are, 'In i 18 the failure to recognize this idiom has led most scholars to mispunctuate the text, and the rest, like Wellhausen and Haussleiter, to excise ὁ ζῶν. The ἐγὼ εἶμι . . . ὁ ζῶν is to be taken closely with καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός (cf. Amos vi 3 for this Hebrew construction) = "I am . . . He that liveth and was dead." Hence the first two lines =

אֲנִי הָרִאשׁוֹן וְהָאַחֲרֹן  
וְהָיִיתִי וְנָהִיתִי מֵת<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with inclusion of the preceding Μη φοβοῦ the words, on Dr Charles's theory, form a couplet, which is rendered in vol. ii p. 388,

'Fear not; I am the first and the last:  
And he that liveth, and was dead.'

It may be maintained with the greatest emphasis that, supposing the existence of a Hebrew sentence אֲנִי . . . הָיִיתִי וְנָהִיתִי מֵת was intended to stand in close relation to its antecedent, Dr Charles's rendering would be quite out of the question. The only possible sense which we could attach to such a sentence would be, 'I am he that lived and (subsequently) became dead.' The imperfect with ו consecutive וְנָהִיתִי necessarily describes our event *taking its start out of the circumstances previously described*. This is so elementary a fact of Hebrew syntax

<sup>1</sup> וְנָהִיתִי is obviously a mispunctuation for וְהָיִיתִי, since Dr Charles's theory of connexion with what follows precludes a pausal form.

that it requires no argument to prove it. The construction with 1 *consecutive* can never describe an event *anterior in time* to its antecedent. It will suffice to recall the fact that when, in a description of past history written with a succession of imperfects with 1 *consecutive*, the writer wishes to introduce such an anterior event (a pluperfect), he invariably breaks the consecutive construction by introducing the subject *between* the 1 and the verb, the verb thus lapsing into the perfect (cf. Dr Driver's long discussion in *Tenses*, § 96 *Obs.*). Had the writer wished to convey the sense desiderated by Dr Charles in the Hebrew construction under discussion, ch. ii 8 suggests the way in which he would have phrased it. He would surely have written וְאֵת הַפֶּתַח וְאֵת הַיָּמִין . . . אָנִי, ἐγὼ εἰμι . . . ὁ ἀποθανὼν καὶ ζῆσα, 'I am He that died and then lived.' Thus we seem bound to acquiesce in the punctuation and rendering of R. V., 'Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.'

On the same grounds, xx 4, which, by Dr Charles's omission of οἷτινες, would run τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων . . . καὶ οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον, could only, if considered as a Hebrew sentence, be naturally interpreted, 'the souls of those that had been beheaded, and so had not worshipped the beast'; for in καὶ οὐ προσεκύνησαν = וְלֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, though the use of 1 *consecutive* is precluded by the insertion of the negative, the natural sequence remains unaffected. In order to express the sense intended, viz. that they had not worshipped the beast prior to their beheading, and that their refusal to do so led to their execution, it would be necessary in Hebrew to employ a *circumstantial clause*, thus breaking the sequence—וְהִפְּוּ לֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ 'and they had not worshipped' (= 'they not having worshipped, &c.'). or to make the clause relational וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ. It is this latter alternative which is adopted by the writer: καὶ οἷτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν. Thus the use of οἷτινες, so far from being 'an addition by John's literary executor in order to make the sentence better Greek', is indispensable upon the assumption that the writer was framing his language on a Hebrew model.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In discussion of Dr Driver's instances of the Hebrew construction, I have mentioned one possible exception to the rule that the finite verb following the participle expresses its proper sequence. This is Isa. xxx 2 הַהֹלְכִים לְרֶדֶת מִצְרַיִם 'That walk (or, are going) to go down to Egypt, and have not asked at My mouth'. Here the 'asking', had it occurred, would naturally precede the embassy. It will be noticed, however, that the sentence is intentionally phrased as a circumstantial clause by inversion of the natural order of sequence, וְלֹא שְׁאַלוּ פִּי. וְלֹא שְׁאַלוּ פִּי 'and at My mouth they have not asked' = 'without having asked, &c.'