

ART. II.—THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

(Concluded from p. 445.)

Epitome.—Chaps. viii., ix., x. 1-18.

SUCH a high priest have we. In place of the old priests, tabernacle, covenant, we have a new priest, tabernacle, covenant; more perfect, of which the old were but a shadow. Of such new covenant, with a law written in the hearts, our Scriptures speak. The old, therefore, is passing away.

The first covenant had its ceremonial worship, sacred vessels, furniture, sacrifices; its holy of holies, into which the high priest entered once a year to make atonement. All this was typical. Christ is our High Priest, who has entered once for all into the holy place, that is, heaven, having obtained for us eternal redemption. It is a cleansing of conscience, not merely an outward cleansing of the flesh, that we have through Him, to serve the living God; a deliverance from sin that leads to salvation. The law had but a shadow of good things. Really the blood of victims could not cleanse and perfect the offerers: else why repeated? And psalmist and prophet testify to this, that another covenant should be made, laws written in the heart, and sins so forgiven and forgotten, that no further sin-offering should be needed. This has been effected by the one perfect offering of Christ.

Notes.

Chap. viii. 2, τῶν ἁγίων.—Unquestionably our versions are right in rendering this “the sanctuary.” Cf. ch. ix. 3. In 1 Kings viii. 6, τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων. Westcott quotes (not as agreeing) some fathers who took it to be masculine, “of the saints.”

Chap. ix., τὸ ἅγιον κοσμικόν.—Which is substantive, which adjective? Both Authorised Version and Revised Version take κοσμικόν as the adjective, put after its substantive as tertiary predicate (Revised Version), which implies especial emphasis. If κοσμικόν be the adjective, it must be thus emphatic from its position. And there is a strong consensus among commentators old and modern to interpret κοσμικόν as “worldly.” In spite of this weight of authority, I incline to the opinion of Bishop Middleton (rather cavalierly dismissed by Farrar as “mistaken”), that κοσμικόν is the substantive, ἅγιον the adjective; that κοσμικόν means *ornamentum* (perhaps *ornatum* would be better). Middleton shows that the very Greek word is transliterated into Hebrew and used to signify “ornamenta”; that the Coptic Version had something which is rendered in Latin by “sanctum splendorem.” τὸν ἅγιον κόσμον was conjectured by

Wakefield, "the sacred furniture," as "suitable to the context"; but the established text may mean exactly the same.

There appears to be no need, at the beginning of this list of the outward furniture and ceremonies of the tabernacle, to emphasize the adjective "worldly" as opposed to "heavenly or spiritual." Very little authority is there for *κοσμικός* in this sense. Tit. ii. 12, "worldly lusts," is the only New Testament passage; "lusts of the outer world, the non-Christian world." But that is explained by the whole passage, and of course it is granted that *κόσμος* is used of "the world" in this sense. A passage of Josephus is quoted as bearing on this; "both Josephus and Philo speak of the Jewish service as having a universal, a 'cosmical,' destination," says Westcott. Philo may have meant something as catholic and wide as this: I have not his work to refer to, and must confess to knowing little of him. But this meaning of "cosmical" is far from being the same as "worldly, earthly, transitory," as opposed to "heavenly." And the passage of Josephus (B. J., iv. 5, 2) appears to me (as it did to Middleton and to Burton) to point quite the other way. It is: *οἱ τὴν ἱεράν ἐσθῆτα περικείμενοι καὶ τῆς κοσμικῆς θρησκείας κατάρχοντες*. He is speaking of the priests in their priestly robes, who led the public worship. Who could suppose the writer here to be saying that this was "cosmical," comprehensive of all the world, or "worldly," terrestrial as opposed to heavenly and ideal worship? He is contrasting their sacred priestly robes and beautiful worship with their fate, "cast out naked, and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts." Surely *κοσμικῆς* here means "ornamental, with outward ornaments, furniture, beautiful vessels and the like." And *τὸ κοσμικὸν* may express all this. The neuter of almost any adjective with the article may be used as a substantive. Thus verse 1 is a short summary explained by verses 2-5.

Chap. x. 1, *σκιάν*.—In Coloss. ii. 17 *σκιὰ* is opposed to *σῶμα*. As contrasted with *εἰκὼν*, *σκιὰ* is "the outline or sketch in flat;" *εἰκὼν*, "the image or form in solid." Plato uses *σκιαγραφία* for "sketch or outline."

Verse 1.—Two readings here—the singular *δύναται*, and the plural *δύνανται*. Such a harsh ungrammatical phrase as the plural makes requires overwhelming MS. authority. Tischendorf reads *δύναται*. If "they can never," who are "they"? It is explained "the priests," the subj. to *προσφέρουσιν*. On the whole, it is better to retain the singular. And so Westcott judges, who has a special note on this reading of verse 1.

εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. Certainly to be taken with *τελειῶσαι*, as a comparison of the passages shows, cf. verses 12, 14, and vii. 3. In each case it is of the one sacrifice once offered, perfect and sufficient for ever. Comparing vi. 20 with vii. 17, 21, 25, we

see that the phrase is about equivalent to *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Symmachus, in his version of Ps. xlv. 18 and xlvii. 15, uses it where the LXX. have *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος*; the adverb *διηλεκῶς* he also uses several times. Westcott points out that *εἰς τὸ δ.* "expresses the thought of a continuously abiding result . . . uninterrupted duration," while *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* expresses "absence of limit." As far as I know, the exact phrase, *εἰς τὸ δ.*, is not found in classical authors. Homer uses the adjective of the far-reaching roots of a tree, of the whole long back of a victim. The adverb is also found in classical authors.

Verse 5, "a body didst Thou prepare."—The Hebrew has "mine ears hast Thou opened." This last has been explained as referring to the boring of the ear of one taken as a servant (Exod. xxi. 6), so that it would mean "Thou hast made me Thy servant." Christ was made a servant by taking a human body; hence the LXX. and Hebrew in a way express the same. But Gesenius explains the Hebrew to mean "Thou hast made me to hear, revealed to me, and made me understand Thy will." And *σῶμα κατηρίσω* may surely mean "Thou hast given me a body fitted to serve Thee with." Certainly the whole gist of the Psalm is, "Obedience before sacrifice." And the writer of this Epistle is pressing this same as the lesson established by Christ. "He taketh away the first" (sacrifice, etc.) "that he may establish the second" (obedient doing of God's will). The Psalmist, in effect, says, "My ear is open to hear," or "My body is ready to serve with all its members, my delight is to do Thy will." Such also is Christ's spirit.

Westcott's excellent note, too long to quote, confirms me in this view (written before his book appeared).

Epitome.—Chap. x. 19-39.

Therefore approach boldly, believingly, hopefully, by the new way opened by Jesus; cleansed in conscience, mindful of good works, of Christian worship. Knowing the truth, it were a terrible thing to sin against knowledge. Your former acts of kindness and endurance encourage hope that you will go on so. Be patient still, and you will receive the promised reward. Let us not be of the fearful and shrinking (whom the prophet rebukes), but of those who have faith.

Notes.

Verse 22.—Having received of baptism both the outward visible sign and the inward spiritual grace.

Verse 24, *παροξυσμόν*.—The only other use of the noun is in Acts xv. 39, of St. Paul's contention with Barnabas. But of course there is no reason why there should not be a "sharpen-

ing" for good, as is shown by the passages quoted by Westcott, especially that from Isocrates—*μάλιστα δ' ἂν παροξυνθείης ὀρέγεσθαι τῶν καλῶν ἔργων*.

Verses 26-31 (compare with vi. 4-8), *ἀμαρτανόντων*.—All-important is the *present* tense of the participle, "while any wilfully go on sinning against light." Thus Westcott: "The argument assumes that the sacrifice of Christ is finally rejected and sin persisted in. The writer does not set limits to the efficacy of Christ's work for the penitent."

Verse 27.—*πυρὸς ζήλος* appears equivalent to *πῦρ ζηλοῦν*, "a fierce eager fire." For it cannot mean "a desire (in any) of fire." The fire is personified and credited with feeling. To this same effect is Theophylact's *ὄρα πῶς οἶον ἐψύχωσε τὸ πῦρ*. Compare also the phrases, "a jealous God," "a consuming fire."

Verse 34, *τοῖς δεσμίοις*.—Plainly some special prisoners and persecutions are referred to. The other reading, *δεσμοῖς μου*, would make the writer a sufferer.

Verse 38, *ὑποστείληται*.—In Acts xx. 20, 27, this verb is used of "keeping back," "shunning to speak out all." The LXX. uses it several times for "to shrink back, to fear." The metaphor is nautical—"to lower sail."

Epitome.—Chaps. xi., xii.

What is Faith? That which makes the future and unseen real to us. Faith is the very mainspring of all. By Faith the Old Testament saints won their triumphs. Look at the many examples. Faith it was in God, in the unseen, in God's promise, which yet they did not fully receive in life. All these saints are witnesses, evidence to God's truthfulness in helping them, and therefore evidence that He will help us. Be patient, therefore. You have these examples; you have, above all, Jesus through suffering attaining to glory. Trials you have had, but not so severe as might be. And chastening is a part of fatherly love. Be of good courage. Follow after righteousness, peace, holiness. You are called to a heavenly Zion, the city of God; reject not Him that speaketh. A kingdom sure and unshakeable is open to us; but we must hold fast the grace given to us, and serve God with holy fear, remembering that He can also punish.

Notes.

Chap. xi. 1., *ὑπόστασις*, "substance."—Undoubtedly better here than "assurance" of the Revised Version. It would hardly be any description or bringing out of the characteristics of Faith to say it was "assurance," which is nearly the same thing. The margin of the Revised Version has "the giving substance

to," which is well enough, but is rather explanation than translation. No doubt *ὑπόστασις* is used for a mental state sometimes; but, as Westcott says, "It is difficult to suppose *ἔλεγχος* can express a state," and "*ὑπόστασις* and *ἔλεγχος* must be co-ordinate." Westcott's note deals well and thoroughly with the passage.

Verse 2, *ἐμαρτυρήθησαν*.—Both the Authorised Version, "obtained a good report," and the Revised Version, "had witness borne to them," need some explanation, the latter being, however, more distinct. The "report, or record, or witness" is in Scripture, in God's word, and in verse 4 God Himself is termed the "witness." Through faith the saints of old were accepted of God and recorded as being'so.

Verse 3.—Through Faith comes "the conviction that the visible order, as we observe it as a whole, has not come into being by simple material causation . . . there is a divine power behind."—Westcott.

Verses 15, 16.—If they had merely been thinking with regret of any earthly home, and meant any return thither (to Mesopotamia, *e.g.*), they might have returned; but as it is, they seek a heavenly home.

Verse 19, *ὅθεν κ.τ.λ.*—The Revised Version translates "received him back;" and certainly *κομίζεσθαι* is often used of recovering. The clause *ὅθεν . . .* is then not part of Abraham's thought, not the ground of his faith, but an assertion of the writer. Most early commentators so take it; others take it to refer to the birth of Isaac, born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age; cf. *νενεκρωμένου* in verse 12 and Rom. iv. 19—"And not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead . . . neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." Abraham believed God could even raise Isaac from the dead, for he had (in a figure) so received him when born. Did we know St. Paul to be the writer, we should feel sure that this was the meaning of this passage. But anyhow the balance seems to be in its favour. For if the reference be to the deliverance of Isaac from the altar, it amounts to this: "Abraham believed God was really able to raise him from the dead, and from the dead figuratively he did receive him;" *i.e.*, as Westcott well puts it, "something came to pass far less than he was able to look forward to"—a weak conclusion. But if it be of Isaac's birth, the clause gives "the grounds of the patriarch's expectation," . . . "the giving of a son beyond nature included a larger hope." That *κομίζεσθαι* may mean simply "to receive" is plain from verse 39. And in a relative clause the Greek aorist frequently has the force of our pluperfect.

Verse 21, *προσεκύνησεν*.—This was when he made Joseph's promise to carry back his bones. But faith was equally shown

in this assurance that his descendants would return to Canaan as in his previsions about Joseph's sons.

Verse 39.—“The promise” expresses the complete whole, the final consummation; not quite the same as “promises” without the article in verse 33 and in vi. 15. Abraham obtained a partial fulfilment of the promise in Isaac's birth, the old saints obtained promised victories, etc., but the perfect fulfilment of the promise was for all together in Christ.

Chap. xii. 1.—“Cloud of witnesses”—*i.e.*, of saints—who bear testimony to what God has done for them, and will therefore do for his saints always. Not simply “spectators”: with the figurative setting in which it occurs the word suggests this, and may include this, but does not chiefly mean this.

τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.—From this passage we get “besetting sin,” meaning “a man's favourite sin.” But it does not mean this here; it is “sin” generally, whatever be the exact interpretation of ἐπιπερίστατος.

Verse 3.—The Revised Version reads εἰς ἑαυτοῦς, “sinners against themselves;” *i.e.*, “persons who sin to their own ruin.” We at once think of Numb. xvi. 38—“sinners against their ὄψιν souls” (or lives). But the LXX. there is very different. It cannot but think that for the sense εἰς αὐτὸν or ἑαυτὸν is better. Christ could endure that sinners should speak against Him; you must expect and endure opposition. Tischendorf reads αὐτόν.

Verse 15, ὑστερῶν.—There is no need to supply the verb “there be” here; ἐνοχλῆ may serve as verb for both participles. The phrase in Deut. xxix. 18 is ῥίζα ἀνω φύουσα ἐν χολῆ καὶ πικρίᾳ. Of this the last four words are put more briefly by πικρίας before ῥίζα, and ἐνοχλῆ is not part of the memory quotation. Its similarity to ἐν χολῆ, therefore, is accidental. The verb παρενοχλεῖν occurs in Acts xv. 19.

Verse 17, μετανοίας.—It is (*me judice*) impossible that μετανοίας can mean “of working a change in Jacob's mind;” the repentance must be Esau's. In him (as may be in others) such change of mind as would undo the past and avert the consequences was impossible; so we commonly say, when a consequence is inevitable, to one who has brought it on: “Oh, you cannot change your mind now; the result you first chose must come.” The passage does not in the least teach that forgiveness from God's mercy is ever hopeless.

“The consideration of the forgiveness of his sin against God, as distinct from the reversal of the temporal consequences of his sin, lies wholly without the argument.”—Westcott.

αὐτήν—*i.e.*, εὐλογίαν.

Verses 18-29.—The visible terrors of the Christian law are not such as those of Sinai, yet is the majesty as great or greater,

and determined rejection as surely punished. The whole passage is no exact quotation from Exod. xix., but a description of the scene by one familiar with the LXX. Version, who could use the Greek language with a force at least equal to that of the Septuagintal translator.

Verse 18, *ψηλαφωμένω*.—This word means “to feel about, grope about,” especially in the dark. In Gen. xxvii. 12, 21, it is used of Isaac’s feeling Jacob; in Job v. 14, *ψηλαφήσουσιν ἴσα νυκτί*; in Acts xvii. 27, St. Paul uses it of men feeling after God in heathen darkness; Aristophanes, *Ρακ.* 691, *πρὸ τοῦ μὲν οὖν ἐψηλαφῶμεν ἐν σκοτῶ τὰ πράγματα*. The word certainly appears to suit better with the common reading, *ἔρει*, than as an attribute of the fire. Fire is not naturally described as “felt after.”

Verse 25.—The word *παραίτησήσθε* seems to refer to verse 19 above and to Exod. xix. 19; where the Israelites begged to hear no more the voice of God. Not that this fear was their chief sin; rather their refusal to obey afterwards. With Christians refusal to hear God’s voice in mercy will lead on to disobedience and punishment.

Verse 26, *ἐσάλευσε*. Cf. Acts iv. 31; xvi. 26.—The word expresses the wavy, rocking motion of an earthquake. Æschylus, at the end of the *Prometheus*, writes: “*καὶ μὴν ἔργῳ κοῦκ ἔτι μύθῳ χθῶν σεσάλευται.*”

Verse 27.—“Only once,” because the old would pass away with the shaking; the new would remain unshaken and unshakeable.

Epitome.—Chap. xiii.

Finally, take some practical precepts. Be mindful of kindness, hospitality, purity. Shun covetousness; be content. Respect your leaders and teachers; follow their examples. Christ is ever the same: be not ye fickle waverers. Christianity is not a matter of ceremonies and meats, but of grace. Christ, to sanctify us, offered Himself a pure sacrifice; offer we ourselves, our words and deeds to God. Such a sacrifice of kind deeds is acceptable to God. Obey your rulers. Pray for us. I hope soon to visit you, with Timothy. Greetings from all about me to you all. Grace be with you. Amen,

Notes.

Chap. xiii. 4, *τίμιος ὁ γάμος*.—Is the indicative “is,” or the imperative “let it be,” to be supplied? If indicative in this verse, then it should also be so in verse 5. There is a very similarly constructed passage in Rom. xii.—*ἡ ἀγαπή ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστύγοντες τὸ πονηρὸν κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ . . . εὐλογεῖτε.*

A substantive with predicate, a string of participles, an imperative. Our Authorised Version has there, "Let love be without dissimulation." But the indicative appears quite as good: "Love (true Christian love) has no dissimulation in it." And the participles may be linked together and run on to the imperative: "Hating evil, cleaving to good, etc., bless ye your persecutors." In this passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews the older authorities are for the indicative. Against this it is said that ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ τρόπος must be "let your . . . be." This is not so certain. Why should it not mean "The character which befits you, the true Christian character, is free from the love of money"? To which is subjoined, with a slight but defensible anacoluthon (as the words have expressed "you are to be uncovetous"), "content. . ." It is argued that the reading πόρνους γὰρ almost requires the imperative. It rather makes for it, but it does not compel it. "Be faithful to marriage vows, for God will punish transgressors in this," is consistent enough; but also very good sense is "Marriage is honourable and pure, for it is πόρνοι and μοιχοὶ that God will punish." This declaration of the purity of marriage appears to me much more likely to be dwelt on as important, than the precept to be faithful to the marriage vow. Also, it may be doubted whether ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος can express this last. Certainly, it is more obvious to take these words as Primasius (quoted by Westcott) does: "Torus talium conjugum est immaculatus, id est sine macula criminis."

Verse 10, "We have an altar."—Does this refer to the Eucharist? Strong authorities say it does; it is often quoted so. Yet there are great objections to this view. (1) Had an opposition been intended between "we" who have the altar and "those who serve the tabernacle," surely ἡμεῖς would have been written. (2) The whole three verses institute a parallel between Christ's offering of Himself and the sin-offering (Lev. vi. 30), of which the priests, "those officiating in the tabernacle service," were not allowed to eat. Thus it is, "We Hebrews have a sacrifice on the altar of which none is allowed to eat, it is taken outside and burned. Jesus suffering outside the gate fulfils this type." The writer has said that meats did not profit (verse 9). And in one sacrifice, and that the most typical of Christ, the meat was not eaten. (3) If in verse 10 there were meant a contrast, "We Christians have a sacrifice of which the Jews may not eat," it is not easy to see why this is said. It is neither connected with the assertion of the unprofitableness of meats, nor with the comparison in verses 11, 12. Westcott gets the emphasis and contrast from the position of ἔχομεν, and says: "The statement presents a contrast to some supposed deficiency. Christians, as such, so it appears to have

been urged, are in a position of disadvantage; they have not something which others have. The reply is, 'We have an altar.' But where is the evidence for any such assertion about the Christians? Westcott also urges that λατρεύειν is distinct from and contrasted with λειτουργεῖν. I fail to see any strong contrast; λατρεύειν may be used either of priest or people. And in chap. viii. 5, to which Westcott refers, λατρεύουσιν is used of the priests, and with their λατρεία the more excellent λειτουργία of Christ is compared, verse 6. In fine, though no one can reasonably deny that the Eucharist was spoken of as a sacrifice, and the holy table came to be termed by a kind of analogy an altar, the New Testament elsewhere does not call it so, and I doubt whether there is any reference to it here.

Verses 13-16.—Jesus was crucified outside the earthly city; we, too, must leave this, and with Him seek the heavenly city. And our sacrifice is praise and thanksgiving, and a life good and imparting good to others.

To Dr. Westcott (whom we welcome as a learned and worthy successor to the see of Durham) the Church owes much already for thoughtful and scholarly works. And in his recently published book on the Epistle to the Hebrews he fully maintains his reputation. It will be for English scholars the book on the subject. To do justice to its merits requires more than the mere end of an article, and a more thorough study of the work than has (to myself) hitherto been possible. From all that I have read, the notes seem eminently learned, thoughtful and reverent. The preliminary matter is excellent.

The Epistle will always possess an interest second to none in the canon. Dr. Westcott well says: "Every student of it must feel that it deals in a peculiar degree with the thoughts and trials of our own time." . . . "The difficulties which come to us through physical facts and theories, through criticism, through wider views of human history, correspond with those which came to Jewish Christians at the close of the Apostolic age, and they will find their solution also in fuller views of the person and work of Christ. The promise of the Lord awaits fulfilment for us in this present day as it found fulfilment for them: *In your patience ye shall possess your souls.*"

W. G. GREEN.

