

tation that must not be described as Predestinarian. All that we have urged is that the difficult words in Peter are to be interpreted without aid from Paul and in a different sense. In conclusion I may remark that the corrections and interpretations here offered have come to me gradually : the recognition that we were dealing with extracts from the Testimony Book came first ; but here one was held up by the fact that the agreement with Cyprian was inexact. After that I came to suspect the genuineness of ἐτέθησαν and made the necessary marginal correction ; it was only recently, however, that I saw that Barnabas had been on the same track, that he agreed with Cyprian on the one hand, and probably with Peter on the other, and that he furnished a remarkable confirmation to the emendation which I had made. So we may leave the matter to be further tested, and cover the final judgment with the words, " He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

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JUSTIN MARTYR AND THE TEXT OF HEBREWS

XI. 4

Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἀβελ παρὰ Καὶν προσήνεγκεν τῷ θεῷ δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανῶν ἔτι λαλεῖ.

THERE are two difficulties in this verse, (1) the interpretation of the words πλείονα θυσίαν, which in their most obvious sense, a "larger" or "greater" sacrifice, do not suit the context ; (2) the text of the words given by Westcott and Hort as αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, but of which they say in their appendix that Clement of Alexandria, who quotes the passage in *Stromata* ii. 4, 12, has probably preserved the true text (αὐτῷ, as above), while all the MSS. have become corrupt. This article is concerned principally with the first point ;

but if the argument is even partially justified, we shall have still earlier indirect evidence for Clement's text of the latter part of the verse.

Πλείονα is difficult to interpret. The word requires to have a meaning for which we can find some justification either in the Old Testament or in Jewish tradition. For the instances of faith in Hebrews are all instances as familiar to the readers, either through recorded or traditional history, as the famous events of English history to us. There is no evidence to show that the advantage of Abel's sacrifice was ever held to consist in its mere quantity. Translators have recognized this and given a metaphorical sense to *πλείονα*. Though the Vulgate is literal with "plurimam hostiam," Beza's Latin gives "majoris pretii," more valuable, and the English A.V. and R.V. "more excellent," both leaving it uncertain in what the value or excellence consists. This translation can be justified from the New Testament, e.g. Matthew vi. 25 (=Luke xii. 23), "Is not the life *more* than food?" Matthew xii. 41, 42 (=Luke xi. 31, 32), "A *greater* than Solomon, or than Jonah, is here." In Mark xii. 33 the MSS. vary between *πλείον* and *περισσότερον*, "to love the Lord is *more* than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." But *πλείον* is most distinctly elevated to the expression of moral greatness in Mark xii. 43 (=Luke xxi. 3), "This poor widow hath cast in *more* than they all."

But we expect the writer of this chapter to keep close to tradition if possible, and *πλείονα*, however excellent a word in itself, is not easily suggested by any account we have of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, and it does not clearly bring out the point on which stress is laid in the story. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." The Septuagint suggests some ritual error in Cain's offering: "If thou offeredst rightly, but didst not divide rightly, didst

thou not sin ? ” This attempt to account for the different reception of the two sacrifices does not seem to have commended itself to the Jews ; but the point of the story is that in some way or other, not clearly signified, Abel’s sacrifice was *more acceptable* than Cain’s, and we expect a word in Hebrews xi. 4 to convey this idea.

Cobet has made the plausible conjecture that a slight corruption of the text has substituted the unsuggestive word *πλείονα* for the right and telling word which calls up the whole story even before Abel’s name is mentioned. He proposes that for ΠΛΕΙΟΝΑ we should read ΗΔΙΟΝΑ. The alterations are three (1) the change in the position of a stroke in Π to make Η ; (2) the addition of a horizontal line at the base of Λ to make Δ ; (3) the reading of Ι for ΕΙ. In this last matter the orthography of MSS. is so liable to variation (see Westcott and Hort, *Appendix*, p. 153) that there is no difficulty in supposing that a scribe who had read ΠΛ at the beginning of the word would imagine that his original had written the word ΠΛΙΟΝΑ and would improve on it with the more correct diphthong. We are thus supplied with the sense of a “ more pleasing sacrifice,” which exactly represents the traditional character of the distinction between Abel’s sacrifice and Cain’s. This reading so far commends itself to Baljon that he puts it in his text on the strength of Cobet’s conjecture.

Most students of texts have some difficulty in maintaining a happy mean between reverence for what is written, which may sometimes be mere grovelling reverence for an age-long mistake, and a soaring faith in the verbal inspiration of conjectural emendations. But even those most inclined to the latter state have their faith confirmed when literary support is found for the conjecture. Now Cobet’s attractive emendation finds support in the following passage from Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 29.

εὐδόκησε γὰρ καὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ τὰς θυσίας ἡδίων παρ' ἡμῶν ἢ παρ' ὑμῶν λαμβάνει. τίς σὺν ἔτι μοι περιτομῆς λόγος, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυρηθέντι ;

Here we have the collocation of *θυσίας* with *ἡδίων*, the latter indeed as an adverb, and referring grammatically to the glad reception of the sacrifices instead of to the sacrifices that cause the gladness ; but though not precisely in the same form it is used in the same general sense as in Hebrews xi. 4 as emended by Cobet. It is clear that the emendation is not merely the result of a manipulation of alphabetic signs, but is in accordance with the thought and usage of the church of the second century.

But we can go further, and show that Justin had Hebrews xi. 4 in his mind when writing this passage. He passes immediately from the more pleasing sacrifices to the witness borne by God to him who offers them, again using the language of Hebrews xi. 4 in a slightly different construction. Thus we have the following parallelisms between Justin and Hebrews xi. 4 :—

Heb. [ἡδίονα] θυσίαν . . . ἐμαρτυρήθη . . . μαρτυροῦντος . . . τοῦ θεοῦ.

Justin. θυσίας ἡδίων . . . μαρτυρηθέντι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

This is not a mere verbal coincidence. The two central ideas of the verse in Hebrews reappear in Justin. The thought of the faithful being testified to by God seems to have been made current among Christians by the author of Hebrews. We are familiar with the idea that the faithful are witnesses who testify to God, and may seal their testimony as "martyrs." But this testimony is mutual : they are equally testified to by God. In Ignatius, *ad Philad.* 5. 2, the Christian prophets (thought of as in the line of the old prophets) are "testified to" by Jesus Christ. In Ignatius, *Eph.* xii. 2, Paul is described as "the sanctified, the one testified to," almost as if ὁ μαρτυρουμένος had

become a title of honour. Clement of Rome *ad Cor.* xvii. 1; xviii. 1; xix. 1, borrowing the thought from Hebrews, speaks of the company of the old saints as "those testified to." In Hebrews xi. the expression is used generally of all the ancient saints in *vv.* 2 and 39, in *v.* 5 of Enoch particularly, on the ground that he pleased God, and in *v.* 4 of Abel on the ground of his . . . sacrifice. (The adjective is omitted for the present). Abel is the one person "testified to" on the ground of sacrifice. We see then that in speaking of God's testimony to His saints on the ground of sacrifice Justin must have Abel in mind, though he does not mention him by name, and we shall be able to show that it is Abel who suggested to him the passage in Hebrews.

Justin is engaged in arguing to justify to Trypho the absence of circumcision and Sabbath observance among Christians. He has already referred to *those who lived before Abraham* as not being bound by either. He has further said, chapter 28, "If a Scythian or a Persian has the knowledge of God and of His Christ, and keeps the eternal right things, he is circumcised with the good and profitable circumcision and is dear to God, and *He rejoices in his gifts and offerings.*" Here we have the same words from Genesis iv. 4, as are quoted in Hebrews xi. 4, while *χαίρει* (rejoices) fairly represents the thought expressed in Genesis by *ἔπιδεν*. But in using this line of argument Justin does not stand alone. He is using the regular Christian testimonies against the Jews, and the point where we can convict him most readily of using a regular book of testimonies is in the quotation which immediately precedes the passage we are discussing. He quotes Malachi i. 10, 11, "I have no delight in you, saith the Lord, and I do not accept your sacrifices at your hands. Wherefore from the rising to the setting of the sun my name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place a sacrifice is offered to my name, a pure

sacrifice. For my name is being honoured among the Gentiles, saith the Lord, but you profane it." By means of this quotation we can trace the argument into Cyprian and Tertullian. Cyprian's *Testimonies against the Jews* are a third century form of the older style of testimony book. It is clearly based on former collections of passages suitable to quote against the Jews. Cyprian's *Testimonies*, book i. chapter 16, is entitled "That the ancient sacrifice should be made void and a new one celebrated," and Malachi i. 10, 11 is quoted under this head. Book i. chapter 8 is entitled, "That the first circumcision of the flesh is made void, and the second circumcision of the spirit is promised instead," and under this heading is the following testimony, "Adam was first made by God uncircumcised, and righteous *Abel*, and Enoch, who pleased God and was translated, and Noah . . . and Melchizedek." These testimonies of Cyprian show us that the thought of an acceptable sacrifice from the Gentiles, and that of the faithful uncircumcised before Abraham, including Abel by name, belong to the stock of testimonies against the Jews.

But Tertullian is the most useful witness to the way of using these two testimonies. In *Adversus Judæos* he applies in great detail the testimonies which we find lying in the armoury in Cyprian, and handled gently, and with a polite and persuasive reserve, by Justin. In chapter ii. he treats of the patriarchs who pleased God though they were not circumcised and did not keep the Sabbath. (The Sabbath argument seems to have dropped out by Cyprian's time.) He has the same list as Cyprian, but adds Lot. Of Abel he says, "God commended Abel who offered him sacrifices, though uncircumcised and not keeping the Sabbath, counting as acceptable (*accepto ferens*) what he offered in simplicity of heart, and reproving the sacrifice of his brother Cain who did not rightly divide what he offered."

After a passing reference to Abel in dealing with the Sabbath question in chapter iv. Tertullian comes in chapter v. to the earthly and spiritual sacrifices, where he quotes the story of Cain and Abel at length, with this introduction.

“So also we show the sacrifices of earthly offerings and spiritual sacrifices to have been predicted, and that from the beginning the earthly sacrifices of the elder son, that is, Israel, have been shown before in Cain, and that different (*diversa*) sacrifices of the younger son, Abel, that is, *of our people*, have been pointed to.” Following the story of Cain and Abel, in due course, comes the quotation from Malachi.

Justin is evidently using a book of testimonies against the Jews, though he does not use it slavishly. The passages in Cyprian and Tertullian show that the book had probably a direct reference to Abel in connexion with Sabbath and circumcision and the better sacrifice. There can be no doubt that when Justin combines in one passage a reference to the more pleasing sacrifices and to the needlessness of circumcision he has Abel in his mind. The thought of Abel calls to his mind the reference in Hebrews, and in the fervour of his conclusion of this part of the argument he falls into its language.

But it is no accident that Justin should fall into the language of Hebrews. He has caught also the spirit of Hebrews. The study of the Epistle must have been part of his preparation for dealing sympathetically with Jews, and this little passage of the *Dialogue* shows that it had helped him to know himself. Hebrews xi. and xii. persuade us, all unconsciously, that the saints of old and the saints of our own time are one community. They are united in the common witness of God to their faithfulness. Abel is “testified to” by God, so is Enoch, as are “all these” ancient saints, who are inseparably connected with “us” (xi. 40, xii. 1). Justin must have had great sympathy with

this sentiment ; he had himself found in the Hebrew prophets the masters of philosophy and they had led him to Christ. He was one of a people still liable to the persecutions and sufferings of the righteous of old time. More thoroughly than either Clement of Rome or Ignatius he has appropriated to himself the language in which the Divine testimony to the righteous is described—*μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυρηθέντι*.

To sum up and return to the question of text. It appears that the acceptableness of Abel's sacrifice to God made it the type of the Christian's acceptable sacrifice, and that it was so quoted against the Jews in Justin's and in Tertulian's time. That Justin in referring to it in the *Dialogue with Trypho* does not mention Abel by name, but has him in mind when he quotes generally those who lived before Abraham as not being bound by Sabbath or circumcision. That in the thick of an argument on the subject Justin falls into the language which the author of Hebrews had used in reference to Abel, and adds a thought which belongs not to the testimony book but to Hebrews. That in referring to Hebrews he uses the same word, *ἡδίων*, in the same degree of comparison, in equally close connexion with *θυσία*, which Cobet has suggested as a substitute for the lifeless word *πλείονα* in Hebrews. The substitution is palæographically easy and greatly increases the force of the passage. Therefore Cobet's conjecture that we should read *ἡδίονα* for *πλείονα* is supported by a passage in Justin which is so full of the spirit of Hebrews and so clearly uses the language of this verse that it deserves high consideration as an early patristic reference. If this argument is accepted, we have textual evidence for Hebrews xi. 4 older than the earliest direct quotation, that of Clement of Alexandria, and this evidence supports the reading *ἡδίονα*.

To come now to the second textual difficulty in this verse.

Quite apart from any evidence respecting ἡδύωνα, if it is allowed that Justin is referring to Hebrews xi. 4, we have fresh evidence for the uncertain text in the latter part of the verse. Justin has *μοι . . . ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυρηθέντι*. In Hebrews we have first the aorist indicative passive with no agent expressed, then the present participle active. Justin's reference retains the aorist passive but in the participial construction. If we turn his passive into active again, we see that his reading of Hebrews must have been *μαρτυροῦντος . . . τοῦ θεοῦ*. But did he read *αὐτοῦ* or *αὐτῷ*? Justin's *μοι* represents the subject of the passive *μαρτυρηθέντι*, and by it he identifies himself with the offerer of the acceptable sacrifice. What he says (though in the dative case¹) is "I being witnessed to by God"; and if we are to find an original for every part of that in Hebrews, it was "God witnessing to *him*," and Justin must have read *αὐτῷ*. There is a fair presumption that Justin's reading of the doubtful words was *αὐτῷ τοῦ θεοῦ*, and we have earlier inferential evidence in support of Clement of Alexandria's text, which Westcott and Hort believed to be the true one.

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¹ The case of *μοι . . . μαρτυρηθέντι* is of course determined by the construction of Justin's own sentence and has nothing to do with Hebrews.