

## CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

## X.

WITH the discussion of *Tense*, which I take next because of its close connexion with last month's subject, we come again into the field of the familiar. It is, however, the field of all others in which the problems are most serious and most important for practical exegesis. On the Present stem, as normally denoting "linear" or durative action, I have already said almost enough. It has to be remembered that this belongs originally to certain present-stem conjugations alone, and that the effects of a primitive diversity may often be levelled by later analogical processes. That some presents are "point-words" is obvious. Thus Mr. Giles conjectures plausibly<sup>1</sup> that ἄρχεσθαι is really an aorist to the present ἔρχεσθαι, which would supply a sufficient reason for its kind of action. But it may indeed be suspected that point and line action were both originally possible in present and aorist stem formations which did not involve the addition of formative prefix or suffix. It would thus be largely due to analogical levelling that the present takes generally the durative character which belongs to most of its special conjugation stems. But this is conjectural, and we need only observe that the *punktuell* roots which appear in the present stem have given rise to the use of the so-called present tense to denote future time.<sup>2</sup> In αὐριον ἀποθνήσκωμεν we have a verb in which the perfective compound has neutralised the inceptive force of the suffix -ίσκω: it is only the obsolescence of the simplex which allows it

<sup>1</sup> *Manua' of Comparative Philology*,<sup>2</sup> p. 482. The *ap* will of course be the familiar weakening of *ep* which we see in *τραπεῖν* against *τρέπειν*: *ap* and *pa* are the Greek representatives of vocalic *r*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the close connexion between *aorist* (not present) subjunctive and the future, which is indeed in its history mainly a specialising of the former.

ever to borrow a durative action. *Εἶμι* in Attic is a notable example of the present of a point-root used for a future in the indicative. But though it is generally asserted that this use of present tense for future originates in the words with momentary action, this limitation does not appear in the New Testament examples, any more than in English. We can say, "I am going to London to-morrow" just as well as "I go": and *διέρχομαι* in 1 Corinthians xvi. 5, *γίνεται* in Matthew xxvi. 2, and other futural presents that may be paralleled from the vernacular of the papyri, have no lack of durativity about them. In this stage of Greek, as in our own language, we may define the futural present as differing from the future tense mainly in the tone of assurance which is imparted. That the Present is not primarily a *tense* in the usual acceptance of the term is shown not only by the fact that it can stand for future time, but by its equally well-known use as a past. The "Historic" present is divided by Brugmann (*Gr. Gram.*<sup>3</sup> 484 f.) into the "dramatic" and the "registering" present. The latter occurs in historical documents with words like *γίγνεται*, *τελευτα*, etc., registering a date. *Γεννᾶται* in Matthew ii. 4 is the nearest New Testament example I can think of. The former, common in the vernacular of all Indo-Germanic languages—we have only to overhear a servant girl's "so she says to me," if we desiderate proof that the usage is at home among us—is abundantly represented in the New Testament. From that mine of statistical wealth, Hawkins's *Horae Synopticae*, we find that Mark uses the historic present 151 times, Matthew 93 times, Luke 8 times in the Gospel and 13 in *Acts*; also that it is rare in the LXX, except in *Job*, and in the rest of the New Testament, except in John's Gospel. I should not, however, take this to mean that it was "by no means common in Hellenistic Greek." Sir John Hawkins himself observes that it is common in Josephus, and of course it was abun-

dant in Attic. The fact that Luke invariably (except in viii. 49) altered Mark's favourite usage means, I think, that it was too *familiar* for his liking. I have not searched the papyri for this phenomenon, but I may cite No. 717 from the new Oxyrhynchus volume as a contemporary document in which a whole string of presents do duty in narrative. Josephus would use the tense as an imitator of the classics, Mark as a man of the people who heard it in daily use around him; while Luke would have Greek education enough to know that it was not common in cultured speech of his time, but not enough to recall the encouragement of classical writers whom he probably never read, and would not have imitated if he had read them. The limits of the historic present are well seen in the fact that it is absent from Homer, not because it was foreign to the old Achaian dialect, but because of its felt incongruity in epic style: it is absent from the *Nibelungenlied* in the same way.

Space forbids enlargement on this theme, and requires brevity in dealing with the Imperfect, a tense in which the classical force is still well maintained. Among the many points in which the Revisers have earned our gratitude for their treatment of the Tenses, the restoration of the *conative* imperfect must take a high place. What would St. Paul have thought of the translators who by missing this in Acts xxvi. 11 committed him to the statement that under terror from him weak Christians had actually renounced their Master! In itself, of course, *ἠνάγκαζον* there might be "I repeatedly forced"; but the sudden abandonment of the aorist gives a grammatical argument for selecting this well-known alternative, which is made certain by the whole tone of the Apostle in his retrospect. We can indeed but faintly imagine the difference to Paul's whole career, had his past included the guilt of soul-murder instead of mere killing of the body. For other typical examples of this imperfect we may compare Mark ix. 38,

Matthew iii. 14, Acts vii. 26, Luke i. 59. In the second and fourth of these the R.V. has corrected the old version, which in Acts *l.c.* has curiously blundered into the right meaning by mistranslating a wrong text.<sup>1</sup> In the first passage it is unfortunate that the Revisers should have corrected the text and then left the translation alone.

The *Aorist* raises many more questions than we can deal with here. Its "punktuell" character is well seen in contrast with the present stem in *δὸς σήμερον* against *δίδου τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν* in the two versions of the Lord's Prayer, or in *παραστήσατε* against *παριστάνετε* in Romans vi. 13. The growth of the constative use has, as we saw last month,<sup>2</sup> greatly diminished the extent of the contrast. On this, and on the Ingressive and Effective uses of the strictly momentary aorist, we must not dwell now. The association of the Aorist with past time is the subject on which our attention may best be concentrated. This is of course confined entirely to the indicative and the participle, except in a few cases where reported speech preserved the past sense of the indicative in the optative or infinitive which replaced it. Past time properly came out of the augment alone, but the participle acquired it by the idiomatic use in which it stands before an aorist indicative to qualify its action. As describing momentary action, or action viewed as a point, it naturally came to involve action precedent to the time of the main verb, and this meaning was extended to cases where it followed that verb. This was, however, not necessary. In many cases the participle and the verb finite are closely bound together as one action: the familiar

<sup>1</sup> The T. R. *συνήλασεν* would naturally mean that he "drove" them to shake hands.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Thumb kindly draws my attention to the article (*Indog. Forsch.* xii. 319 ff.) in which Meltzer controverted Miss Purdie's results. I had unaccountably overlooked it. I am glad, however, to find that Professor Thumb himself thinks that Miss Purdie is essentially right, and that Modern Greek is on this side.

example of ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπε is as good as can be given. There are even cases where the participle seems to involve *subsequent* action. Thus, in the Fourth Pythian (l. 189) we have, "when the flower of his sailor-folk came down to Iolcos, Jason *mustered and thanked* them all" (λέξατο ἐπαινῆσαις). It is *coincident* action really, as Gildersleeve notes, but of course if Pindar had felt bound to chronicle the exact order of proceedings he would have put the muster first. I am strongly disposed to have recourse to this for the much-discussed ἀσπασάμενοι in Acts xxv. 13, though Hort's suspicions of "prior corruption" make me nervous. It might seem more serious still that Blass (*Grammar*, p. 197) pronounces "the reading of the majority of the MSS. . . . not Greek,"<sup>1</sup> for Blass comes as near to a revived Athenian as any modern could hope to be. But when he says that the "accompanying circumstance . . . cannot yet be regarded as concluded," may we not reply that in that case Pindar's ἐπαινῆσαις equally needs emending? The effective aorist κατήνησαν is very different from a durative like ἐπορεύοντο, which could only have been followed by a word describing the purpose before them on their journey. But in "they arrived on a complimentary visit" I submit that the case is really one of *identical* action. The R.V. text is accordingly correct. There are a good many New Testament passages in which exegesis has to decide between antecedent and coincident action, in places where the participle stands second: Heb. ix. 12 will serve as an example. It would take too much space to discuss as I should like the alleged examples of *subsequent* action participles for which Ramsay pleads (*Paul the Traveller*, p. 212).

<sup>1</sup> Blass here slurs over the fact that *not one uncial* reads the future. The paraphrastic rendering of the Vulgate cannot count, and a reading supported by nothing better than the cursive 61 had better be called a conjecture outright. (Blass's misquotation κατήλθον, by the way, is not corrected in his second edition.)

I confess myself unconvinced, but must reserve my defence.

There are naturally few places in the New Testament where the aorist indicative has in any way lost the sense of past time. Ἐβλήθη in John xv. 6 is paralleled by the classical use seen in Euripides, *Alc.* 386, ἀπωλόμην εἰ με λείψεις, where we prefer the perfect "I am done for": so in Romans xiv. 23 κατακέκριται (cf. Jannaris, *Hist. Gr.* § 1855 f). In ἐξέστη (Mark vii. 21) our English idiom uses the perfect ("He has gone out of his mind"), instead of the aorist of indefinite reference. Similarly, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα is "on thee I have set the seal of my approval." (It is unfortunate that in English the perfect tense has this neutral zone, in which it is impossible to determine whether it represents the aorist or the perfect of Greek. There is, for example, a very marked difference between the tense of Mark xvi. 6 and 1 Corinthians xv. 4. Ἠγήθη states simply the past complete fact, while ἐγγέγερται is concerned with its present abiding significance. And yet our idiom demands "He is risen" for the first, and in the second, since a definite point of time is named, somewhat rebels against the perfect which is imperatively demanded by the sense. See Dean Armitage Robinson's note on this subject, *The Study of the Gospels*, p. 107. In classical Greek we may find an aorist of this kind used with a sequence which would naturally suggest a foregoing perfect, as Euripides, *Medea* 213 f., ἐξήλθον δόμων μή μοί τι μέμφησθ'—where see Verrall's note. There remains the "Gnomic Aorist," which Winer need not have denied: James i. 11 and 1 Peter i. 25 are clear cases—see Hort's note on the latter. It survives in Modern Greek, according to Jannaris (*Hist. Gr.* § 1852).

At this point, as I am manifestly leaving the Aorist in an extremely unfinished condition, I must pause to explain that this paper cannot profess even the degree of complete-

ness which has been aimed at hitherto. To do this would involve undue extension, and I must attempt it elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> At present I must only endeavour to round off the subject at the very outset of the Verb, lest we should encroach upon another year's programme. I pass on then to the Perfect, the most important of all the tenses for us to understand. A cursory reading of the papyri soon shows us that the Perfect is used in the later vernacular very much more than in classical literature. The inference might be drawn that the Perfect has become a mere narrative tense, as it undeniably became at a later stage, and is a mere alternative for the Aorist. This would however in my opinion be entirely unwarrantable. I have found extremely few passages in the papyri of the earlier centuries A.D. in which an aoristic perfect is demanded, or even suggested, by the context. It is simply that a preference grows in popular speech for the expression which links the past act with present consequences. A casual example from the prince of Attic writers will show that this is not only a feature of late Greek. Near the beginning of Plato's *Crito* Socrates explains his reason for believing that he would not die till the third day. "This I infer," he says in Jowett's English, "from a vision which I *had* last night, or rather only just now." The Greek, however, is *τεκμαίρομαι ἔκ τινος ἐνυπνίου, ὃ ἐώρακα ὀλίγον πρότερον ταύτης τῆς νυκτός*, where point of time in the past would have made *εἶδον* as inevitable as the aorist is in the English, had not Socrates meant to emphasise the present vividness of the vision. It is for exactly the same reason that *ἐγγήγερται* is used with a time point in 1 Corinthians xv. 4.<sup>2</sup> Now

<sup>1</sup> In some *Prolegomena to New Testament Greek Grammar*, to be published next year by Messrs. T. & T. Clark. I have not yet done with the papyri and their lessons for New Testament students, and hope to take up the theme in a less technical series of papers in the *EXPOSITOR* in 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rom. xvi. 7, and the 2nd cent. papyrus O.P. 477: *τῶν τὸ πέμπτον*

when this tendency grew beyond a certain limit, the fusion of aorist and perfect would be complete. But it must be observed that it was not the perfect which survived in the struggle for existence. In Modern Greek the old perfect forms only survive in the passive participle (with reduplication syllable lost), and in the *-κα* which was tacked on to the aorist passive (*ἐδέθηκα* for *ἐδέθην*). It does not appear that the perfect had in any way superseded the aorist—though in a fair way to do so—when it was itself attacked by the weakening of reduplication which destroyed all chance of its survival as a distinct form, in competition with the simpler formation of the aorist. But these processes do not set in for at least two centuries after the New Testament was complete. It is true that the LXX. and inscriptions show a few examples of a semi-aoristic perfect in the pre-Roman age, which, as Thumb remarks (*Hellenismus*, p. 153), disposes of the idea that Latin influence was working: cf. Jannaris, § 1872. But it is easy to exaggerate them. Thus in Exodus xxxii. 1 *κεχρόνικε* is not really aoristic (as Thumb and Jannaris), for it would be wholly irregular to put an aorist in *oratio obliqua* to represent the original present or perfect “Moses is tarrying” or “has tarried”: its analogue is rather the *χρονίζει* of Matthew xxiv. 48. Nor will it do to cite the perfects in *Hebrews*, e.g. xi. 17, where the use of this tense to describe what stands written in Scripture is a marked feature of the author’s style: cf. Plato, *Apol.* 28c, *ὅσοι ἐν Τροίᾳ τετελευτήκασιν*, as written in the Athenians’ “Bible.” In fact Matthew xiii. 46 is the only New Testament example cited by Jannaris<sup>1</sup> which impresses me at all. (I may quote in illustration of this O.P. 482 (2nd cent.) *χωρὶς ὧν ἀπεγραψάμην καὶ πέπρακα*). The distinction is very clearly seen

*ἔτος* . . . *ἐφηβευκότων*—a fusion of “who came of age *in*” and “who have been of age *since* the 5th year.”

<sup>1</sup> What is meant by the references to “John 6. 3, 6, 9”?



in papyri for some centuries. Thus τῆς γενομένης καὶ ἀποπεπεμμένης γυναικός (2nd cent.), “who *was* my wife and *is now* divorced”; ὄλον τὸν χαλκὸν [δεδα] πάνηκα εἰς αὐτῶ (3rd cent.), where an erased ἐ- shows that the scribe meant to write the aorist and then substituted the more appropriate perfect. As may be expected, illiterate documents show confusion most: e.g. O.P. 528 (2nd cent.) οὐκ ἐλουσάμην οὐκ ἤλιμε (= ἤλειμαι) μέχρει ιβ Ἀθύρ (cf. EXPOSITOR VI. vi. 434). It is in the combinations of aorist and perfect that we naturally look first for the weakening of the distinction, but even there it often appears clearly drawn. At the same time we may find a writer like Justin Martyr guilty of confusion, as in *Apol.* i. 22 πεποιηκέναι . . . ἀνεγείραι, 32 ἐκάθισε καὶ εἰσελήλυθεν, 44 νοῆσαι δεδύνηνται καὶ ἐξηγήσαντο. And in the LXX. we find such a mixture as ἐτραυματίσθη . . . μεμαλάκισται, Isa. liii. 5 (aor. in A).

I must not attempt anything like a discussion of the alleged aoristic perfects in the New Testament, the most probable of which are collected by Blass, *Gram.* 200. The case of γέγονα is the most difficult, as most of the others are mitigated by their having somewhat aorist-seeming forms:—εἶρηκα, ἔσχηκα end like ἔθηκα, ἀφήκα, and (like εἶληφα) have no obvious reduplication. (Πέπρακα is intelligible on account of the absence of aorist from the same root.) The affinities of γέγονα would naturally be with the present, and there seems small reason for letting it do the work of the common ἐγενόμην. Yet even Josephus (*c. Apion.* 4. 21) has ὀλίγη πρότερον τῆς Πεισιστράτου τυραννίδος ἀνθρώπου γεγονότος, “who flourished a little before P.” From the papyri I may cite two 2nd cent. examples:—O.P. 478, “I declare that my son . . . has reached (προσβεβηκέναι) the age of 13 in the past 16th year of Hadrian . . . and that his father *was* (γεγονέναι) an inhabitant . . . and is now dead (τετελευτηκέναι)”; B.U. 136 διαβεβαιουμένου

τοῦ Π. μὴ γεγόναι τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἐκδικουμένης ὀνηλάτην. In the face of these examples it is hard to assert perfect force in Luke x. 36, or John vi. 25. But the case must be settled by the context in each passage. It will be found that among the 45 occurrences of *γέγονα* (indic.) the very large majority are in present time beyond dispute. I doubt if there is one for which an aoristic sense *must* be found. In Matthew xxv. 6 and elsewhere we may have a historic present, *γέγονα* being virtually *sum*, but that is another matter. The evidence just cited must make us chary of denying aoristic *γέγονα a priori*, but we are bound to admit it with the utmost caution. K. Buresch, in his well-known article "*Γέγοναν*" (Rhein Mus., 1891) notes an example of aoristic *γεγόνασι* in Plato (?) *Alcibiades*, p. 124a, but observes that in Greek which is at all decent this is never found. In later Greek, he proceeds, the use of *γέγονα* greatly increases. "It has present force always where it denotes a state of rest, preterite force where it denotes becoming. Hence *γέγονα* in innumerable cases is quite an equivalent of *εἰμί*, as with *existi*, *factus* or *natus sum*, etc." (p. 231 note). We may certainly assert without hesitation that even if a few exceptions are to be allowed in the particular words quoted—and only in a fraction of their occurrences can any case be made—in the immense majority of perfects in the New Testament the full perfect force is seen.

Before I close this article I should like to mention in advance a vernacular usage which I have not seen noted elsewhere. In the papyri there are a good many examples of the participle used instead of a finite verb, presumably by the ellipse of the substantive verb. The following stand for imperatives.<sup>1</sup> G. 35 (99 B.C.) *ἑαυτῶν δὲ ἐπιμελόμενοι ἴν' ὑγιαίνητε* (1st person plural precedes): so G. 30 (103 B.C.) *αἰ.*—a standing formula. For the indicative these may be

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations as in EXPOSITOR, VI. viii. 423.

cited. Tb. P. 14 (114 B.C.) τῶι οὖν σημαινόμενῳ Ἡρᾶτι παρηγγελκότες ἐνώπιον, "I gave notice in person" (no verb follows). Tb. P. 42 (*ib.*) ἡδίκημένος (no verb follows). A P. 78 (2nd cent.) βίαν πάσχων ἐκάστοτε, etc. (no verb). Tb. P. 58 (111 B.C.) γράψας ὅπως εἰδῆς, καὶ σὺ ἀναγωνιάτος ἴσθαι. N.P. 49 (3rd cent.) ὅτι ". . . ἐξαγρήσαντες. . . καὶ . . . σφετερίσαντες, καὶ ἀπάντηκα αὐτοῖς. . ." There are other examples, but these will serve to prove that it is needless to resort to anacoluthon and all manner of other devices to regularise Romans v. 11, xii. 9-13, 1 Peter v. 7, Ephesians v. 21, and other passages. Of course we must not overdo our new resource, as the construction cannot have been very common. It may be recalled that in a prehistoric stage Latin used the participle for an indicative, where the 2nd plur. middle for some reason became unpopular, and *sequimini* = ἐπόμενοι not only established itself in the present, but even produced analogy formations in future and imperfect, and in the subjunctive.<sup>1</sup> Cf. the constant ellipse of *est* in perf. indic. passive. (We may make the Hebraists a present of the parallel use of the Hebrew participle!) If one more analogy may be permitted, we might refer to the plausible connexion claimed between the 3rd plural indicative and the participle in all languages of our family: *bheronti* (*ferunt*, φέρουσι, *bairand*, etc.), and *bheront* (*ferens*, φέρων, *bairands*). These analogies are only meant to show that the use of the participle always lay ready to hand, with or without the auxiliary verb, and was a natural resource whenever the ordinary indicative (or, less often, imperative) was for any cause set aside.

<sup>1</sup> *Sequimini* imperative has a different history: cf. the old infinitive ἐπέμεναι, Skt. *sacamane*.