A CONCORDANT STUDY IN GREEK AND ENGLISH GRAMMAR

The English and Greek Indefinite



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THE GREEK AND ENGLISH INDEFINITE

"The Greek Aorist tense cannot be consistently translated into English, and especially not by the English present." This seems to be the usual attitude of scholars toward the attempt to render each Greek tense consistently, and to use the English present as a constant equivalent of the Greek indefinite, in the Concordant Version.

We fully concur in this opinion, from the standpoint of traditional Greek grammar. If we include under the term "Aorist", and "second Aorist" all the forms usually so designated, it is impossible not only to translate consistently, but it is also impossible to give a rational reason for any rendering. Translation will be based on individual bias, and thus the Scriptures are conformed to fallible human interpretation, rather than to divine revelation.

To the casual critic, the renderings of the verbs in the Concordant Version sometimes seem erratic and pedantic. Until one has become accustomed to them, the changes appear unreasonable and capricious, instead of being consistent or uniform. It is like one who steps out at night and stares at the stars, scattered hither and thither on the blue vault of heaven without any apparent system. Yet, just as the heavens are marvelous manifestations of order and law to the astronomer, so the patient student will find that the verbs are rendered in accord with divine law, and seek to manifest the exactitude of the great Author of the original, even though these are often unappreciated and unwanted.

The entire scheme of the CONCORDANT VERSION founds itself upon a desire for unvarying consistency in setting forth the mind of God. The Greek language is capable of expressing with precision the finest and most delicate shades of meaning. With proper care it is possible to set over into English most (if not all) of the excellences of the God-given original.

In effecting a faithful reproduction of God's thoughts it was found necessary to consider each Greek word in all of its contexts in order to determine its scope and its

most satisfactory English equivalent.

A similar process, though more arduous, was called for and diligently performed, to arrange these words in a proper grammatical setting to accord with the language of inspiration.

The consideration of the nouns and adjectives did not present many serious difficulties. The Greek verb, which tradition had invested with almost insuperable difficulties, required a great deal of preliminary analysis and dissection before it finally yielded up its complex structure. Certain forms of the verb were found to contain within themselves invariable signs of state and tense.

At the first attempt to apply the prime principle of consistency to the rendering of the Greek verb, according to accepted grammatical doctrines, we soon found ourselves in clouds and chaos. This was especially true of the so-called Voices and Tenses. There seemed to be no correspondence between form and force. The Middle form was usually called the Passive. The Aorist was either past, present, or future. It seemed a hopeless task to create order out of such confusion.

This condition of affairs is recognized by the greatest scholars in this field, as the following facts and extracts from their writings show. The Analytical Greek Lexicon, published by Bagster, was first intended as the basis of our Analytical Concordance. But when one word was found which, in its three persons, I, you, and he, was listed first as a past and then as a present and also as a future, this work had to be discarded. If one form of a

verb, differing only in the matter of personal endings, which do not affect the tense, can be rendered in all three tenses, there is an end of all significance to the Greek verb so far as time is concerned.

In "A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research" Prof. Robertson has this to say regarding the translation of the Aorist into English: "The Greek Aorist ind., as can be readily seen. is not the exact equivalent of any tense in any other language. It has nuances all its own, many of them difficult or well nigh impossible to reproduce in English. We merely do the best we can in English to translate in one way or another the total result of a word, context and tense. Certainly one cannot say that the English translations have been successful with the Greek agrist . . . (Page 847). The English past will translate the Greek agrist in many cases where we prefer 'have'. . . (Page 848). The Greek agrist and the English past do not exactly correspond, . . . The Greek agrist covers much more ground than the English past. . . The agrist in Greek is so rich in meaning that the English labors and groans to express it. As a matter of fact the Greek aorist is translatable into almost every English tense except the imperfect . . . " Again, "The aorist is. strictly speaking, timeless."

As this is the latest and most authoritative work on the grammar of the New Testament, it is evident that Dr. Weymouth's suggestion has not been deemed a satisfactory solution and that the translation of the aorist into English is in a most unsatisfactory state, notwithstanding all the efforts of modern scholarship.

In view of this self-confessed failure, any attempt at the solution of so grave a defect in our method of translation should be welcomed and examined on its own merits.

Dr. Weymouth, in his pamphlet "On the Rendering into English of the Greek Aorist and Perfect" criticises the Revised Version for its treatment of the aorist. Falling in with the prevailing tendency, they had changed

Weymouth Prefers the Perfect

many renderings which are in the "perfect" (using HAVE) to the past tense. In fact they, generally speaking, regarded the agrist as referring to the past. Dr. Weymouth noted how often it makes poor English, and felt, in an indefinite way, that the agrist must not be confined to the past. He would have it rendered by the "perfect", as it often is in the Authorized Version, at the same time translating the perfect in this way as well. But if the agrist is I-HAVE-LOVED and the Perfect also is I-HAVE-LOVED, what is the difference between them? After all, the chief function of a translation is to preserve the distinctions of the original. If a painter should copy a picture of sheep and goats and draw them all alike, he may produce a pretty picture, but an unfaithful copy. There are sharp boundaries between all the forms of the Greek verb as we shall see, and they should be distinguished as far as possible.

Weymouth pleads for the perfect, as a rendering of the Greek aorist because it has a bearing on the present, which the past has not. He protests that "it is too commonly believed and taught that the Greek Aorist Indicative . . . is equivalent to the Simple Past Tense in English (I wrote, I loved, I brought . . .)" He affirms that "the English Past, used according to the true English idiom, will largely fail to coincide with the Aorist . . ." He makes the startling discovery that we give the English Present the force of a Future, giving the following examples: "We start tomorrow," "The king comes here tonight." He might have added the fact that this same "present" is used of the past also, as in "The

He was on the verge of discovering that the English "Present" is not a present at all but a true past-future indefinite. He even gives examples where the Present must be used, as, "The Chronicle states—", "Clarendon records—", "Gibbon informs us—". The one instance he gives for the past in narrative is found in Acts 25: 14: "Festus declared". But the Greek word here used has none of the characteristics of the true agrist at all

king comes here since he was crowned."

except the sign of the past. Etheto is a simple past, and should be rendered "Festus submitted Paul's case to the

king".

To prove that the agrist is not a simple past he gives the following instances in which both the A. V. and the Revisers render it by the perfect: We add the C. V. rendering to show that it can usually be still better rendered by the so-called English "present".

Mt. 5:21,27 Ye have heard that it was said C. V. You hear that it was declared

Mk. 10:20 All these things have I observed C. V. I maintain all these things from

Rev. 14:8 Babylon is fallen, is fallen C. V. It falls! It falls! Babylon

The perfect limits the action to the past just as much as the past tense does. In these and all other instances of the acrist the action is not confined to the past.

Weymouth then makes the welcome admission that "aorist means indefinite, and we must bow to the authority of the Greek grammarians who held that name to be a suitable one . . .". This is precisely the point for which we contend.

He then gives examples where he thinks the agrist should be rendered by the pluperfect and the translators have so given it.

Mt. 1:24 As the angel had bidden him C. V. As the messenger bids him

Mt. 11:1 When Jesus had made an end C. V. When Jesus finishes

Mt. 27:31 When they had mocked Him C. V. And when they deride Him

Mt. 26:19 As Jesus had appointed them C. V. As Jesus instructs them

Mk. 1:32 When the sun had set C. V. When the sun sets

The following is a step in the right direction: "The Aorist is often used where our idiom demands the Present... but this Gnomic Aorist (as in Jas. 1:11, "for the sun rises", etc.) and the Epistolary Aorist (2 Cor.

8:18, "we send with him the brother") need not here be enlarged upon." Weymouth touches the true sense of the aorist here, but, alas, he did not enlarge upon it! He recognizes its use in the statement of general truths or proverbs (the Gnomic Aorist). The very fact that it can be used of things which are true at all times and that English uses the "present" for this purpose is sufficient to identify them.

Those who suppose that the English of our versions is beyond reproach will be shocked when he states that "the persistent rendering of the Greek Aorist by the English simple Past in the R. V. of the N. T. has one very undesirable effect—that the translation is not Eng-

lish".

Some conception of the difficulty of the problem before us is evident from the fact that Greek is proverbially one of the most difficult of languages, the verb is the most complex and elaborate part of Greek grammar, and of the verb the one unsolvable riddle has been the aorist. It is, indeed, the most difficult of the most difficult. Yet we propose to make it so simple and easy that anyone, with the understanding of an adult, will be able to grasp the essential facts, and thus open up a new and still unknown vista in God's revelation to readers of the English language.

It should be understood that this attempt to explain the agrist is not intended primarily for scholars, but for the unlearned and ignorant. Everything has been done with a view to make it so easy to understand that it will comfortably come within the range of the most ordinary

intellect.

In planning a consistent version it is manifest that one of the most vital elements is the rendition of each verbal form by a fixed English equivalent. To investigate the possibility of such a course the verb was analyzed into all its forms and each was given its nearest English equivalent. In assigning the English equivalents, the first form dealt with was the incomplete present. The tendency at first was to assign to it the so-called

English "present", the simplest form of the verb, as I-LOVE. But repeated experiments showed the inadequacy of this form to express the fact that the action was actually in progress. For this English has the special form, I-AM-LOVING, called the "participial present". Exhaustive tests showed that this was the true equivalent of the so-called Greek "present", though the strenuous tendency of our idiom to shorten all forms often demands the indefinite I-LOVE.

After all the other forms had been assigned and tested, the Indefinite Past-Future, or Aorist, remained. What could be used for it? Nothing was left but the so-called English "present", as, I-LOVE, and it dawned upon the mind of the investigator that its name was a misnomer—it was not restricted to the present at all. but it, too, was indefinite, just like the Greek "Aorist". We have named it the English Aorist. Exhaustive tests proved the correctness of this conclusion, and years of use in compiling the version have confirmed the fact that the English "present" is a very close equivalent of the Greek "aorist". True, there are passages where it seems odd at first, but close investigation shows it to be correct, and when the initial queerness vanishes, it leaves a delightful sense of clearer vision into the realms of truth.

The difficulties in regard to the aorist "tense" arise, in part, from the fact that a heterogeneous mass of forms is huddled together, either as "first" or "second" aorists, some of which have little in common except the name given to them by grammarians. We propose, then, to limit the present discussion to true aorists, which we will presently define, and, to avoid confusion of thought, we will call these aorists by the equivalent English term—indefinite.

The indefinite form, in Greek, consists of verbs which have E—, the augment of the past prefixed (or its equivalent), the symbol of the future (—C-) between the stem and the personal ending (or some compensation in the preceding vowel) and the connecting vowel (or ending)

-A, (except in the third person). The essential elements are

6 - - · C · A

The student of Greek will understand that, for the sake of simplicity, the augment is always spoken of as a prefixed E— though in practise it is often indicated by the lengthening of the initial vowel. The future —C- is understood, even when, for euphony's sake, it is represented by changes in the stem. All these points are not essential, and it seems unnecessarily cumbrous to be continually guarding our statements by saying "the augment, or its equivalent", or "the future —C- or its equivalent".

THE INDEFINITE DEFINED

The indefinite changes an act into a fact. It transforms deeds into truth. "John baptized in water" is a bald statement of an historical occurrence. "John baptizes in water" indicates the essential character of his ministry. It locates his action, not in the course of time, but in the wider sphere of truth. When Peter charges the house of Israel with the crucifixion of Christ, it is not simply the act but the attitude which he condemns. "You have crucified" was true; "you crucify" is truth (Acts 2:36).

Here we have a hitherto secret combination to the great depository of divine truth. We do not need to guess to distinguish what is true, but transient, from that which is truth and permanent. God has deposited the truth in the indefinite. If we but glance at such high unfoldings as are found in the first chapter of Ephesians, this fact will force itself upon us. Like a string of pearls we read (Eph. 1) of the One Who blesses us (verse 3), Who chooses us (4) and designates us (5) and graces us (6) and lavishes on us (8) Who makes known to us (9) the secret of His will. Read the pas-

sage in the CONCORDANT VERSION at least a dozen times, to wear off the strangeness, meditate on its unlimited scope in time, the aptness of its present application as well as its past and future place, then suddenly change the tense to the past and see what a chill falls upon the whole. Then change the verbs to the present incomplete, Who is blessing, Who is choosing, etc., and see how the thought shrinks.

The translators of the Authorized Version felt this and tried to express it by the perfect or complete tense, hath blessed, hath chosen, etc. This, however, confines all action to the past, and denotes the condition consequent on that action. It is as though a father gave his son all that was coming to him and left him to make what he could of it. It puts God's active efforts for us into the past and leaves but a passive interest for the present and future. This is the very opposite of the truth and contrary to God's purpose, which is to draw us nearer to Himself by a constant flow of blessing. He does not start us off to go on alone. It is true, that He has blessed us. But it is truth that He blesses us now and in the future as well.

To one whose eyes have been opened to see it, there is an exquisite beauty in this. God fills the whole horizon. His immanence is everywhere. He is not behind or before, but both. His care for us can be traced in His purpose and its accomplishment.

True, some of the expressions seem strange to those accustomed to stereotyped English phraseology. We would say He chose us, in the past. At first we miss the precious fullness of the fact that His choice of us is not affected by time or circumstance. He chooses us today and will choose us in all the eons to come. It is not a mere act in the past which may be repudiated should His attitude toward us change. It is a fact for all time. It is a guarantee that His gracious dealings with us do not alter. Time cannot modify or state impair His settled beneficence toward the objects of His affection.

FIVE METHODS OF PROOF

We depend upon five distinct lines of evidence for our conclusion that the Greek "aorist" is indefinite as to state and tense, and corresponds to the so-called "present", as I-LOVE, in English.

Our first witness is the meaning of the word "aorist". This name was given to it by the ancients, who used this form continually in their conversation and literature, and who ought to have known what to call it. It comes from two Greek elements A- un- and -OP- SEE. As -OP- was usually preceded by the h sound, the verb horizō is almost the same as our word "horizon". This gives us the true thought—without a horizon, indefinite.

Strange as it may seem, notwithstanding this form's name means indefinite, the usual definition in Greek grammars is "a definite action, complete in itself". Such works as Newberry's Bible indicate it by a dot, and explain it as "a point in the expanse of time". As, however, many forms were added to it which were in reality a primitive past tense (called the "second" aorist) it is usually translated by means of the past tense, as, I-LOVED. As the indefinite covers the past, this confusion of forms has strengthened the idea that it is, in some way, a past tense.

Our second proof lies in the correspondence between the connecting vowel of the aorist and abstract nouns. If the vowel —A- is given to nouns to make them indefinite, it is striking, to say the least, that the personal endings of the aorist indicative and middle are, with few exceptions, this same letter.

The fact that the same analogy exists between nouns in —MA, which stand for the effect of an action, and the perfect or complete form of the verb, which also denotes the effect of an action, goes far to establish the connection between the indefinite nouns and verbs.

Our third reason for clinging to the ancient definition is found in the formation of all true indefinite verbs. It should be understood that Greek has a very simple yet effective method of indicating the past. It seems to be almost a matter of instinct which leads them to precede past action by the prefixed E—. In English regular verbs add —ED to obtain the same effect. Thus, guide is changed to the past by adding —ed, guided. The present and past of call (Greek, kal) would be

KAAEW

EKAAON I-CALLED

Another easy method is employed in indicating the future. An C (corresponding to our letter S) was inserted as a link letter just before the personal endings. Where we must use the auxiliaries shall or will they simply inserted a sibilant sound near the end of the verb to change it to the future form. We say "I shall call", or "you will call", but they needed only to insert one letter, thus:

KAAE (DI-AM-CALLING

KAAEC @

The striking and distinctive feature of all true aorists is that they contain the signs of past and future. It is difficult to illustrate this in English, for shall wrote is ridiculous. We cannot will called anyone. Our tenses will not blend. The real reason is that we have no need for such combinations, for we also have a true aorist or indefinite form in English, as, I-WRITE, which is misnamed the "present". In Greek the word call will be as follows:

EKAAON KAAEC (D

EKAMECA

Our fifth, the final and conclusive proof that the "aorist" is indefinite and corresponds to our "present" is its application to test passages of Scripture. If we find that it gives the true sense, that it removes difficulties, that it corresponds with the context, then let us gladly accept it. If, however, it creates difficulties, confuses the sense and wars with the context, then let us be rid of it. But we should not let our stereotyped man-

nerisms, which are a sign of the decadence of the English language, lead us to reject the truth. We are after sense not sound. We want our hearts instructed, not our ears tickled.

THE VARIETIES OF THE VERB

The Greek verb (and the English as well) varies its form to indicate the *state* as well as the *time* of an action. It tells us whether the action is going on, or indefinite, or completed. So much stress has been laid upon the time element, in English grammar, that the state has been largely overlooked. The difference between I-WROTE and I-WAS-WRITING, both past, I-WRITE and I-AM-WRITING, both present, and I-SHALL-BE-WRITING, both future, receives but little consideration.

The state of an action, in Greek, is indicated by the form of the endings. Nouns in —A, using the —A- as a connecting vowel, are either abstract or denote the effect of an action. By adding -eia to the root for TRUE (alêth) we get TRUTH (alêtheia). Add it to KING (basil) we get KINGDOM (basileia), to SLAVE (doul) gives

SLAVERY (douleia).

The effect of an action, denoted by the ending -ma in nouns (as krima, the effect of judging, a sentence, or thelêma, will, as the effect of willing), has its counterpart in the so-called "perfect" or complete verb, which also registers the effect, or state consequent on an action. It has the vowel —A-. Anyone can see the close relationship between I-HAVE-JUDGED, and a JUDGment or sentence. Both indicate the state consequent on a past action. Hence the noun and the verb have —A- in the ending.

The same correspondence may be traced between the true aorist, or indefinite, and that class of nouns which denote the abstract idea. Thus, both I-SLAVE (edoulōsa) and SLAVERY (douleia) fail to call to mind any specific act, but suggest rather the abstract fact based on a series of acts. Such words almost always have —A- as a connecting vowel or end.

We may conclude, then, that the indefinite connect-

ing vowel —A- suggests the abstract idea, that it is, in fact, as well as name, *indefinite*. It does not denote any specific act, or if used of such, includes other such acts within its range. I-HAVE-WRITTEN and have manuscript to prove it. I-AM-WRITING at this very moment. These are definite, and refer to distinct acts. I-WRITE, however, may refer to any act. or all.

As the passive endings are practically the verb to-be, which is itself indefinite, the connecting vowel —A- is not necessary.

Verbs change their form to indicate both the State and Time of the Action	PAST E -		PRESENT	F	UTURE - C -
INDEFINITE The fact merely	E-ON		€- <u>C</u> -A		ı'll—
INCOMPLETE Going on, in progress —ING	E-W I-WAS-—ING		- W I-AM-ING	-C-C	
COMPLETE The consequent condition HAVE or HAD	E-R-KE	IN	R—K-為 i-have—ed	ı'ı	L-HAVE—

As set forth in the table, verbs change their form to indicate the *state* as well as the time of an action. Any of these three states may be past, present or future. An action may be looked at as *going on*, hence is *incomplete*. I-WAS-LOVING, I-AM-LOVING, I-SHALL-BE-LOVING, all denote an action in progress. An action may be considered as *performed*, or *complete*, leaving a resultant condition. This we usually call the "perfect". I-HAD-LOVED, I-HAVE-LOVED, I-SHALL-HAVE-LOVED, all put the action behind them and deal with the state consequent on the action.

The remaining class denotes neither the progress nor the effect of an action. I-LOVED, differs from I-WAS-LOVING and I-HAVE-LOVED in treating the action simply as a past fact without a definite occurrence or result. Perhaps another verb would be clearer. I-WORKED at printing in my youth. I-WAS-WORKING at printing when God called me. Transpose the verbs and note the result:

I-WAS-WORKING at printing in my youth. I-WORKED at printing when God called me. The indefinite past "in my youth" demands the simple indefinite I-WORKED. The definite past "when God called me" calls for a definite verb. I-WAS-WORKING.

The same is true of the future. I-SHALL-WORK at printing for a livelihood. This is true at any future time. I-SHALL-BE-WORKING at printing when this is being printed. This defines the action as going on at some particular time.

THE INDEFINITE OR "AORIST"

We have now considered all the forms in the table except the one which is denoted by the formula E—C-A-. It occurs opposite the side-head indefinite, and is translated simply i-love, or i-work. It is under the column-heading present, but its box is widened to include both the past and future. It is, in fact, a past-future. This will be taken up fully when treating of the tenses. As this makes it indefinite as to time as well as to state it is doubly indefinite. So we will call it simply the indefinite.

Consider the scope of the simple statement, I-LOVE. It may include any or all the other states and tenses! If I-WAS-LOVING, I-AM-LOVING, I-SHALL-BE-LOVING, I-LOVED, I-SHALL-HAVE-LOVED, then I-LOVE. It is at home in any condition at any date. It ignores both time and state. Test this conclusion (which is, generally speaking, quite as true in the Greek forms as in the English) with other words, such as work or believe. I-work at printing though, at the present moment I-AM-WORKING on an article dealing with the aorist. I-HAVE-WORKED at printing for nearly forty years. I-SHALL-WORK at it in the future. The one word I-WORK covers all the ground. So, I-BELIEVE God, that is, I-HAVE-BELIEVED, I-AM-BELIEVING, and I-SHALL-BE-BELIEVING—until faith vanishes in sight.

The true agrist is not only indefinite as to state, but also as to time. This is incorporated into its form in a

marvelously effective yet simple method. A glance at the column-headings in the table will show that the sign of the past is a prefixed E—. The sign of the future is —C-. The sign of the aorist, or past-future is a combination of both, or E—C-. No verb is a true indefinite which does not have these indications or their equivalent.

The presence of the signs of both past and future ought to settle the point so far as time is concerned. What form in English, except the simple present, as I-LOVE, refers to all time as this does? The perfect, I-HAVE-LOVED, will not do, for its action is confined to the past, its effect to the present. It has no direct bearing on the future.

The following shows all the forms of the true agrist and the English equivalents, as they are set forth in the "Elements" of the Concordant Version. The connecting vowel —A- is sometimes lacking or absorbed, and is not necessary in the passive, the endings of which are already indefinite.

THE PAST-FUTURE INDEFINITE VERB

Active	Middle	Passive
E-C-A	E-C-A-MHN	E-C-O-HN
E-C-A-C	E-C-W	E-C-O-HC
E-C-E	E-C-A-TO he, she, its or -ISED	E-C-O-H he, she or itIS -ED
E-C-A-MEN	E-C-A-MEOA WE or WE-areED	E-C-O-HMEN WE-AREED
€-C·A·T€	E-C-ACBE YE or YE-areED	E-C-O-HTE
E-C-A-N	E-C-A-NTO	E-C-O-HCAN

TEST PASSAGES

Our final appeal is to the contexts in which the indefinite is found, in other words, to its usage in Holy Writ. We have already considered the opening sentence of Ephesians and noted the marvelous richness imparted to its transcendent doctrines by the unbounded scope of the indefinite. Now we will consider a few more texts, and then take up some words to confirm, if we can, the evidence we have already considered. For our first test we will take a text in which there is action, past, present and future. In the A. V. Rom. 8:30 reads as follows: "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This verse is full of difficulties to the close student. The "did predestinate" cannot be questioned, but how can Paul say that these were called (in the past) when Romans was penned? If this is strictly true, then we have no place in this Scripture, for we were not called until the far future from that time.

The same difficulty applies to justification, but with far more force to glorification. If it was an error for some to teach that the resurrection was past already, why is the apostle allowed to teach that glorification, which is far more than resurrection, and includes it, is past? Of course no one takes this as it stands, and thus this translation breeds that miserable habit of slovenly interpretation, in which all idea of accuracy and definiteness is decried. If glorified here means will glorify, then we have the best of reasons for suiting any tense of

Scripture to our own interpretation.

Now see how simply and grandly the whole passage responds to a true translation. "Now whom He designates beforehand, these He also calls, and whom He calls, these He also justifies: now whom He justifies, these He also glorifies." The whole transaction is taken out of time and circumstance into the higher realm of eternity and truth. There is now no confusion created by the time when the epistle was written. He justified some before that, He was justifying them then, He has been since and will be in the future. All this is concisely and elegantly embraced in the indefinite form, justifies.

And glorification, though future, is itself glorified when we receive it as a great truth, rather than as a future act. This rendering blends beautifully with the great thought of the chapter, and imparts permanence and majesty to God's method of drawing us to Himself.

Our next example has proven a puzzle to the greatest

Bible scholars. They have written reams of "Explanations" but the real difficulty remained. In 2 Tim. 1:10 the old version reads "Who hath abolished death . . ." With all due respect to the Bible, we may safely conclude, from the sad evidences so abundant on every side, that death hath not been abolished. It has been in the case of Christ. It will be for His own at His presence, and it will be for all at the consummation. The abolition of death is partly past but mostly future. How can we express this in English? By the very form by which we have chosen to render the Greek indefinite. All incongruity vanishes when we translate "Who, indeed, abolishes death . . ." Hath abolished will not be true until after death has been done away with as the last enemy.

There is a negative test which proves our position as to the aorist, which supplies an interesting example. The statement "in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22) was quite perturbing to the writer at one time, as he clings hopefully to the expectation of being alive at the Lord's presence and being changed without passing through death, as set forth in this very chapter (verse 52). It was a welcome relief for him when he noticed that die is not indefinite, but incomplete. It should be rendered are dying. This is strictly, literally, actually true, even of those who will not die when He comes. We surely may be pardoned if we are very fond of the correct rendering. The translation we once preferred has become most distasteful to us. Let us not be fascinated by the face, but edified by the heart of a rendering.

The verbal adjective or "participle" has no indefinite form in English, hence is especially difficult to translate. When preceded by the article, in the Greek, we can preserve the distinction thus: the [one]-calling may be rendered he who is calling, but, when indefinite, we may change it to he who calls. This effectually conveys the difference between them. The verbal ending -ing is especially expressive of incompleted present action, hence is not fitted to represent the indefinite Greek participle. It seems necessary to change it to a noun and

express its verbal force by an auxiliary. As the participle is a verbal adjective this is really a close method of translation.

But when there is no article the case is not so readily solved. The nearest solution seems to be the addition of the indefinite when. There are times when the translator cannot ignore the distinct force of these forms. In Heb. 6:10 the sense of the final clause depends solely on drawing an accurate boundary between them. We cannot ignore the shade of difference and render this "serving the saints and serving". The old version attempts to define the difference thus: "in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister". This rendering follows the interpretation, instead of guiding it. They supposed that the past and present acts of the Hebrews are before us and thus they produced a version which seemed to correspond closely with its context.

Its grave defect is that it has no bearing on the future. And this, of course, was especially on the writer's heart, for this is an exhortation. The true rendering broadens out the statement to its necessary extent. God will not forget when you serve—at any time

in the past or future—and you are serving.

Let us put our position to a different test. We will take the word "love" and discover, if we can, the distinction between the indefinite and other forms. Our first passage will be John 3:16. The usual rendering is "God loved", which we change to "God loves". Which is best? Is God's love a thing of the past? Is God not loving the world now? Will He not love it in the future? Surely His love is timeless! He loved, He is loving, and He will be loving: in brief, He loves. Does not this appeal to our hearts as well as our heads? However precious the old text may be, is it not a thousand times more precious in the new form? Suppose it does offend our ears at first, is not the great spiritual gain worth some temporary pain?

Christ's love is like the Father's love. It is timeless. Hence we read (Jn. 15:9): "According as the Father loves Me, I, also, love you." In contrast to this is the love of the saints for God, which is put in the present. "We are loving God, seeing that He first loves us." (Jn. 4:19). But, we hear our readers object, "The sentence is awkward; it does not balance. It should be the same form of the verb in both clauses. Either make it 'We love . . . He . . . loves . . . 'or 'We are loving . . . He . . . is loving.' The former is far preferable."

As the lack of "balance" is in the inspired original, the question is really not one of translation but of revelation. God did not "balance" the sentence. Shall we "improve" on His work? Or shall we let the "defect" appear in the English rendering? Shall we not rather break our jaws over the most cacophonous wilderness of words in the world, rather than disturb the very shading of truth? The sentence does not balance because it should not balance. God's love and man's are different in their quality. It is not a natural instinct but a divine compulsion which urges us to love Him.

Can we not see the beauty of His love in this contrast? Shall we not revel in the distinction drawn by our Lord when He charges His disciples: "A new precept am I giving to you, that you be loving one another, according as I love you, that you too, be loving one another." (Jn. 13:34)? This distinction "cumbers" all of John's writings. We would always use the indefinite forms. But the very love which burns within us bids us tear off the veneer that hides the surpassing excellence of His affection, and raises it above the feeble flicker of our own.

This thought is further unfolded when the indefinite form is used of men. Though men do not love God, they love darkness rather than light (Jn. 3:19); they love the praise of other men (Jn.12:43), they love the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet. 2:15), they love their own souls (Un. 12:11). In contrast to this the Son of God loves righteousness (Heb. 1:9). The only time it is used of our love toward God it is in the negative: Not the we love God, but that He loves us' (1 Jn. 4:10).

Further examples and contrasts are found in the following passages: "If you should love those who are loving you" (Mt. 5:46). First we have the settled disposition, next the actual experience. Again (1 Jn. 4:11): "Beloved, if God loves us thus, we, too, ought to be loving one another." And again (Jn. 15:12) "This is My precept, that you be loving one another, according as I love you." And (Eph. 5:25): "Husbands, be loving your own wives according as Christ, also, loves the ecclesia..."

At first sight, the case of the woman who anointed our Lord's feet seems to be out of line with the indefiniteness of the aorist (Lu. 7:47) for the Lord says "She loves much". Yet the near context shows that He does not refer specifically to her act, but to her character. Hence it should be in the aorist.

The following references are given that those who wish it may have all the evidence. I love occurs in Jn. 13:34; 15:9,12; Ro. 9:13; Un. 3:9. We love: 1 Jn. 4: 10. You love: Jn. 17:23, 24, 26; Heb. 1:9. He loves: Mk. 10:21; Lu. 7:47; Jn. 3:16; 13:1; 15:9; Eph. 2:4; 5:2,25; 2 Pt. 2:15; 1 Jn. 4:10,11,19. They love: Jn. 3: 19; 12:43; Un. 12:11.

The subjunctive, MAY-LOVE, is, from its nature, in the future. There is nothing contingent in the past, hence, in this form the indefinite drops the sign of the past while it retains the sign of the future. See Mt. 5:46, ye-may-love (agapêsête).

The imperative, likewise, cannot have any place in the past. A command is always future. Here, too, the indicator of the past tense is absent. See 1 Pt. 1:22,

love-ye (agapêsate).

That the indefinite verb expresses past as well as future is strongly confirmed by this change which it undergoes outside of the indicative mode. Those modes which, by their nature, cannot be used of a past action, drop the augment E-, the sign of the past. Such a form is not the simple indefinite but the indefinite future. The indefinite verbal adjective (participle) has this

peculiarity. It serves the purpose of a future indefinite, which has no equivalent in English.

Yet the same great truth vibrates in the participle, where we translate it who loves and the present who is loving, when they are preceded by the article. Is it not infinitely better to say "Him who loves us", in Ro. 8:37? And Gal. 2:20 is robbed of much of its sweetness in the old rendering, "Who loved me". The apostle's theme is not the past so much as the present and the future. "Who loves me" is full of solid satisfaction, entirely absent from the Authorized rendering. So in 2 Th. 2: 16, is not "Who loves us" more comforting than "which hath loved us"? The participle is found without the article in Jn. 13:1. Its indefiniteness is quite apparent,

though it cannot be expressed in English.

The vivid and lifelike changes of the verb in Greek offend our dull perceptions. Our minds are sluggish and do not respond to quick variations. We have a tendency to put everything in the past if it has already occurred, even if, for any reason, the fact rather than the act is in view. We would say (1 Pt. 1:21) "God Who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory," instead of "God Who rouses Him from among the dead and is giving Him glory," as in the Greek. But Peter is not calling attention to past acts but present conditions. God's character, as the God of resurrection, is in point, not merely the past deed. And it is especially appropriate that Peter should call attention to the One Who, indeed, suffered in the past, but Who is now actually obtaining the glory which follows. He is not reciting history but inculcating faith.

We grieve over the fact that we all feel the infraction of current English mannerisms much more keenly than the violation of the inspired originals. Even the most godly seem to be content if the English follows in the ruts of the decadent intellects of this dark era, rather than rides roughly in the road of truth. Those who are willing to bear with a passing disgust will find that, after a little use, the new renderings will appeal to them far

more strongly than the old, for the old had nothing but custom and usage to gild them while the new will gradually get these as well as the vital advantage of confor-

mity to the mind of God.

We stand upon the ground that the tenses of Scripture are a vital part of its inspiration. We have no more liberty to change the tense than we have to alter the words. At times the tense of a word is of greater moment than its meaning. When we yield to current English custom, we do so under protest, with the comfort that the sublinear shows the true reading and exposes our departure from it.

The distinction may not seem vital to us, but how must the disciples have felt if the Lord had really said to them, "Where I go ye cannot come"! (Jn. 13:33). True, He immediately softens it by adding "at present", but that only shows that He did not say "come" but "be coming". Some certainly can go whither He went, but not at that time. In the case of the Jews (8:21) this English rendering has given rise to the natural deduction that they never could come to Him. But surely that cannot be so when He applies the very same words to His own.

Both the A. V. and Revised quote the Lord as saying "I judge no man" (Jn. 8:15), notwithstanding that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son (Jn. 5:22). Both cannot be true. The discrepancy vanishes when we render it "I am judging", that is, at that time.

We have a strong conviction that, once students of the Scriptures grasp and enjoy the rich redundance of wisdom and grace brought to light by the proper rendering of the past-future indefinite, their initial aversion will be turned to delight. It almost seems like the voice of God to find, among the letters just received, the following from a devout lover of the Word:

I would have answered sooner but waited to see how I would like the version. At first it seemed strange, being used to the old versions, but now I always want to read it. I like the ever present tense of the words.

The value of this orderly disposition of the forms of the Greek verb cannot be overestimated. The earnest searcher after truth will find a haze removed from his eyes, and he will be able to follow God's thoughts clearly and precisely, if he distinguishes where God has been pleased to put a difference.

"If the shoe fits, put it on." This is the common sense method of distributing the English verbal forms among the Greek. Traditional grammatical tenets must fall before the fact that this plan works. The shoe may pinch at times, but that is because it is new, or some

malformation is in the foot.

The little epistle of Jude furnishes a few interesting illustrations of the indefinite and the failure of the Revisers to recognize its force. They change the archaic are crept in of the A. V. to crept in—putting it all in the past. It should be creep in (verse 4). So also, where both have prophesied, it should read prophesies, for it is a fact for the future, rather than a past event (14). Was it not a calamity to change "the Lord cometh" of the A. V. to came? Surely that was not past in Enoch's day! It is not past yet! It should be "the Lord comes" as in the A. V. The Lord has indeed come, but not in judgment. It is evident that the aorist is not a past tense.

The segregation of each separate grammatical form enables the student to locate passages which are precisely the same. An argument founded on the indefinite form may not be at all true of the incomplete. For instance, if the Lord had really said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come", it would shut them out at all times. But what He really said was "ye cannot be coming" (at this time), hence the future is not involved. There are Scriptures in which the destiny of the universe hangs on this distinction of the Greek verb. It is of vital moment.

To give ample examples and evidence which any student of the Scriptures may grasp, without knowing Greek, we print a specimen of the proposed Lexical Concordance with an explanation of some of its features. Its special advantage in the present discussion is the fact that the indefinite and incomplete and complete forms are segregated. The student is earnestly urged to consider every passage in the indefinite and see if it will not be best satisfied with the rendering HEAR. Then each text with the incomplete should be tested for the rendering HEARING. The complete should answer to HAVE-HEARD.

This specimen of the Lexical Concordance is only tentative, and is published with a view of provoking criticism, so that its details will have been perfected before it is put into type. After that changes will be costly. It is desired to give the maximum of real help in the minimum of space, so that it will not be too bulky or heavy. The definitions usually follow the method of giving the wider realm of thought together with the limiting characteristic. Thus, Hearing is one method of perception, limited to the ears. Its relation to sight, another method of perception, is also indicated. Every point must be substantiated by a passage of Scripture.

An undoubted difficulty remains for discussion. Our mode of thinking offers no facilities for considering a past act as a fact. Let us take the most notable act in history, the crucifixion of Christ. Surely that was a past act and cannot be repeated. Yet this is the very point the apostle presses in the sixth of Hebrews. There were some who were crucifying Him for themselves again. English may wince under the statement of Peter (Ac. 2:36): "Jesus Whom ye crucify." Peter was pressing on them, not merely the past act, but the present fact of their attitude toward Him. Perhaps few of them had taken an active part in the act of crucifixion. All who refuse Him are guilty in fact. This distinction is a very practical one. In Gal. 5:24 the A. V. tells us that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh". This has led to the logical deduction that this is a definite past experience, as was the case with Christ. It supports the doctrine of sinlessness in this life. correct reading may grate on the English ear, but it HEAR - AKO[Y]- ⁷⁶¹ akou [cf. acoustics]
ypw ⁷⁶⁶ shahmag. Perceive with the ears Is6¹⁸
Ac28²⁷, hearken Mk4³. Spiritual perception
Jn8³² ³⁷ but inferior to sight Job 42⁵.

INDEFINITE

To- Mt 1242 1317 Lu 618 1024 1131 Ac 1022 33 137 44 157 1910 2214 244 2522 263 2822 Ja 119

HEARD Mk 620 1237 Lu 1039 Ac 1614 THEY- Mk 655 1114 Lu 1614 Ac 26 1046 1512 2222

HEAR I- Jn 826 40 1515 Ac 734 913 117 227 2614 Un 110 41 511 513 61 3 5 6 7 74 813 913 16 104 8 1210 142 213 161 57 184 1916 213 228 700-Jn 114 Ac 2215 271113 22 Un 33 it, he, or she Mt 141 Mk 614 Ln 141 97 1526 Jn 332 935 116 1120 29 198 Ac 830 94 149 Ac 2424 1C 029 2C 0124 WE. Mt 1438 Lu 433 2271 Jn 1234 Ac 430 1524 192 2112 Col 19 2Pt 118 YE. Mt 521 27 33 38 43 2665 Mk 1464 Lu 722 Jn 838 927 1428 Ac 14 Ga 113 Ep 32 42 Pt P282 49 Col 62 3 Ja 521 1 Jn 27 18 24 24 311 2Jn 6 THEY- Mt 1315 17 Mk 1118 Lu 158 220 1024 Jn 137 41 732 940 108 1218 Ac 524 111 229 2827 Ro 1014 18 Un 1112

Imperative Let-him or her Un 27 11 17 29 36 13 22 139
-YE Mt 1318 2133 Lu 186 Ac 222 72 1316 1513 221 Ja 25
LET-THEM Lu 1629

-ing OF- pl Jn 140 Ac 44 He 23 to- pl He 42 masc. Mt 23 22 412 810 912 112 1413 1922 Mk 217 536 616 20 1047 1228 Lu 648 73 29 2850 1415 1822 23 36 236 Jn 447 645 114 1229 1913 217 Ac 712 2226 2316 Ep 115 pl Mt 22 1224 1413 1512 176 1925 2024 30 2145 2222 33 34 2747 Mk 33 21 418 639 1041 1411 1535 1611 Lu 166 218 812 14 15 1826 2016 Jn 525 660 746 89 1212 Ac 237 424 521 33 814 938 1118 1414 1638 1732 1828 195 32 2120 222 2815 Ep 113 Coll4 He 316 1219 fem. Mk 527 725

INCOMPLETE

-ING TO-BE Mt1115* 139* 43*246 Mk 49 23 33 716* 37 Lu 51 15 88 1435 151 2138 238 Jn660 843 927 Ac419 85 1721Ro 118 920 I-AM Lu 99 162 Jn 530 1Co 1118 YOU-ARE Mt2116 2613 Jn 38 1142 -18 Mt724 Lu 1013 Jn 847 931 31 103 1837 1Co 142 2Co 126 1Jn 45 6 6 514 15 WE-ARE- Ac 28 11 2Th 311 YE-ARE- Mt 1027 114 1317 Mk 424 818 Lu 818 1024 Jn 847 1020 1424 Ac 233 1926 Ga 421 Ph 130 THEY-ARE- Mt 116 1313 16 Mk 420 Lu 722 1631 Jn 1027

MAY-BE I- 3Jn⁴
BE- YOU- Mk 1229 LET- Mt 139 43 Mk 423 716 Lu 88 1435
YE- Mt 1510 175 Mk 43 714 97 Lu 985

Ph. 1010 or Mt1319 Lu2045 pl Lu 1911 2Ti 214 to Ro 2218 p Lu627 Ep429 m Mt725 1320 22 23 Lu647 1016 1948 Jn329 524 Ac55 Phm 5 Un 228 17 pl Mt 1313 Mk472 62 Lu 247 428 Lu 810 21 1128 Ac 754 97 21 188 Ga 123 Un 13 a Lu 246 Ac 1348 pl Ac55 11 1044 178;2629 1Ti 418

LL-BE fut. I- Mt1219 Jn1613 YE- Mt1314 Ac2826 THEY-Jn525 28 1016

BIOULD-BE ful, contingent 1- Ph127 it, he or she Mt1014-1815 16 Jn751 1247 Ac323 Un320 YE- Mk137 Lu219 He37 15 47 THEF- Mt1315 Mk 415 16 611 Lu818 Ac2827 Ro1014 2 Ti417

COMPLETED

HAVE 1765 WE- Jn 442 Ac611 14 1Jn 11 3 5 YE- Jn 537 1Jn 43 THEY- Ro1521 -ING a Jn 1821

MIDDLE VOICE

-ING IS-be- 1Co51 fut. 'LL-BE- WE- Ac1732 YE- Ac322 (Deut1915) THEY- Ac21222828 SHOULD- YOU- Ac2522

PASSIVE VOICE

WAS- Mt 218 Mk 21 Jn 932 Ac 1 1 22 BEING- MAY-BE- Mt 2814 Un 1 822 22 23 to- He 21 fut. 'LL-BE- Lu 1 23

EXPLANATION

Y is dropped in nouns. 761 = section in Elements where verb is conjugated. akou is the transliteration and the pronunciation. acoustics = memory help. 766 = times used in LXX for its Hebrew equivalent in the "Old Testament" shahmag=pronunciation of Hebrew equivalent. Defined by limiting the broad sphere, perception, to the organ of sound. Derived sense, hearken. Figurative use, transfers to the realm of the spirit.

INDEFINITE

TO-, TO-HEAR understood. HEARD = past indefinite. it, he or she is understood when no pronoun given. Mk 620 reads he-HEARD. Mk655 reads THEY-HEARD. HEAR = past-future indef. I-=I-HEAR. Add it to all. Imperative, add HEAR. Un 27 is LET-him-HEAR. -ing is the verbal adjective (participle) future indef. OF-indicates genitive case. pl abbreviation = pluralto- indicates dative case. masc., masculine gender. fem. is feminine gender.

INCOMPLETE

-ING is the usual ending for Incompleted action in English, so hearing is always to be added to the following forms, as, TO-BE-HEARING, Or I-AM-HEARING, I-MAY-BE-HEARING, etc.

COMPLETED
HAVE is the auxiliary of the English "perfect" hence should be added to all the following forms.

1765 = section in Elements.

MIDDLE VOICE

English has no distinct form for both HEARING and BEING-HEARD, this is usually indicated by the italic passive, be-, but also by the forms of the active.

PASSIVE

O is sign of the passive. The indefinite uses the forms of I-AM as endings.

conveys the truth. They crucify the flesh. It is a fact for the past, the present and the future. A knowledge of this distinction would have saved the saints from

many a tremendous blunder and false step.

The question is, shall we attempt to enlarge the scope of English idiom to express a past act as a fact, or shall we alter God's truth to fit the narrow confines of our craniums? It recalls the story of an Eskimo translation. The Eskimo children had never seen a lamb. They had seen baby walruses. So the word "lamb" was changed to "walrus" to bring it down to their comprehension! They had never seen a lion. We suppose that "lion" was also rendered "walrus"!

It would make this treatise too long and laborious to multiply examples. They may be readily found by any English reader by a reference to the Concordant Version sublinear. Few are without point. Many are most precious. Even as this is being written Eph. 4:32 comes up in our hearts. ". . and become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, dealing graciously among yourselves, even as God, in Christ, deals graciously with you." The contrast between dealing and deals fills our hearts to overflowing with thankfulness. His gracious dealings with us are timeless.

We have opened up a new vista in divine revelation. If it is true it should be welcomed with open arms and published in every periodical, our grammars should be corrected and our versions revised. If it is true it is an enormous stride toward the knowledge of God. If it is true we should not allow set forms of speech or temporary idioms to rob us of its light. We should break our rigid molds of thought and recast them to include this new and precious vehicle of truth.

If it is false it should be condemned unsparingly. Let it be tested, however, not from the standpoint of current scholarship, or devout tradition, or any other thing than the evidence found in the form and context of the inspired originals. We are confident that these will support our position, yet we are prepared to abandon this stand just as soon as actual evidence from the original shows it to be unfounded.

No one who believes in divine inspiration can be neutral in this matter. To put it concretely, "God loved the world" is wrong: "God loves the world" is right.

Furthermore, if it is right it should be the best possible vindication of the method used in the CONCORDANT VERSION. If this method automatically solves the riddle of the Greek verb, does it not follow that it can also solve many of the lesser problems of translation?

Finally, shall we ally ourselves with a human version simply because usage has hallowed it in our minds, or shall we loyally support a translation which claims our allegiance, not because of any human learning or sacred associations, but because its method insures a more accurate and illuminating insight into the mind and heart of God? It is God Who hallows His word, not the English form and phraseology. We want Him and His thoughts, even if He speaks to us in broken English.

To conclude, try this experiment, if you have not already done so. Read in the C. V. the first of Ephesians (which has many aorists) daily for a month. The initial strangeness will gradually vanish. The words will soon become quite familiar, the phrases friendly. The concord of words will, however, soon be overlooked in that higher accord which attunes us with the infinite grace and glory of God, which can be adequately seen only by means of the English indefinite.

A. E. K.

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