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CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

V.

WE pass on to the syntax, and begin naturally with that of the noun. There are grammatical categories here that scarcely ask for more than bare mention. On the subject of *Number* there is one obvious thing to say—the dual has gone. Many Greek dialects, Ionic conspicuously, had discarded this hoary luxury long before the Common Greek was born, and no theory of the relation of the Κοινή to the dialects would allow Attic to force on the resultant speech a set of forms so useless as these. The dual may well have arisen in distant prehistoric days when men could not count beyond two, and it is evidently suffering from senile decay in the very earliest monuments we possess of Indo-Germanic language. It was at home in Attica—witness the inscriptions, and folk-songs like the " Harmodius "—but it never invaded Hellenistic, not even when a Hebrew dual might have been exactly rendered by its aid. We shall see when we come to the adjectives that the disappearance of the distinction between duality and plurality had wider results than the mere banishment of the dual number from nouns and verbs. Apart from this matter the only noteworthy point under Number is the marked weakening of the old principle that neuter plurals (in their origin identical with collectives in $-a^1$) took a singular verb. In the New Testament we have a large extension of what in classical Greek was a comparatively rare licence, allowing the plural verb when the individual items in the subject are separately in

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[1] See Giles, *Manual of Comparative Philology*, pp. 264 ff. (I might add here that Mr. Giles thinks the dual may have been originally a specialized form of the plural, used (as in Homer always) to describe natural or artificial *pairs*. That this is its earliest extant use is certain, but its origin may very well have been as conjectured above.)

view, while the singular treats the subject as a collective unity. The liberty of using the plural freely makes the use of the singular distinctly more significant than it could be in classical Greek.

It might be added that the converse phenomenon, known as the *Schema Pindaricum*, is found in the New Testament : cf. Mark iv. 41, 1 Cor. xv. 50, Matt. v. 18, Rev. ix. 12.

On *Gender* likewise there is not much to say. There are sundry differences in the gender of particular words; but even Modern Greek is nearly as much under the domination of this outworn excrescence on language as was its classical ancestor. That English should still be the only prominent language to discard gender, indicating only distinction of sex, is exceedingly strange.

We are free now to examine the phenomena of *Case*. To estimate the position of Hellenistic along the line of development, we may sum up in a few words the features of the two ends of this line. Modern Greek has only the three cases we ourselves possess, nominative, accusative and genitive. (The survival of a few vocative forms, in which Modern and Hellenistic Greek are on practically the same footing, does not affect this point, for the vocative is not really a case.) At the very dawn of Greek language-history, as we know it, there is only one more, the dative, though we can detect a few moribund traces of instrumental, locative and ablative. For all practical purposes we may say that Greek lost in prehistoric times three out of the primitive seven cases (or eight, if we include the vocative), viz., the *from* case (ablative), the *with* case (instrumental [1]), and the *at* or *in* case (locative), all of which survived in Sanskrit, and appreciably in Latin, though there obscured

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[1] The instrumental proper all but coincided with the dative in form throughout the 1st and 2nd declensions, so that the still surviving dative of instrument may in these declensions be regarded as the ancient case; the *comitative* " with," however, was always expressed by a preposition except in the idiom αὐτοῖς ἀνδράσι.

by the syncretism of ablative, instrumental and (except in singular of -*a*- and -*o*- nouns) locative, in respect of form. In other words, the purely local cases, in which the meaning could be brought out by a place-adverb (for this purpose called a preposition), sacrificed their distinct forms and usages.[1] Greek is accordingly marked, like English, by the very free use of prepositions. This characteristic is very obviously intensified in Hellenistic, where we are perpetually finding prepositional phrases used to express relations which in classical Greek would have been adequately given by a case alone. It is needless to illustrate this here, except with one typical example which will fitly introduce the next point to be discussed. I have already (p. 73) referred to the instrumental ἐν, formerly regarded as a translation of the familiar Hebrew ַ, but now well established as vernacular Greek of Ptolemaic and later times. The examples we have happen to be all from the category " armed with," but it seems fair to argue that an instrumental sense for ἐν is generally available if the context strongly pleads, for it, without regarding this restriction or assuming Hebraism.[2] What gave birth to this extension of the uses of ἐν? It seems certain that it implies a growing lack of clearness in the simple dative, which produced an unwillingness to trust it to express the required meaning without further definition. We may see in the growth of prepositions an incipient symptom of that simplification of cases which culminates in the abbreviated case system of to-day.

It is very easy for a New Testament student to overlook

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[1] Note that the *to* case also disappeared, the " terminal accusative" seen in the Latin *ire Romam.* The surviving cases accordingly represent purely grammatical relations, those of subject, object, possession, remoter object and instrument.

[2] I should not wish to exclude the possibility that this ἐν, although correct vernacular Greek, came to be used rather disproportionately by translators from Hebrew, or by men whose mother tongue was Aramaic. The use would be explained on the same lines as ἰδού on p. 72.

entirely the fact that the dative has already entered the
way that leads to extinction. I take a page at random from
St. Mark in Westcott and Hort's text, and count 21 datives
against 23 genitives and 25 accusatives. A random page
from a Teubner Herodotus gives me only 10, against 23
and 29 respectively; one from Plato 11, against 12 and 25.
Such figures could obviously prove nothing conclusive until
they were continued over a large area, but they may be
taken as evidence that the dative is not dead yet in the first
century. Taking the New Testament as a whole, the dative
with prepositions falls behind the accusative and genitive in
the proportion 15 to 19 and 17 respectively. This makes
the dative considerably more prominent than in classical
and post-classical historians.[1] The preponderance is, how-
ever, due solely to ἐν, the commonest of all the prepositions,
outnumbering εἰς by about three to two : were both these
omitted, the dative would come down to 2½ in the above
proportion, while the accusative would still be 10. And
although ἐν has greatly enlarged its sphere of influence [2] in
the New Testament as compared with literary Κοινή, we
find very clear examples of εἰς encroaching on its domain.
There are many New Testament passages where a real dis-
tinction between εἰς and ἐν is impossible to draw without
excessive subtlety, for which all the motive is gone when
we find in modern Greek στό with accusative (= εἰς τόν)
the substitute for the now obsolete dative, and the language

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[1] Helbing, in the latest issue (1904) of Schanz's *Beiträge*, p. 11, gives a
table for the respective frequency of dat., gen. and accus. with preposi-
tions, which works out for Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, taken
together, at 1: 1·2: 3; for twelve post-classical historians, from Polybius
to Zosimus, at 1: 1·5: 2·4.

[2] This is well seen by comparing the statistics of Helbing, pp. 8 f. He
gives the figures for the three favourite prepositions of the historians.
Ἐν is one of the three in every one except Polybius, Diodorus and
Josephus ; εἰς falls out of the list in Eusebius only. The total occurrences
of εἰς in the three classical historians amount to 6,531, those of ἐν to 6,031 ;
while in the twelve Hellenistic writers εἰς comes to 31,651, and ἐν to only
17,130. Contrast the New Testament, where St. Mark and the author of

in its intermediate stages working up to this ultimate goal.
Side by side with this we may put the disappearance of ὑπό
with the dative, the accusative serving to express both
motion and rest. In the classical historians the dative is
nearly as frequent as the accusative, and some of their suc-
cessors, notably Appian and Herodian, made it greatly out-
number its rival—see Helbing, *op. cit.*, p. 22. Similarly we
find that πρός with dative is in New Testament less than
·01 of πρός with accusative : in the three classical historians
it averages nearly ·12, in the later twelve ·01 again. Ἐπί
and παρά are the only prepositions in which the use with
three cases can be called really alive in the Greek Testament.

We pass on to other symptoms of senescence in the
dative. In the papyri there are some clear examples of an
accusative expressing point of time instead of duration (see
Class. Rev. xviii. 152) ; and in John iv. 52[1] and Rev. iii. 3·
we may recognize the same thing. Of course the dative of
" time when " was still very much more common. There
were not wanting, indeed, cases where a classical use of the
accusative, such as that of specification (Goodwin, *Greek
Gram.* § 1058), has yielded to a dative of reference (instru-
mental) : cf. *Class. Rev.* xv. 438, xviii. 153, and the useful
program by Compernass, *De Sermone Gr. Volg. Pisidiae
Phrygiaeque meridionalis*, p. 20 f. We have examples of
its survival in John vi. 10 *al.* (WM. 288 f.) ; but, as in the
papyri, the dative is very much commoner. The evidence
of the decay of the dative was examined with great minute-

Hebrews are the only writers who prefer εἰς to ἐν, and the total occurrences
amount to 1,743 and 2,698 respectively. It is noteworthy that in the New
Testament ἐπί, which in the twelve writers of literary Κοινή comes not far
behind ἐν (14,093), is less than two-fifths as common as ἐν, being level
with ἐκ, which does not figure in Helbing's list at all. The order of pre-
cedence in the New Testament goes on with πρός (·25 of ἐν), διά and ἀπό
(·24), κατά and μετά (·17), περί (·13), ὑπό (·08), παρά (·07), ὑπέρ (·054), σύν (·048),
πρό (·018), ἀντί (·008), ἀνά (·004).

[1] With ὥραν, however, the use began in classical times: see Blass, *N.T.
Gr.*, 94.

ness by F. Krebs in his three pamphlets, *Zur Rection der Casus in der späteren historischen Gräcität* (1887–1890). He deals only with the literary Κοινή, but we may profitably take up his points in order and show from the New Testament how these tendencies of the artificial dialect are really derived from the vernacular. Krebs begins with verbs which are beginning to take the accusative, having been confined to the dative in the earlier language. The distinction in meaning between transitive verbs and verbs whose object was really an instrumental (as with χρῆσθαι), or a dative of person interested, inevitably faded away with time, and the grammatical distinction became accordingly a useless survival. Of his examples, πολεμεῖν takes accus. also in vernacular, ἐνεδρεύειν and εὐδοκεῖν in the New Testament; but ξενίζεσθαι, ἀπαντᾶν and ὑπαντᾶν retain the dative there.[1] The movement was accompanied with various symptoms of reaction. Προσκυνεῖν in the New Testament takes the dative about twice as often as the accusative. The phrase παραβάλλεσθαι τῇ ψυχῇ (Polybius) has its innovating dative matched with παραβολεύεσθαι in Phil. ii. 30. I must return to Krebs later, and here may dismiss the decay of the dative with the remark that the more illiterate papyri and inscriptions very decidedly show it before the New Testament had acquired any antiquity. The schoolboy of O.P. 119, often referred to already (p. 223 *al.*), uses σέ for σοί after γράφω, while later samples (see *Class. Rev.* as above) include such monstrosities as τίνι λόγου and σὺν τῶν υἱῶν.

The encroachments of the accusative as the object of a verb were naturally not confined to the dative. We may resume here the examples discussed by Krebs, to be found in his second part (1888). The Hellenistic verb ἀπελπίζειν generally takes accusative instead of the natural genitive, and

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[1] Also, I may add, πειθαρχεῖν, which takes a gen., like ἀκούω, in a Ptolemaic papyrus and in an inscription. (I must take the opportunity of correcting my slip in the EXPOSITOR for February, 1903, p. 118, where I unaccountably call the construction with genitive " classical.")

this it seems to do in Luke vi. 35, if we read μηδένα with
א etc. and the Lewis Syriac (so Tischendorf, WH. margin
and R.V. margin).[1] Κρατεῖν (Krebs ii. 14) takes the gen.
only eight times in the New Testament, out of forty-six
occurrences, but διαφέρειν (" surpass ") has gen. always.
Ἐντρέπεσθαι (p. 15) takes only the accus.[2] and so does
κληρονομεῖν. Δράσσομαι (p. 17) has the accus. in the only
place where it occurs, a citation from the LXX. There
follows a category of intransitive verbs which in Hellenistic
have begun to take a direct object in the accusative. Of these
we recognize as New Testament examples ἐνεργεῖν (six times),
συνεργεῖν (in Rom. viii. 28 AB and Origen), πλεονεκτεῖν
(four times, and once in passive) and χορηγεῖν. The third part
of Krebs's work (1890) deals with compound verbs and their
cases. Here προσφωνεῖν c. accus. may claim Luke vi. 13,
but it has the dative four times ; ὑποτρέχειν has accus. in its
only occurrence ; ἐπέρχεσθαι has only dative or prepositional
phrase ; καταβαρεῖν occurs once, c. accus. ; καταλαλεῖν takes
gen. in New Testament, but is once passive, as is κατα-
πονεῖν in its two occurrences ; while κατισχύειν shows no
sign of the accus. construction.

It would of course be easy to supplement from the New
Testament grammar these illustrations of a general ten-
dency, but exhaustive discussion is not needed here. I
should pass on to note a few special characteristics of the
individual cases as they appear in New Testament Greek,
as contrasted with the earlier language. Before doing so,
however, I must make some general observations, the bear-
ing of which will not be limited to the subject at present
engaging us. We must not assume, from the evidence just
presented as to variation of case with verbs, that old dis-

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[1] Of course μηδέν, if not to be read μηδέν', is an internal or adverbial
accus., *nil desperantes.*

[2] A passage from Dionysius (Krebs 16),' οὔτε θεῖον φοβηθέντες χόλον οὔτε
ἀνθρωπίνην ἐντραπέντες νέμεσιν, bears a curiously close resemblance to Luke
xviii. 2.

tinctions of meaning have necessarily vanished, or that we may treat as mere equivalents those constructions which are found in common with the same word. The very fact that in John iv. 23 προσκυνεῖν is found with dative and then with accusative is enough to prove the existence of a differ- ence, subtle no doubt but real, between the two, unless the writer is guilty of a most improbable slovenliness. The fact that the maintenance of an old and well-known distinction between the accusative and the genitive with ἀκούω saves the author of *Acts* from a patent self-contradiction (ix. 7, xxii. 9) should by itself be enough to make us recognize it for St. Luke, and for other writers until it is proved wrong. So with the subtle and suggestive variation from genitive to accusative with γενέσθαι in Heb. vi. 4, 5.[1] Further, the statement that because εἰς often denotes rest in or at, and sometimes represents that motion *towards* (as distinguished from motion *to*) which may well have been the primitive differentia of the dative, therefore it is immaterial whether we have εἰς or ἐν or the simple dative with any particular word, would be entirely unwarrantable. It depends upon the character of the word itself. If its content be limited, it may well happen that hardly any appreciable difference may be made by placing it in one or another of certain nearly equivalent relations to a noun. But if it is a word of large content and extensive use, we naturally expect to find these alternative expressions made use of to define the different ideas connected by the word they qualify, so as to set up a series of phrases having a perfectly definite mean- ing. In such a case we should expect to see the original

[1] To supplement with a lexical example, we need not think that the evidence which makes ἐρωτᾶν in the vernacular no longer restricted to the meaning *question* (cf. EXPOSITOR, Dec. 1903, p. 431), compromises the antithesis between the verbs in John xvi. 23, rightly given by R.V. margin. Our English *ask* is the complete equivalent of the Hellenistic ἐρωτᾶν, and if we translated αἰτήσητε by some other word, say *beg* or *petition*, we should naturally take *ask* to mean *question* there. See West- cott or Milligan-Moulton *in loc*.

force of these expressions, obsolete in contexts where there was nothing to quicken it, brought out vividly where the need of a distinction stimulated it into new life. A critical example is the construction of πιστεύω, as to which Blass *N.T. Gr.* 110 declares that (in addition to the prepositional construction, with the meaning " believe in ") it takes the dative "*passim* even in the sense ' to believe in,' as in Acts v. 14, xviii. 8." ¹ Again, p. 123, " πιστεύειν εἰς alternates with πιστ. ἐν (Mark i. 15) and πιστ. ἐπί, in addition to which the correct classical πιστ. τινί appears." Let us examine this. In classical Greek, as Liddell and Scott observe, " the two notions " of πιστεύειν *believe* and *believe in* " run into each other." To be unable to distinguish ideas so vitally different in the scheme of Christianity would certainly have been a serious matter for the New Testament writers. Blass allows that with the preposition the meaning is *believe in.* Is this meaning ever found with the simple dative, or is this the appropriated locution to express the other idea alone ? The answer must, it would seem, come from examination of the New Testament passages, rather than from outside. There are about forty occurrences of πιστεύειν with dative, apart from those where the meaning is *entrust.* It will be admitted that in the great majority of these passages the meaning is *believe.* There remain a few passages where the alternative is arguable, such as John v. 24, 38 (in which the λογος just preceding shows that *believe* is more appropriate), viii. 31 (where the variation from the previous π. εἰς cannot be merely accidental), Acts v. 14 (where the dative may be construed with προσετίθεντο, as in R.V.), xvi. 34 and xviii. 8 (where accepting the truth of God's word completely satisfies the connexion). It might be said that the influence of the LXX tends towards a weakening of the normal distinction in the phrase π. τῷ θεῷ. But it is very clear that the LXX is not responsible for the New

¹ This passage is dropped in the German 2nd edition.

Testament use of πιστεύειν. The only prepositional phrase
used in the LXX is that with ἐν, which is itself very rare,
and this occurs in only one New Testament passage, Mark
i. 15.[1] That with ἐπί, which outside St. John is commoner
than εἰς, is found in Isa. xxviii. 16, where B omits, and
conformity to the New Testament application of the pas-
sage may well have occasioned its insertion in אAQ. It
would seem therefore as if the substitution of εἰς or ἐπί for
the simple dative may have obtained currency first in
Christian circles, where the importance of the difference
between mere belief (לְהַאֲמִין) and personal trust (הֶ "בְ) was
keenly realized. The prepositional construction was sug-
gested no doubt by its being a more literal translation of
the Hebrew phrase with בְּ. But in itself it was entirely
on the lines of development of the Greek language, as we
have seen. There was, moreover, a fitness in it for the use
for which it was specialized. To repose one's trust upon
God or Christ was well expressed by πιστεύειν ἐπί, the
dative suggesting more of the state, and the accusative
more of the initial act; while εἰς recalls at once the bring-
ing of the soul into that mystical union which St. Paul
loved to express by ἐν Χριστῷ—that great phrase the com-
mon use of which by three Apostles sufficiently evidences
the source from whence it came.[2]

The space we have devoted to this single example of
alleged equivalence must be our excuse for letting it stand
by itself at this stage of our survey. Its great intrinsic
importance makes it a specially good rallying-point against
a tendency to exaggerate some of the results of the latest
Hellenistic research. It is only with the utmost diffidence
that we can venture to criticise the foremost grammarian
of our time, but it is impossible to overlook in Blass's

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[1] Eph. i. 13 is only an apparent exception, for the second ἐν ᾧ is
assimilated to the first and is determined by ἐσφραγίσθητε.

[2] It may be convenient to give a table of the constructions of πιστεύω

brilliant *New Testament Grammar* a yielding to this ten-
dency which calls for frequent caution. A scholar supremely
at home among the niceties of classical speech, and not
sufficiently alive to the smallness of the part which Semitism
must play in our study of the late Greek vernacular,[1] he
can hardly avoid the inclination to regard the fine distinc-
tions of the ancient language as lost under the solvent forces
of foreign influence and decadent culture. To a very large
extent this is undeniably true, as we have seen in not a few
instances already and shall see in many more. In the light
of the papyri and of modern Greek we are compelled to
give up some grammatical scruples which figure largely in
commentators like Westcott, and colour many passages of
the R.V. But it does not follow that we must cheerfully
obliterate every grammatical distinction which was obsolete
in the daily conversation of the first century Egyptian
farmer. We are in no danger now of reviving Hatch's idea
that phrases which could translate the same Hebrew must
be equivalent to one another. The papyri have slain this

with a noun (not meaning *entrust*). As before, the table is from WH
text, ignoring all the doubly bracketed passages.

	c. εἰς.	c. ἐπί.		c. ἐν.	c. dat.	Total
		dat.	acc.			
Matthew . . .	1	—	1	—	4	6
Mark	—	—	—	1	1	2
Luke and Acts .	3	1	4	—	9	17
John and 1 John	37	—	—	—	18	55
Paul	3	4	2	—	6	15
James.	—	—	—	—	1	1
1 Peter	1	1	—	—	—	2
Total . .	45	6	7	1	39	98

In other writers only used absolute. 1 John iv. 16 is omitted, as ἐγνώκαμεν
determines the construction. So also are Acts v. 14 and Eph. i. 13 for
reasons given above.

[1] Blass's book came out in 1896, and Deissmann's *Bibelstudien* in 1895,
so that this only means that he did not anticipate Deissmann's pioneer
work.

very Euclid-like axiom, but they must not enslave us to others as dangerous. The New Testament must still be studied largely by light drawn from itself. Books written on the same subject and within the same circle must always gather some amount of identical style or idiom, a kind of technical terminology, which may often preserve a usage of earlier language, obsolescent because not needed in more slovenly colloquial speech of the same time. The various conservatisms of our own religious dialect, even on the lips of uneducated people, may serve as a parallel up to a certain point. We are justified by these considerations in examining each New Testament writer's language first by itself and then in connexion with that of his fellow-contributors to the sacred volume; and we may allow ourselves to retain the original force of distinctions which were dying or dead in every-day parlance, when there is a sufficient body of internal evidence, especially from passages where antithesis in the same context seems to demand them. Of course we shall not be tempted to use this principle when the whole of our evidence denies a particular survival to Hellenistic vernacular : in such a case we could only find it as a definite literary revival, rarely possible in St. Luke, and conceivable in St. Paul and the writer of *Hebrews*.

We shall need to refer back to these general cautions often in our future inquiries, and notably when we come to the tenses. If we have hung them upon πιστεύω as a convenient peg, it is only because this is our first opportunity under the Syntax of insisting on a caution which seems by no means superfluous in the present stage of grammatical study. The length of this necessary digression requires the postponement of a few further remarks on the cases one by one.

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