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ARTICLE VIII.

THE CASE ABSOLUTE IN THE NEW
TESTAMENT.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY ANSELM SCOMP, PH.D., LL.D.

II.

WE see that time is really the only idea which Matthew associates with the Genitive Absolute. The Capernaum tax-gatherer, or whoever wrote the Greek version of his Gospel, has not gone beyond the range of his native Aramaic in dealing with this participle construction. The participle time limitation of his native tongue still controlled the expression of his thought while handling the new garb for its vesture.

Let us see some further examples from the second Evangelist.

MARK.

Chap. I. 42.—"And as soon as he had spoken (*εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ*), immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." Here the participle seems to mark the time, inasmuch as the instrumentality employed in the cleansing was the putting forth of his hand by the Master, and the touching of the leper. See also John xviii. 22: "And when he had thus spoken (*ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος*), one of the officers struck Jesus"; see, also, Acts xxvi. 30; xxviii. 25, 29.

The present participle has the same temporal relation; e.g., Luke ix. 34: "While he thus spake (*ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος*) a cloud came and overshadowed them," etc.; so, also, xi. 53; xiii. 17; xxi. 5. In chap. xiii. 17: "When

he had said these things (*ταῦτα λέγοντος*), all his adversaries were ashamed." We have the *cause*, as well as the *time*, of the "were ashamed." So, too, in Acts xx. 9, where it is said of Eutychus, that as Paul was long preaching (*διαλεγόμενου τοῦ Παύλου ἐπὶ πλείον*), "he sunk down with deep sleep and fell," etc.; so, also, xxiv. 25: "As he [Paul] reasoned (*διαλεγόμενον δὲ αὐτοῦ*) of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." We shall remark further upon Luke's usage of this construction.

Chap. V. 21.—"When Jesus was passed over by ship (*διαπεράσαντος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*) much people gathered unto him."

Chap. VIII. 1.—"The multitude being great, and having nothing to eat (*παμπόλλου ὄχλου ὄντος, καὶ μὴ ἔχόντων τί φάγωσι*), Jesus called his disciples," etc. Here *cause*, as well as *time*, is involved. See, also, xiv. 3-66; Luke xxii. 53; Acts xix. 35; Rom. v. 6, 8, 13. In these latter passages *cause* and *time* are brought into the argument.

Chap. XI. 27.—"As he was walking in the temple (*ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ περιπατοῦντος αὐτοῦ*), there came to him the priests."

Chap. XVI. 20.—"They went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them* (*τοῦ Κυρίου συνεργούντος*), and confirming the word" (*καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιούντος, κ.τ.λ.*). We have here an accompanying circumstance unlike any other instance in the Gospels. This verse, be it remembered, belongs to that part of the last chapter of Mark whose authenticity is so keenly disputed. From verse 9 to the end of the Gospel, the MS. authority is, in large degree, wanting. Leaving out this doubtful verse, there remains only one instance (viii. 1) in which any other idea than the temporal seems to be incorporated. Mark's many Hebraisms leads readily to infer that Greek was to him a foreign tongue, probably learned after he had grown to manhood.

Let us examine some verses not yet cited from Luke's Gospel.

LUKE.

Chap. II. 2.—"This taxing was first made when *Cyrenius was governor of Syria*" (ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου). See, too, iii. 1, where the time when John began his ministry is dated at the fifteenth year of Tiberius, *when Pilate was governing* (ἡγεμονεύοντος) Judæa; Herod was "tetrarching" (τετραρχοῦντος) Galilee; Philip was tetrarch of Iturea, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene: these relations are all temporal. See, also, Acts xviii. 12, Gallio (ἀνθυπατεύοντος).

Chap. III. 15, 21.—Ver. 15. "As the people were in expectation (προσδοκῶντος δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ), and all were reasoning (καὶ διαλογιζομένων πάντων) concerning John, . . . John answered," etc. Compare Acts xxviii. 6. Ver. 21. "When Jesus had been baptized, and was praying (Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος καὶ προσευχομένου), the heaven was opened."

Chap. IV. 2.—"When they [the days] were ended (συντελεσθειῶν αὐτῶν) he afterward hungered."

Chap. VII. 6.—"When he [Jesus] was not far away from the house (αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας), the centurion sent unto him." Compare, also, xiv. 32; xv. 20.

Chap. VIII. 23, 45.—Ver. 23. "While they were sailing (πλεόντων δὲ αὐτῶν) he [Jesus] fell asleep." Ver. 45. "When all were denying (ἀρνούμενων δὲ πάντων), Peter and those with him, said."

Chap. IX. 43.—"While all were wondering (πάντων δὲ θαυμαζόντων) he [Jesus] said unto his disciples."

Chap. XI. 29.—"When the crowds were gathered thick together (τῶν δὲ ὄχλων ἐπαθροισμένων), Jesus began to say." Compare:

Chap. XII. 1.—"When an innumerable multitude were gathered together (ἐπισυναχθειῶν τῶν μυριάδων), he began to say."

Chap. XIV. 29.—"Lest when he has laid the foundation (μήποτε, θέντος αὐτοῦ θεμέλιον), and is not able to finish ἔτι

(καὶ μὴ ἰσχύοντος ἐκτελέσαι), all shall begin to mock him." *Time* and *cause* both introduced.

Chap. XV. 14.—"When he had spent all (δαπανήσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ πάντα), there arose a mighty famine in that land."

Chap. XVIII. 40.—"When he [the blind man] was come near (ἐγγίσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ), Jesus asked him." Compare xix. 37; Acts x. 9.

Chap. XIX. 33.—"As they were loosing the colt (λυόντων δὲ αὐτῶν τὸν πῶλον), the owners thereof said." In the sense of to *dismiss*, or to *dissolve*, Γύω is used in Acts xiii. 43: "When the synagogue was dismissed (λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς), many followed Paul and Barnabas.

Chap. XX. 1.—"While he was teaching (διδάσκοντος αὐτοῦ) and preaching (καὶ εὐαγγελιζομένου), the chief priests came upon him."

Chap. XXI. 28.—"When these things begin to come to pass (ἀρχομένων δὲ τούτων γίνεσθαι), then lift up your eyes."

Chap. XXII. 55, 59.—Ver. 55. "When they had kindled a fire (ἀψάντων δὲ πῦρ), and had sat down (καὶ συγκαθισάντων), Peter sat down with them." Ver. 59. "When about one hour had intervened (διαστάσης ὥσει ὥρας μιᾶς), another confidently affirmed."

Chap. XXIV. 5.—"As they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth (ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν, καὶ κλινουσῶν τὸ πρόσωπον εἰς τὴν γῆν) they said to them."

Of the passages here cited from Luke, all with one exception (xiv. 29), are clearly temporal in use and in meaning. This Apostle is conceded to have been of Gentile parentage, at least upon his father's side, but his knowledge of Greek was certainly superior to that of Mark, and much superior to that of Matthew.

JOHN.

Chap. II. 3.—"When the wine failed (ἰστερήσαντος οἴνου), the mother of Jesus saith to him."

Chap. V. 13.—"Jesus had conveyed himself away, *a multitude being in that place*" (ὄχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ).

Chap. VI. 23.—"Where they did eat bread, *after that the Lord had given thanks*" (εὐχαριστήσαντος τοῦ Κυρίου).

Chap. XIII. 2.—"And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas . . . (καὶ δείπνου γενομένου, τοῦ διαβόλου ἤδη βεβληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν Ἰούδα, κ. τ. λ.), Jesus riseth from supper."

Chap. XXI. 11.—"Although there were so many (καὶ τοσοῦτων ὄντων), yet was not the net broken." This last example should probably be rather classed under the head of Appositive clauses. It seems to be in apposition to the preceding clause (ἰχθύων μεγάλων ἑκατὸν πεντηκοιτατριῶν), "a hundred and fifty-three great fishes." This Genitive attraction (and assimilation) is not unknown in New Testament Greek.

ACTS.

Chap. I. 9.—"While they beheld (βλεπόντων αὐτῶν), he was taken up, and a cloud received him," etc.

Chap. II. 2, 6.—Ver. 2. "Suddenly there was a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind" (ὥσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βίας) or, as when a mighty wind rushes. Probably it would be better to treat this last as a limiting Genitive. Ver. 6. "When this was noised abroad (γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης), the multitude came together," etc.

Chap. III. 11, 13.—Ver. 11. "While the lame man which was healed, was holding (κρατοῦντος δὲ τοῦ ἰαθέντος χωλοῦ) Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch," etc. Ver. 13. "Ye denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he [Pilate] was determined to let him go" (κρίναντος ἐκείνου).

Chap. IV. 31, 37.—Ver. 31. "When they had prayed (δεηθέντων αὐτῶν), the place was shaken." Ver. 37. "Having land (ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ), he sold it, and brought the money."

Chap. V. 1.—"Kept back part of the price, *his* wife also being privy to it" (*συκειδύλας καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ*).

Chap. VI. 1.—"When the number of disciples was multiplying (*πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν*), there arose a murmuring."

Chap. VII. 5, 30.—Ver. 5. "When as yet he had no child (*οὐκ ἔντοσ αὐτῷ τέκνου*), God promised to give." Ver. 30. "When forty years were expired (*πληρωθέντων ἐτῶν τεσσαράκοντα*), there appeared"; also xxiv. 27.

Chap. IX. 8.—"When his eyes were opened (*ἀπεφγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν*), he saw no one." Compare 2 Cor. ii. 12.

Chap. X. 9, 10, 19.—Ver. 9. "While they were journeying (*ὁδοιπορούντων ἐκεῖνων*), Peter ascended," etc. Ver. 10. "While they were making ready (*παρασκευαζόντων ἐκεῖνων*), he fell into a trance." Ver. 19. "While Peter thought on the vision (*τοῦ δὲ Πέτρου ἐνθυμουμένου περὶ τοῦ ὁράματος*), the Spirit said."

Chap. XII. 13.—"When Peter knocked (*κρούσας τοῦ Πέτρου*), a damsel came."

Chap. XIII. 2, 24.—Ver. 2. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted (*λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ νηστεύοντων*), the Holy Ghost said." Ver. 24. "God raised up Jesus as a Saviour, John having preached before (*προκηρύξαντος Ἰωάννου*) his coming the baptism of repentance."

Chap. XIV. 20.—"While the disciples stood round about him (*κυκλωσάντων δὲ αὐτὸν τῶν μαθητῶν*), he rose up," etc.

Chap. XV. 2.—"When Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them (*γενομένης οὖν στάσεως καὶ συζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης*), they determined," etc. This Genitive has both *time* and *cause* within its meanings.

Chap. XVII. 16.—"Now while Paul waited for them (*ἐκδεχομένου αὐτοὺς τοῦ Παύλου*) at Athens, his spirit was stirred."

Chap. XVIII. 6, 14, 20, 21, 27.—Ver. 6. "When they op-

posed themselves, and blasphemed (*ἀντιτασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων*), he shook his raiment, and said." Ver. 14. "When Paul was now about to open his mouth (*μέλλουτος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀποῤῥῆσαι τὸ στόμα*), Gallio said." Ver. 20. "When they desired (*ἐρωτῶντων δὲ αὐτῶν*) him to tarry longer, he did not consent." Ver. 21. "If God will (*τοῦ Θεοῦ θέλοντος*), I will return unto you." Here the Genitive Absolute expresses condition. Ver. 27. "When he [Paul] was disposed (*βουλομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ*) to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote." See, also, xix. 30.

Chap. XIX. 6, 34, 36, 40.—Ver. 6. "When Paul had laid his hands upon them (*ἐπιθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Παύλου*), the Holy Spirit came." Ver. 34. "When they knew [recognized] that he was a Jew (*ἐπιγινόντων δὲ ὅτι Ἰουδαῖός ἐστι*), all cried out." Ver. 36. "Seeing then that these things are not to be spoken against (*ἀναντιβρίθων οὖν ἕντων τούτων*), ye ought to be quiet." Ver. 40. "There being no cause (*μηδενὸς αἰτίου ὑπάρχοντος*), we are in danger," etc.; also xxvii. 40.

Chap. XX. 3.—"When a plot was made against him (*γενομένης αὐτῷ ἐπιβουλῆς*), it was his purpose to return"; also xxiii. 30.

Chap. XXI. 5, 10, 14, 31, 40.—Ver. 5. "They all brought us on our way (*προπεμπόντων ἡμᾶς πάντων*), and we kneeled down." Ver. 10. "While we were tarrying there many days (*ἐπιμερόντων δὲ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας πλείους*), a prophet came down." Ver. 14. "When he would not be persuaded (*μη πειθομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ*), we ceased." Ver. 31. "As they went about to kill him (*ζητούντων δὲ αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνειν*), tidings came to the captain"; also, xxvii. 30. Ver. 40. "When he had given him license (*ἐπιτρέψαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ*), Paul stood upon the stairs."

Chap. XXII. 17, 23.—Ver. 17. "While I prayed (*προσυχόμενου μου*), I fell into a trance." Ver. 23. "As they cried (*κραυγαζόντων*), and cast off (*ῥιπτούντων*) their

clothes, and threw (*βαλλόντων*) dust, the captain commanded."

Chap. XXIV. 2, 11, 20.—Ver. 2. "When he was called forth (*κληθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ*), he began to accuse." "Since worthy deeds are done (*κατορθωμάτων γινομένων*) by thy providence, we accept it always." Ver. 11. "That thou mayest be able to know (*δυναμένου σου γινῶναι*), I more readily speak for myself." Compare, also, *ἀπολογουμένου*, Acts xxv. 8; xxvi. 24; Rom. ii. 15. Ver. 20. "While I stood before the council (*στάντος μου ἐπὶ τοῦ συνεδρίου*), let them say if they found aught against me."

Chap. XXV. 21.—"When Paul had appealed (*τοῦ δὲ Παύλου ἐπικαλεσαμένου*) to be reserved . . . I commanded"; also verse 25.

Chap. XXVI. 10, 14.—Ver. 10. "When they were put to death (*ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν*), I consented [or approved]." Ver. 14. "When we were all fallen to the earth (*πάντων δὲ καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν*), I heard a voice."

Chap. XXVII. 7, 15, 18, 20, 21, 27.—Ver. 7. "The wind not suffering us (*μὴ προσεῶντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ ἀνέμου*), we sailed under Crete"; so, also, verse 13. Ver. 15. "When the ship was caught (*συναρπασθέντος δὲ τοῦ πλοίου*), and could not bear up into the wind (*καὶ μὴ δυναμένου ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῷ ἀνέμῳ*), we were driven." Ver. 18. "We being exceedingly tossed with a tempest (*σφοδρῶς δὲ χειμαζομένων ἡμῶν*), they lightened the ship." Ver. 20. "When neither sun nor stars appeared (*μήτε δὲ ἡλίου μήτε ἀστρῶν ἐπιφαινόντων*), all hope was taken away." Ver. 21. "After long abstinence (*πολλῆς δὲ ἀστυίας ὑπαρχούσης*), Paul stood forth and said." Ver. 27. "While we were driven up and down (*διαφερομένων ἡμῶν*) in Adria, the sailors sought to approach land."

Chap. XXVIII. 3, 6, 19.—Ver. 3. "When Paul had gathered (*συστρέψαντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου*) a bundle of sticks, and laid (*ἐπιθέντος*) upon the fire, a viper came out." Ver. 6. "When they saw (*θεωρούντων*) no harm come to him, they

changed." Ver. 19. "When the Jews spake against *it* (*ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων*), I was compelled to appeal to Cæsar."

ROMANS.

Chap. II. 15.—"Which show the work of the law, *their conscience bearing witness* (*συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως*), their thoughts accusing, or else excusing one another" (*ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων*). See, also, ix. 1; Heb. ii. 4; xi. 4.

Chap. V. 6.—"While we were weak (*δυνῶν ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν*), Christ died for the ungodly"; also, verses 8 and 13.

Chap. VII. 3.—"If, while her husband liveth (*ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός*), she marieth another, she shall be called an adulteress."

Chap. IX. 11.—"When the children [Esau and Jacob] were not yet born (*μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων*), nor had done (*μηδὲ πραξάντων*) anything good or evil) that the purpose of God might stand fast, it was said unto her."

FIRST CORINTHIANS.

We have four instances of the Genitive Absolute in this Epistle, viz. iv. 18; v. 4; xi. 18, 20. The last three passages have already been cited in connection with similar preceding examples. The first is one of those genitives introduced by *ὡς*.

Chap. IV. 18.—"As if I were not coming (*ὡς μὴ ἐρχομένον δέ μου*) to you, some are puffed up." Compare 2 Cor. v. 20.

SECOND CORINTHIANS.

Chap. I. 11.—"You are helping by prayer (*συννυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν . . . τῇ δεήσει*) for us, thanks may be given by many." The remarkable similarity of expression here to that in Mark xvi. 20, cannot fail to strike our attention.

Chap. IV. 18.—"While we look not at the things seen (*μὴ σκοπούντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα*), but at the things unseen."

Chap. IX. 14.—"Were earnest in petition for you which long (*αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούντων, κ. τ. λ.*), they glorify God."

Chap. X. 15.—"But we have hope, *since your faith is increasing* (*αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν*), to be enlarged by you."

GALATIANS.

Chap. III. 25.—The single instance of the Genitive Absolute found in this Epistle has been already cited.

EPHESIANS.

Chap. II. 20.—"Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (*ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ*).

FIRST THESSALONIANS.

Chap. III. 6.—The single example of the Genitive Absolute in this Epistle has already been instanced.

HEBREWS.

Chap. IV. 1, 3.—Ver. 1. "[Since] a promise is left us (*καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας*) of entering into that rest, let us fear lest any come short of it." Ver. 3. "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (*καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων*), yet shall they [the Jews of the desert] not enter in." This Genitive seems to be the equivalent for a protasis of the unfulfilled conditional sentence.

Chap. VII. 12.—"For since the priesthood is changed (*μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης*), there is necessarily a change of law."

Chap. VIII. 4.—"Since there are priests that offer (*ὄντων τῶν ἱερέων τῶν προσφερόντων*) according to the law, he should not be a priest."

Chap. IX. 6, 8, 15.—Ver. 6. "Now since these things

were thus ordained (τούτων δὲ οὕτω κατεσκευασμένων), the priests went always into the first tabernacle." Ver. 8. "The Holy Spirit this signifying (τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Ἁγίου), that the way was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing" (ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηπῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν). Ver. 15. "That by means of death (θῶπος, θανάτου γενομένου) they might receive the promise."

Chap. X. 26.—"For if we sin wilfully [i.e. persist in sin] (ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἀμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν) after knowledge, there remaineth no more sacrifice."

Chap. XI. 40.—"God provided some better thing" (τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρείττον τι προβλεψαμένου), i.e. *they* received not the promise; but *we* have received it.

FIRST PETER.

Chap. III. 20, 22.—Ver. 20. "The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing" (κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ). Ver. 22. "Christ went up into heaven, when [or, after] angels and principalities and powers had been made subject to him" (ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων).

Chap. IV. 1, 4.—Ver. 1. "Since Christ has suffered for us (Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." Ver. 4. "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot" (μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν, κ. τ. λ.).

Chap. V. 4.—"When the chief shepherd shall appear (φακερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος), ye shall receive a crown."

SECOND PETER.

Chap. I. 3, 17.—Ver. 3. "According as his divine power hath given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness (ὡς πάντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν δεδωρημένης), grace and peace be multiplied to

you." Ver. 17. "When such a voice came to him (*φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύδε*), he received from God honor and glory."

Chap. III. 11.—"Seeing then that all these things [i. e. the material universe] are dissolving (*τούτων οὖν πάντων λυομένων*), what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

The other instances of the Genitive Absolute in the New Testament are cited by reference without quotation. It will be observed that in some of the Epistles and in the Apocalypse this construction is not used at all. James does not furnish any example of it; and John uses it most sparingly—thirteen times in the Gospel and once in one Epistle. Peter has nine examples in his two letters.

The future participle is not used by any of the New Testament writers in this connection, and the perfect is found but nine times, and, with a single exception (*βεβληκός*, John xiii. 2), always in the passive form. This participle thus used, has a sort of adjective signification, and is rather descriptive of the substantive to which it is joined. The present and the aorist are the participles regularly employed; and they are used even where other than their tense relations are introduced, e.g. *φανερωθέντος* (1 Pet. v. 4), where some form of the future would seem to be demanded. These probably harmonized best with the mold of Aramaic thought.

We notice that the proportion of Greek to Aramaic with these writers is in a sort of ratio to their nearness to or distance from Palestine, the center of the Jewish race. Thus Matthew, or his Greek translator, molds his Genitives Absolute after the Aramaic model. The *time* idea of his Aramaic participles prevails everywhere with his Greek. He hardly knows of any other signification for them.

Hardly less to the manner born, and hardly less Aramaic

in his use of this participle structure, was Mark, whose early home was in the Holy City, and whose mother's house was the seat of the first Christian church, or "society." With his Syrian dialect he could well and naturally express the thoughts of the great "Apostle of the Circumcision," whose literary mouthpiece he became. Probably Peter did not write with his own hand any of the sacred text. Doubtless his hand was more deft with the net than with the pen. Mark was the recorder of his testimony in the Gospel; perhaps Silvanus wrote the First Epistle from Peter's dictation (1 Peter v. 12); though Mark was evidently with the Apostle at the same time. Silvanus, who had been preaching at Corinth, probably acknowledged Greek for his mother-tongue, and the Greek form is more apparent in the Epistle than in the Gospel.

St. Luke was, by far, better acquainted with Greek than was any other of the Gospel writers. Being of Gentile parentage, at least on the father's side, and brought up in Antioch, already for several centuries the seat of Greek culture in the East, his opportunities for mastering the language were vastly better than were those of the Bethsaida fishermen, and we find him handling the Hellenic with a skill and a purity to which they were strangers. Added to all this, he was also the companion of Paul, likewise a native of a Greek city and a master of the Greek. It is not wonderful, then, that Luke handles the nicer forms of the language—the Case Absolute among them—with such power and propriety. About one-half of all the New Testament examples of the Absolute Case is found in Luke's two "treatises." Whether these were addressed to a personal Theophilus (God-lover), or were "open letters"—encyclicals—to the general Christian body, thus personified, their very dedication points to a foreign public of a Greek vernacular.

To chapter xiii., the Acts are St. Peter's "acts"; thence-

forth Paul is the central figure. Was the former part written from Peter's dictation and at Rome, and the second part recorded at the same place under Paul's direction? Where else did he know St. Peter? One thing in this connection we may note, viz. the Genitive Absolute occurs more than three times as often in the "Acts of St. Paul" as in the "Acts of St. Peter." We may perhaps detect the dominating Greek thought of the Gentiles' Apostle in this prevailing use of the Absolute.

We note, also, the far wider range of the Genitive Absolute by Luke and Paul. Other relations as well as that of *time* are brought into use. The Absolute expresses cause, purpose, and other attendant circumstances, as we may readily see by an examination of the passages quoted. We feel that we are listening to Greeks treating, it is true, of very foreign and *un-Greek* themes; but, nevertheless, handling with master hands the real Hellenic of their age and country.

Paul's other amanuenses—e.g. Tertius, writer of the Romans, Stephanas, Timothy, Tychicus, and others—were not Jews, or, at least, were of mixed parentage; and Aramaic was not their vernacular, nor Palestine their country. Consequently they were less fettered by the limitations of an alien tongue, in their use of a Greek original.

We may see, therefore, how the tracing of a strange idiom may help us to fix more clearly in mind the history of the progress and the variety of thought in the development of the New Covenant.

In the era of our Lord and the Apostles, Hebrew in its olden form had long ceased to be either the language of speech or of writing in Palestine. Between Nehemiah and the Maccabees, the old language had gradually given place to the Syrian cross-breed—Aramaic. Of literature there was but little. The Law and the Prophets had become the "learned tongue," to be read in the synagogues, and

expounded by "doctors of the law," and to be weighed down by a body of tradition whose yoke was too heavy for even the most devout. Old Hebrew was as unintelligible to the people as "Old English" to the common people of to-day. Even the learned historian Josephus—a Pharisee, and the son of a priest—usually quotes the Greek Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew original; while his etymologies betray no small lack of thorough knowledge of the old speech of his people. Philo, the other great light of the Jewish nation in that era, shows hardly any acquaintance with Hebrew. He constantly uses the Seventy, faithfully copying their errors, manifestly without suspecting their inaccuracies.

In that period of unrest and confusion, the people lacked the guidance of a language with a literature accessible to the masses and readily understood by them. Rabbis and religion, targums and tradition—everything was in an unknown tongue, and perceived, if perceived at all, only through a veil and darkly. All was at second-hand, and subject to the "doctoring" of sectaries and bigots. The Babylonian Hillel had come to Jerusalem, and established there the chief school for the orthodox students of ancient lore. Puerile discussions occupied the Jewish intellect; demons and devils swarmed invisible under the Prince of the powers of the air. It was the royal time for the quack and the impostor. Every pretender to supernatural power was sure of a following. Simon or Bar-Jesus—it was all one. "*Show us a sign*" was all the test required; and if the sign was forthcoming, the multitude were ready to follow the sorcerer into the desert, to see him ascend into heaven; or, on the tottering walls of the sacred city, to defy famine and the battering-rams which were thundering around Zion and Moriah. Fanatics the masses undoubtedly were; blindly ignorant of their own law and of the teachings of their prophets;—yet in their last desperate struggle they

manifested an honesty and a devotion to their creed which evoke our sympathy, and no small meed of our admiration. Yet lucky, indeed, was it for the world, that the teachings of a higher law and of a greater Master were committed to the keeping of a far richer and purer tongue than the hybrid Aramaic, with its doubtful etymologies, its meagerness of expression, and its misty veil of tradition spread before even the Sun of righteousness himself.