

# TA HAGIA IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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τὰ ἁγία (and its variants) occurs a total of ten times in the NT, all of them in the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>1</sup> A casual examination of translations and commentaries makes it evident that there is considerable confusion of expression (if not of thought) among translators and commentators in their handling of this word. Table 1 illustrates the variety offered by translations ranging from the *KJV* to Phillips. An attempt was made to choose a representative group, including the committee translation, the modern speech translation, and the paraphrase. Of the ten translations chosen there is complete agreement only at one point (9: 1). In six of the verses under consideration (9: 2, 8, 12, 25; 10: 19; 13: 11) there is disagreement whether τὰ ἁγία refers to the sanctuary in general or to a specific part of it. Of the 100 translations represented in Table 1, 65-69 are in terms of the sanctuary in general, 11-13 are in terms of the outer compartment of the sanctuary, and 20-22 are in terms of the inner compartment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heb 8: 2; 9:1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10: 19; 13:11.

<sup>2</sup> The variation occurs because, at some places, the intention of the translator is not clear. In order to avoid the confusion introduced by such terms as "Holy Place," "Holy place," "holy Place," "holy place," "holy places," etc., the following terminology is hereinafter used as far as possible: "sanctuary" is used to refer to the Tabernacle or Temple in general; "outer compartment" and "inner compartment" are used of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies respectively. The summary given above in the text can be broken down as follows: 8: 2 sanctuary 10 x; 9: 1 sanctuary 10 x; 9: 2 sanctuary 3 x (?), outer compartment 7 x; 9: 3 inner compartment 10 x; 9: 8 sanctuary 6 x, inner compartment 4 x; 9: 12 sanctuary 5 x, outer compartment 3 x, inner compartment 2 x; 9: 24 sanctuary 10 x; 9: 25 sanctuary 7 x, outer compartment 2 x; inner compartment 1 x; 10: 19 sanctuary 6 x, inner compartment 4 x; 13: 11 sanctuary 8 x, outer compartment 1 x, inner compartment 1 x.

The same division of opinion has been discovered among the commentators<sup>3</sup> where it has been found necessary to explain that "Holy place" in some instances does not refer to the Holy Place, but to the Holy of Holies!

In view of the fact that the *auctor ad Hebraeos* leaned so heavily upon the LXX,<sup>4</sup> it would seem that this is the logical place to look for evidence of his meaning in the use of τὰ ἁγία. A study of the LXX revealed the results summarized in Table 2. Of the 170 uses of this word which had reference to the Tabernacle or Temple,<sup>5</sup> the overwhelming majority (142) referred to the sanctuary in general. When used in this way τὰ ἁγία seemed to appear indiscriminately in the singular or plural, although more than twice as frequently in the plural.<sup>6</sup> At the same time it should be pointed out that when it was used of either the outer or inner compartments it was more usually singular. With only four exceptions this use was found to be articular. This same general pattern seems to be

<sup>3</sup> See *infra*, pp. 66 ff.

<sup>4</sup> For a recent discussion of the use of the LXX by Hebrews, see Kenneth J. Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews," *NTS*, XI (1965), 303-325. See also B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1903), pp. 469-480; J. van der Ploeg, "L'exégèse de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Épître aux Hébreux," *RB*, LIV (1947), 187 ff.; R. A. Stewart, *The Old Testament Usage in Philo, Rabbinic Writings, and Hebrews* (unpublished M. Litt. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1947); C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris, 1952), I, 330 ff.; F. C. Synge, *Hebrews and the Scriptures* (London, 1959); M. Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews," *Current Issues in NT Interpretation*, ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder (New York, 1962), pp. 53 ff.

<sup>5</sup> In addition there were 16 uses in which it was constructed with τόπος, and 13 in which τὸ ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων (and variants) occurred. These were treated separately.

<sup>6</sup> The possible reasons why the plural was used so commonly were not pursued in this study. See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (translated and revised by Robert W. Funk, Cambridge, 1961), p. 78; Nigel Turner in James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh, 1963), III, 25-28; J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Griechisch, Lateinisch und Deutsch* (Basel, 1926), I, 97 ff.

followed (on a much smaller scale) in Hebrews.<sup>7</sup> It is significant

Table I

Translation of τὰ ἅγια in the Epistle to the Hebrews <sup>a</sup>

| Reference | Greek       | Goodspeed      | Knox | NEB | ERV | ASV | RSV | KJV | Moffatt | Wuest | Phillips |
|-----------|-------------|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|-------|----------|
| 8: 2      | τῶν ἁγίων   | 1 <sup>b</sup> | 1    | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1       | 10    | 1        |
| 9: 1      | Τό τε ἅγιον | 1              | 1    | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1       | 1     | 1        |
| 9: 2      | "Ἄγια       | 1              | 1    | 2   | 2   | 2   | 2   | 1   | 2       | 2     | 2A       |
| 9: 3      | "Ἄγια ἁγίων | 1A             | 1A   | 3   | 4   | 4   | 4   | 5   | 4       | 4     | 4        |
| 9: 8      | τῶν ἁγίων   | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 1   | 5   | 6       | 7     | 4        |
| 9: 12     | τὰ ἅγια     | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 2   | 9   | 2       | 4     | 4        |
| 9: 24     | ἅγια        | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 1   | 10  | 9       | 10    | 10       |
| 9: 25     | τὰ ἅγια     | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 2   | 9   | 9       | 10    | 4        |
| 10: 19    | τῶν ἁγίων   | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 1   | 7   | 8       | 4     | 4        |
| 13: 11    | τὰ ἅγια     | 1              | 1    | 1   | 9   | 9   | 1   | 1   | 2       | 4     | 1        |

<sup>a</sup> The translations are arranged (reading from the left) in order of consistency of translation. Although it is recognized that this is not a *sine qua non* of translation, it is, nonetheless, one factor of evaluation and for the present purpose a convenient standard of comparison. A study of this Table reveals some expected results, *e.g.*, the close connection between the *ERV* and the *ASV*; and the degree of inconsistency of translation in the "expanded" translation of Wuest and the paraphrase of Phillips. It also reveals some surprises, *e.g.*, the consistency of translation of the *NEB*; and the similarity of Knox to Goodspeed.

- <sup>b</sup>
- 1 = "sanctuary"; 1A = "inner sanctuary"
  - 2 = "Holy Place," "Holy place," "holy Place";
  - 2A = "outer compartment"
  - 3 = "Most Holy Place"
  - 4 = "Holy of Holies," "Holy of holies," "holy of holies"
  - 5 = "Holiest of all," "holiest of all"
  - 6 = "Holiest Presence"
  - 7 = "Holiest," "holiest"
  - 8 = "holy Presence"
  - 9 = "holy place"
  - 10 = "holy places"

<sup>7</sup> Of the nine uses in Hebrews which correspond to τὰ ἅγια (the construction at 9: 3 is Ἄγια ἁγίων), eight were in the plural and seven were articular.

*Table II*  
*The Use of τὰ ἄγια in the LXX* <sup>a</sup>

|                      | sanctuary | outer compartment | inner compartment |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total number of uses | 142       | 19                | 9                 |
| Singular             | 45        | 13                | 8                 |
| Plural               | 97        | 6                 | 1                 |
| Articular            | 138       | 19                | 9                 |
| Anarthrous           | 4         | —                 | —                 |

<sup>a</sup> The accuracy of these figures is, of course, subject to such factors as variant readings, doubtful uses, and the human factor.

that of the 98 places where this LXX expression is a translation of the Hebrew, 36 translate *מִקְדָּשׁ* which designates a sanctuary in general.<sup>8</sup> All of this would suggest that this word had the idea of the sanctuary as a whole for its basic meaning in Hebrews as in the LXX.

It could be argued that, inasmuch as all the uses of τὰ ἄγια from Heb. 9: 8 on are found in a Day of Atonement setting, a connection must be made between these six uses (at least) and the seven uses of this same word in Lev 16.<sup>9</sup> It is true that these latter references are to the inner compartment of the sanctuary.<sup>10</sup> However, it should be pointed out that each of the uses in Leviticus is singular, while in Hebrews (with one exception) they are plural. If the author of Hebrews was making a conscious borrowing from Lev 16 undoubtedly he would have used the singular. Furthermore, it seems far more likely that he was influenced by the general tendency of the LXX (which indicates that τὰ ἄγια refers primarily to the sanctuary as a whole), than by a specific part of it.

In addition to the uses of τὰ ἄγια already considered, there

<sup>8</sup> The remaining 62 were translations of *מִקְדָּשׁ* which parallels ἄγιοσ.

<sup>9</sup> Lev 16: 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27.

<sup>10</sup> See especially Lev 16: 2 where "within the veil, before the mercy seat" specifies which part of the sanctuary is referred to.

are two other constructions in which it appears in the LXX. τὸ ἄγιον τῶν ἁγίων (and variants) occurs eleven times referring to the inner compartment of the sanctuary.<sup>11</sup> Seven of these are of the order cited above (i.e. singular/plural) and four are plural/plural. All of them are translations of קִנְיֵי הַקִּדְשִׁים. "Ἄγια Ἄγιων in Heb 9: 3 is an example of this use and refers to the inner compartment. Although it appears in the LXX more frequently in the articular form (eight such uses), this is not sufficient reason to eliminate the anarthrous example in Hebrews from this category. It appears that the author of Hebrews had a specific reason for omitting the article.<sup>12</sup>

The construction with τόπος is found 16 times in the LXX, all of which are singular.<sup>13</sup> It does not appear in Hebrews but is found in the NT at Mt 24: 15; Acts 16:13; 21:28. In all of its LXX appearances it refers to the sanctuary in general. All three of the NT uses could also be understood in this same way. Acts 21: 28 is particularly significant in that τὸν ἄγιον τόπον τοῦτον is parallel to ἱερόν. The use of this construction in both the LXX and the NT supports the thesis that τὰ ἄγια primarily refers to the sanctuary in general.

The use of ἄγιος in non-biblical sources reveals that the meaning "sanctuary" or "temple" was quite widespread. In the Ptolemaic period τὸ ἄγιον was used for "temple" in the Canopus inscription of Ptolemy III (239 B.C.).<sup>14</sup> Both Philo<sup>15</sup> and Josephus<sup>16</sup> also used it in this sense. Schlatter points out

<sup>11</sup> Ex 26: 34; 1 Ki 6: 16; 7: 36; 8: 6; 1 Chr 6: 49; 2 Chr 3: 8, 10; 4: 22; 5: 7; Eze 41: 4; Dan 9: 24. In addition there are two uses, the meanings of which are debatable: Lev 16: 33; Num 18: 10.

<sup>12</sup> See *infra*, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Ex 29: 31; Lev 6: 9 (MT 6: 16), 19 (MT 26); 8: 31; 10: 13, 17, 18; 14: 13; 16: 24; 24: 9; Ps 23: 3 (MT 24: 3); 67: 6 (MT 68: 5); Ec 8: 10; Is 60: 13; 2 Mac 2: 18; 8: 17.

<sup>14</sup> W. Dittenberger, ed., *Orientes Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig, 1903-1905), No. 56, line 59. See also U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, I (Berlin, 1922), No. 119, line 12 (156 B.C.).

<sup>15</sup> *Legum Allegoriae*, iii. 125.

<sup>16</sup> Josephus used it both of the Jerusalem temple (*Ant.*, iii. 6.4), of the inner compartment (*Bell.*, i. 7.6), and of the sanctuary with the forecourt and walls of the temple (*Bell.*, iv. 3.10; vi. 2.1; *Ant.*, xii. 10.6).

that Josephus used it sparingly in this sense probably because it would have sounded strange in the ears of Greeks who were used to hearing *ἱερόν*.<sup>17</sup> Procksch<sup>18</sup> agrees with Flasher<sup>19</sup> that τὸ ἄγιον and τὰ ἄγια were introduced into the LXX to avoid using *ἱερόν* which had heathen connotations.

Only three of the uses of τὰ ἄγια in Hebrews are anarthrous. Of these, Heb 9: 24 is qualified by the accompanying *χειροποίητα* so that it has the value of being definite, even though not articular. The remaining 9: 2 ("Ἀγια) and 9: 3 ("Ἀγια Ἀγίων) both refer to specific parts of the sanctuary (the outer and inner compartments respectively), as is clearly indicated by the context. Was the author trying to make a distinction between these two (by leaving them anarthrous) and the other uses in Hebrews thus indicating that these two alone referred to specific parts of the sanctuary? Was this a device employed deliberately, to show a difference between the two groups?<sup>20</sup> If this is the case, it constitutes further evidence

<sup>17</sup> A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart, 1929), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Otto Procksch in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, 1964), I, 95.

<sup>19</sup> M. Flasher in *ZAW*, XXXII (1929), 245, n. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 245 noted that "the anarthrous form ["Ἀγια in 9: 2] in this sense appears to be unique." He also connected it with "Ἀγια Ἀγίων in 9: 3. However, he felt that it fixed attention on the character of the sanctuary. Helmut Koester's puzzlement concerning the use of "Ἀγια here ("Outside the Camp": Hebrews 13: 9-14," *HTHR*, LV (1962), 309, n. 34) is solved by the above suggestion. His statement that "in all other places the simple "Ἀγια is the technical term for the 'inner tent'" does not take into consideration the peculiarly anarthrous nature of the expression at 9: 2, nor does it account for the use of this word at 9: 1, 24. His explanation of 9: 2, in terms of dependence upon a "Vorlage" in the description of the tabernacle, is quite unsatisfactory. Koester himself seems to prefer the suggestion of J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, 1924), p. 113, that the words *ἥτις λέγεται Ἀγια* of 9: 2 would have been in a better position immediately after *ἡ πρώτη*. From this, Koester takes the next step to suggest that the words are a marginal gloss "which later came into the text, that is at a wrong place." It is true that there is some textual confusion at this point, but none of the readings suggests a different position for this clause. It

that τὰ ἅγια in Hebrews (apart from 9: 2, 3) should be regarded as referring to the sanctuary as a whole.

The general conclusion reached from the study of the LXX use of τὰ ἅγια and the comparison with the use in Hebrews is that this expression refers basically to the sanctuary in general. The question remaining to be answered is the question of translation. How should it be translated in Hebrews? Should it be left in translation with the emphasis on the basic meaning and thus be translated "sanctuary" each time (as by Goodspeed and Knox)? Or should it be interpreted in the light of its context and the theology of the passage, and translated according to that specific part of the sanctuary which seems to be in the mind of the writer? It is the contention of the present writer that the basic meaning of the word should be uppermost in the mind of the translator and, provided it makes sense in the context, should be used for the translation.<sup>21</sup> Thus "sanctuary" would be the translation throughout Hebrews except at 9: 2, 3. It is then the work of the commentator, on the basis of his study of the context and the theology of the passage, to decide what specific part (if any) of the sanctuary was in the mind of the writer.

8: 2 τῶν ἁγίων here refers to the heavenly sanctuary as a whole. This is supported by the exegetical statement that follows, καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς.<sup>22</sup> σκηνή is used quite

should also be pointed out that, while there are readings for articles before both "ἅγια of 9: 2 and "ἅγια ἁγίων of 9: 3, the evidence is not strong for either.

<sup>21</sup> The general principle as applied to the question of ambiguity in translation is discussed by the following: Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (Leiden, 1961), pp. 63, 69; Theophile J. Meek, "Old Testament Translation Principles," *JBL*, LXXXI (1962), 143-145; F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible: A History of Translations* (London, 1961), p. 222.

<sup>22</sup> Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, 234, "Mais il désigne nettement le temple dans ix, 8, 12; x, 19; xiii, 11, et il est fréquemment l'équivalent de ἱερόν dans les LXX (cf. Lévi. v, 15; 1 Mac. iv, 36; xiv, 15). De fait, il est parallèle ici à τῆς σκηνῆς." It is worth noting that Philo uses the exact phrase (*Leg. Alleg.* iii. 46), λειτουργός τῶν ἁγίων, of Aaron. He uses it, however, in the sense of "holy things."

regularly in the LXX for both **הקל** and **מִשְׁכָּן** representing the tabernacle as a whole. While it is argued by Koester<sup>23</sup> and Hewitt<sup>24</sup> that the author is speaking here of two separate things, their position is not strongly supported. In view of the evidence already presented from the LXX of the use of **τὰ ἄγια**, it would appear that the primary meaning here is the sanctuary as a whole, not the inner compartment (the basis of the arguments of Koester and Hewitt). Moffatt strongly supports this conclusion.<sup>25</sup>

In the larger context of the author's argument the emphasis is here being placed on the *existence* of the heavenly sanctuary. Just as Israel had its place of worship and high priest, so (says the *auctor*) Christianity, on a grander scale, has the same. In the words of Moule, "sanctuary and sacrifice are ours."<sup>26</sup> Now it is true, both that the reference in the context is to the high priestly function (8: 1, 3), and that the unique function of the high priest was concerned with the inner compartment of the sanctuary. Thus, while "sanctuary" must rightly be regarded as the translation of **τῶν ἁγίων**, on a secondary level, at least, the author may be considered to have had a specific part of the sanctuary in view.

9: 1 Coming as it does, at the beginning of a detailed description of the parts and functions of the earthly sanctuary, **τὸ ἄγιον κοσμητόν** obviously is a reference to the sanctuary in general and should be translated accordingly. As Bruce points

<sup>23</sup> Koester, *loc. cit.*, "This is not a hendiadys, but expresses that Christ's office includes both the service in the sanctuary of heaven itself (**τὰ ἄγια**) and the entering by passing through the heavenly regions (**ἡ σκηνή**) = the ascension!"

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Hewitt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, 1960), p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 104, "But the writer uses **τὰ ἄγια** elsewhere (9<sup>st</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 13<sup>th</sup>) of 'the sanctuary', a rendering favoured by the context. By **τὰ ἄγια** he means, as often in the LXX, the sanctuary in general, without any reference to the distinction<sub>1</sub> (cp. 9<sup>st</sup>)<sub>1</sub> between the outer and the inner shrine."

<sup>26</sup> C. F. D. Moule, "Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament," *JThS*, N. S., I (1950), 37.

out, the author bases his description on "the wilderness tent described in the book of Exodus . . . the sanctuary of the old covenant."<sup>27</sup> Westcott emphasizes that it gives naturally "the general notion of the sanctuary without regard to its different parts."<sup>28</sup> The singular τὸ ἅγιον is not found elsewhere in Hebrews; however, it is found quite frequently in the LXX.<sup>29</sup>

9: 2 Provided the reading Ἄγια is correct (τὰ Ἄγια B sa), this use is unique. The significance of this has already been discussed.<sup>30</sup> Montefiore notes that the anarthrous form is unparalleled in Hebrews but fails to see any significance in it.<sup>31</sup> Unaccountably (unless there is a printing error, or he is following the *Textus Receptus*), he identifies the word as ἅγια and then discusses whether it is neuter plural or feminine singular. He decides in favour of feminine and considers that it is an adjectival use qualifying σκηνή. However, it would appear rather to be a neuter form and a substantival use referring to the outer compartment (ἡ πρώτη σκηνή) of the sanctuary. The contents of the room as described in the verse support this.

9: 3 This is the most straightforward of the uses of τὰ ἅγια in Hebrews. The form Ἄγια Ἀγίων (both neuter plural) is equivalent to the Hebrew superlative מִשְׁקִינִי מִשְׁקִינִי ("Holiest") and thus refers to the inner compartment of the sanctuary.<sup>32</sup> Like 9: 2, the expression in this verse is anarthrous,<sup>33</sup> and like

<sup>27</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1964), p. 182.

<sup>28</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 244. See also Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 248 ("il désigne ici l'ensemble de ce lieu saint sans distinction de l'une ou l'autre de ses parties").

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Ex. 36: 3; Lev 4: 6; 10: 18; Num 3: 47; Ps 62: 3 (MT 63: 2); Eze 45: 18; Dan 8: 11, etc.

<sup>30</sup> *Supra*, p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, 1964), p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> P<sup>46</sup> has ἅγια here and ἅγια ἁγίων in 9: 2. This appears to be the result of some primitive disturbance of the text.

<sup>33</sup> X<sup>c</sup> B D<sup>e</sup> K L read τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων. This could be an assimilation to the LXX use of this phrase which is always articular.

9: 2, it refers to a specific part of the sanctuary. This, of course, is confirmed by the context (9: 4) which describes the contents of this compartment.

9: 8 Again, the basic meaning of τὰ ἄγια must be considered foremost in translating, so that "sanctuary," as given by Goodspeed, Knox, *RSV*, and *NEB*, is correct. The comprehensive meaning which includes both the outer and inner compartments of the sanctuary explains the use of ἡ πρώτη σκηνὴ.<sup>34</sup> The sanctuary here described is the heavenly sanctuary of which the inner compartment of the earthly sanctuary is symbolic.<sup>35</sup>

The means of access to the heavenly sanctuary was historically not available as long as the outer compartment had standing or retained its status.<sup>36</sup> This outer compartment represents the customary limit of access to God in the experience of Israel. Westcott's comment is pertinent, "the outer sanctuary [*i.e.*, compartment] was the representative symbol of the whole Tabernacle as the place of service."<sup>37</sup> When the earthly sanctuary fulfilled its purpose at the death of Christ, the means of access was historically provided into the heavenly sanctuary.

9: 12 The translations of the *KJV*, *ERV*, and *ASV* ("the holy place") and of Moffatt ("the Holy place") and the *RSV* ("the Holy Place") are definitely misleading. The characteristic service of the Day of Atonement here referred to (cf. vs. 7), was located in the inner compartment of the earthly sanctuary. However, inasmuch as the high priest had to pass through the outer compartment, it could be said that he "employed" (cf.

<sup>34</sup> ἡ πρώτη σκηνὴ (as in 9: 2, 6) refers to the outer compartment. See Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>35</sup> Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>36</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 192, n. 48, "It is not necessarily implied that the earthly sanctuary, as a material structure, no longer existed; what is implied is that, with Christ's passing 'through the heavens' (Ch. 4: 14) into the presence of God, the earthly structure has lost its sanctuary status."

<sup>37</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

vs. 11 διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειότερας σκηναῖς) the whole sanctuary in this service. "Whereas Aaron and his successors went into the earthly holy of holies on the Day of Atonement . . . Christ has entered the heavenly sanctuary."<sup>38</sup> It is suggested, then, that τὰ ἅγια once more be rendered "sanctuary," referring to the heavenly sanctuary.

9: 24 If in 9: 12 τὰ ἅγια is to be translated "sanctuary," clearly it should be the same in 9: 24, for the same locale is described. It is not a specific part of the heavenly sanctuary that is in the mind of the author, as is evident from his adversative phrase ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν. Commentators are almost unanimous in considering this use of ἅγια a reference to the heavenly sanctuary in general.<sup>39</sup>

9: 25 As in 9: 12, the translation "Holy Place" (and variants) is misleading. The reference in the context of the Day of Atonement service of the earthly high priest is not to the outer compartment of the sanctuary. His characteristic service on that day was carried on in the inner compartment. However, once more, because the whole sanctuary is involved in these services, "sanctuary" is to be preferred as the translation, thus emphasizing the basic meaning of the expression. This leaves with the commentator the task of pointing out that the inner compartment was the place where the significance of that day resided.<sup>40</sup>

10: 19 Unquestionably, the context (vs. 20) indicates that the author here is referring to the Christian's privilege of free access into the very presence of God, access which was denied both the worshipper and the ordinary priest in the earthly

<sup>38</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 200. See also Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>39</sup> See Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 160; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 220; Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 267; Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 271; F. W. Farrar, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge, 1888), p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> F. D. Nichol (ed.), *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, 1957), VII, 456, "Ta hagia may, in this context, be regarded as referring particularly to the most holy place, or in a general sense to the sanctuary as a whole, as in ch. 8: 2."

sanctuary. But again it is recommended that the translation of τῶν ἁγίων be left as "sanctuary," allowing the reader or commentator, on the basis of the literary and theological context, to draw his conclusions as to what part of the sanctuary is particularly in the mind of the author.

13: 11 Although Westcott allows that this verse may apply to other than the Day of Atonement ritual,<sup>41</sup> it is likely in view of Chapter 9 particularly, that the author has this day in mind. From Lev 16: 27 (cf. vs. 2) it is possible to discover that on the Day of Atonement the blood of the sacrificial animal was carried into the inner compartment of the sanctuary. Thus this part of the sanctuary was in the mind of the author. But the LXX use of τὰ ἅγια and the manner in which it has been used in Hebrews would lead us to render it once more in the neutral sense, "sanctuary."

<sup>41</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 440.