

by faith (vv. 37-38). If they endure they will grasp the promise: again we find the directness of second person verbs, ἔχετε ... κομίσηθε (v. 36). Surely they will not fall back and perish, but will press on in the faith that can save their souls. The chapter ends on a note of assurance and confidence, with first-person forms, ἡμεῖς ... ἐσμὲν (v. 39). Having pressed the readers confidently into the path of faith, not only by the substance but also by the rhetoric of his argument, the author goes on to outline the nature, cost and effects of faith more fully in chapter 11.

VIII. Conclusion

This essay has suggested that the verb κρινεῖν in Hebrews 10:30 means ‘vindicate’ or ‘judge in favour of’, rather than ‘condemn’ or ‘judge against’. There are four arguments.

First, this verb can mean ‘vindicate’ and often does have a positive flavour in the LXX. The author of Hebrews would be able to recognise this.

Secondly, the writer to the Hebrews adopts Deuteronomy, in such a way as to make its message contemporary for his own readers. In addition the situation depicted in Deuteronomy 32 matches that addressed in Hebrews, in the themes of temptation, persecution and (importantly) final vindication.

Thirdly, Deuteronomy 32:35 is used in Romans, in identical text-form to Hebrews 10:30a, referring to God judging those who persecute his people. The same thought may therefore be in view in Hebrews. Furthermore, the similarity of the text-form found in Romans and Hebrews to targumic readings of Deuteronomy 32:35 suggests that the targums to verse 36 may reflect an interpretation that Hebrews too has known and assumed.

Fourthly, the reading ‘vindicate’ fits the context in Hebrews. In particular it gives insight into the author’s persuasive use of first-, second- and third-person forms, to associate the readers implicitly with his hopes and to distance them from his fears.³⁶

³⁶ I am grateful to a Cambridge colleague Dr Arnold Browne, and to the editors of the *Tyndale Bulletin*, for helpful comment on earlier drafts of this material.