

# CAMBRIDGE GREEK TESTAMENT FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

THE EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS

# **C**AMBRIDGE

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# THE EPISTLE TO THE

# **HEBREWS**

Edited by

A. NAIRNE, D.D.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, July, 1917.



# PREFACE.

THANK the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for kind permission to use and quote from Dr Souter's edition of the Revisers' Text of the Greek Testament, and Dr Souter himself for concurring in this permission and for other generous aid: Messrs T. and T. Clark, publishers of The Epistle of Priesthood, for allowing me with their wonted courtesy to extract the "Rhetorical Paraphrase" which had been already printed in that book: the Master of Selwyn College and the Editor of the Church Quarterly Review for free use of an article in that Review: the Fathers of the Society of S. John the Evangelist for placing certain numbers of the Cowley Evangelist at my disposal: Mr G. M. Edwards for criticism and advice especially in questions of Greek scholarship: and Dr St John Parry, the Editor of the series in which this commentary appears, to whose patience judgement and learning I am deeply indebted. Nor is it impertinent, I hope, to express gratitude to all who have been concerned with the printing of this book: under the difficult conditions of a troubled time they have persisted in the endeavour to shape it according to their scholarly tradition.

A. N.

July, 1917.



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# **C**AMBRIDGE

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# INTRODUCTION

Ι

#### PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

The aim of this division of the Introduction is to set forth as plainly as possible the argument and intention of the epistle. For this purpose three summaries are given: (1) an outline sketch of the plan, (2) an enlargement of this in detailed analysis, (3) a very brief rhetorical paraphrase. All three are coloured by the view adopted in this commentary of the circumstances out of which the epistle arose. Their proper place would be at the end of the critical and theological enquiries which recommend that view. But it may make for clearness if the results are shortly stated first.

#### PRELUDE

The epistle is a λόγος παρακλήσεως (xiii. 22): to what does it exhort? To right conduct in an approaching crisis in which the readers must choose whether or no they will be faithful to their Lord. Such faithfulness must rest on a right conception of the Person and work of Christ. Hence Doctrine is interwoven with Exhortation. But i.—x. 18 is mainly doctrinal, x. 19—xiii. mainly practical; though xi. is intermediate, since faith partakes of both doctrine and practice, and is the affection which makes argument convincing. The author would hardly claim to have absolutely proved his doctrine by logical process, but he knows that the proof will be completed for his friends if they will trust their Lord and follow Him where He is leading them now.

The crisis will include persecution, abandonment of ancient forms of ritual, of ties of friendship, even of what seem to be the

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#### INTRODUCTION

claims of honour, and if the right choice is made will result in actual entrance upon the complete Christian state, i.e. entrance into the very presence of God.

Hence it must be shewn that Christ has passed through suffering and death, and, according to the analogy of the ancient ritual, has opened the way to the presence of God, i.e. that He is the one true Priest who through death has offered the eternal sacrifice of life; and withal His Person must be displayed in such a light as to win affection and be a proper object of devoted faith.

All this is summed up in the concluding Collect, xiii. 20, 21.

[If we may suppose the epistle written from a Jewish Christian in Italy to his friends (a family rather than a church) in Palestine, just before the breaking out of the Jewish war with Rome, its significance would seem to be particularly clear. But even though this must be considered unproven, still it will be necessary to recognise as its background an approaching crisis of a very severe character in which the readers will be obliged to make a brave and painful choice.]

Analysis is rendered difficult by the compression of the writer's thought—the style is severe rather than rhetorical; by our want of familiarity with the pre-supposed habits of his readers' minds, which compels a certain amount of filling in; and by his method of interweaving the divisions of his subject, allowing no visible articulations. The larger divisions are: i.—iv. Preparatory; v.—x. 18, Priesthood, subdivided into v.—vii. the High Priest, viii.—x. 18, the Sacrifice; x. 19—xiii. Exhortation, subdivided into two parts by xi., on Faith, which clinches the preceding argument and introduces the final Exhortation.

All through the idea rules that Jesus is the Forerunner. He has entered the presence of God, the heavenly sanctuary; the readers of the epistle have not yet followed Him thither—the crisis, their choice, must first be passed: but they are in an increasingly close relationship to Him as they follow the argument of the epistle. This is made vivid by three illustrations: the ship, vi. 19, 20; the race-course, xii. 1, 2; the sacrifice outside the camp, xiii. 10—16.

The ancient Hebrew idea of sacrifice must be kept in mind,



#### PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE xi

i.e. that the blood sprinkled was a symbol, not of death, but of life set free by death and thus presented to God.

The quotations from the Old Testament are not made arbitrarily, but according to the principle that those who were called Christs (χριστός, anointed) in the Old Testament, whether kings, prophets, priests, or even the people of Israel as a whole, were really Christs, or in The Christ; they represented God to man and man to God. The eternal Son, whom the faithful call The Christ or Christ (as a proper name), took as His inheritance and fulfilled all that was adumbrated in them.

#### SKETCH

### I-IV.-Preparatory to the main theme.

- i.—ii. 4. The Son's inheritance as declared in Old Testament references to Israel's king and people and to the world's Creator,
- ii. 5—18. and as displayed in the glorified humiliation of the earthly life of Jesus.
  - iii.—iv. The unity of man with God through the Christ, whose office Jesus the Son of God has inherited, fulfilling its inherent high-priestly efficacy by His ascension after suffering.

# V—X 18.—Doctrinal theme: the Eternal High Priest.

- V-VII, The Priest: VIII-X 18, His Sacrifice.
  - v. 1—10. The Christ-priest satisfies the conditions of priesthood by His sympathy in suffering and by His appointment according to the order of Melchizedek.
  - v. 11—vi. 20. Argument broken by warning and encouragement, but brought in again by reference in vi. 20 to this order of Melchizedek,
    - vii. which signifies the Priesthood of eternal life.
    - viii. Its sacrifice belongs to the promised New Covenant:
      - ix. is offered once for all in the heavenly sanctuary, and by a true outpouring of blood has been effectual for remission of sins:



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- x. 1—18. effectual indeed for absolute perfecting of worshippers, since it is the personal offering of that free will which is the meeting-point of spiritual beings.
- X 19—XIII.—Exhortation to use the Entrance, thus inaugurated by the High Priest, in the one way—like His own—which is at this very time appointed.
  - x. 19—39. Therefore enter the sanctuary after Jesus, not shrinking from His own painful way. You will not, for yours is the life of faith:
    - xi. the reality of which is proved by history.
    - xii. Endure therefore, even though heaven as well as earth is to be shaken:
  - xiii. 1—17. actually overtaking the Forerunner in what seems on earth to be His ignominious position outside the camp.
    - 18—25. That you may do just this, the writer (who has done it) prays.

## ANALYSIS

#### I-IV.

- i. 1—4. God has spoken in one who is a Son, heir of all: who being eternal and divine has become man, offered sacrifice for sins, and ascended to the right hand of God, taking His inheritance:
- 5—14. which is Manhood joined to Godhead; not the state of the angels, for He has inherited all that was said in the Old Testament of anointed men and of God in manifestation.
- ii. 1—4. Parenthetic exhortation, in which the author shews that he speaks of Him whom the faithful call The Lord.
  - 5—9. The Manhood—its glory in humiliation—is displayed by comparison of the promise of glory for man and the actual life of Jesus on earth.



## PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE xiii

- 10—18. This was the fitting way for their Brother (Old Testament name inherited) to set men free from fear of death, and so by triumph over death and by sympathy to become their High Priest.
- iii. 1—5. This manhood, however, is not merely that of one man among many, as even Moses was, but corresponds to and fulfils the manhood of the anointed representatives of the ancient people (who were called sons by God); as Christ He is head of the whole house and one with its Founder:
  - 6. which house consists of the faithful.
- iii. 7—iv. 14. Exhortation to such faithfulness, which exhortation leads through the quotation from Ps. xcv. to the explanation of three principles in understanding the Old Testament:
  - (a) iii. 7—iv. 2. much is there said which has never been satisfied till these later days;
  - (β) iv. 3—10. the description of heavenly things such as the Rest of God gives the reality which earthly things suggest;
  - (γ) iv. 11—13. sincerity of conscience is necessary for the right reading of God's Word.
  - iv. 14--16. Into this Rest of God Jesus of the Old Testament did not lead the people, but Jesus the Son of God has passed into it, and stands therefore confessed the true High Priest: since the function of the high priest is to provide access to God for the people whom he represents, and Jesus has already been shewn to be the true representative of man. The section ends with exhortation: "Let us draw near."



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### INTRODUCTION

#### V-X 18

#### V-VII

- v. 1—4. As every high priest must be sympathetic and duly appointed:
  - 5-6. so the Christ: for the Christ of the Old Testament, the King of Israel, was divinely addressed not only as Son, but also as Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:
  - 7—10. and the Son of God, who inherited these Old Testament appellations, sufficiently manifested His sympathy by the process of His suffering.
- v. 11—vi. 3. Rebuke; vi. 4—8, Warning; 9—12, Encouragement, followed by
  - vi. 13—20. declaration of the assurance afforded by God's promise, and of the earnest of its fulfilment in Jesus' entrance within the veil.
    - [Illustration: ship outside harbour; anchor touching ground; Captain already ashore.]
    - vii. 1—3. Melchizedek a representation (as sketched in the Old Testament) of the eternal High Priest, the Son of God:
      - 4—10. a greater priest than Aaron:
        such as our Lord has exactly shewn Himself
        to be,
      - 11-14. inasmuch as, being sprung from another tribe than Aaron's, namely the royal tribe of Judah,
      - 15—19. having filled up the ancient sketch by the power of an indissoluble life,
      - 20-22. and having been appointed by the oath of God,
      - 23-25. He ever liveth to make priestly intercession.
      - 26—28. This conclusion is confirmed by our sense of fitness: just such a High Priest were we needing.



#### PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE xv

#### VIII-X 18.

- viii. 1—13. After repeating the chief point of the preceding argument—that we have a High Priest who has entered heaven itself and God's actual presence (1, 2), the author goes on to consider that He must offer a true heavenly sacrifice (3—6), and points out that a new and real Covenant had been promised, the Covenant in fact of which the true High Priest is Mediator (7—12), and that this implies the disappearance of the Old in the New (13).
  - ix. 1-5. Description of the old ritual, which
    - 6—10. provided no real access to God's presence, and was to last only till a time of reformation.
    - 11—14. Description of the new ritual of the true Sanctuary, Victim, and Priest, in which eternal redemption and cleansing of conscience has been provided.
    - 15—17. And as the old ritual, according to the ancient idea of a Covenant,
    - 18-22. involved death by representation:
    - 23—28. so does the new ritual involve suffering, but through suffering the manifestation of abiding life.
  - x. 1—4. The old rule of ritual has a shadow of hope, and repeats a memorial of sins:
    - 5—10. but Jesus Christ, the sacrificing Priest who has passed through earthly life to heavenly, has made a real offering, in which we have been really consecrated, for it is the offering of Himself made of His own free will,
  - 11-14. and needing no repetition, for it is complete;
  - 15—18. and hence the prophetic promise has been fulfilled; remission of sins has taken place; the only barrier is removed.



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### X 19-XIII.

- x. 19—25. Enter then by the way, fresh-slain yet living, the painful way of the flesh of Jesus Christ, into the true sanctuary, not forsaking the appointed methods of worship; the consolations of worship and fellowship are real to those who recognise the unseen power which is carrying on the succession of events to the appointed Day.
  - 26—31. For so it is indeed; we know the truth of things, and there is no other religion to take the place of ours; we dare not despise it.
  - 32—34. Nor will you: your former constancy must be renewed.
  - 35—39. The Day is at hand: He comes, as the ancient warning says; surely the ancient Faith is ours.
  - xi. 1—2. And that there is such a power as Faith is proved
    - by our own intelligent observation of the course of history,
    - **4—39.** and by the witness borne to our forefathers, who ever looked into the unseen and chose the braver course,
      - and now wait for us to realise with them the promise they trusted.
  - xii. 1—3. And they, witnesses themselves to faith's reality and power, are watching us as we strip for our contest.
    - [Illustration: a race-course; the readers of the epistle are stripping to run; at the end of the course they can see Jesus who has run the race before them, and whom, as they run, they will approach.]
    - 4—13. Endure chastisement as being yourselves sons: shrink not even from extreme suffering.
    - 14—17. Live at peace with all if you can; but do not, for the sake of peace, impair your consecration, as Esau, for the sake of ease, sold his birthright.



## PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE xvii

- 18—29. For the coming crisis is supreme: at Sinai Israel could not endure God's voice; but then matters were transacted in the shadowy sphere of earth, now for good or ill you touch the heavenly city: even what seem heavenly realities are to be shaken now, but in the very endurance of this terror we are receiving a Kingdom which cannot be shaken: for this let us with grateful hearts do our priestly service to God who purifies by fire.
- xiii. 1.—3. Exhortation to love of the brethren: 4, honour of marriage; 5—6, contentment:
  - 7—16. holding fast to the traditional order of the society of the faithful by remembering their deceased rulers (7); celebrating the unchanging sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to whom they can actually draw near [here the illustration from the old sacrificial ritual passes from illustration into fact] by going out of the ancient camp and joining in that real, heavenly sacrifice, which from the view of it presented now on earth appears less as a sacrifice than as the offscouring of a sacrifice;
    - 17. and by obeying their present rulers.
  - 18—19. Exhortation to prayer for the writer, followed by
  - 20—21. his prayer for them: that they may be enabled by God who creates peace in the midst of tumult to make the right choice in the approaching crisis,—even as the writer himself has already made his choice, and henceforth acquiesces in the divine purpose—through Jesus the exalted Christ, who passed in an exercise of His will, which is our pattern, through death to the glory of His High Priesthood.
  - 22-25. Farewell and greetings.



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# INTRODUCTION

#### RHETORICAL PARAPHRASE

Son of God, Christ: who is He whom we thus name and who has inherited such great titles from Israel's heroes?

One who seems far lowlier than they. But His glory was revealed in humiliation, and His humiliation was the means of His high-priestly sympathy with men.

For He shared their trials that, priest-like, He might bring them to God.

Think of Him as High Priest and you will never give Him up. Hold fast to Him in your approaching trial and you will know what His priestly salvation really is.

As High Priest: but not in the mechanical line of Aaron. That shadowy ordinance is fading ineffectually away before our eyes. Rather as High Priest in that eternal line of world-wide ancestry and living growth which the Psalmist symbolically named "after the order of Melchizedek."

Jesus, our Lord, standing on the Godward side of all men, and sacrificing His life for love of men, is the evident fulfiller of all that line of loving priestly life which has been throughout all history the visible sacrament of Godhead on earth.

Believe then that He as High Priest has opened the way for you to the presence of God.

The visible shame of Calvary was the sacrament of His entrance into the sanctuary of God's presence on our behalf. It remains for us to make the sacrament our own and to follow Him.

Remember your courage in former trials. Imitate the courageous faith of your forefathers. Follow Jesus your acknowledged Lord in the course He has run before you—do that hard duty which is now specially set before you.

Break old ties. Go forth to Him outside the camp. Enter the city of God.

Following Jesus you shall be united with the Christ.



#### HISTORY OF THE EPISTLE

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#### $\mathbf{II}$

# HISTORY OF THE RECEPTION, CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EPISTLE

§ 1. At Alexandria a tradition of Pauline authorship was criticised by scholars in the second century, but by the fourth century it prevailed and spread over the East: Clement, Origen, Athanasius.

Eusebius in the sixth book of his Ecclesiastical History describes the attitude of the early Church in Alexandria towards the epistle to the Hebrews. It seems to have been accepted as S. Paul's; but the acceptance was criticised. Eusebius quotes from the Hypotyposeis of Clement of Alexandria (c. 200) as follows: ήδη δέ, ως ο μακάριος έλεγε πρεσβύτερος, έπεὶ ο κύριος ἀπόστολος ὧν τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἀπεστάλη πρὸς Ἑβραίους, διὰ μετριότητα δ Παῦλος ως αν είς τὰ έθνη ἀπεσταλμένος, οὐκ έγγράφει έαυτον Εβραίων απόστολον διά τε την προς τον κύριον τιμήν, διά τε τὸ ἐκ περιουσίας καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἐπιστέλλειν, ἐθνῶν κήρυκα ὅντα καὶ ἀπόστολον—" Paul, as the blessed presbyter used to say, did not put his name, as apostle, to this letter, since the Lord, the apostle of Almighty God, had been sent as apostle to the Hebrews. It was a matter of reverence, and because this letter lay outside his commission as apostle to the Gentiles" (H. E. vi. 14). From H. E. v. 11, vi. 13, it is reasonable to suppose that "the blessed presbyter" was Pantaenus, Clement's predecessor in the Catechetical School of Alexandria. He used to explain in this way the difficulty presented by the abrupt opening of the epistle, and the absence of the author's name and title throughout. The explanation was repeated by later writers in cruder language. Pantaenus put it in a careful, scholarly fashion, combining and interpreting iii. 1 (κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς όμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν) with ii. 3 f. and (which is important) those many other allusions in the epistle to the same idea. As Pantaenus put it, in harmony with his interpretation of the whole letter, the explanation was by no means trivial; it deepened the significance of many passages.



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But there were other difficulties to be faced; and one, the peculiar style, was felt by Clement. Eusebius in the same chapter and still referring to the Hypotyposeis writes: καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους δὲ ἐπιστολὴν Παύλου μὲν εἶναι φησί, γεγράφθαι δὲ Έβραίοις Έβραϊκη φωνή, Λουκάν δὲ φιλοτίμως αὐτὴν μεθερμηνεύσαντα έκδοῦναι τοῖς Έλλησιν. ὅθεν τὸν αὐτὸν χρῶτα εὐρίσκεσθαι κατά την έρμηνείαν ταύτης τε της έπιστολης και των πράξεων. μὴ προγεγράφθαι δὲ τὸ Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, εἰκότως Ἑβραίοις γάρ Φησιν επιστέλλων πρόληψιν είληφόσι κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑποπτεύουσιν αὐτόν, συνετῶς πάνυ οὐκ ἐν ἀρχῷ ἀπέστρεψεν αὐτοὺς τὸ ὅνομα We cannot be sure whether Eusebius' φησί, "he says," means that these are Clement's very words or only the general sense of them. Nor is it clear whether Clement is giving his own private judgement or the common opinion of his school. There is not much significance in his habit of quoting from the Greek epistle as Paul's; that would be convenient, and if he held that it was so closely related to Paul he need have had no scruple about doing so. It should be noticed how daringly Pantaenus' explanation of the suppressed name and title is After saying that Paul wrote in Hebrew and Luke translated, whence comes the likeness in style to Acts, Clement goes on to explain that Paul kept back his name because the Hebrews were prejudiced against him, and so "very cleverly he did not repel them at first start by putting his name." The  $\vec{\epsilon} \nu \ \vec{a} \rho \chi \hat{\eta}$ , "at first start," makes us think of a converse piece of modern criticism in Wrede's Das literarisch Rütsel des Hebrüerbriefs, who, denying Pauline authorship, thinks the conclusion a later addition by some one who wished to pass the epistle off as a letter of Paul's. Did Clement mean that the readers would perceive who was writing to them when they reached those intimate and affectionate messages? Probably not. does not appear to have gone beneath the surface in his criticism and perhaps never felt how near he came to impugning the good faith of S. Paul.

Pantaenus criticised simply, yet profoundly; Clement slightly. His successor Origen has the sure touch, far sight, and caution of a real scholar, but is characteristically himself in the way he uses his scholarship; like Pantaenus, he is carried by his reverence near to the heart of the problem. Eusebius has



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preserved two fragments from his Homilies on the Epistle (H. E. -VI. 25): περὶ τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολῆς ἐν ταῖς εἰς αὐτὴν δμιλίαις ταθτα διαλαμβάνει· ότι ό χαρακτήρ της λέξεως της πρός Έβραίους ἐπιγεγραμμένης ἐπιστολῆς οὐκ ἔχει τὸ ἐν λόγῳ ἰδιωτικὸν τοῦ ἀποστόλου, όμολογήσαντος έαυτὸν ἰδιώτην είναι τῷ λόγῳ, τουτέστι τη φράσει, άλλα έστιν ή επιστολή συνθέσει της λέξεως Έλληνικωτέρα, παις ο έπιστάμενος κρίνειν φράσεων διαφορας όμολογήσαι ἄν. πάλιν τε αὖ ὅτι τὰ νοήματα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς θαυμάσιά έστι, καὶ οὐ δεύτερα τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ὁμολογουμένων γραμμάτων, καὶ τοῦτο αν συμφήσαι είναι άληθες πας δ προσέχων τῆ αναγνώσει τούτοις μεθ' έτερα ἐπιφέρει λέγων · ἐγὼ δὲ τη αποστολική. αποφαινόμενος είποιμ' αν ότι τα μεν νοήματα του αποστόλου έστίν, ή δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις ἀπομνημονεύσαντός τινος τὰ ἀποστολικά, καὶ ώσπερεὶ σχολιογραφήσαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου. εί τις οὖν ἐκκλησία ἔχει ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ὡς Παύλου, αὐτὴ εὐδοκιμείτω καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκῆ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ανδρες ως Παύλου αὐτὴν παραδεδώκασι. τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν έπιστολήν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν ή δὲ εἰς ήμᾶς φθάσασα ίστορία ὑπό τινων μὲν λεγόντων ὅτι Κλήμης ὁ γενόμενος ἐπίσκοπος 'Ρωμαίων ἔγραψε τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ὑπό τινων δὲ ὅτι Λουκᾶς δ γράψας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὰς πράξεις. The precise meaning of some phrases here is disputed, but the general sense may be shewn in a paraphrasing translation. "In his sermons on the epistle to the Hebrews Origen thus discusses its authorship and authority. He says that every one capable of distinguishing styles would acknowledge Hebrews to be quite different from the style of S. Paul. S. Paul was as he told the Corinthians (2 Cor. xi. 6) 'rude in speech,' and Hebrews is what may be called good Greek. On the other hand, anyone who read S. Paul's epistles diligently would agree that the theology of this truly wonderful epistle is on the same high canonical level as S. Paul's." adds that "if I were to declare my own opinion I should say that the theology is S. Paul's, but the actual composition of the letter has been entrusted to some one who took notes, like a pupil at his master's lectures, of S. Paul's ideas and then wrote them out in his own way. So then if a church like ours at Alexandria holds the epistle to be S. Paul's, let it not be blamed, even though it connects the document more closely with the apostle than I do: for it really was (as I have just shewn)



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with reason that an elder generation has handed down the letter as simply 'Paul's.' But to speak accurately, S. Paul did not write the letter himself: who did, God only knows, though critical enquiry, so far as it has gone as yet, has suggested Clement, the friend of S. Paul who afterwards became bishop of Rome, or Luke the writer of the Gospel and the Acts, as in some sense the writer of Hebrews."

Origen repeats ό γράψας, ἔγραψεν, ό γράψας, in different senses because he is not sure that his predecessors did not mean more than he did by the word. He witnesses to a tradition of Pauline authorship in the Alexandrian Church without denying or affirming that it may be found in some other churches. He recognises a moderate antiquity for this tradition. He is sure himself that the letter was not composed by S. Paul, but he is also sure that it is worthy to be ranked with S. Paul's writings as a primary source of Christian theology. That being so he is not much interested in the question of authorship; a church may harmlessly quote the letter as Paul's, and he himself used to do so, as we learn from his other writings. In all this he is near to modern criticism. The difference is that he seems to recognise a closer connexion with S. Paul than most modern critics would allow. Yet even this is not absolutely clear. The word νοήματα is vague; the illustration, ωσπερεί σχολιογραφήσαντος... υπό του διδασκάλου, seems to be drawn from the lecture room rather than from the letter-writing clerk; and if so it is at least possible to understand a general dependence on the apostle's theology, rather than a close following of his directions for this particular letter. It is a sad loss that we cannot read his sermons on the epistle in full; but, from their influence, which we dimly trace in Catenae and later commentators, we may imagine that he resembled his successors in this respect also, viz. that he thought more of the broad doctrine of the epistle than of special circumstances which called it forth and gave it a special character of its own.

Alexandria then witnesses to a firm conviction of the canonicity of Hebrews and of its great value; and to a vague tradition of its Pauline authorship, which we only hear of because the competent judges at Alexandria criticised it. On



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the other hand, Alexandria accounted for the later general acceptance of the Pauline authorship; Origen's acquiescence in the habit of quoting the epistle loosely as S. Paul's encouraged its continuance, and it spread abroad. And yet perhaps that encouragement was hardly needed. It was the Alexandrian recognition of canonicity that influenced the future. Origen was great enough to distinguish inspiration from reverence for an apostle's name. Others were less bold. And when the epistle stood firmly established in the Canon of the Eastern Church Pauline authorship became a necessary inference.

# § 2. There is no primitive evidence for such a tradition in the East generally: Irenaeus, Eusebius, Versions.

But this came later. Even in the Eastern Church there is no evidence, outside Alexandria, for any early belief that the epistle was written by S. Paul. Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons in Gaul, but he was by birth a Greek of Asia Minor, and may be considered a witness to the Eastern tradition of the second century. If indeed the fragment published by Pfaff<sup>1</sup> were genuine, we might suspect that Irenaeus did bring a tradition of Pauline authorship with him from Asia Minor, though he afterwards gave this up in deference to the authority of the West. He is represented in this fragment as quoting Heb. xiii. 15, "let us offer up a sacrifice of praise, that is the fruit of the lips," together with Rom. xii. 1, as being both exhortations of S. Paul. It is generally supposed that the fragment is not genuine. But if it were the inference would be uncertain. The Greek runs as follows: καὶ ὁ Παῦλος παρακαλεῖ ἡμᾶς παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ἡμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν, άγίαν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικήν λατρείαν ήμῶν. καὶ πάλιν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως τουτέστι καρπὸν χειλέων (see Bleek, § 28). The καὶ πάλιν, "and again," a loose conjunctive phrase tacking on a condensed quotation illustrative of the quotation from Romans, need not imply that the δ Παῦλος παρακαλεί governs both clauses.

<sup>1</sup> Irenaei fragmenta anecdota, ed. Ch. M. Pfaff: Hag. Comit. 1715.

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less is it a distinct assertion that S. Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews; that kind of popular quotation is allowed to themselves by many of the ancient church writers, who speak differently when they are to give a careful critical opinion. If Irenaeus wrote the words and was understood to refer them definitely to S. Paul, that would contradict what Photius cites from Stephen Gobar, "a tritheist of the sixth century,"  $\ddot{\sigma}\iota$  ' $1\pi\pi\dot{\delta}\lambda\upsilon\tau\sigma$ s kaì  $Ei\rho\eta\nu a\hat{\sigma}\sigma$ s  $\dot{\tau}\dot{\eta}\nu$   $\pi\rho\dot{\sigma}s$  ' $E\beta\rho a\hat{\sigma}\sigma$ s  $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\dot{\sigma}\dot{\eta}\nu$  Ha $\dot{\tau}\dot{\sigma}\dot{\sigma}\sigma$ 0  $\dot{\kappa}\dot{\kappa}\dot{\kappa}\dot{\kappa}\dot{\tau}\nu\sigma$ 0  $\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\nu}a\dot{\tau}\dot{\sigma}\sigma\dot{\tau}\nu$ , unless indeed we fall back on the explanation that Irenaeus had learned this denial, so displeasing to Gobar as well as to Photius, in Gaul or Rome; an unlikely explanation, since Photius tells us in another place that Hippolytus learned this from Irenaeus. But we shall return to Hippolytus presently when we come to the witness of Rome.

Eusebius (H. E. v. 26) uses language of Irenaeus which points in the same direction. He speaks of a book of his "in which he mentions the epistle to the Hebrews and the so-called Wisdom of Solomon, making quotations from them." This is not very conclusive by itself, but it fits in with the rest of the evidence which seems to prove with sufficient clearness that neither in the East nor in the West did Irenaeus hold the epistle to be S. Paul's. Eusebius himself seems to accept the new custom of reckoning it with the Pauline epistles. He does so in the chapter in which he expressly declares what the Canon of Scripture is, H. E. III. 25; for he enters therein, after the Gospels and Acts, "the epistles of Paul," without considering it necessary to say how many there are, and he does not name Hebrews, or any other epistle attributed to S. Paul, among the disputed books which he presently catalogues. But in H. E. vi. 13 he does use this very term "disputed," ἀντιλεγομένων, of Hebrews together with the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Barnabas, Clement, and Jude, and he was of course Moreover in H. E. III. 37, aware of the ancient objections. when he is writing about the epistle of Clement and his mind is thereby brought to consider frankly the problem of authorship, he adopts as his own the Alexandrian mediating explanation: Clement's use of the epistle shews that it was not a new work in his day; hence it has been decided that it should be included in the Pauline list; no doubt Paul communicated



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with the Hebrews in his native language, Luke or Clement (whose epistle resembles Hebrews in style) interpreted his writing.

Such was the reputable opinion of an ecclesiastical scholar just before the Council of Nicaea. At that Council Hebrews was quoted as written by S. Paul, but no discussion of the Canon of Scripture was held (Westcott, Canon, p. 430). It is however from this period that Hebrews does definitely take its place among the Pauline epistles. Athanasius, in his Festal Letter for the year 367, may be held to have declared the settled opinion of the Eastern Church. In this letter he gives a list of the canonical Scriptures, in which, after Acts and the seven Catholic epistles, he enumerates the fourteen epistles of S. Paul, placing Hebrews between the two to the Thessalonians and the Pastorals; these are followed by Philemon, which concludes the list. Possibly the form of expression "that"—not "one"—"to the Hebrews" was intended to stand as a memorial of superseded doubt.

The order is interesting. It is familiar to us to day because Westcott and Hort have adopted it in their Greek Testament from the great uncials & B and also A. The last, Codex Alexandrinus, was probably written in Alexandria. The home of N and B is still disputed. Hort thought they came from Rome; Kenyon inclines to Egypt, but admits "fair evidence of a connexion with the textual school of Caesarea, which does not exclude an actual origin in Egypt, from which the school of Caesarea took its rise<sup>1</sup>." Kirsopp Lake<sup>2</sup> says, "It is hard to realize at first that there seems to be no evidence for this order, with which we are so familiar, before the fourth century. Probably it was part of the textual and critical revision which the New Testament underwent, chiefly, but not exclusively, at the hand of Alexandrian scholars, in the fourth century." He is writing of the arrangement of the Pauline epistles, properly so called. What we, with our eyes fixed upon Hebrews, notice is, that this epistle is thus removed from the position which it elsewhere held among the early epistles<sup>3</sup>, and is placed after

- 1 Textual Criticism of N.T., p. 84 f.
- <sup>2</sup> The earlier Epistles of St Paul, p. 358.
- <sup>3</sup> See Moffatt, Historical N.T., p. 110.

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all those addressed to churches. Here caution appears. If popular Alexandrian usage was the source of the tradition of Pauline authorship, Alexandria was also the place where that tradition was restrained by scholarship. From Alexandria a modified judgement about authorship, and a modified position in the Pauline list, were promulgated to the Eastern Church. The order of our English version, Hebrews last of all, comes to us from the Vulgate. It is found in DEKL, and perhaps in the mass of Greek cursives, but it is really Western, and reflects the never quite forgotten objection to Pauline authorship in the Latin Church.

The Syriac versions may be appealed to for the liturgical practice of the Eastern Church of the Euphrates valley, of which the metropolis was Edessa. But it is not easy to decide with certainty whether this church read Hebrews in its earliest worship. The Peshitta includes Hebrews among the Pauline epistles. But for the gospels we know that the Peshitta is not the primitive form of the version. For the rest of the New Testament we have now no "Old Syriac" to check the Peshitta. Since the Armenian version was made from the "Old Syriac," but revised from the Greek in the fifth century, it too fails to supply clear evidence about the early use of Hebrews in Armenia. This however may be considered. The Armenian version does include Hebrews now. If Hebrews preserves vestiges of an Old Syriac base as the rest of the Pauline epistles do in this version, we do get thereby satisfactory proof that the "Old Syriac" contained this epistle.

What it certainly did not contain, any more than the Egyptian versions did, was the Apocalypse. S. Jerome wrote to Dardanus that whereas the use of the Latins (in his day) was to exclude Hebrews, while the churches of the Greeks excluded the Apocalypse, he followed the authority of the ancient writers and accepted both as canonical. We will consider presently what this testimony precisely signifies. Meanwhile it is enough to note that he somewhat misunderstood the authority of the ancient writers. Speaking roughly we might say that the earlier

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Burkitt, quoting J. A. Robinson, *Enc. Bibl.*, Text and Versions, § 36.



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evidence shows Hebrews received in the East and not in the West, Apocalypse in the West not in the East; that is, each was suspected in that region where it was probably composed. But for Hebrews, at any rate, even this partial acceptance must be qualified. Only at Alexandria in quite early times does anything like a tradition of Pauline authorship appear, and at Alexandria we only know it because it was criticised. Nor does criticism cease in the East even when the "use" becomes fixed. Euthalius (c. 460) still has to defend his "use" against the old obstinate questionings, and it is interesting to find that one of the arguments in his defence is drawn from the false reading in x. 34,  $\tau o is \delta \epsilon \sigma \mu o is \mu o \nu$ , "my bonds." Satisfaction with the Pauline claim grows up side by side with the textual and exegetical blurring of the individual character of the epistle.

# § 3. In Africa Tertullian quotes the epistle as Barnabas', and approves it as excluding second repentance.

In the West meanwhile there is no hint of any one reading Hebrews as S. Paul's. Tertullian at the beginning of the third century writes in the tract de Pudicitia, c. 20: "Disciplina igitur apostolorum proprie quidem instruit ac determinat principaliter sanctitatis omnis erga templum dei antistitem, et ubique de ecclesia eradicantem omne sacrilegium pudicitiae, sine ulla restitutionis mentione. Volo autem ex redundantia alicuius etiam comitis apostolorum testimonium superinducere, idoneum confirmandi de proximo iure disciplinam magistrorum. Extat enim et Barnabae titulus ad Hebraeos, adeo satis auctoritatis viri, ut quem Paulus iuxta se constituerit in abstinentiae tenore: 'aut ego solus et Barnabas non habemus hoc operandi potestatem?' Et utique receptior apud ecclesias epistola Barnabae illo apocrypho Pastore moechorum. Monens itaque discipulos. omissis omnibus initiis, ad perfectionem magis tendere, nec rursus fundamenta poenitentiae iacere ab operibus mortuorum: 'impossibile est enim,' inquit, 'eos, qui semel illuminati sunt et donum caeleste gustaverunt et participarunt spiritum sanctum et verbum dei dulce gustaverunt, occidente iam aevo, cum exciderint, rursus revocari in poenitentiam, refigentes cruci in semet ipsos filium dei et dedecorantes; terra enim, quae bibit



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saepius devenientem in se humorem, et peperit herbam aptam his propter quos et colitur, benedictionem dei consequitur; proferens autem spinas reproba et maledictionis proxima cuius finis in exustionem.' Hoc qui ab apostolis didicit et cum apostolis docuit, numquam moecho et fornicatori secundam poenitentiam promissam ab apostolis norat."

Here Tertullian names Barnabas as author. He seems to have no doubt about this, but it is not therefore certain that he witnesses to the African tradition. Zahn¹ supposes him to have found the epistle so described in a Ms. that came from some Greek Church, and this is the more likely in that the rendering he gives is very different from any form of the Old Latin known to us, and appears to be his own. There is just one piece of evidence for a real tradition behind Tertulian's assertion: in the list of New Testament writings preserved in Codex Claromontanus "Barnabae epist." seems to have meant Hebrews. This would be more significant if, as Tischendorf thought, that Ms. had an African origin, but Souter now gives reasons for tracing it to Sardinia<sup>2</sup>. On the whole it seems probable that there is no more value in the reference preserved by Tertullian to Barnabas than in those of Alexandria to Clement or Luke. Those were the guesses of a literary Church where style was considered; this was the guess of a simpler society which only noticed the subject-matter and argued that the Levite of the New Testament was likely to be the author of the epistle which dealt with priesthood.

What Tertullian does prove is that he had no idea of the epistle being S. Paul's, and that he rather wishes than asserts its canonical authority. He valued it highly, but only because it is faithful to what he believed to have been the primitive apostolic discipline of penitence. He read it and the rest of the New Testament in what till lately would have been thought his own masterful way: but, as will presently appear, one of the latest editors of Hebrews agrees with him that "no second repentance" is the actual doctrine of the epistle. The newest rule of interpretation is the same as that of the African master in the second century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Einleitung in das N.T. vIII. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Journal of Theological Studies, Jan. 1905.



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§ 4. At Rome Clement quotes Hebrews in first century, but says nothing about authorship. Close connexion of his epistle with Hebrews throughout, and possible dependence of both on Roman liturgical use. Clement generalises doctrine of Hebrews.

But not the same as that of the earliest reader known to us, Clement of Rome, the first "doctor" of the Church, whose motto was  $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\epsilon\nu\dot{\eta}s$   $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\epsilon\dot{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\iota a$ , "intense moderation." He puts no straiter limits to repentance than our Lord does in the Gospels, nor does it seem to occur to him that such limits are prescribed in this epistle or in any other part of the New Testament.

For the present however our first business is with Clement as witness to Rome's early knowledge of the epistle, and in particular Rome's knowledge that S. Paul was not the author of it.

The letter sent from the Roman Church to the Corinthian Church, where quarrels had arisen concerning the ministry, bears no writer's name. Early tradition tells us that it was written by Clement, the third bishop of Rome after the apostles, the successor, that is, of Linus and Cletus or Anencletus, and that it was written at the end of the reign of Domitian, about 95 A.D. This fits well with the indications of date afforded by the document itself, which refers to an earlier persecution (i.e. Nero's) and to one which was raging or had but just ceased when it was written. This date corresponds with Clement's position in the episcopal succession, and we may safely accept both name and date, in spite of the critics—some of them acute—who have placed the document either earlier (in the reign of Nero) or later (in the reign of Trajan or of Hadrian).

Clement, then, writing to Corinth about 95 A.D., shews, among other things in his "very adequate letter," much familiarity with the Septuagint; names S. Paul as having written to the Corinthians; "while expressions scattered up and down his own letter recall the language of several of S. Paul's epistles belonging to different epochs and representing different types in his literary career....The influence of S. Peter's First Epistle may be traced in more than one passage....Again



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the writer shews himself conversant with the type of doctrine and modes of expression characteristic of the Epistle of S. James. Just as he co-ordinates the authority of S. Peter and S. Paul, as leaders of the Church, so in like manner he combines the teaching of S. Paul and S. James on the great doctrines of salvation." But also, "It is so largely interspersed with thoughts and expressions from the Epistle to the Hebrews,

that many ancient writers attributed this Canonical epistle to  $Clement^{1,n}$ 

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In ch. 36 something more than interspersion of thoughts and expressions is found. The whole passage must be quoted:

Αυτη ή ώδός, άγαπητοί, έν ή ευρομεν τὸ σωτήριον ήμων Ἰησουν Χριστὸν τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν, τὸν προστάτην καὶ βοηθὸν της ἀσθενείας ήμῶν. διὰ τούτου ἀτενίσωμεν είς τὰ ΰψη τῶν οὐρανῶν · διὰ τούτου ἐνοπτριζόμεθα τὴν ἄμωμον καὶ ὑπερτάτην ὅψιν αὐτοῦ · διὰ τούτου ἢνεώχθησαν ἡμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας · διὰ τούτου ή ἀσύνετος καὶ ἐσκοτωμένη διάνοια ἡμῶν ἀναθάλλει εἰς τὸ θαυμαστόν αὐτοῦ φῶς. διὰ τούτου ἡθέλησεν ὁ δεσπότης τῆς ἀθανάτου γνώσεως ήμας γεύσασθαι· δc ών ἀπαγγαςμα τής μεγαλως νης αγτος τος ο γτω κείσων ές την άγγελων ός ω Διαφορώτερον ὄνομα κεκληρονόμηκεν. γέγραπται γάρ οὔτως· Ὁ ποιῶν τογο ἀγγέλογο αγτογ πνεγματα καὶ τογο λειτογργογο αγτογ πγρόο φλόγα. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ οὕτως εἶπεν ὁ δεσπότης· Υἰός Μογ εἶ τς, εμω τήμερον Γεγεννηκά τε· αἴτηται παρ' ἐΜογ, καὶ Δώτω τοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σογ, καὶ τὴν κατάσχεσίν σογ τὰ πέρατα της της. και πάλιν λέγει πρός αὐτόν. Κάθογ ἐκ ΔεξιῶΝ ΜΟΥ, έως δη θῶ τοὴς ἐχθροής ςογ ἡποποδιον τῶν ποδῶν ςογ. Τίνες οὖν οἱ ἐχθροί; οἱ φαῦλοι καὶ ἀντιτασσόμενοι τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, Part 1., S. Clement of Rome, vol. 1. p. 95 f.