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into criticism an element which has been hitherto ordinarily neglected. The history of a text is only understood by those who know of what both the authors and the copyists are thinking. But to appreciate fully the system suggested in this pamphlet requires more knowledge of mathematics and of the history of mathematics than most students of Christian theology are likely to possess.

The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

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I.

During the past ten years, ever since Wrede published his pamphlet in 1906, it is the literary aspect of this writing which has commanded most attention, the problem of its structure and shape, the question whether it is a treatise or a homily. But the problem of its theology or Christology remains paramount. If this religious aspect has drawn less eager interest than was formerly the case, the reason has been an impatience with the habit of turning metaphors into dogmas, which has been specially rife in the dogmatic use of Hebrews, partly owing to the mistranslations of the Vulgate, partly owing to ignorance of Semitic sacrifice. I propose in this paper to discuss the genesis rather than the exodus of the Christology of Hebrews. But I do not mean to imply that the interests of the one are not at bottom the interests of the other. The doctrinal applications of Hebrews have been sometimes arid and sometimes mischievous, and often both. Still, they have been prompted by a religious interest fundamentally, and this was the interest which led to the original formation of the author's Christology. The more historical criticism has altered our attitude to the biblical proofs of Hebrews, to its bookish arguments and occasionally fantastic Alexandrian exegesis, all the more ought we to realize that the instincts of the writer were larger than any arguments which he adduces in their favour. The tabernacle may be legendary, and the interpretations of the Old Testament no longer tenable, but it was not from these that the composer of this beautiful and strong homily derived his convictions and confession of Jesus.

The clue to the Christology of Hebrews as of any other N.T. writing or group of writings lies in the particular aspect or estimate of the Christian experience which characterizes the writer. By 'Christology' we mean the expression given to thoughts upon the value and significance of Jesus Christ in the world-order, viewed from any standpoint of thought and discipline. The anonymous author of Hebrews is forced to think out this religious value, not by any speculative necessity (although he is more speculative in some respects than Paul) but by the demands of his own original faith in contact with the needs of his readers. Just because his speculations are so daring, we require to start carefully from the axiom that they are speculations in the interests of a religious experience, on which he reflects and for which, by the help of Alexandrian Judaism, he finds a metaphysical and theoretical basis of the Christian position towards God and the world.

To this writer religion is above all the sense and assurance of fellowship with God on the basis of forgiveness. Christianity is the religion which *is* religion as it mediates access to the divine presence and secures the consciousness of God's nearness. Now and then he seems to admit the simpler view of Jesus that such access requires no more than faith: 'he who draws near to God must believe that he exists and that he does reward those who seek him.' But the characteristic idea of his argument is that man's approach to God must be mediated by sacrifice offered on his behalf. He takes a sombre view of life; the stern sense of the moral decisiveness of existence in this world and of the liability to lose heart and ground thrills paragraph after paragraph of his homily. He thoroughly sympathizes with the instinct which underlay the practice of sacrifice in ancient religion, that fellowship with God is not a matter of course, that God is accessible and yet difficult of access, that human nature cannot find its way unaided into his presence, that the pressure

of life may make faith waver, and that the fact of sin, with all the fear and weakness born of sin, presents an obstacle to be surmounted. He quotes the climax of the fortieth psalm, for example—'I come to do thy will, O God'—but not to prove that obedience to God's will means fellowship for men, as if the ethical discipline were enough to secure communion. His point is that this will does require a sacrifice, and such a sacrifice as Jesus alone could offer. 'It is by this will that we are consecrated, because Jesus once for all has offered up his body.' 'Having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, let us draw near. . . . We have confidence to enter the holy Presence in virtue of the blood of Jesus.' It is only on the basis of this sacrifice that fellowship with God can be attained and maintained.

Observe how he reaches this position.

To his mind, trained in the Alexandrian philosophy of religion, the world of absolute reality, the world of ideas and of eternity, stands over against the present world of sense. The latter is merely the shadow and copy of the former. There is an archetypal order of things to which this lower world of ours but dimly corresponds, and in the eternal order alone is there access to God's real presence. From the shadows and unsubstantial shows of the lower world one must somehow enter this higher, inward sanctuary. I say, sanctuary—for to our author the idea of fellowship is fundamentally regarded as worship. He is himself conscious of living in this sphere of the absolute, in the divine presence; but he has not broken into it by some heroic venture of faith, he has been brought into it, or rather it has broken upon him. Christianity is for him the absolute religion of nearness to God and of eternal fellowship in the Spirit, but, unlike Philo, he is conscious of having attained this, not through ecstasy or mystical rapture, but by the person and work of Jesus Christ, who has not only opened up the higher order but inaugurated the way into it. The higher world of bliss is indeed a future world, in the sense that Jesus was to return to earth for his expectant company. Primitive Christianity required this eschatological attitude even from a thinker like the author of Hebrews, though he yields more to it than the Fourth Evangelist. His theme, he tells us, is the world to come, 'of which we speak'; Christ 'is the high priest of the bliss to be' (9^{11}). Still, the Christian has already tasted the powers of the world to come, they have entered his experience in part here and now, since with the ascension of Christ into the upper world the messianic era has dawned and the new covenant between God and man has been set up. Unlike Philo, our author has not allowed his eschatology to be spiritualized away. But it is held along with ideas which hitherto had never been correlated with it, namely, the celestial sanctuary and the high priesthood of Jesus.

Though the philosophical idea of the two worlds did not suggest any idea of a high priest, it is not difficult to understand how the latter conception could be fitted into the former by an early Christian. Mediation between God and man was a cardinal note of the priestly idea. The priest's work, in the ancient world, was in the main to realize a specially close relation to the deity, either on the score of personal achievement or on the ground of race or hereditary position; which carried with it the power of doing for other men, with regard to God, what they were unable to do for themselves. Both of the O.T. sacrifices singled out in Hebrews bear on this point. The sacrifice at the inauguration of the covenant and the high priest's annual offering on the day of atonement dealt with those breaches of the holiness-code which periodically interrupted and impaired the communion between the people and God. Both re-established the right of the people to enjoy his presence. Jesus, for our author, is the great High Priest who represents the people before God in virtue of his self-sacrifice; he is also the mediator who inaugurates the new covenant. Both conceptions bring out the fundamental significance of Christ for his religion, but it is the former which emphasizes the vital relation between Christ and his people. And that is how the author of Hebrews represented to himself what Paul put in his doctrine of vicarious redemption.

How did he come by this remarkable and novel conception of Jesus as a celestial high priest? Was it a flash of inspiration, another note of insight in his restatement of the faith? We may grant that it was, and at the same time repudiate any intention of diminishing that originality when we proceed to ask—what led him to it? After all, the most brilliant flashes depend upon an atmosphere already prepared for them. They are struck out of something.

Now it is not enough to say that the conception

of the high priesthood of Jesus Christ was an amplification of what Paul had already said about the intercession of Christ, nor even that it was the transference to Christ of the Philonic sacerdotal predicates of the Logos, or the result of Bible-reading in the Pentateuch. In the Pentateuch the writer found proofs for what he brought to it. The O.T. illustrations really buttress a conception built on other grounds. What these grounds are, we may perhaps discover by looking in three directions.

(*a*) Once the notion of a heavenly temple became current, it was not difficult for an author like the writer of Hebrews to advance to the allied conception of a heavenly high priest. Like the prophet who wrote the Apocalypse of John, he thinks of heaven in civic, ritual, and even pastoral imagery, but particularly in ritual terms. The origin and moulding of the conception of a celestial sanctuary do not concern us here. We have simply to bear in mind that this idea of a temple and altar in heaven seems to have become widespread in apocalyptic piety during the second century B.C., and that one of the germs of this speculative conception was the Hebrew (originally, I suppose, the Sumerian) legend that the altar and tabernacle of Moses had been copied from pre-existent heavenly patterns. The tabernacle on earth was, as our author puts it, 'a mere outline and shadow of the heavenly—as Moses was divinely instructed, when he was about to execute the building of the tabernacle: See, God said, that you make everything on the pattern shown you on the mountain.'

From this it was a natural development to work out the idea of a priest in the celestial sanctuary, and this is exactly what our author did. When I say 'natural,' I do not intend to disparage his poetical and religious originality. It was not an inevitable development. The Apocalypse of John has no priest in heaven; it does not rise to this view, nor does the earlier Testament of Levi (5), where we have the confession and vision of Levi who has been raised to heaven in order to be consecrated: 'The angel opened to me the gates of heaven, and I saw the holy temple, and upon the throne of glory the Most High. And he said to me, Levi, I have given you the blessings of priesthood till I come and sojourn in the midst of Israel. Then the angel brought me down to earth.' Like Hebrews, this Testament regards the priesthood on earth as only a temporary substitute for the direct presence of God, but unlike Hebrews it has no high priest in heaven: the priesthood is Levi's, not Judah's, and it is exercised on earth.

(*b*) It was the idea of the celestial sanctuary, I believe, which ultimately formed the genesis of the companion idea of the celestial priest in Hebrews. Philo indeed found in his conception of the Logos one principal means of mediating between the cosmos of divine ideas and the material, phenomenal world. In the latter the Logos is inherent as the pervasive Reason or moral principle, enabling men to apprehend the higher world of God; and as such, as superior to the angels, as the son of God and of Wisdom, the Logos is the high priest who intervenes between humanity and the celestial order. But in Hebrews the Logos is in the background, and the divine high priest has a human career on earth. According to Philo, the function of the Jewish high priest was to mediate between God and men; his nature bordered on the divine as well as on the human. We can trace, in his references to this subject, that instinctive need of intercession which breathes through Philo's piety, even though the breath is theosophic rather than spiritual. But in Hebrews, for all the Philonic atmosphere, it is not some heavenly Man who performs the priestly functions needful to bring men into fellowship with God. It is not an angel, as in the speculation of Rabbi Resh Lakish, who assigned the priestly function of intercession to Michael (Chagiga 12*b*: 'Zebul [*i.e.* the fourth of the seven heavens] is that in which is the heavenly Jerusalem and the temple, and an altar is built there, and Michael the great Prince stands and offers upon it an offering'). In Hebrews it is a divine Son, who, in order to qualify for his service, has to become man. Furthermore, Hebrews stands significantly and I think deliberately apart from the beautiful idea of the intercession of departed saints like Jeremiah on behalf of Israel. The entire interests and hopes of men are centred on the function of Jesus Christ.

(*c*) A third source for the conception may be sought in the combination of the messianic and the sacerdotal functions which is reflected in the hundred and tenth psalm. Whether or not this hymn was originally messianic, it was interpreted as such before long. In the Testament of

Reuben (6^8) it is actually applied to Hyrcanus, the Maccabean priest-king, but in the Testament of Levi (18) functions which are messianic in almost everything but name are ascribed to a new priest, with more spiritual insight than even in the hundred and tenth psalm itself. The curious thing is, however, that this priest discharges no sacerdotal functions. The hymn describes his consecration, but contents itself with declaring that sin shall end in his days and that he shall open the gates of Paradise to men. Probably this incidental and occasional fusion of messianic and sacerdotal functions was due to the passing phase of expectation that a messiah would arise from the sacerdotal Maccabees. In any case, it was not widespread. But this third source deserves special attention, since Hebrews goes back to the hundred and tenth psalm for one of its leading proofs of the sacrificial power of Christ—as we shall see.

In the Study.

Orpah.

A Study in Internationalism.

'And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god.'—Ruth $1^{14, 15}$.

Over and above the charm which belongs to the beauty, simplicity, directness, and symmetry of the story of the Book of Ruth, its interest for us lies in the fact that it sets before us the purpose of God, and His own providential working for the fulfilment of that purpose, in such a way as to bring home to us how He is still moving wonderfully for the carrying out of that same purpose in our lives. We see also how side by side with this revelation comes the further revelation that, for its due fulfilment, God asks and waits for human co-operation, and this not only in the actual response which each human will must make to the call of God, but also in the surrender of each human life to further the purpose of God in other lives.

The providence of God, working out His will and purpose, is no blind necessity. He makes an offer to our will, but that will He has made free—free to accept or to reject His offer—and He will never destroy or withdraw the freedom which He has given.

Of one thing we may be certain: the ultimate result of this great gift of freedom must be for good, else God would not have given it; and of this we have a pledge, in that we can see at once that only in this way can we enjoy the privilege of co-operating with God by the free correspondence of our wills with His.

But once more we have to bring ourselves to face the dread alternative. Our privilege is balanced by responsibility. There is the possibility of missing our opportunity, and therefore of failing to let God's purpose be fulfilled in us.

I.

Daughters-in-Law.

1. Orpah is a somewhat disappointing figure in this interesting story. She belongs to the class of persons who turn out differently from what one expects them to do: there is, in fact, a looking-back-from-the-plough note in the music of her life. We have very little information about her past. All we are told is that she was a Moabitess by birth, was married to Chilion, one of Naomi's sons, and had been left a widow.

Next to Ruth, the bereaved Naomi is really the one who touches our sympathies. Naomi's husband had lost his life while seeking a livelihood: he had found a grave where he sought a home. Apparently this 'judgment' fell on him at once, judgment treading on the very heels of offence. Before his sons were married he was taken away from the evil to come. For we can hardly doubt that it would have seemed evil to him that his sons should marry strange women, women of a race of which God had said, 'Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods' (Dt 7^{2-4}). The sin of these