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THE PROBLEM OF  
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.<sup>1</sup>

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**T**HE Epistle appears in our Bibles with the superscription, 'The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews' (A.V. and R.V.). I propose to substitute for this,

'The Epistle of Apollos to the Churches of the Lycus Valley'. The original heading is a guess and so is this, but I hope to show that a number of converging lines of argument make it a fairly probable guess. I take first the external evidence; but before doing that we must ask whether letter is the correct name for the document.

Hebrews has no epistolary beginning (just as the Epistle of James has no ending); but it has an ending which, if genuine, shows that it is a letter and not a sermon. The words, 'I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner' (xiii. 19), show that the author is not present with the recipients of his message.

Further there are indications within the letter that it is not a 'general epistle' addressed to the Church at large. The writer has in view a definite group; this is clear from such passages as xiii. 18 f.; x. 32-34; vi. 10; v. 11-vi. 8, all of which point to a community known intimately, and over a period of time, to the author; one, moreover, in which he has a lively and personal interest.

It is the more curious that there is no introductory matter, and

<sup>1</sup> An amplification of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library, on Wednesday, the 19th of January, 1949.

the possibility must be kept in mind that this has been lost. Such loss might be due to accident or design. Against accident is the fact that the letter seems to begin at the beginning of its argument ; and it seems unlikely that accidental mutilation would have made the cut so neatly. It is possible that the address was suppressed. If it was, there was presumably some reason why. But we have no means of knowing or even making a guess.

The current title, *πρὸς Ἑβραίους*, is not the address : most probably it is a guess. But it must have been made at an early stage since the Epistle is known under this title in all MSS. and versions, and to the Alexandrian school and Tertullian. This means that the title was in use by the end of the second century. The name 'Hebrews' would mean one thing in Palestine and another outside. As the addressees are Christians, it would mean, if the document was sent to Palestine, Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians, natives of the land as opposed to Greek-speaking 'Hellenists', i.e. Christian Jews of the Diaspora. If sent to a community outside Palestine it would naturally mean Christians of Jewish extraction whether Aramaic- or Greek-speaking. Early Fathers mostly preferred the former alternative ; but the latter possibility cannot therefore be excluded. There is no guarantee that the originator of the title held the patristic view ; nor are we bound to follow blindly. Indeed there is nothing to show that the originator of the title did anything but what we must do—make more or less probable inferences from the contents of the Epistle itself.

In Alexandria, so far as we can get back, Hebrews was regarded as an Epistle of Paul. It was certainly so regarded by Clement of Alexandria (Eus., *H.E.*, vi. 14. 2 ff.) and probably also by his teacher Pantaenus (Zahn., *Einl.*, ii. 122 f.). The problem for the Alexandrians was to account for the difference in style between Hebrews and the accepted Pauline Epistles. This was done by supposing, for example, that Paul wrote it in Hebrew or Aramaic and that Luke translated it into Greek. Origen was more fully aware of the difficulty and while he tries to defend the tradition of his own church, he cannot conceal the fact that he is dubious about the Pauline authorship (Eus., *H.E.*, vi. 25. 11-14). He

suggests that the thoughts are Paul's and the expression of them due to a scholar of the Apostles. He thus tacitly abandons Clement's translation theory. He also mentions Clement of Rome and Luke as supposed authors.

On the other hand, whatever may have been the doubts and hesitations of the Christian scholars of Alexandria, there is no doubt that Hebrews was accepted as Pauline in the Egyptian Church and included among the letters to Churches from a very early date. The position of Hebrews in the Canon of the New Testament has been the subject of an elaborate and detailed study by Professor W. H. P. Hatch in the *Harvard Theological Review* (xxix (1936) 133-151) from which it appears that there are three different positions for the Epistle: (i) among the letters to Churches; (ii) after II Thess., i.e. at the end of the letters to Churches; (iii) after Philemon, i.e. at the end of the Pauline corpus. It is of interest to consider the witnesses to these different positions; and we may begin with the third position, after Philemon. It is fairly obvious that in this case Hebrews has been added as an afterthought to a collection already closed; and it is significant that the most important witnesses to this order come from the West (D f and the Latin Vulgate. The Syriac versions, pesh. and hcl., also have this order; but, as Hatch points out, in Syria it replaced an earlier arrangement in which Hebrews followed Romans). Now we know independently that it was in the West that the resistance to accepting Hebrews as Pauline was most determined and prolonged. We should therefore be inclined to suppose that our third position originated in the West and spread from there to Antioch and so to the Syriac-speaking Churches. The second position, after II Thess., has as its leading witnesses the principal authorities for the so-called 'Neutral' or Alexandrian text (ⲛ ABC, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, etc.). Hatch thinks that this arrangement originated in Alexandria when the revision which produced the B ⲛ text took place, probably early in the fourth century.

Older than either of these arrangements is the first order, in which Hebrews is placed among the letters to Churches. The exact position varies: it is after Romans in the Chester Beatty Codex (P<sup>46</sup>), the oldest known MS. of the Pauline corpus, and in

the Syrian Canon of about A.D. 400 ; it is after II Corinthians in the MSS. of the Sahidic version and in the Sahidic translation of the 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius, where Athanasius' order as given in the Greek has been altered to agree with the Sahidic Canon ; it was after Galatians in the archetype of B. The important point here is that the leading witnesses for a place among the major Pauline letters are Egyptian. The evidence of the MSS., versions, and early Fathers all points to the conclusion that full recognition of Hebrews begins in Egypt and spreads from there to Syria and eventually to the West. The earliest Syriac evidence agrees with the Old Egyptian in classing Hebrews with the major Pauline Epistles.

(1) W. Bauer (*Der Apostolos der Syrer*, p. 28) accepts Zahn's demonstration that the original order of books in Ephrem's († 373) commentary on the Paulines was Gal. I and II Cor. Rom. Heb. (Zahn, *NKZ.* xi (1900), 798 f.).

(2) The Syriac Stichometry (Lewis, *Studia Sinaitica.* i. pp. 11-13).

(3) Theodore of Mopsuestia († 428) appears to have had a similar order (*Comm.* on Gal. iv. 24 (Swete I., p. 76) and preface to Philemon, quoted in Swete's note *ibid.*). On Gal. iv. 24 he says 'et hoc in epistola illa quae ad Hebraeos est interpretantes ostendimus euidentiis'. In the preface to Philemon he mentions, 'Epistolae quae ad Rom. et Cor. et Hebraeos.' Theodore's order seems to have been Rom. I and II Cor. Heb. Gal.

(It may be noted that here the position of Heb. is fixed—after II Cor. It is Gal. that is the variable factor. In Ephrem and the Stichometry it stands first in the group of five Epistles ; in Theodore it stands last.)

The Syrian Church entertained no doubt about the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. It is cited as Paul's by Ephrem († 373), Rabbula († 435), Titus of Bostra († c. 375), Apollinarius († c. 390), Diodorus of Tarsus († c. 394), Chrysostom († 407), Theodore of Mopsuestia († 428), Nestorius († c. 440), Theodoret († 458). Proofs are given by Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 ff.

On the other side in the Churches of the West the Epistle was well known from an early date ; it is quoted in I. Clem. But, up to the middle of the fourth century it was not accepted as Pauline

or included in the N.T. canon. Irenaeus<sup>1</sup> and Hippolytus<sup>2</sup> do not seem to have any tradition as to its author.

Tertullian (c. 220) and the author of a treatise wrongly attributed to Origen<sup>3</sup> ascribe Hebrews to Barnabas the apostle.

The result is that between 180-260 there were three prevailing views: (1) Paul (Alexandria), (2) Barnabas (Tert.), (3) An unknown author (Iren. Hipp.). Zahn argues that (3) is the common root of (1) and (2)—in other words that (1) and (2) are guesses: and that the author was really not given in any reliable tradition. Zahn himself adopts (2).

After the middle of the fourth century the Alexandrian—now the Greek—tradition broke down the Western attitude and led to the recognition everywhere of Hebrews as Pauline and a genuine part of the N.T. This is a triumph of Alexandrian guesswork, for the Epistle is surely not by Paul. We must reject the Alexandrian guess, and make a better if we can. In framing our hypothesis we shall have to depend very largely on the evidence supplied by the document itself; and I hope to show that this internal evidence gives reliable indications of the date of the document, of its probable purpose, and of a possible author and destination.

1. *Date.* We have a reasonably well fixed terminus ad quem in the fact that the Epistle is quoted in *I. Clem.* (c. A.D. 96).

On the assumption that the personalia at the end are part of the original document, we can push the date still further back. The statement in xiii. 23 implies that Timothy is still in active missionary work and capable of travelling in the interests of the Gospel. Now Timothy was probably born about A.D. 20-25, so that when *I Clem.* was written he would be, if still alive, about 70-76 years old, a somewhat advanced age for active missionary

<sup>1</sup> On Iren. see C. H. Turner in *N.T.S. Iren.*, 226 f. It seems certain that Irenaeus neither ascribed the Epistle to Paul nor reckoned it in the N.T. canon.

<sup>2</sup> On Hippol. see R. H. Connolly in *JTS*, xlvi. 198 f. That Hippolytus denied the Pauline authorship is expressly stated by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 121. Gaius also rejected the Pauline authorship. See Eus., *H.E.*, vi. 20, who says that even in his (Eusebius') day some Romans denied Heb. to Paul.

<sup>3</sup> This work entitled *Tractatus Origenis de libris SS. Script.*, was published by Batiffol in 1900. It is certainly not by Origen. By some authorities it has been assigned to Novatian or one of his followers. See Zahn, *Einl.*<sup>3</sup>, ii. 118 f., 124; Moffatt, *Introd.*<sup>3</sup>, 437 f.

work. We may, therefore, on the strength of Heb. xiii. 23 push the date back to about 80-85. As we do not know when Timothy died we cannot make any more progress along this line.

We have also a fixed terminus a quo, if we can show, as I think we can, that the author of Hebrews was acquainted with Romans. This would give a date about 55 as the earliest possible.

We are thus left with a period 55-85 as that within which the Epistle must most probably fall. Can we narrow these limits any further? I think that we can if we look carefully at the argument of the Epistle as a whole and particularly at the part of it which is developed in chapters v-x.

### THE ARGUMENT OF THE EPISTLE.

The theme of the Epistle is set out in the opening words. It is an interpretation of the history of Israel in terms of God's purpose, now fully and finally realised in Jesus Christ. For this purpose it is of course assumed that the Church is continuous with the old Israel of the O.T.—a position which the writer shares with St. Paul. In Christ there has been a divine intervention in the fullest sense. The creative, sustaining, and redeeming activity of God has been manifested to the world in the person of Jesus crucified and exalted, and now supreme over every power in the universe (i. 1-4). This supremacy the author now proceeds to demonstrate.

*A. Jesus is superior to the Angels (i. 5-14).* The proof is obtained by taking texts from the O.T. and interpreting them in a Messianic sense, at the same time comparing them with texts referring to angels. It is argued that these groups of texts show that the angels are lower in status than the Messianic Son. Their functions are of an interim, preparatory, and subordinate character (v. 14). In particular they proclaimed the Law which is inferior to the Gospel (ii. 1-4). Furthermore, their authority does not extend into the coming order of existence (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν = אֲבָרָה אֱלֹהִים), where, as may be again shown from Scripture, Christ is supreme (ii. 5-8a). It is true that this supremacy is not yet very obvious; but that is part of the divine plan. The humiliation and suffering of Jesus are there in order that he may carry through his redemptive work (ii. 8b-18).

*B. Jesus is superior to the great historic leaders of Israel.* He is superior to Moses. Proof from Scripture. Moses was a faithful servant. Jesus is the Son (iii. 1-6). Moreover, if we look at the O.T. history, we can see how Jesus is superior to other heroes besides Moses—Joshua and David for example. For the perfect state called in the Bible 'Rest' is a reality from the beginning. It is offered by God to his people. Yet scripture shows that Moses was not able to bring the people into it because of their unbelief, which he could not overcome (iii. 7-19). And it is clear that Joshua succeeded no better, for the promise is still unfulfilled and the invitation still open in the time of David (iv. 1-13). But what they could not achieve has been achieved by Jesus the Son of God, and so made possible for us (iv. 14-16).

This achievement of opening a way of access to God through humiliation and suffering is best understood if we think of Jesus as our great High-priest. That is to say, for our author the supreme good, which is groped after in the O.T. and found in Christianity, is essentially a religious good; and its achievement depends not on bringing it into existence—as though it were not already there where God is — but in removing those obstacles—*ἀπείθεια, ἁμαρτία*, etc.—which hinder men from 'entering into the Rest'. The messianic task is one of atonement—making men at one with God, and therefore the messianic office is priestly. The delineation of Jesus as the supreme High-priest thus occupies the central place in the argument (chaps. v-x). The main thesis is that in this high-priestly office,

*C. Jesus is superior to the High-priests of Judaism* in the nature of his office, in himself, and in the effectiveness of his ministration.

(1) The nature of the office. Called by God from among men to act on behalf of them in divine things (v. 1-10). Thus Aaron was called (v. 4) and thus Christ. The proof that the Christ is called to the high-priestly office is Ps. cx. 4. 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' Jesus in the days of his flesh acted in this office and by his own self-sacrifice became the *αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου*. (Here the author inserts a long piece of exhortation (v. 11-vi. 12) suggesting that if they find his argument

unintelligible, the fault is in themselves, and calling them to new zeal and consecration.)

- (a) This Melchizedek priesthood is connected with another firm promise of God, that to Abraham. (The two hang together and as Paul worked out the one in Galatians so our author will work out the other.) (vi. 13-20.)
- (i) This Melchizedek was contemporary with Abraham and acted as priest for him receiving tithes. He was no ordinary priest but the description in Genesis shows him to have been the prototype of the perfect High-priest to come (vii. 1-3).
- (ii) Abraham recognised his superiority ( $\alpha$ ) by paying tithes to him, ( $\beta$ ) by accepting his blessing (vii. 4-8).
- (iii) In a sense the unborn Levi was subordinate to Melchizedek when Abraham paid the tithes (vii. 9 f.).
- (b) The levitical priesthood on the other hand is connected with the Mosaic Law. They fail and fall together (vii. 11-25).
- (i) If the levitical priesthood were effective what need for the Melchizedek priesthood? With the levitical priesthood goes the Law also (vii. 11 f.).
- (ii) The Law prescribed priests from Levi: Jesus sprang from Judah. So the Law is abrogated (vii. 13-17).
- (iii) And this because the Law had proved weak and ineffective (vii. 18 f.).
- (iv) The true priesthood is confirmed by divine oath. The levitical priesthood lacks this (vii. 20-22).
- (v) The levitical priesthood constantly changes hands. The Melchizedekian priest is 'for ever' (vii. 23-25).
- (2) *Character.* The Law contemplates a high-priest who knows sin. The true high-priest is sinless (vii. 26-28).
- (3) *Effectiveness of ministration.*
- (a) The two priesthoods are connected with the two covenants, the old covenant of Sinai and the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah (ch. viii.).
- (i) The old covenant had its order of worship and its outward furniture of devotion. But all this was merely an earthly copy of the real spiritual thing

as is proved by Moses' being shown the pattern of the Tabernacle when he was on Mt. Sinai (viii. 1-5).

- (ii) Christ introduces a better form of worship corresponding to the new covenant (viii. 6-12).
- (iii) The fact of the new covenant shows that the old is obsolete (viii. 13).
- (b) The purpose of both priesthoods is the same—to make atonement (chs. ix, x.).
  - (i) Hence the culminating point in the old ritual was the annual service of the Day of Atonement. But the very nature of the service showed its insufficiency. Only the High-priest had access to the Holy of Holies. And the ritual had to be constantly repeated. The worshippers were not perfected by the worship, which merely pointed the way to what should one day supersede it (ix. 1-10). Now Christ has come with a better ritual, the sacrifice of himself; and has opened the way into the true Holy of Holies—heaven itself, the very presence of God—for those who by him are cleansed from all the defilement that separates them from God and unfits them to enter into his presence (ix. 11-14).
  - (ii) He is thus the mediator of the new and better covenant (as Moses was of the old). By his death he has delivered men from the transgressions of the old so that they can now receive the promise as heirs of an eternal heritage (ix. 15).
  - (iii) As a sacrifice was necessary under the old regime, so also under the new (ix. 16-22). But whereas the old sacrifice had to be repeated, Christ's one sacrifice is sufficient (ix. 23-28). More than that, the old sacrifices were really ineffective. The blood of bulls could not really cleanse away sins. Jesus comes into the world to offer not animal sacrifices but the oblation of a will wholly devoted to God's will. This is effective and so the new covenant replaces the old (x. 1-18).

*D.* Exhortation to lay hold of this great salvation while there is still time (x. 19-25); and to sin no more lest a worse thing befall them (x. 26-31). Let their own former enthusiasm spur them on

to new efforts (x. 32-39). The whole secret of the religious life is that it is a life of faith—that trust in God which expresses itself in obedience to his will and hope of the fulfilment of his promises. This faith is exemplified in the saints and heroes of Israel who carried on bravely in their own day of partial fulfilment, though they could not receive the whole promise then, because God's plan was more comprehensive and included us also (ch. xi.). That plan has now been completed in Jesus and it is for us to follow their example and his footsteps. If that means loss and suffering, interpret these trials as the fatherly discipline that proves you to be the sons of God (xii. 1-13). Cultivate the Christian virtues and do not despise your heritage (xii. 14-17). It is something far greater than the old covenant for which the old heroes suffered so much (xii. 18-19). Cherish kindness, purity, unselfishness, contentment. God is with you: what more do you need? (xiii. 1-6). Follow Christ even if it means obloquy and being outcast (xiii. 7-17).

Greetings and blessings and personal messages (xiii. 18-25).

We have seen that Hebrews was probably written between 55 and 85. That period is divided about the middle by the great catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem. On which side of that event does Hebrews lie? It is—as has often been pointed out—precarious to argue from the present tenses in descriptions of Jewish ritual that they imply that the Temple is still standing. For (a) the same phenomenon occurs in the Mishnah (c. A.D. 200) and in Josephus<sup>1</sup>; and (b) the author of Hebrews argues from the arrangements of the Tabernacle, not of Herod's Temple. But while this is so, there is a further and weighty argument which we can now adduce. As we have seen the whole point of the argument of Heb. v.-x. is that the levitical priesthood with all its ritual has now been superseded by the Melchizedekian High-priesthood of Christ. To support this proposition our author brings forward all kinds of arguments and performs the most amazing feats of exegesis. Surely the clinching argument would have been this: 'That God has no further use for the old priesthood and ritual is conclusively shown by the fact that he has permitted the Temple to be destroyed and its services to be

<sup>1</sup> See Thackeray, *Josephus, the Man and the Historian*, 99.

brought to an end'. It is difficult to see how the writer, who shows such ingenuity in drawing support for his thesis from the most unlikely places, could have missed this argument, if it were there to be used. That he does not use it I take to be a strong indication that he was writing before A.D. 70, quite possibly before the outbreak of the Jewish revolt in 66. This consideration narrows down the period of writing to 55-70.

That, I think, is as far as we can go in fixing the date with any degree of certainty. In what follows I shall bring in some other factors and attempt to be more precise; but I must admit that this further construction is, and probably must remain, no more than a moderately attractive hypothesis. Any nearer determination of the date depends on bringing in considerations of authorship and destination. I will deal first with the question of destination.

2. *Destination.* I suggest that the Epistle was written to the Churches of the Lycus Valley, two of which, Colossae and Laodiceae, we know by name in the Pauline letters.<sup>1</sup> The main reason for thinking this is that the conditions implied in our document seem to answer to the conditions in those Churches at some time during the period 55-70, i.e. during the period in which I think the letter must have been written. We have independent evidence concerning those conditions in Paul's letter to the Colossians. The trouble in the Lycus Valley Churches is thus summarised by Bishop Lightfoot in his *Commentary on Colossians*, p. 71.<sup>2</sup>

' 1. A mere glance at the Epistle suffices to detect the presence of *Judaism* in the teaching which the Apostle combats. The observance of Sabbaths and new moons is decisive in this respect. The distinction of meats and drinks points in the same direction (ii. 16 ff.). Even the enforcement of the initiatory rite of Judaism may be inferred from the contrast implied in St. Paul's recommendation of the spiritual circumcision (ii. 11).

<sup>1</sup> On the Lycus Valley and its Churches see Lightfoot, *Colossians and Philemon*, 1-70; W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 1-121; A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 73-76.

<sup>2</sup> For a very full recent discussion of the 'Colossian heresy' see Ernst Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser und Epheserbriefe*, 137-178.

'2. On the other hand a closer examination of its language shows that these Judaic features do not exhaust the portraiture of the heresy or heresies against which the Epistle is directed. We discern an element of theosophic speculation, which is alien to the spirit of Judaism proper. We are confronted with a shadowy mysticism, which loses itself in the contemplation of the unseen world. We discover a tendency to interpose certain spiritual agencies, intermediate beings between God and man, as the instruments of communication and the objects of worship (ii. 4, 8, 18, 23).' Lightfoot makes two main points : a hankering after Jewish religious observances and a doctrine of intermediaries between God and man.

Now the central argument of Hebrews (v.-x.) is just that the whole Jewish ritual system is superseded by the High-priestly work of Christ. That is, the central argument of Hebrews is a complete answer to the first main point in the Colossian heresy.

More than that, the argument of Heb. i.-iv. is concerned to prove the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ as against all other intermediaries. The Epistle begins with the argument that Christ is superior to the angels (i.-ii.). There the proof is obtained by taking texts from the O.T. and interpreting them in a messianic sense, at the same time comparing them with texts referring to angels. The comparison always works out to the disadvantage of the angels : they regularly come out with a lower status than the Messianic Son. Their functions are of an interim, preparatory, and subordinate character (i. 14). In particular they proclaimed the Law, which is inferior to the Gospel (ii. 1-4). Furthermore their authority does not extend into the coming order of existence, where, as can be shown from Scripture, Christ is supreme (ii. 5-8).

Similarly Christ is superior to the other great intermediary Moses (iii. 1-6) ; and to anybody else you like to name. In effect the author says to his readers, ' You seek mystical communion with God and contemplation of the unseen world ? The Old Testament itself shows that neither angels nor men can give it (iii. 7-iv. 16). No being, heavenly or earthly, can give you what you are seeking except Christ.'

Thus Heb. i.-iv. is a detailed answer to the second main point

in the Colossian heresy ; and so Heb. i.-x. is a complete refutation of the Colossian heresy as that heresy is described by Lightfoot.

One minor point of agreement between Hebrews and Colossians may be added. Lightfoot draws attention to the distinction of meats and drinks as pointing to the Judaising character of the Colossian heresy. In Col. ii. 16 the Apostle exhorts his readers not to let any man judge them in matters of meat and drink, and in verses 20 ff. he protests against their subjecting themselves to ordinances which say ' Handle not, nor taste, nor touch ', with reference to goods which exist to be used and used up. Heb. xiii. 9 reads : ' Do not be carried away by varied and novel doctrines ; for the good thing is to have one's heart strengthened by grace, not by foods wherein those who walked had no benefit '. That is, we already know all about a dietary discipline that was of no real advantage to those who submitted to it. The reference in both Hebrews and Colossians may well be the same whether we take the dietary restrictions to be Jewish food laws or pagan mystical asceticism.

I therefore think that the Epistle to the Hebrews may have been sent to the Churches of the Lycus Valley to meet the same peril as is combated by Paul's to the Colossians.

3. *Author.* By whom was it sent ? I conjecture Apollos for the following reasons : (1) He has the qualifications for writing a letter of this sort.

Our knowledge of Apollos depends on :

- (a) Primary authority : the mentions by Paul in I Cor. i. 12 ; iii. 4, 5, 6, 22 ; iv. 6 ; xvi. 12. To these add Tit. iii. 13— if, as P. N. Harrison argues (*Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, 115-118), Tit. iii. 12-15 is a genuine note written by Paul to Titus between the ' severe letter ' and II Cor. while Titus was at Corinth.
- (b) The narrative in Acts xviii. 24-28, and the mention in Acts xix. 1.

'Απολλῶς (shortened form of 'Απολλώνιος) probably was an Alexandrian Jew. Acts xviii. 24 describes him as ἀνὴρ λόγιος . . . δυνατὸς ὦν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς. Λόγιος may mean either *learned* or *eloquent*. Phrynichus, the Atticist, says that *learned* is the proper sense of the word ;

from which J. H. Moulton inferred that *eloquent* was what Luke meant by it. *Δυνατὸς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*—mighty in the Scriptures, can, of course, only mean at this period the O.T. In the N.T. the phrase *δυνατὸς ἐν* is peculiar to Luke. (Lk. xxiv. 19, *δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ*—of Jesus; Acts vii. 22, *δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις καὶ ἔργοις αὐτοῦ*—of Moses; and the present passage). LXX parallels are Judith xi. 8, *δυνατὸς ἐν ἐπιστήμῃ*; Ps. xxiii. (xxiv.) 8, *δ. ἐν πολέμῳ*; Eccles. xxi. 7, *δ. ἐν γλώσση*; and *Ps. Sol.* xvii. 42, *δ. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*. In *Sotah* 14a R. Simlai (c. 250) calls Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob 'mighty in knowledge of Torah and in the fulfilment of the Commandments' (*עצומים בתורה ובמצות*)—the reference being to Is. liii. 12 where *עצום* is rendered in LXX by *ἰσχυρός*. Parallels from profane Greek writers in Wettstein *ad* Lk. xxiv. 19. It is clear that Luke means us to gather that Apollos had a masterly knowledge of the O.T. It may be conjectured that he was also a skilled exegete after the Alexandrian manner of Philo on the Jewish side and Origen later on the Christian. The allegorical method was characteristic of Alexandrian exegesis. Acts further states that Apollos was *κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ Κυρίου*. On *κατηχημένος* cf. Cadbury, in *Beg. Chr.*, ii., 508 f. The word implies *oral* instruction or information. It is a question whether *τοῦ Κυρίου* here means 'Jehovah' or 'Jesus'. Probably the latter in contrast to *δυνατὸς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*. Apollos knew the essence of Judaism from book-study and he had learned something about Christ and the Gospel orally. It may be conjectured that *τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ Κυρίου* here means the way of life set forth in the teaching and by the example of Jesus: roughly, the 'Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount'. With this goes the statement that he knew only the baptism of John, i.e. a baptism of repentance as a prelude to this new way of life. He further knew and could recount *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, i.e. the main outlines of the story of Jesus. For

what Luke understood by this phrase see Luke xxiv. 19 ff. It is to be noted that all this, even backed by the spiritual fervour of Apollos, was not regarded as a *Gospel*. What Apollos was preaching when Priscilla and Aquila found him was still not the Gospel. He knew Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth, colleague and successor to John the Baptist, and with John leader of a prophetic and spiritual revival within Judaism. The something more, that made Apollos into a Christian missionary instead of a Jewish revivalist, was communicated by Priscilla and Aquila; and Luke describes it by saying that they took him in hand and ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ὁδόν (J. H. Ropes om. τοῦ θεοῦ). We can only conjecture what is implied in this; but it is a fairly safe guess that it is what is given in v. 28, εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. In other words what Apollos' previous preaching had been meant to lead up to, and prepare the Jews for, is now seen by him to be something already accomplished. The Kingdom has come; the Messiah has appeared. Jesus is not another forerunner like John preparing the people for the coming Messiah and his Kingdom. He is the Messiah: and the Kingdom has come in him and his followers. In place of a Johannine repentance-baptism in preparation for a future Kingdom we have the Christian rite of incorporation into a present Kingdom.

With this new message Apollos went from Ephesus to Corinth bearing a letter of introduction to the community there; and began to work among the Jews, using his O.T. scholarship as a means to convince them of the truth of his new faith (xix. 27 f.). Some of the terms used by Luke to describe the work of Apollos are of special interest. Συμβάλετο. This word is peculiar to the Lucan writings (Ev. 3; Ac. 4) in the N.T. its meanings are:

Act. lit. 'throw together', and hence:—

(a) To discuss, confer, arrange a matter.

(b) To meet with, fall in with.

Middle. To make a contribution, help, assist.

(See the exx. in Moulton and Milligan, *Voc.* s.v.)

διὰ τῆς χάριτος. Should this be taken with *πεπιστευκόσιν* or with *συνεβάλετο*? For (1) cf. Ac. xv. 11. *διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι*. For (2) cf. Ac. iv. 33; vi. 8 and Luke ii. 40, 52; iv. 22. As a rule if Luke means the grace of God or Christ, he says so explicitly. Therefore we are justified in taking the second alternative and regarding *χάρις* in this case as a certain quality about Apollos, a spiritual gift possessed by him, through which he was able to be of real help to the Corinthian Christians.

*διακατηλέγχετο*. He not only beat them in argument—he completely floored them. And he made a regular business of it (*εὐτόνως*); and he did it publicly (*δημοσίᾳ*). Apollos ought to be the patron saint of the Christian evidence societies; the father of apologetics.

Such vigour and eloquence doubtless had their effect in two ways: (a) by strengthening the conviction of some who were already members of the Church; and (b) by securing the conversion of others, perhaps from Judaism. The result would be a section of the Corinthian community who could own Apollos as their father (or step-father) in the Gospel. Here doubtless we have the Apollos party at Corinth: simply the people who had been either converted by him or who being already Church members had fallen under the spell of his personality and his eloquence.

- (2) He has the local connexion and interest. In Acts he makes his first appearance at Ephesus.
- (3) Hebrews shows great familiarity with the characteristic thoughts and expressions of Paul as we find them in Corinthians and Romans. And the period when Corinthians and Romans were written was the time when Apollos was in close touch with Paul.
- (4) The attitude on second repentance in Hebrews might be traced back to the austere teaching of John the Baptist.

And now I really launch out into the deep.

What is the relation between Hebrews and Colossians? Here I make very tentative suggestions.

I suggest that Hebrews is prior to Colossians, and reconstruct the story in this way.

Apollos has an interest in the Churches of Ephesus and the neighbourhood. News is brought to him possibly at Corinth about the new departures in the Lycus Valley. This letter is his attempt to counter the new teaching by showing the sufficiency and finality of Christ.

When the news about the Colossian heresy was later conveyed to Paul at Rome, a copy of Hebrews was sent along with the news. This would account for several facts.

- (a) The fact that Hebrews is known at a very early date in Rome, and is *known not to be by Paul*.
- (b) That it is known to Irenaeus ; but its authorship is not known.
- (c) That it is known to Tertullian, and supposed by him to be the work of Barnabas. I should think that (b) and (c) arise out of (a).
- (d) It would account for the somewhat advanced Christology of Colossians. We assume a general and dominant Pauline influence perhaps too readily, and sometimes overlook the possibility that Paul may have been influenced by others. May it not be the case that Paul in Colossians has been influenced by Heb. i.-iv ?
- (e) It would account for the belief in Egypt that Hebrews was Pauline. For the first collections of the Pauline corpus were made in Asia Minor and—if Harnack is right—Corinth. An important letter like Hebrews attached to such a collection, and having nothing to show its authorship, would naturally be reckoned in with the rest.