

# Types in Hebrews

by Robert Anderson

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*The sermon explores the authorship and theological significance of the book of Hebrews, emphasizing the importance of the covenant people and typology in understanding God's revelation.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 8:1

**Topics:** "Hebrews Authorship", "Christ's Priesthood"

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## Description

Robert Anderson preaches about the authorship controversy of the book of Hebrews, discussing the claims of different authors like Luke, Barnabas, and Apollos, but ultimately pointing to the absence of concrete evidence. The sermon delves into the suspicion the Roman Church had towards Hebrews due to its emphasis on the covenant people, contrasting with the ecclesiastical pretensions of the church. It highlights the importance of surrendering to God, acknowledging the divine revelation through Christ, and the need to understand the Old Testament Scriptures to grasp the significance of Christ's work as the Great High Priest.

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## Transcript

TYPES IN HEBREWS

CHAPTER 1

AUTHORSHIP

THE authorship of Hebrews has been a subject of controversy during all the centuries. Was it written by the Apostle whose name it bears in our English Bibles. Or does the honour rest with Luke the Evangelist? The claims of Barnabas and Apollos, and also of Clement of Rome, are championed by writers of eminence. There is a venerable tradition that the Epistle was written in Hebrew by the Apostle, and that our Greek version is the work of the Evangelist. And our only difficulty in accepting that tradition is the absence of evidence to support it.

As for the other companions of the Apostle, their claims rest on mere conjecture; there is not a scintilla of evidence to connect them with the book. And the question at issue is purely one of evidence. It must be settled on the principles which govern the decisions of our Courts of Justice. As therefore the evidence which points to Luke as the writer is unquestionably inferior to that available in support of the Pauline authorship, the controversy might be closed at once were it not for certain difficulties suggested by the

language and contents of the Epistle.

It has literary characteristics, we are told, different from those which mark the well-known writings of the Apostle. "The Judaism of the Epistle is that of the Hebrew prophets," and not of the Pharisees. And lastly, the writer takes his place among those who received the revelation of the Messiah immediately through "them that heard Him," whereas the Apostle Paul maintained with emphasis that he received the gospel immediately from the Lord Himself. This is held to be a "fatal" objection to the Pauline authorship.

But, as every one who has had much experience in dealing with evidence is aware, a solution may often be found of difficulties and objections which at first seem "fatal"; and the sequel will show perhaps that the Hebrews controversy is a case in point. The difficulties suggested by the language of the book shall be considered later. Even from the earliest times the Roman Church has viewed Hebrews with suspicion. And the reason for this is not doubtful. It is amply accounted for by the fact that the Epistle gives such prominence to the covenant people, and that its teaching is utterly incompatible with the proud ecclesiastical pretensions which, even from the days of the Fathers, that church has championed.

The following extract from Dr. Hatch's Bampton Lectures may explain my meaning: "In the years of transition from the ancient to the modern world, when all civilized society seemed to be disintegrated, the confederation of the Christian churches, by the very fact of its existence upon the old imperial lines, was not only the most powerful, but the only powerful organization in the civilized world. It was so vast and powerful, that it seemed to be, and there were few to question its being, the visible realization of that Kingdom of God which our Lord Himself had preached, of that 'Church' which He had purchased with His own blood...This confederation was the 'city of God'; this and no other was the 'Holy Catholic Church.'" The error denounced in these eloquent words betrays ignorance not only of Christian truth, but of what may be described as the ground-plan of the Biblical revelation as a whole.

And yet the beliefs even of spiritual Christians are leavened by it. In laying the foundation stone of a great building it is a common practice to bury documents relating to the scheme and purpose of the edifice. And concealed in the Hebrews foundations of the self-styled "Holy Catholic Church" (how different is the meaning given to these words by the Reformers!) is the flagrant falsehood that God has finally cast away the people of the covenant. To the history and hopes and destiny of that people it is that, on its human side, the Bible mainly and primarily relates; and yet the only notice accorded to them by the two great rival branches of the apostasy of Christendom must be sought in the records of the fiendish persecutions of which they have been the victims.

That the professing Church on earth is "the true vine" - this is the daring and impious lie of the apostasy. That it is "the olive tree" is a delusion shared by the mass of Christians in the churches of the Reformation. But the teaching of Scripture is explicit, that Christ Himself is the vine, and Israel the olive. For "God hath NOT cast away His people whom He foreknew." Most true it is that they have been temporarily set aside. Some of the natural branches of the olive tree have been broken off, and wild olive branches have been engrafted in their place.

But the tree remains, and the tree is Israel.<sup>1</sup> But the very same Scripture which records this, declares explicitly that the wild branches which, "contrary to nature," "partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree," are liable to be themselves "broken off," and then the natural branches will be again restored. While, therefore, the apostate Church claims to be the realization of God's supreme purpose for earth, the intelligent student of Scripture knows that even in its pristine purity the "Gentile Church" was an abnormal,

episodical, temporary provision; and that the divine purpose for this age is to gather out the true and heavenly Church, the body of Christ; and then, dismissing the earthly church to its predicted doom, to restore to their normal position of privilege and blessing that chosen people to whom belong the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh. (Romans 4:4-5) That these inspired words of the apostle are no mere reference to a past economy, but a statement of abiding truth, is made definitely clear by the sequel ending with the words: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Romans 11:29)<sup>2</sup> And it is truth which may help not only to a right understanding of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but incidentally to the solution of the problem of its authorship. 7

## CHAPTER 2

### OTHER TESTIMONY

"GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets...spake unto us in His Son." Does the "us" here refer to us Christians of the Gentile dispensation? The question is not whether the Epistle has a voice for us; "Every student of Hebrews must feel that it deals in a peculiar degree with the thoughts and trials of our own time,"<sup>1</sup> but what was the meaning which they to whom it was primarily addressed were intended to put upon the words. The opening verses are an undivided sentence; and as "the fathers" were Israel, we may assume with confidence that the "us" must be similarly construed.

There was no "us" in the Apostle Paul's references to the revelation with which he was entrusted as Apostle to the Gentiles. "My Gospel" he calls it. And again, "that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles." It was the precious charge, "the good deposit" (Timothy 2:1-4)<sup>2</sup> which, in view of his passing from his labours to his rest, he very specially committed to his most trusted fellow-worker. But much as he "magnified his office" as Apostle to the Gentiles, he never forgot, and never ceased to boast, that he was an Israelite.

And he had a special ministry to the covenant people. To them it was that he first addressed himself in every place he visited throughout the whole circuit of his recorded labours.<sup>3</sup> Even in Rome, although his relations with the Christians there were so close and so tender, his first care was to call together "the chief of the Jews." And, assuming the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, the book was the work, not of "the Apostle to the Gentiles," but of Paul the Messianic witness to Israel - "our beloved brother Paul," as "the Apostle to the Circumcision" designates him with reference (ex hypothesi) to this very Epistle.

This lends a special significance to the tense of the verbs in the opening sentence. "God, having spoken to the fathers in the prophets, spake to us in the Son." In the one case as in the other the reference is to a past and completed revelation. It is not the distinctively Christian revelation which was still in course of promulgation in the Epistles to Gentile churches, but the revelation of the Messiah in His earthly ministry - that ministry in respect of which He Himself declared "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

For, as the inspired Apostle wrote, "Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy." (Romans 15:8-9) Promises for Israel, but mercy for those who were "strangers to the covenants of promise." (Ephesians 2:12) These words may remind us of the distinction already noticed between the Judaism of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the Judaism of the Pharisees. Using the word "religion" in its classical acceptance, the religion of the Pentateuch is the only divine religion the world has ever known; for in that

sense Christianity is not a religion, but a revelation and a faith.

The little company of spiritual Israelites who became the first disciples of Christ accepted Him because He was the realization and fulfillment of that divine religion. But the religion of the nominal Jew was as false as is the religion of the nominal Christian. And while "the Jews' religion," which rejected Christ, is denounced in the Apostle Paul's ministry toward Judaisers, the divine religion which pointed to Christ is unfolded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "That gospel which I preach among the Gentiles."

These words are usually read with a false emphasis. It is not "the gospel which I preach,"<sup>4</sup> as contrasted with the preaching of the other Apostles, but "the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles," as contrasted with his own preaching to Israel. And the contrast will be clear to any one who will compare his epistles to Gentile churches with his sermon to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts 13:16-41) There was not a word in that sermon which might not have been spoken by any Jew who had embraced the faith of Christ at or after Pentecost.

It is based entirely on the history, and the promises and hopes, of Israel, and upon the coming and work of Christ as recorded in the Gospels - the salvation, as Hebrews expresses it, "confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." Writing as an Israelite to Israelites, the words of (Hebrews 2:2) are just what we should expect from the Apostle Paul. They are the precise counterpart of his words recorded in (Acts 13:26-33). And if the one passage be proof that he could not have been the author of Hebrews, the other is equal proof that he could not have been the preacher at Antioch.<sup>5</sup> We thus see that what appeared to be a fatal bar to the Pauline authorship of Hebrews admits of a solution which is both simple and adequate.

And we can understand why the Apostle did not declare himself in the opening words, according to his usual practice. For the writer, I again repeat, was not "the Apostle to the Gentiles," but Paul "of the stock of Israel," "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." To describe the book as "anonymous" is a sheer blunder; for the concluding chapter gives the clearest proof that the writer was well known to those whom he was addressing. Due weight has never been given to this fact in estimating the value of the general testimony of the Greek Fathers that the writer was the Apostle Paul.

To attribute equal value to the statements of certain Latin Fathers of a later date betrays ignorance of the science of evidence. The testimony of the earlier Fathers, moreover, is confirmed in the most striking way by the explicit statement of 2 Peter 2:3-15, that Paul did in fact write an Epistle to Hebrews. And if this be not that Epistle, what and where can it be? But this is not all. Writers without number have noticed the striking fact that the book is a treatise rather than an epistle.

This is met, however, by pointing to the strictly epistolary character of the closing chapter. But may not the twenty-second verse of that chapter afford the solution of this seeming paradox? "Bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written unto you in few words."<sup>6</sup> Apart, from the authorship controversy no one would venture to suggest that this could refer to the book as a whole. Even in these days of typewriters, such an ending to a letter of some 8000 words would be worthy of a silly schoolgirl!

To common men the suggestion will seem reasonable that Chap. 13 is "a covering letter," written to accompany the treatise. And if that letter stood alone no one but a professional skeptic would question that it emanated from the Apostle Paul. For, in every word of it, as Delitzsch so truly says, "we seem to hear St. Paul himself and no one else." Unless therefore such a conclusion is barred on the grounds already indicated, the presumption is irresistible that the author of the letter was the author of the book:.

And if the solution here offered of the doctrinal peculiarities of Hebrews be deemed adequate, the whole question becomes narrowed to a single issue. It is an issue, moreover, which cannot be left to the decision of Greek scholars as such. For even if they were agreed, which they are not, we should insist on its being considered on more general grounds. Will any student of literature maintain that so great a master of the literary art as the Apostle Paul might not, in penning a treatise such as Hebrews, display peculiarities and elegancies of style which do not appear in his epistolary writings?

Some people might object that this remark ignores the divine inspiration of the Epistle, which is the one question of essential importance, the question of the human authorship being entirely subordinate. But if the objector's estimate of inspiration be of that kind which eliminates the element of human authorship, *cadit quæstio*. If, on the other hand, that element be recognized, it is easy to conjecture circumstances which would account for any peculiarities of style. Here, however, I should repeat, scholars differ.

The following is the testimony of one of our most eminent Greek scholars: "After a study of the Greek language as diligent, and an acquaintance with its writers of every age, as extensive probably as any person at least of my own country now living, I must maintain my decided opinion that the Greek is, except as regards the structure of sentences, not so decidedly superior to the Greek of St. Paul as to make it even improbable that the Epistle was written by him."<sup>7</sup> Any one who is accustomed to deal with the evidence of witnesses would here consider whether circumstances may not have existed to account for "the structure of sentences" in the Epistle, and for the occasional use of words not found in the Apostle's other writings.

Let us suppose, for example, that Hebrews was written with "the beloved physician" by his side, either in "his own hired house" during his Roman imprisonment, (Acts 28:30) or in the house of some Italian Christian after his release, may he not have accepted literary suggestions from his companion? No "theory of inspiration" is adequate which does not assume Divine guidance in the very terminology of Scripture. But God makes use of means. When he fed Elijah, He used the birds of the air.

And when the Lord fed the multitudes, He did not "command the stones to become bread," as the Devil suggested in the Temptation, but utilized the disciples' little store, utterly insignificant though it was. And no devout mind need refuse the suggestion that as the Apostle read (or possibly dictated) Hebrews to his companion, the Evangelist would suggest that this sentence or that might be made more forcible by transposing its clauses, or that some other word would more fitly express the Apostle's meaning than that which he had employed.

It is, as Bengel declares, "with the general consent of antiquity" that the authorship of Hebrews is attributed to the Apostle Paul. And the only other witness I will here call is another eminent German expositor, whose great erudition is but one element in his competence to deal with this question. Franz Delitzsch's words are always weighty; but the value of his testimony to the Pauline authorship is all the greater because he ranks with those by whom the Epistle is attributed to the Evangelist.

In the introduction to his Commentary he writes as follows: - "We seem at first to have a treatise before us, but the special hortatory references interwoven with the most discursive and dogmatic portions of the work soon show us that it is really a kind of sermon addressed to some particular and well-known auditory; while at the close the homiletic form (the Paraclesis) changes into that of an epistle (Ch. 13:22). The epistle has no apostolic name attached to it, while it produces throughout the impression of the presence of the original and creative force of the apostolic spirit.

And if written by an Apostle, who could have been its author but St. Paul? True, till towards the end it does not make the impression upon us of being of his authorship; its form is not Pauline, and the thoughts, though never un-Pauline, yet often go beyond the Pauline type of doctrine as made known to us in the other epistles, and even where this is not the case they seem to be peculiarly placed and applied; but towards the close, when the epistle takes the epistolary form, we seem to hear St. Paul himself, and no one else.<sup>8</sup>

## CHAPTER 3

### HEBREWS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

"GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by diverse portions and in diverse manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son."<sup>1</sup> Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews opens by declaring the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. It is not merely that they were written by holy and gifted men, but that they are a divine revelation. God spoke in the prophets. And the mention of "prophets" must not lead us to limit the reference to what we call "the prophetic Scriptures."

Both in Hebrew and in Greek the term used is wide enough to include all the "diverse manners" in which God spoke to men - not only by prophecy (as the term is commonly understood), but by promise, law, exhortation, warning, type, parable, history. And always through individual men specially chosen and accredited. Through them it was that the revelation came. The highest privilege of "the Jewish Church" was its being entrusted with these "oracles of God"; for not even in its darkest days did that church pretend to be itself the oracle.

But the Christian apostasy is marked by a depth of blindness and profanity of which the Jew was incapable. To understand this Epistle we need to be familiar with the language in which it is written. And it is the language of that "divine kindergarten" - the typology of the Pentateuch. The precise point in Israel's typical history at which the Epistle opens is the 24th chapter of Exodus; and this gives us the key to its scope and purpose. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, but more than this, they had fallen under Egypt's doom.

For the death sentence was not upon the Egyptians only, but upon all the inhabitants Of the land.<sup>2</sup> But God not only provided a redemption, He also delivered His people from the House of Bondage. They were redeemed in Egypt by the blood of the Passover, and they were brought out of Egypt "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm." (Deuteronomy 26:8) And standing on the wilderness shore of the sea, they saw the waters closing over their enemies, and raised their triumph song to their Saviour God? (Exodus 15) But not even deliverance from both the guilt and the slavery of sin can give either title or fitness to draw near to a holy God.

And at Sinai His care was lest the people, although thus redeemed, should approach the mountain on which He was about to display His glory. (Exodus 19:21) The twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus emphasizes this still more strongly; for there we read that even Aaron and the elders were excluded. Moses alone might come near. And Moses' right of access was due to his being a type of Christ, as mediator of the covenant. The record then recounts the dedication of the covenant. The blood of the covenant sacrifices was sprinkled, on the people - the elders presumably representing the whole congregation of Israel - and then we read, Aaron and the elders ascended the mountain along with Moses.

But yesterday it would have been death to them to "break through to gaze." But now "they saw God." And such was their "boldness," due to the blood of the covenant, that "they did eat and drink" in the divine presence. The man of the world will ask, How could "the blood of calves and goats" make any difference in their fitness to approach God? And the answer is, just in the same way that a few pieces of paper may raise a pauper from poverty to wealth. The bank-note paper is intrinsically worthless, but it represents gold in the coffers of the Bank of England.

Just as valueless was that "blood of slain beasts," but it represented "the precious blood of Christ." And just as in a single day the banknotes may raise the recipient from pauperism to affluence, so that blood availed to constitute the Israelites a holy people in covenant with God. What was the next step in the typical story of redemption? By the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant Israel was sanctified; and then, to the very people who were warned against daring to draw near to God, the command was given, "Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8) Moses, the mediator of the covenant, having thus made purification of the sins of the people, went up to God.

This was the type, the shadow, of which we have in Hebrews the fulfillment, the reality; for when the Son of God "had made purification of sins" "by the blood of the everlasting covenant," he went up to God, and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:3; cf. 13:20) Here, then, it is that Hebrews takes up the story of redemption. Not at the twelfth chapter of Exodus, but at the twenty-fourth. The Passover has no place in the doctrine of the Epistle. Its purpose is to teach how sinners, redeemed from both the penalty and the bondage of sin, and brought into covenant relationship with God, can be kept on their wilderness way as "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling." (Chap. 3:1) Such a great redemption implies a great Redeemer; and His divine glory is the theme of the opening section of the book.

A superstitious assent to the dogma of His Deity is so common in Christendom that we need to be reminded that a real heart belief of that supreme truth is the mark of divine spiritual enlightenment. And we utterly fail to realize the depth of meaning, the almost dramatic force, which the Old Testament Scriptures here cited would have with a godly Jew. Let any one read a Jewish commentary on the forty-fifth Psalm, for example, and then try to gauge the thoughts of a Hebrew saint on learning that the words of the sixth verse of that Psalm are divinely addressed to Him whom the nation called the crucified blasphemer!

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Every element of prejudice and superstition which leads a nominal Christian to accept this would make the true Hebrew realize his need of divine grace to enable him to assent to it and to grasp its meaning. And yet the great truth which is thus enforced by quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures is implicitly asserted in the opening sentence of the Epistle. "God spake to us in His Son." To a Gentile this may have but little meaning - how little may be judged by the Revisers' marginal note;<sup>3</sup> for we are accustomed to hear that we are all sons of God, and that "Jesus is our elder brother."

But the Lord's claim to be Son of God was rightly understood by the Jews to be an explicit claim to Deity; and because of it they decreed His death.<sup>4</sup> And that claim is stated here with new emphasis. Our English idiom will not permit of our reproducing precisely the words of the text, and yet we can appreciate their vivid and telling force: "To us God spake in SON." The Hebrews Scriptures are divine, for they were given through men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," but the words of Christ have a still higher dignity, for He Himself is God.

But to some this truth that He is God may seem to create an impassable gulf between the redeemed and the Redeemer. For we are but men -- weak and sinful men, who need not only mercy and help, but sympathy. But there is no such gulf. For though He is "the effulgence of the glory (of God) and the very image of His substance," and upholds all things by the word of His power, He came down to earth, to take part of flesh and blood, to live as a man among men, and to die a shameful death at the hands of men.

And having thus been "made perfect through suffering," He has become "a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God."<sup>5</sup> And yet we must not overlook the special setting in which this wonderful truth is here revealed. The Apostle Paul was divinely commissioned to unfold the great characteristic truths of Christianity - "grace, salvation-bringing to all men," and Christ "a ransom for all." But they must have a strange conception of what inspiration means, who can cavil because these truths have no place in Hebrews.

For here we have to do, not with the children of Adam, but with "the children of Abraham," who is the father of all believers. Nor are we told how lost sinners can be saved, but how saved sinners on their way to rest can be "made perfect in every good work to do His will." The glorious truth of the love of God to a lost world must not be limited by the teaching of Hebrews, neither must the truth revealed in Hebrews be frittered away by ignoring its special meaning. In a sense the Lord has taken up the seed of Adam, but not in the sense in which, Hebrews tells us, "He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham."

For though God loves the world, He loves His own the best; and "the children" in Hebrews are not the Adamic race, but the children of the promise, the children of God. And these, and these alone, it is that the Lord here calls His brethren.<sup>6</sup> Many a Scripture may be studied in the market place, but we must withdraw from the market place to the sanctuary if we are to join in the worship, or profit by the teaching, of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRIESTHOOD

"WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." It was the divine intention that the offices of Apostle and High-priest in Israel should be united; but, yielding to the entreaties of Moses, God permitted Aaron to share the ministry. (Exodus 4:14) Save for this, however, the type had its exact fulfillment. For not until the mediator of the covenant had "made purification of sins," and had gone up the mount to God, was Aaron appointed high-priest; and not until the Son of God had completed the work of redemption, and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, was He called (Hebrews 5:10)<sup>1</sup> of God High-priest after the order of Melchisedek.

It is not that the Lord then entered upon high-priestly functions of a new character, but that, while on earth (as the Apostle expressly declares), (Chap. 8:4 R.V.)<sup>2</sup> "He would not be a priest at all." And on earth it was that His sacrificial work in redemption was accomplished. That work, therefore, must have been complete before He entered on His High-priestly office. Repetition may be pardoned here, for our minds are leavened by the pagan conception of priesthood which prevails in Christendom, by which these vital truths of Christianity are secretly undermined or openly denied.

By the blood of the paschal lamb the Israelites were redeemed in Egypt, in all the hopelessness and degradation of their doom and their bondage. They were then delivered out of Egypt, and permitted to see

the destruction of the power that had enslaved them. And finally, by the blood of the covenant, they became a holy people, and gained the right to approach their Jehovah God. And all this before Aaron was appointed to the priestly office. "Now these things happened unto them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition." (1 Corinthians 10:11) God saves the sinner in his sins, as he is and where he is; He saves him also from his sins, and teaches him that sin has no longer the power to enslave him.

Not only so, but the sinner is sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and accorded the right of access to God. (Hebrews 10:29) And all this, both in the type and the antitype, without the intervention of priesthood. The priest was appointed in Israel to maintain the people in the enjoyment of the blessings thus secured to them by redemption. And his duties were of such a character that the humblest Israelite could have discharged them, had not God decreed that none but sons of Aaron should hold the office.

In contradistinction to all this, the pagan priest bars approach to the shrine, and claims to be endowed with mystical powers which enable him to dispense to his dupes the benefits his god is willing to bestow. And the so-called Christian priest, not being a son of Aaron, must of course be of the pagan order; and he naturally displays that veritable hall-mark of paganism, a claim to mystical powers. "A Christian priest!" Save in respect of the spiritual priesthood of all the "holy brethren," a man might as well call himself a Christian infidel,<sup>3</sup> for the whole position denies the perfectness and sufficiency both of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ before His ascension, and of His atoning work in heaven for His people now.

As Bishop Lightfoot declares, "The only priests under the Gospel are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood."<sup>4</sup> That the priesthood of Christ could not be Aaronic, the Apostle impresses on the Jewish mind by pointing to the fact that "our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." And the truth in question is made "still more evident," he adds, by the fact that the Lord's priesthood was divinely declared to be of the order of Melchisedek.

That Melchisedek was type of the Messiah the Jews themselves admitted; and his priesthood had to do, not with offering sacrifices for sins, but with ministering blessing and succour and sustenance. And with the Jew no further proof of his transcendent greatness was needed than the fact that "even the Patriarch Abraham" paid him homage, giving him "tithes of the chief spoils." (Chapter 7:4). The language used of him is full of mystery. "Priest of the most high God" - a title of the Supreme as Lord of heaven and earth - "king of righteousness"; "king of peace"; "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God." (Chapter 7:2, 3.)

Whatever meaning may be placed upon these words with reference to the type, it is certain that their application to Christ is meant to teach that it is as Son of God that He is High-priest. This truth rings out loud and clear at the end of chapter 4, which tells us that we have "a great High-priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son God." And then at the beginning of Chap. 5, by way of "tacit comparison with Christ, the divine High-priest," the Apostle goes on to speak of priests "taken from among men."<sup>5</sup> And yet the Revisers have adopted a rendering; of the opening words of chapter 5, which make them seem to the English reader to contradict; the clear and emphatic teaching of the Epistle.

The Apostle's statement is explicit, that "Every high-priest taken from among men is appointed...that he may offer gifts and, sacrifices for sins."<sup>6</sup> But, instead of this, the R.V. tells us that "Every high-priest, being taken from among men," is appointed for this purpose. The following will illustrate the difference between the text and this perversion of it. A military handbook reads: "Every commissioned officer, taken from the ranks is appointed for special merit." But some editor changes this to "Every commissioned officer, being

taken from the ranks, is appointed for special merit."

The "reviser" thus attributes to the author two statements, both of which are false. For every commissioned officer is not raised from the ranks, neither is he appointed for special merit. And so here, Hebrews teaches explicitly and with emphasis, first, that in contrast with the Aaronic high-priests who were taken from among men, our great High-priest is Son of God. And secondly, that, as High-priest, He has nothing to do with offering sacrifices for sins: for ere He ascended, and entered on His High-priestly office, He offered the one great sin-offering that has for ever put away sins.

Hence the change of attitude mentioned so emphatically in Chap. 10:11, 12. The Aaronic priest was ever standing, for his work was never done; "But HE, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Chapter 10:11, 12. This may lead us to notice the distinction between functions which are essential to priesthood, and those which were peculiar to priests of the Aaronic order. As we have already seen, Scripture lends no sanction to the prevailing belief that a sacrifice is essentially a priestly rite.

If, as we know, the entire ritual of the day of Atonement devolved upon Aaron, this was not only because the yearly sin-offering was for the whole congregation of Israel,<sup>7</sup> but because his acts were in a peculiar sense typical of the work of Christ. The Aaronic high-priest therefore was appointed to offer sacrifices for sin (Hebrews 5:1); but neither offering nor killing the ordinary sin-offering was the work of the priest, but of the sinner who had sinned. The words of the law are explicit: "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt-offering before the Lord. it is a sin-offering." (Leviticus 4:24-29-33) Not until the sacrifice had been offered, the victim slain, the blood shed, did priestly work begin.

Very strikingly does this appear in the ritual prescribed for a sin committed by the whole congregation. Though, of course, the priests were implicated in a national sin, it was not the sons of Aaron who offered the sin-offering, but the elders of the congregation. And the elders it was who laid their hands upon the victim's head and proceeded to kill it.(Leviticus 4:13 f.). For "offer" is not a synonym for "kill"<sup>8</sup>. "When the Apostle Paul spoke of "the offering up of the Gentiles,"<sup>9</sup> he was not contemplating a holocaust of the converts!

His use of the term in this passage should safeguard us against the common misreading of his words that Christ "offered Himself" to God. The study of Scripture typology will save us from that extraordinary vagary of Gentile exegesis that this refers to Calvary, and that the Lord officiated as a priest at His own death. Here are the opening words of the Book of Leviticus. "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord...he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."<sup>10</sup> The fact that in this passage "offer" and "bring" represent the same Hebrew verb might guard us from the error of supposing that any sacerdotal meaning is inherent in the former term.<sup>11</sup> The Israelite offered (or presented) his sacrifice at the door of the tabernacle, and if found to be according to the law it was accepted.

He then killed the victim, having first identified himself with it by laying his hands upon its head. And the sacrificial work being thus completed, "the priests, Aaron's sons," proceeded to execute their peculiar priestly functions in making atonement for the offerer. This ritual will enable us to understand those wonderful words already quoted, that Christ "offered Himself without spot to God."<sup>12</sup> This was not at the Cross, but when, "on coming into the world," He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Chap. 10:5-7) As the result, the divine will led Him to His death of shame.

But neither His death, nor the self-surrender which led to His death, was a part of His High-priestly work.<sup>13</sup> Everything that was typified by the action of divinely appointed Aaronic priests "with the blood of bulls and goats," the Son of God did with His own blood when He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high.<sup>14</sup> Until after the Exodus no sacrificing priest had ever been officially appointed; and yet throughout the preceding ages holy men had offered gifts and sacrifices.

And the death of Christ was the antitype of every sacrifice, whether before or after Sinai. But in Hebrews special emphasis is laid upon the annual sin-offering of the law; and if we read the Pentateuch in the light of the Epistle, we cannot fail to see that the appointment of the high-priest, and the peculiar duties assigned to him, had special reference to the great Day of Atonement. If then God desired to teach the truth that, although the high-priest's sacrificial duties were typical of Calvary, the type would not be fulfilled by Christ in virtue of His priesthood, was it possible, in that religion of ritual and of ceremonial ordinances, to teach it with greater, with more dramatic emphasis, than by commanding Aaron to divest himself of his high-priestly garments until the sacrificial rites of the day had been accomplished?

With no less definiteness does this appear in the typology of the great sin offering of Numbers 19, which holds such an important place in the teaching of Scripture. As a rule all priestly duties which were not peculiar to Aaron could be discharged by any of his sons: why then was an exception made in this instance? The obvious explanation is that as the type was to be fulfilled by Christ, not as High-priest, but before entering on His High-priestly office, the ritual was assigned expressly to Eleazar, the high-priest designate.

Such is the accuracy of the types of Scripture! Let no one feel impatient at such repeated reiteration of these most important truths; for the pagan errors which they refute are accredited by many eminent theologians. Moreover, they are in the warp and woof of the false cult of the apostasy of Christendom; and in our day they are sapping the Protestantism of our National Church.

## CHAPTER 5

### CHRIST'S DEITY ENFORCED

AS already suggested, two qualifications are necessary if we are to read the Epistle to the Hebrews intelligently. We need an adequate acquaintance with the typology of Scripture, and we must understand the position and thoughts of the Hebrew Christians who had been led to Christ under the tutelage of the divine religion of Judaism. That Christ came to found a new religion is a figment of Gentile theology. In the classical sense of the word "religion," Judaism is the only divine religion the world has ever known; and Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill it.

As contrasted with Judaism (and in contrast also with the apostasy of Christendom), Christianity, I repeat, is not a religion,<sup>1</sup> but a revelation and a faith. But the Hebrew Christians were in danger of regarding the coming of Messiah as merely an advance in a progressive revelation. God who had spoken by the

prophets had now spoken in a still more authoritative way. It was a climax in the revelation, but that was all. They needed to learn that it was not merely a climax, but a crisis.

For Christ was the fulfillment of the divine religion; and by the fact of His fulfilling it He abrogated it. In whole and in every part of it, that religion pointed to Him. Its mission was to prepare men for His advent, and to lead them to Him when He came. And now that He had come, any turning back to the religion was in effect a turning away from Christ. Therefore is it that with such emphasis and elaboration Hebrews teaches us the divine glory of the Son of God, and the incomparable pre-eminence of His ministry in every aspect of it.

For it is by way of contrast, rather than of comparison, that He is named, first with angels, and then with the apostle and the high-priest of the Jewish faith. Therefore is it that, in a way which to us seems laboured, the Epistle unfolds the truth that the divinely appointed shrine, with its divinely ordered ritual, and all its gorgeous furniture living and dead, were but the shadows of heavenly realities; and that, with the coming of the Son of God, the morning of shadows was past, for the light that cast them was now in the zenith of an eternal noon.

All this accounts for the many digressions by which the Apostle sought to reach the goal of his crowning exhortation in chapter 10 - digressions due to prevailing ignorance and error. For in "the Judaism of the Pharisees," as in the false cult of Christendom, a priest means a sacrificing priest - an error which is not only antichristian, but which, as the Apostle declares in chapter 5:12, betrays ignorance of "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." And deferring for the present any fuller notice of these digressions, let us now consider the wonderful words of that exhortation.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 19:19-22) To come, or draw near, is one of the "key words" of the Epistle.<sup>2</sup> It occurs first in the exhortation of chapter 4:16, "Having a great high-priest ... let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace."

As the tense of the verb indicates, this is not an act to be done once for all, as when a sinner comes to God for salvation; it is the habit of the true Christian, who is ever conscious of his need of mercy and grace. Still more plainly does this appear in chapter 7:25, where Christians are characteristically called, "comers unto God," drawing near to Him being their normal attitude and habit. And the man of faith is similarly designated in chapter 11:6. In the opening words of chapter 10, therefore, the worshipper is described as one who thus comes or draws near.

And this same word is prominent in the exhortation of the twenty-second verse. The figurative language here employed - the blood, the veil, the sprinkled heart, the washed body - so perplexing to Gentile exegesis, would be plain and simple to the Hebrew Christian, for it is the language of the typology of that divine religion in which he had been trained. The Israelite, as we have seen, set out upon his journey to the land of promise as one of a redeemed and holy people. But, being none the less a sinner, he was ever liable to fall; and though his sin did not put him back under either the doom or the bondage of Egypt, it necessarily barred his approaching the sanctuary.

His exclusion, moreover, must have been permanent if there had been no provision for atonement. And if this was true in relation to "a sanctuary of this world," how intensely true must it be for us who have to do

with the spiritual realities of which that sanctuary was but a shadow. Therefore is it that in the teaching of Hebrews "to make atonement<sup>3</sup> for the sins of the people" is given such prominence in enumerating the priestly functions of Christ. But Hebrews teaches in part by contrast; and whereas the Israelite had to bring a fresh sin-offering every time he sinned ("because it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins"), atonement for us is based upon the one great sacrifice which in fact accomplished what these typical offerings were powerless to effect.

And yet, I repeat, the need of atonement is deeper in our case than it was with the Israelite; and were it not for the work of our Great High-priest in the presence of God, our sins as Christians would preclude our ever entering that holy presence during all our life on earth. If a citizen be guilty of a crime, his conviction and sentence will dispose of the judicial question raised by his offence; and yet if he formerly enjoyed the right of entree at the palace, nothing short of a royal pardon will restore to him that privilege.

This parable may serve to illustrate one aspect of the truth here in question. Although the believer has vicariously suffered the judicial consequences of his sin, that sin would none the less bar his ever again approaching God, were it not that by confession and the atoning work of Christ he obtains forgiveness. But even though a citizen may have an acknowledged right to appear at Court, he may not enter the royal presence mud-splashed or travel-soiled; and wilderness defilement, even though contracted innocently, precluded the Israelite from entering the sacred enclosure.

And for this also there was full provision. But no special sin-offering was needed. The unclean person was purged, first by being sprinkled with "the water of purification" - water that owed its efficacy to the great sin-offering - and then by bathing his entire body. The ritual is given in detail in Numbers 19. The victim was burnt to ashes. The ashes were preserved, and water that had flowed over them availed to cleanse. A sin required blood-shedding, defilement was purged by this water (Hebrews 9:13).

And, as we have seen, the blood-shedding was the act of the man who sinned; so here, no priest was needed; any clean person could perform the rite (Numbers 19:18), thus indicating that the sprinkling and the washing are not the work of Christ for us, but indicate our own responsibility to seek the restoration of communion with God by faith and repentance. This typical ordinance of the water of purification, though ignored in our theology, fills an important place in the teaching of Scripture.

It is the keynote of the great prophecy of Ezekiel 36, 37, which loomed so large in Jewish hopes - a prophecy Nicodemus' ignorance of which evoked the Lord's indignant rebuke, "Art thou a teacher of Israel and knowest not these things!" (John 3:10) "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean," is the promise of the twenty-fifth verse of chapter 36, addressed to the earthly people. But though gathered out of all countries and brought into their own land (verse 24), they are likened in the next chapter to dry bones lying on the ground.

And then follows the great. Regeneration: "Come, O breath, and breathe upon these slain"; and the Spirit of God enters into them, and they live (verses 9, 10, 14). This is "the birth of water and the Spirit," ignorance of which on the part of a Rabbi of the Sanhedrim was as shameful as it would be for a Christian teacher not to recognize an allusion to the Nicodemus sermon. And in its application to ourselves, this is "the loutron of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" of Titus 3:5.

The word "regeneration" occurs only once again in the New Testament, namely in Matthew 19:25, where the Lord uses it with reference to the fulfillment of this very prophecy of Ezekiel 36-37. And the only other mention of the loutron explains its symbolic meaning. I refer to Ephesians 5:26: "that He might sanctify

and cleanse it (the Church) with the loutron of water by the word."4 Whether it be a question of salvation for an individual sinner, or of the national regeneration of Israel, the blessing depends upon the "once for all" sacrifice of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

But the great blood-shedding is past; Calvary is never to be repeated, and it is only by the "living and eternally abiding word of God," ministered by the Holy Spirit, that sinners are born again. 1 Peter 1:23. And as it was by recourse to the water of purification that the Israelite proved the continuing efficacy of the sin-offering to purge him from defilement, so is it with us. But we have the reality of which the water was only a type; and by constant recourse to the Word of God, and by the repentance which that Word produces in us, we prove the efficacy of the death of Christ to maintain us in the position of acceptance and access to God, which redemption gives us.

When a Christian whose secular pursuits are uncongenial to the spiritual life turns away from them to acts of worship or of service, he can appreciate the words of the exhortation, "Let us draw near...having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." But the exhortation adds, "and our bodies washed with pure water." Without the sprinkling of the water of purification, the bath would be unavailing; and to resort to the sprinkling while neglecting the bath would be to appeal to the atoning work of Christ without turning away from evil.

For such is the figurative meaning of washing in Scripture. It signifies only and always practical purity. To read baptism into the passage is to fritter away its force and meaning, for it relates to the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life, and not to the position accorded to the sinner on his coming to Christ for salvation. And more than this, such a perversion of the text implies the confounding of Christian baptism with the pagan rite of the Eleusinian mysteries.5

## CHAPTER 6

### ASPECTS OF HIS WORK

IN a certain house there hangs a notable picture which commemorates a great historic event, and contains portraits of all the notable personages who took part in it. A sketch-plan, which had been prepared in advance, indicated the name and rank of each of them; but when the picture itself was hung upon the wall, there seemed to be no further need of the sketch, and so it was thrown away. And today if you ask for particulars about the various portraits, most members of the circle will tell you that such details have no interest for them: it is the central figure alone that they think about, and it is the picture as a whole that they value.

Or if any of the house-party should make a more sympathetic response to your inquiries, you will get conflicting answers from them, for they are all at sea upon the subject. This parable, suggested by the study of Hebrews, may serve to illustrate our efforts to understand the evangelical teaching of the New Testament, if the key-plan of Old Testament typology be neglected. For, though the sacrificial work of Christ has as many aspects as there are great typical sacrifices in the Pentateuch, the Passover and the Sin-offering hold a practically exclusive prominence in our theology.

And yet the Passover, though in sense the basis of all the rest, has no place in Hebrews;1 and the Sin-offering holds a subordinate position in the doctrinal teaching of the Epistle. The ninth chapter will help to guide us aright in the use of these many types. As they all point to Christ, we may lose important truth if we neglect any one of them. But we must not suppose that His sacrificial work was marked by successive

stages.<sup>2</sup> And yet we need to distinguish between these types.

An uninstructed reader, for example, would probably fail to notice that verses 1 and 13 point to three entirely different offerings. For verse 12 (compare verse 19) refers to the Covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24; and verse 13 to the two great sin-offerings of Leviticus 16), and Numbers 19. And though, perhaps, the uninstructed reader may fail to appreciate distinctions of this kind, he will eagerly seize upon another distinction which no pupil in the divine kindergarten of Bible typology can miss, namely, that while the types specified in Hebrews represent only what the death of Christ is to His people, yet in a most important aspect of it that death was for a lost world.

And it is owing to ignorance of the typology, and of the distinctions which it teaches, that seemingly conflicting statements of Scripture have driven theologians into separate, if not hostile, camps, and have led ordinary Christians (like the owners of the picture in my parable) to ignore details altogether, and to rest content with general impressions. When, for example, we read in one Scripture that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all," and in another that He was "offered to bear the sins of many," we must not set ourselves to prove that "all" means only some, or that "many" is equivalent to all; but, knowing that no book in the world is so precise in its terminology as the New Testament:, we shall turn to the key-picture of the Pentateuch, to find that here, as always, Scripture is perfectly accurate and consistent with itself.

Take, for example, two passages in the First Epistle of Peter, which are akin to the passages above quoted. In chapter 1:18, 19, we read, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"; and in chapter 2:24, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body to the tree." The references here are unmistakable - in the one case to the Paschal Lamb of Exodus 12; in the other, to the scapegoat of Leviticus 16.

But the Passover was the sacrifice by which an enslaved and doomed people obtained redemption, whereas, in common with the other sacrifices of the law, the sin-offering was for those who had been thus redeemed. To object that the Israelites were the "Covenant people" involves an anachronism, for the covenant had not yet been inaugurated. And to say that none but the Israelites could have gained the shelter of the blood is wholly unwarranted; for if, even after the covenant was dedicated, such an outcast as "Rahab the harlot" could come within the pale, we may be certain that any Egyptian might have thrown in his lot with Israel, and sought the shelter of the blood.

This suggestion is entirely in the spirit of the law which permitted the stranger to eat the Passover. (Numbers 9:14 Deuteronomy 23:7) In the case of the sin-offering, before the victim was slain the offerer identified himself with it by placing his hands upon its head. But there was no such identification of the Israelite with the Paschal lamb. Its blood was shed and sprinkled upon the house, and all who sought the shelter of the blood escaped the death sentence pronounced upon Egypt.

But, in contrast with this, on the Day of Atonement the sins of the redeemed people were laid upon the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:21-22), and the victim bore them away to the wilderness - the desert aptly typifying "that undiscovered country from whose borne no traveller returns." And so, in the language of the types, the inspired Apostle tells us that Christ "bare our sins to the tree."<sup>3</sup> Our sins - the sins of us who have been redeemed by the blood of the Paschal lamb. For "bearing sins" is a figurative expression, and the figure is neither poetic nor yet forensic, but sacrificial; and it comes from the, great Day of Atonement.

Therefore is it that in Scripture the Gospel for the unsaved is never stated in the language of the sin-offering. And a student of types will notice any violation of this rule as instinctively as a trained ear will

detect a discord. Or if he should find any seeming exceptions, he will rightly attribute them to the wording of our English versions. The utterance of the Baptist, recorded in John 1:29, is a case in point. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

This is not translation merely, it savours of exegesis. "Who beareth the sin of the world" is what the Baptist said. His words were not a prophecy of what Christ would accomplish by His death, but a statement of what He was in His life. Mark the present tense, "Who is bearing." And while the word used in 1 Peter 1:2-24, and in kindred passages, is a sacrificial term, we have here an ordinary word for lifting and carrying burdens. When the Lord sighed in healing the deaf mute by the Sea of Galilee Mark 7:34, and when He groaned and wept at the grave of Lazarus, He took upon Himself, as it were, the infirmities and sorrows which He relieved, and made them His own.

And in this pregnant sense it was that He bore the world's sin. In this sense of the word He was manifested to bear sins,<sup>4</sup> and in no other sense was He a sin-bearer during His earthly life. The imputation of sin to Christ was entirely the act of God. And the twenty-second Psalm tells of His anguish when He reached that crisis of His mission, and passing under the awful cloud "became a curse for us." But to suppose that the twenty-second Psalm expresses His relations with the Father during the years of His ministry gives proof that in the religious sphere there is nothing too profane, and nothing too false, to be believed.

He was "manifested" to bear human sins and sorrows, for the facts of His life and death on earth are matters of evidence, and none but fools deny them. But that He was the Son of God, and that He "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" - this is altogether matter of revelation, and none but fools would believe it on mere human testimony. There is no element of deception or of artifice in the Gospel. The Lord commissioned His Apostles to proclaim forgiveness of sins among all nations (Luke 24:47).

And from one of the sermons recorded in Acts we know in what sense they understood His words. "Through Him is preached unto you forgiveness of sins," said Paul at Pisidia Antioch (Acts 13:38). And this because (as he declared at Corinth - the message being given him by express revelation) "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3) The truth of this is in no respect modified by the further truth that when the believing sinner receives Christ, he becomes identified with Him in the sin-offering sense.

For the passover was as true as the sin-offering. And the Antioch sermon discloses a kindred advance in truth; for, to the proclamation of the amnesty, the Apostle added, "And all who believe are justified." "Justified freely by His grace," as we read in Romans 3:24. The Jew indeed had "the promises made unto the Fathers," but we Gentiles (being "strangers from the covenants of promise") "glorify God for His mercy." (Romans 15:8, 9) We owe everything to grace; and to speak of grace for a favoured few, if it do not imply a contradiction in terms, is at least an utterly inadequate statement of truth.

"For the grace of God has appeared, salvation-bringing to all men." (Titus 2:11) And God is "willing that all men should be saved." (1 Timothy 2:4) Language could not be more explicit and unequivocal; and to question whether these statements are true and to be taken "at their face value," is profanely to charge the Word of God with deception of a kind that would not be tolerated as between man and man.<sup>5</sup> In the parable of the Great Supper (Luke 14:16-24), the Lord likens us Gentile Christians to the tramps and waifs of the highways and the city streets, who in Divine mercy have been gathered to the feast which the privileged people spurned.

And yet when we come within, we find a place prepared and reserved for each of us, as though we were specially invited guests. But the effect produced on some people by this amazing mystery of grace is that they return to the streets and highways, not to obey the Master's orders to publish the good news to "the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind," but to announce that the places are limited, and that it is all settled who shall occupy them. The mention of the covenants in this section of Hebrews throws light upon this subject, and moreover it has a special interest for the Bible student.

The Old Testament quotations in chapter 8 relate to the "new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," a covenant which will bring "the times of refreshing" that fill so large a place in Hebrew prophecy.<sup>6</sup> And they are quoted, not to establish the fact of a new covenant - for that no Israelite would question - but because the fact gives proof that the Mosaic covenant is superseded. But Scripture knows nothing of a covenant with Gentiles, and the question arises, where do we come in?

The Greek word *diatheke* signifies both "covenant" and "testament"; and while to the covenant there are two parties and a "mediator," a testament depends only on the will of the testator, and it becomes operative at his death. And so, up to the fifteenth verse of Hebrews 9, the word is used in the Old Testament sense, but in the sixteenth verse it assumes the alternative meaning of "testament."<sup>7</sup> Our spiritual and eternal blessings do not depend on a covenant made with us, but upon a testament under which we are beneficiaries.

And if we have learned to mark the accuracy of Holy Scripture, we shall not fail to notice how the difference between the relations of Hebrews and of Gentiles to the new covenant is recognized in the institution of the Lord's Supper. For the favoured people had access to the blood in virtue of the covenant, whereas we Gentiles come within the covenant in virtue of the blood. In the "Hebrew" Gospel, therefore, we read, "This is My blood of the new covenant" (Matthew 26:28) whereas in the "Gentile" Gospel it is "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." (Luke 22:20) While the old covenant had an earthly sanctuary and a human priesthood, the sanctuary of the new covenant is heaven itself, and the Great Priest who ministers there is no other than the Son of God.

This, the Apostle declares, is "the chief point" of all he has said (chap. 8:1, R.V.). And these great facts of the Christian revelation sweep away the whole structure of the false cult of Christendom. That cult would have us believe that every man upon whose head a bishop's consecrating hands have been placed is a sacrificing priest, with powers and privileges higher than those which pertained to the divinely appointed priests in Israel. But so exclusive are the prerogatives of the sons of Aaron, that while on earth not even the Lord Jesus Christ could share them (Hebrews 8:4). What a staggering fact it is that, during His earthly ministry, the Son of God Himself could not pass within the veil which screened the antechamber to the holy shrine!

And yet that place of worship was merely "a sanctuary of this world," and Jewish priests "went in continually." The very existence of this antechamber - the "first tabernacle" of Hebrews - gave proof that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest."<sup>8</sup> An earthly place of worship is proof that the heavenly place of worship is still closed. The Apostle therefore warned the Hebrew Christians that to set up such a place of worship, with an earthly priesthood, was apostasy, for it denied the efficacy of the work of Christ. And by this test the false religion of Christendom, with its earthly shrines and its earthly priesthood, is proved to be outside, the pale of true Christianity. (Hebrews 9:8)

## CHAPTER 7

## A GREAT PRIEST

"HAVING a Great Priest over the house of God."1 Upon this depends our right of access to the divine presence. For His priesthood is a necessity, not only because of human infirmity and need, but because of the holiness and majesty of God. And yet, owing to our inveterate habit of regarding redemption from our own standpoint, we forget this highest aspect of the truth.

In the miracles of Scripture within the sphere of the natural, there is nothing so seemingly incredible as that God should allow a sinner to come into His presence. Yet such is the blindness of unspiritual men, that they carp at the miracles, while treating these amazing truths of grace as commonplaces of Evangelical doctrine. A comparison between our Christian hymn-books and the old Hebrew Psalms will indicate how much lower is our conception of God, than that of the spiritual Israelite of a bygone age.

And we forget that man is not the only created being in the universe. Of the Gospel of our salvation it is written, "which things angels desire to look into." No good man would refuse to meet a repentant criminal or magdalen. But none save a fanatic or a fool would bring such into his home, and give them a place of special nearness and honour in his family and household. And yet this would be but a paltry illustration of what the grace of God has done for sinful men. "While the first tabernacle was yet standing,

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