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*THE EPISTLE TO HEBREWS AS THE WORK  
OF BARNABAS.*

IN a paper already published in the EXPOSITOR (June, 1902), reasons were given for believing: first, that Barnabas was a far greater figure in the eye of the Apostolic Church, especially in Palestine, than is usually realized to-day; and next, that his standing was due not only to goodness of heart, but also and equally to deep religious insight. If these positions be conceded, it is no longer allowable to start with a *præjudicium* against Barnabas as unequal to the authorship of a writing of such authority and ability as "The Epistle to Hebrews." On the other hand we are able to do justice to his positive fitness for the task, as at once a Hellenist and a Levite.

Consider Barnabas for a moment as a Hellenist. He was a Cypriot; and we must picture the Jews of Cyprus as under the influence both of Jerusalem and Alexandria. Doubtless they would partake of the "Alexandrine" mode of thought, which was really far from confined to Alexandria or to the one type best known to us through Philo. But the ultra-idealism to which many Jews tended in the peculiarly philosophic atmosphere of Alexandria might well be qualified by the local conditions of an island closely connected with the Syrian mainland. And in the case of Barnabas we know that his family, like himself, had intimate ties with Jerusalem, as indeed was natural, owing to its Levitic origin. Such a dual training finds its counterpart in the mingled idealism and realism of the thought in *Hebrews*.

Then, again, Barnabas was a Levite. This accords with the form taken by the great argument, in which the superiority of the New Covenant or religious relation between God and man, and indeed its final or absolute character, is

made to appear over against the transient and shadowy forms of the earlier or Mosaic covenant. How significant of Levitic training and sympathies is the following, where the Law is treated as relative to Priesthood, and not *vice versa*. "Now if there was perfection (i.e. absolute religion) through the Levitical priesthood—for under it<sup>1</sup> hath the people received the law—what further need that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of (the) law" (vii. 11 f., cf. 20–22). Here, then, we have a man who apprehends religion on the side of priestly mediation, with a view to securing for the sinful perfect access to the holy God and abiding communion. And it is characteristic of him that the very nerve of his appeal, both as theoretical and practical (viii. 1–2, x. 19–25), is the absolute priesthood of Jesus, whose suffering even unto death thus became the deepest ground of salvation and hope. Through His sufferings He became qualified (ii. 10, v. 8–10) to offer the sacrifice of an absolutely filial and obedient will (x. 5 ff., cf. v. 8), for the initial sanctification or consecration of His brethren (x. 10, 14); as also to aid them in their efforts to maintain that consecration as sons, unto perfect sonship (xii. 1–10, 14), by His human sympathy (ii. 11–18, iv. 14–16, v. 2) and heavenly intercession (iv. 14–16, viii. 1 f., x. 19–22, xii. 24).

But as our author's argument is not framed for his own edification but for that of his readers, we pass at this point to consider the conditions which evoked this passionate appeal, with its "logic on fire." For it is really incorrect to think of it as an epistle at all. It calls itself a hortatory utterance (*λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως*, xiii. 22): it is preaching raised

<sup>1</sup> The original, *ἐπ' αὐτῆς*, suggests that the Priesthood is fundamental to the Law as a system; cf. Luke iv. 29, *ὥς ὄφρα τοῦ θρόνου ἐφ' οὗ ἡ πόλις ὑποκόμῃτο*.

to the highest power. Still better, it is prophecy, remonstrating and entreating, as an Old Testament prophet warns and entreats, or as James in his prophetic address to the true Israel in dispersion. Indeed there are many valuable hints towards an understanding of each of these two great New Testament "preachments" (as Carlyle would have said), to be won from a comparative study of "Hebrews" and James. They represent conditions in kindred communities of Hebrew Christians, perhaps at almost the same period of development. The danger of apostasy, implied by *Hebrews*, may not yet have emerged into any prominence when James wrote his encyclical appeal, probably on the basis of reports brought by pilgrims to the Jewish feasts, or by brethren otherwise visiting the parent Church. But the predisposing causes were already present, in the special trials against which James would brace the brethren's powers of endurance, and in the state of being in "two minds" which jeopardized the steadfastness of many, sick at heart with the long-deferred hope of Messiah's glorious return in victory. What, then, were the conditions with which the readers of *Hebrews* had to grapple? Here one cannot do better than quote Dr. Hort's terse summary.<sup>1</sup>

"The religious condition of these Jewish Christians shows plainly the dangers to faith which inevitably beset that form of Jewish Christianity which we have seen to have been legitimate in Palestine, the adoption of the Gospel without any disuse of the Law. It was only for a time that such a combination could be legitimate, and now the hour was at hand when it could be legitimate no longer. Meanwhile, before the announcement of the hour by the trumpet of Divine judgments, the mere force of long-continued custom had rendered possible a state of things which threatened to destroy all reality in men's allegiance to the Gospel. The freshness of power with which it had first

<sup>1</sup> *Judaistic Christianity*, 157 f.

laid hold on them had died away, while the deep-seated instincts of ancestral custom preserved all their tenacious influence, and were aided by the corresponding spiritual degeneracy which made a religion of sight easier, and apparently more substantial, than a religion of faith. Then it would seem that the pressure of the unbelieving Jews, in the midst of whom the Jewish Christians were living, was now becoming heavier and more intolerable, in great measure, doubtless, owing to the unrest caused by the signs of approaching Roman invasion. Thus, without abjuring the name of Jesus, His professed followers in Palestine were to a large extent coming to treat their relation to Him as trivial and secondary compared with their relation to the customs of their forefathers and their living countrymen, and to give up that gathering together in Christian congregations which gave outward expression and inward reality to membership in the true people of God and of His Christ. We hear nothing about circumcision, and nothing about Gentile Christians. The Christianity here rising may be justly called a Judaistic Christianity; but it was rather the product of a degeneracy in heart and mind than the expression of a conscious doctrine or theory."

These Jewish Christians "were in danger of apostatizing from the faith, because of persecution endured on account of it, and also because of doubts concerning its truth."<sup>1</sup> Such doubts coincided with a cooling of zeal due to disappointment with the practical outcome of the gospel. In their eyes it belied its apparent promises. When they had welcomed it and had felt the uplifting of Spirit which its reception brought, they had regarded its salvation as consisting partly in the assurance of forgiveness of past sins, but partly, and still more, in the sure hope it vouchsafed of speedy participation in the Messianic kingdom which the

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews; the first Apology for Christianity* p. 7.

return of Jesus the Messiah might usher in at any moment, and certainly before the passing of the generation that had witnessed His humiliation and shameful death. As this longed-for consummation tarried year after year, they found it ever harder to live on hope of this kind, devoid as it was of a due sense of Messiah's present significance for their daily life, with its temptations and trials. The only explanation they had to place between themselves and growing sickness of heart was the patriotic one, that delay meant the coming over of their fellow-Jews as a nation to belief in Jesus Messiah. But as years wore on, little occurred to feed this hope, and much to kill it. They felt, like Israel of old, led out into a trying "wilderness" experience, bereft of the old consolations, while the Land of Promise, the Rest of God, seemed intolerably far off—if, indeed, it was ever to break upon their vision at all. There lay the haunting doubt that began to overshadow their souls. What if all their early rapture and devotion, in the face of bitter opposition, had been for naught, based on a delusion? Were not even Messiah's personal followers dying, one by one? Was distinctness from the main stream of the national life really justified in the light of experience? What did their new faith bring them, *here and now*, to compensate for all the sacrifices its open profession entailed? They were weary of the long strain: they were half inclined to give up the struggle within and without, and to fall back upon the spiritual resources of the national religion as God-given and tried by age-long use. They were beginning to "drift away," to "draw back."

To Barnabas such falling away from a higher and more real spiritual experience, to a lower (vi. 5), was nothing less than apostasy from God as a living God (iii. 12), because from His word as living and active in the conscience (iv. 12). It meant relapse into the sphere of relatively formal and "dead" works (ix. 14), after breathing the vital

air of the Spirit (vi. 4, x. 29). But how was this to be prevented? Not by any flogging of fagged and harassed souls to fresh efforts; not by mere appeals to stand firm or try harder; but rather by giving them a new conception altogether of the conflict in which they were engaged and of the resources within their reach. They needed new motive power; and this might be theirs, if only they could be taught to think more adequately of the nature of the salvation which they already shared (v. 12-vi. 5), and above all of the person and work of Him whom they had accepted as God's Messiah. It was here that their faith had proved itself so defective: they had not found in Jesus the full reality of all, and more than all, that they had been wont to seek under the less effective forms of the pre-Messianic economy. They had not learnt even to look to Him for the spiritual equivalents of Mosaic law and ritual, in virtue of which their communion with God might be on a totally new and higher level in point of confidence and intimacy. In a word, they had not found in Jesus that absolute provision for sin—as hindering man's approach to, and joyous fellowship with, the Father of spirits—which was promised by prophecy to Messiah's people, in virtue of Messiah Himself and His relation to His own. True, they regarded Jesus as their Leader<sup>1</sup> into the Messianic relation to God, which included forgiveness of past sins and a certain participation in the gifts of the Spirit, joy-giving and wonder-working: but for anything beyond this, they did not for the present look to their Messiah. They were waiting for Him to lead them actually into the promised Rest by His visible return in power, which should also cancel all the perplexing features of His first advent, with its humiliation, suffering, and even death. So little had they grasped the genius of

<sup>1</sup> The incidental use of this title in Heb. ii. 10, xii. 2, shows it to have been a category familiar to the readers. This is confirmed by its use in the early Petrine speeches in Acts (iii. 15, v. 31), which are generally admitted to be representative of primitive Palestinian Christianity.

the gospel they had accepted, that they saw no saving virtue, no means of grace for daily living, in these most distinctive characteristics of their Lord's ministry. They did not see that a suffering Leader of Salvation befitted man (ii. 10 ff.), who has to be disciplined through suffering to real sonship (xii. 2-10); nor that His very suffering and death qualified Him as the absolute Priest of humanity (ii. 17 f., iv. 15-v. 10), in whom Sacrifice and Mediator coalesced into one. Hence the whole stress of the Epistle is on these themes, evidently unfamiliar to them and so needing proof at every point. Particularly is this the case with the notion of Jesus as High Priest and absolute Sacrifice, who was thus able, here and now, to save to the uttermost those who habitually approach God through Him (vii. 25).

This is plain enough when we read the Epistle with care, remembering that emphasis on the writer's part means special lack of insight on his readers' side<sup>1</sup> (cf. v. 11). But there is one part of this great apology for Christianity as the absolute form of revealed religion, which has received less notice than is its due, yet which is most significant of the situation contemplated. It is found in chapters iii-iv., and begins with a broad statement of the superiority of Jesus, the representative of their "profession," to Moses, the representative of past Judaism. Almost immediately, however, the writer concentrates attention on the fact that Israel under Moses failed to enter into God's Rest, the blissful state of life in the Promised Land which was forfeited by "hardness of heart" and "unbelief" in the wilderness. Further, it is hinted that a like spirit had never been really absent from Israel since, in that the promised Rest had never been won. And yet God had renewed the

<sup>1</sup> See A. B. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 10-20, for the contrasts between the old and the new covenants, and what these imply in the readers. "The writer is not repeating but *creating* theology."

promise since that first failure (iv. 6-10). "There is, then, in reserve a *sabbatism* for the people of God" (iv. 9): some must one day enter in. "Let us be zealous, then, to enter into that Rest"—aye, let us be zealous—"lest any fall in the like fashion of disobedience."

Note the bold and severe judgment on Israel's past,<sup>1</sup> and on the inadequacy of its great leaders to achieve the task of leading God's people into Rest. Moses had failed; so too had Joshua. If the condition in which this former "Jesus" established the Chosen People in the Holy Land had been satisfactory, God would not have pointed forward to a future day when Rest should be theirs. But if so, then how retrograde to fall back (as some seemed like to do) upon the ordinary religious community of Israel; and how dangerously sinful! It was like the very unbelief<sup>2</sup> which forfeited God's Rest, when Israel was in the wilderness. The carcasses of that generation fell in the wilderness. Let Christians take heed in this their period of wilderness trial, a trial which was soon to end.<sup>3</sup> For the penalty of infidelity to the "heavenly calling" through the greater

<sup>1</sup> The importance of this line of argument, as part of Christian apology over against unbelieving Judaism, becomes more apparent when we observe that it underlies also Stephen's apology in Acts vii. This contains an implicit comparison between Moses, the God-sent "Leader and Deliverer" (vii. 35), whom Israel distrusted to their own hurt, and Jesus, the greater Prophet, whom God should raise up (vii. 37). The moral is, that hardness of heart had ever marked Israel as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be what is meant by "the deceitfulness of sin" (iii. 13), and "the sin that doth so closely beset" (xii. 1). The opposite of "faith" is the instinct to "draw back," daunted by the trials of endurance involved in obedience. "He *endured* as seeing Him that is invisible," is the description of the man of faith, faced by the seductions of the world of sense (xi. 27).

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the writer has partly in mind the fact that he and his readers were living in the fourth decade of their trial of faith and patience, when he speaks of the Day as visibly approaching (x. 25), and of the quiet little while that yet intervenes (x. 37). But his chief ground for believing the end near was doubtless the massing of the forces of hostility to Messiah's followers, both in Judaea and in the world-empire beyond, which was a sign of the last hour.

Leader, must be even more terrible than that which befell those who disobeyed the call through Moses.

The psychological situation of *Hebrews* points pretty clearly to the locality of its first readers. "Priesthood, sacrifices, ancient covenant, commonwealth—these were the chief things that seemed substantial and solid beside the Christian realities that were losing their power of attraction." Our author "therefore dwells on their inexorably transitory nature," and that with an impassioned emphasis and iteration which can only mean that his readers lived where the Holy City and its temple were overshadowing practical realities. Here the contrast afforded by James' Epistle,<sup>1</sup> in which sacrificial worship, as of only occasional significance to the members of the Dispersion, is not alluded to, is instructive; and it surely points, as Hort and many others maintain, to Palestine as the home of these Hebrew Christians. Hort, indeed, goes too far when he would include Jerusalem in the region in question; but when Dr. A. B. Davidson would exclude even "any church in its immediate neighbourhood," we must ask what exactly is meant. Would he exclude all the semi-Gentile seaboard between Joppa and Caesarea? If not, we may find in this very region the community or communities of which we are in quest. To them all the conditions above described in Hort's words would apply, along with some others that would seem to suit the maritime plain better than the Highlands of Judaea.

To begin with, it is interesting to observe the nautical metaphors used to bring home both warning and reassurance. There is the figure of a craft drifting with the tide away from its safe moorings (ii. 1); and, again, of the hope

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. B. Davidson seems to overlook the force of this contrast, in inclining to "some community of the Dispersion in the East . . . with a Hellenistic type of Judaism" (p. 18).

in Christ as "an anchor of the soul," holding firm in the sure ground "within the veil" (vi. 18 f.). Such suggest familiarity with the sea, not only in the writer but also in his readers. Further, the vivid picture of the race in the amphitheatre, with the cloud of spectators nerving the competitors to put forth all their efforts, would be comparatively lost on ordinary Judæan Christians, but would be full of suggestion to men living in or near to a semi-Greek city like Caesarea, where such non-Jewish sports were within the experience of even Hebrew Christians. Finally, the allusions to their history and to their besetting vices appear to look in the same direction. They do not seem to have borne the full brunt of the early persecutions that befell the Palestinian Church (x. 33 f.) So far, in fact, they had not "suffered unto blood" in the conflict in which Jesus, Faith's Pioneer and Consummator, had shown the way.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they had, from the first and down to the time in question, "ministered to the Saints" (vi. 11)—not necessarily those of Jerusalem and its environs in particular, of whose needs we happen to have special knowledge (2 Cor. viii. 4, ix. 1, with Rom. xv. 26); and to judge from xiii. 5, it looks as if there were a good deal of wealth among them. Finally, the sins of the flesh against which, in the same context (xiii. 4), they are warned, are more likely to have infected Jewish society on the seaboard than further inland.

When one tries to think out these conditions, the thought of a place like Caesarea on the coast comes naturally to mind. The Church there was of primitive foundation; and though from an early date it contained some members of Gentile

<sup>1</sup> See A. B. Davidson, *ad loc.* (p. 235). "The natural sense is that they had not yet been persecuted unto death, and from the Apostle's manner of regarding the community as a moral person having a continuous history (v. 11-14, vi. 10-12, x. 32-37, xiii. 7), this seems to be said of their whole life as a Church"—as it could not be said of the Christians in a region including Jerusalem.

birth, these were probably the small minority, and would moreover be drawn from the class of proselytes—men, that is, who had adopted in some degree Jewish forms of piety. Their presence, therefore, would not be inconsistent with the phenomena of the Epistle. The main body of the Christians in Caesarea, and in its region, would be Hebrews by birth as by thought and feeling, while yet living on the borderland<sup>1</sup> between Palestinian and extra-Palestinian conditions. Thus, in all respects, Caesarea seems superior to Antioch,<sup>2</sup> as the destination of our Epistle; and it is strange that its claims seem hardly to have been considered seriously by scholars at large.<sup>3</sup> Let us try to supply this defect.

What was the situation in Caesarea during the years immediately before the fierce outbreak there, which precipitated the inevitable conflict with Rome in A.D. 66? Josephus tells us that under Felix the jealousy between the wealthy and influential Jewish element in the city and the non-Jewish native population reached the burning point. "Neither the Jews nor the heathen were satisfied with this state of things; each of the two parties claimed for itself exclusively the government of the city. Already towards the close of the official career of Felix there were sanguinary struggles on the subject; in consequence of which, Nero, whose advisers had been bribed by the heathen party, deprived the Jews of their equal rights and declared the

<sup>1</sup> It seems certain that Caesarea, like Askelon, still ranked as part of the Holy Land, and as for the most part "clean," in contrast to strictly Gentile soil. This means that Jews living in it would be in close relations with the Temple system (e.g. paying priestly tithes), and would not need prolonged purification before sharing in its worship: see *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, xiii. 683 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In favour of which Rendall finally decides, after reaching the sure general conclusion which he expresses thus: "In Palestine, then, or its neighbourhood, I would fix the locality of the Hebrew Church" (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, xviii.).

<sup>3</sup> Moses Stuart, in particular, is one of the rare exceptions.

heathen sole governors of the city." Schürer, whose words have just been quoted, in the new edition of his *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes* (Dritte Auflage, ii. 107 n.) reckons the imperial rescript on the subject as "certainly not later<sup>1</sup> than A.D. 61." "This letter," writes Josephus, "became the occasion of the subsequent miseries that befell our nation; for when the Jews of Caesarea were informed of the contents of this letter to the Syrians, they were more disorderly than before, till a war was kindled" (*Antiquities*, xx. viii. 9). In the light of this we can imagine how strong must have been the patriotic feeling stirring in the breasts of the Jews in Caesarea from about 60-66 A.D. And this could not but have reacted upon the position and sentiments of the more strictly Jewish section of the Christians in that city.

To continue the probable course of events for the sake of clearness, we observe that the parallel march of events in Jerusalem must, about this time, have stimulated Jewish feeling in Caesarea in a way highly unfavourable to Jewish Christians. For Josephus goes on to record the friction which arose between Festus, the new governor (under whom the restriction of Jewish rights actually occurred), and the Jews, particularly in Jerusalem. But in this case it was the Jews who were successful in an appeal to the Emperor, on a matter touching their sensibilities as to the Temple. The date of their embassy, consisting of ten principal men, including Ismael the High Priest, is fixed by the fact that Ismael, who was kept in Rome as a hostage, was succeeded

<sup>1</sup> The reason being that Pallas, who died in A.D. 62, after being for some time under a cloud, was then still high in favour. Büchler (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, xiii. 689) assigns this struggle touching equal citizen-rights (*ισοπολιτεία*) to A.D. 59-60, and thinks that two or three years later there was another case of friction between the Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea, traces of which survive in the Talmud (Tosifta, *Oholoth*, xviii. 16). Confirmation of the earlier date may be found in the fact that Poppæa was already a potent factor in Nero's action, and retrenchment of Jewish rights was less likely to occur henceforth: comp. her intervention in A.D. 60-61, referred to below.

in the high priesthood by Joseph Kabi in A.D. 61. We are told further that its success was due to the influence of Poppæa; so that the Jews had every reason to take heart at the thought that they had now a powerful friend at court. The fruit of this was soon evident in the bold line taken by the Sanhedrin under the lead of Ananus, the successor of Joseph Kabi, whose tenure of office may not have extended beyond the year A.D. 61 in which he was appointed. Taking advantage of the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor Albinus, "the High Priest Ananus the younger, being of a rash and daring spirit, and inclined, like the Sadducees in general, to severity in punishing, brought to trial James the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ, and some others before the court of the Sanhedrin; and having charged them with breaking the laws, he delivered them over to be stoned. The better class of citizens and those who were versed in the laws were indignant at this, and made complaints both to Agrippa and Albinus, on the ground that Ananus had no right to summon the Sanhedrin without the consent of the procurator: and Agrippa in consequence removed him from the high priesthood" (*Antt.* xx. 9. 1, and comp. 8. 8 for a similar division of feeling in Jerusalem).

It is altogether likely that the movement in Jerusalem, which led up to the martyrdom of the leading Christian there, had a reflex influence on the lot of Hebrew Christians in Caesarea, where national feeling was already so stirred. And in this connexion it may be remembered that the last touches were just about this time being put to the Temple that had so long been in process of completion, a circumstance which would bring the national system of religion very much to the front in all Jewish minds. Now it is almost certain that our Epistle was written to meet something like a sudden crisis in the religious situation of its readers; and that this crisis was occasioned, though not

wholly caused, by special pressure from outside, is strongly suggested by various turns of phrase in the Epistle itself. Thus the pointed reference to their splendid devotion evoked by persecution in "the former days" (x. 32 ff.), suggests an implicit contrast to their present attitude under somewhat similar conditions. It is surely "boldness" of this order that they are urged not to cast away, in that now too "they have need of patient endurance"<sup>1</sup> (ὕπομονῆς), lest they "shrink back" from the cost of frankly showing their colours. So the allusion in xiii. 3 to "those in bonds" and "evil entreated," within reach of their aid, points to serious persecution as then active in their region at least. And, lastly, Jesus' own endurance of the cross, in despite of shame, is set before them for contemplation and comparison,<sup>2</sup> along with the reminder that they "have not yet resisted unto blood" in the arena of the struggle with sin, where its assault is delivered largely through other human wills (xii. 3 ff.). The analogy here implied shows that very severe persecution is on the horizon, though it has not yet reached and tried these Christians to the full extent.

Can we draw a further inferencé,<sup>3</sup> and argue that the persecution in view was connected with the martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother, probably early in A.D. 62? I think we can. No event could happen more calculated to bring about in any Palestinian community the acute crisis reflected in *Hebrews*, than the sudden removal of him who in the eyes of his believing countrymen at any rate was *Oblias*, the "Fenced-wall of the People."

<sup>1</sup> The word is used in a connexion full of the associations of persecution in Rev. i. 9. So in our Epistle the verbal form occurs in x. 32, "Ye endured a great conflict of sufferings," and in xii. 2, of Christ's endurance of the cross.

<sup>2</sup> Such is probably the force of the remarkable phrase ἀναλογίσασθε γὰρ τὸν . . . ὑπομενεγκῶτα, which Davidson renders "bring into analogy," which implies that the readers, too, were exposed to "the gainsaying of sinners" in like manner with Jesus their model.

In view, too, of the blank thus created, Barnabas might well feel himself invested with enhanced responsibility and authority in relation even to certain Palestinian Christians who, perhaps, had looked hitherto somewhat askance at him as an apostle of liberal Judæo-Christianity. He would naturally feel constrained to speak out more clearly than ever before, as to the supersession of the rudimentary by the final form of spiritual religion, if a great object-lesson had just been afforded by the practical apostasy of the official heads of Judaism from "the living God," as represented by so true an Israelite as James. Yet he is doubtful whether some of his readers will receive his message as of God (xiii. 18, 22). It might be too strange and revolutionary in their eyes, to be accepted save on higher authority than he possessed to them.

Thus we may assign *Hebrews* to the early summer of 62 A.D., a date which also fits the personal references at the end. Its writer is anxious to hurry to his readers' side, but is hindered by some duty sufficient to detain him even at such a crisis. He also sends news that "our brother Timothy is set at liberty"; and adds the hope that he will reach the place from which the letter was being written in time to make a joint visit to the readers. Finally he sends the greetings of certain persons hailing from Italy (*οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας*, a phrase which in its context may mean persons resident in Italy, though another sense is possible). All these data cohere readily, if we may assume what the allusion to Timothy itself suggests in the light of 2 Tim. iv. 9, 21. Assume that Timothy, on hurrying to Paul's side to share the closing hours of his imprisonment, became involved in the charges which proved fatal to his father in Christ (c. 61-62 A.D.); but that the case against him broke down, probably because there was not the same array of personal influence working against him, a comparatively obscure personage. A similar cause, namely the

critical turn taken by Paul's case about the time of the hearing referred to in 2 Tim. iv. 16 ; cf. i. 15), may well have brought Barnabas to Italy—possibly in response to an appeal from Paul to come and watch over the interests of their common gospel in Rome (for the need, cf. Phil. i. 15 ff., ii. 20 f.). The performance of this sacred charge, now doubly needful after the staggering stroke inflicted by Paul's death, might well detain Barnabas for a little longer in Italy, even after the news of the crisis in Palestine had reached him. As Timothy was probably arrested and tried in Rome, while our writer speaks of him as at a distance, we infer that he himself was not then at Rome. Say, then, that he was at Brundisium, and the conditions of the problem seem fully satisfied (including the nautical metaphors of the Epistle).

To sum up our conclusions in the fewest possible words, *Hebrews* was written by Barnabas from Italy, probably from a seaport, whence he hoped to sail very shortly—accompanied, if possible, by Timothy, fresh from an imprisonment connected with that of St. Paul. This was in A.D. 62, in the spring of which James, the Lord's brother, suffered in Jerusalem. It was, perhaps, his death at the hands of the Jewish authorities which precipitated the crisis in the communities<sup>1</sup> addressed in this writing, and of which Caesarea may be taken as type. But the nature of its argument throughout implies that the tendency to practical apostasy from the gospel, which *Hebrews* aims at checking, had its roots far back in an inveterate habit of mind. It was due in large part to a mode of conceiving the gospel which failed to do justice to its character as the absolute form of religion, to which Judaism as such was but preparatory.

VERNON BARTLET.

<sup>1</sup> "Omnes" eos salutari jubet: nam ii, ad quos scribit, multis in locis erant. Bengel on Heb. xiii. 24.