

**THE EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS IN GREEK AND
ENGLISH: WITH CRITICAL
AND EXPLANATORY NOTES**

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The Epistle to the Hebrews in Greek and English: with critical and explanatory notes by
Frederic Rendall

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EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS
IN GREEK AND ENGLISH

WITH CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY
✓
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PREFACE.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews has special claims on the theologian and the historian. For it stands absolutely alone in the New Testament in the thoroughness with which it develops the priestly character of the Messiah, and the typical significance of the Old Testament: its influence has been great in shaping the doctrine of the Atonement; and the formularies of our faith have borrowed largely from its language. Its historical importance will be differently estimated according to the date assigned to it, and the view taken of the author's position and circumstances: if it be, as I see strong reason to conclude, the voice of one of the most distinguished living members of the church of the circumcision at the supreme crisis of its history, uttered for the guidance of his Hebrew brethren during the final agony of the Jewish nation, its value becomes very great as a contribution to early church history.

It has hitherto however obtained but scanty attention from English critics: and the want of an edition suitable for the student's use has been my chief motive for undertaking the present work; which has been to me a veritable labour of love. In its execution the authorities, to which I have most often had recourse, have been the LXX. and the New Testament, the works of Philo, Josephus and Clement of Rome: but I have relied still more upon the thoughtful study of the author's own language and argument. My obligations to those who have laboured before

me in the same field are greater than I can attempt to acknowledge in detail; but, while availing myself of their assistance, I have never been satisfied to accept the judgment of others, without an independent and conscientious search after the truth for myself. It is not the province of this edition to record the history of former criticism; and the discussion of interpretations, whose claims have failed to stand the test of thorough investigation, has been purposely curtailed within the narrowest possible limits.

The translation aims only at the faithful reproduction of the original: beauty of style has been deliberately sacrificed, wherever the claims of accuracy or distinctness made it advisable: but no pains have been spared to achieve the object of correct translation; and I venture to hope, though it differs sometimes materially from our existing English versions, that alterations which have not been adopted lightly or hastily, will meet with candid consideration from my reader in spite of some natural prejudice against novelty in the translation of Scripture.

The Greek text is based entirely on that of Westcott and Hort: textual criticism demands so much special study, that it seemed to me wiser to defer to their judgment, than to attempt the construction of an independent text. Where however they have given alternative readings, I have selected freely between them on grounds of intrinsic probability: there will be found also changes of punctuation in the text; and the notes contain occasional discussion of doubtful readings. Where brackets are employed, they indicate some uncertainty whether the enclosed words formed part of the original text.

INTRODUCTION.

External traditions of authorship.

THE first questions which a reader is disposed to ask on opening a book are the name of the author, the time, place, and circumstances of its composition. It is however the singular fortune of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that no distinct record has come down to us of these facts. The book itself was treasured: its power of thought and beauty of language were admired in the earliest ages of the Church: but no external tradition was preserved that throws real light on the history of its authorship. For though St Paul was from the fifth to the sixteenth century accepted without question as its author, the awakening of independent thought, and revival of Greek literature and criticism, revealed the fact that no such unanimity had prevailed in the first four centuries: nor can authentic traces of such a tradition be found in the earliest period of Christian literature existing anywhere outside the Church of Alexandria. Even the great fathers of that Church, Clement and Origen, though quoting it loosely as St Paul's, hesitate to assign to him more than a share in its origin. Clement appears indeed in one passage¹ to assume the authorship of St Paul: for he attempts to explain the absence of his apostolic superscription on the ground that his commission was to the Gentiles, whereas the Lord

¹ The passage is quoted by Eusebius (*H. E.* vi. 14) from the *Υποτιπώσεις*: "Ἦδη δὲ, ὡς ὁ μακάριος ἔλεγε πρεσβύτερος, ἔπει ὁ Κύριος, ἀπόστολος ὦν τοῦ παντοκράτορος, ἀπεστάλη πρὸς Ἑβραίους, διὰ μετρίωτηα ὁ Παῦ-

λος, ὡς ἂν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἀπεσταλμένος, οὐκ ἐγγράφει ἑαυτὸν Ἑβραίων ἀπόστολον, διὰ τε τὴν πρὸς τὸν Κύριον τιμὴν, οὐκ ἔτι τὸ ἐκ περιουσίας καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἐπιστέλλειν, ἐθνῶν κήρακα ὅτα καὶ ἀπόστολον.

himself was apostle to the Hebrews; but perhaps he is not here stating his own opinion, but reproducing that of his master Pantaenus (the blessed elder, as he calls him); for in another passage¹ of the same work he resorts to a fresh explanation of the omission, as a prudent concession to Jewish prejudice: here also he appends a suggestion that the epistle is a Greek translation by Luke of a Hebrew original written by Paul; and he thus accounts for the resemblance of its language to that of Luke's other writings. Origen², though like Clement he quotes it as St Paul's, nevertheless discusses the authorship as an open question; he contrasts the finished Greek style of this epistle with Paul's own account of himself as rude in speech; expresses

¹ Eusebius (*II. E. VI. 14*) quotes again from the Ὑποτιπώσεις: καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους δὲ ἐπιστολὴν Παύλου μὲν εἶναι φησὶ, γεγραμμένην δὲ Ἑβραίοις Ἑβραϊκῆ φωνῇ, Λουκᾶν δὲ φιλοτίμως αὐτὴν μεθερμηνεύσαντα ἐκδοῦναι τοῖς Ἕλλησι. ὅθεν τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνῳ εὐρίσκεισθαι κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν ταύτης τε τῆς ἐπιστολῆς καὶ τῶν πράξεων μὴ προγεγραμμένην δὲ τὸ Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, εἰκότως Ἑβραίοις γὰρ, φησὶν, ἐπιστέλλων πρόληψεν εὐλόγησαι κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑποπτεύουσιν αὐτὸν, συνειπῶς πάνυ οὐκ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἀπέστρεψεν αὐτοὺς τὸ ὄνομα θεῖς.

² Euseb. *II. E. VI. 25*: περὶ τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολῆς ἐν ταῖς εἰς αὐτὴν ὁμιλίαις ταῦτα διαλαμβάνει: "ὅτι ὁ χαρακτήρ τῆς λέξεως τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιγεγραμμένης ἐπιστολῆς οὐκ ἔχει τὸ ἐν λόγῳ ἰδιωτικὸν τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ὁμολογῆσαντος ἑαυτὸν ἰδιώτην εἶναι τῷ λόγῳ, ταπεινῆς τῆς φράσεως, ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπιστολὴ συνθεσεί τῆς λέξεως Ἑλληνικότερα, πῶς ὁ

ἐπιστάμενος κρίνειν φράσεων διαφορὰς ὁμολογήσει αὐτῷ. Πάλιν τε αὐτῷ ὅτι τὰ νοήματα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς θαυμάσια ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐ δεύτερα τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ὁμολογουμένως γραμμάτων, καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῷ συμφήσει εἶναι ἀληθὲς πῶς ὁ προσέχων τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῇ ἀποστολικῇ." Τοῦτους μὲν ἕτερα ἐπιφέρει λέγων: "ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποδομιγόμενος εἶποιμ' αὐτῷ ὅτι τὰ μὲν νοήματα τοῦ ἀποστόλου ἐστὶν, ἡ δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις ἀπομιμησιμωδέσαντός τινος τὰ ἀποστολικά καὶ ὡςπερὶ σχολιωγράφουσαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου. Εἴ τις οὖν ἐκκλησία ἔχει ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ὡς Παύλου, αὐτῇ εὐδοκιμείτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτῳ οὐ γὰρ εἰρήναι οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες ὡς Παύλου αὐτὴν παραδεδώκασι; τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν; ἡ δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς φθάσασα ἱστορία ὑπό τιμων μὲν λεγόντων ὅτι Κλήμης ὁ γενόμενος ἐπίσκοπος Ῥωμαίων ἔγραψε τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, ὑπό τιμων δὲ ὅτι Λουκᾶς ὁ γράψας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὰς πράξεις.

admiration of the thoughts, as with good reason ascribed to Paul by the ancients (that is, by Pantænus and the early fathers of the Alexandrian school), and such as to justify any church in that belief; but professes his own utter ignorance who the actual writer was: he further quotes two traditions, as existing in his day, one in favour of Clement of Rome, the other of Luke.

Passing to other churches, we find Tertullian¹ quoting it as an acknowledged work of Barnabas; Irenæus² distinctly implying by his silence, if he does not directly assert, that it was not St Paul's; and Caius the presbyter³ excluding it from his enumeration of the thirteen epistles of St Paul. Even as late as the fifth century the two great Latin fathers, Jerome and Augustine, express complete uncertainty on the subject. It was not till after their time that the natural tendency to associate a great anonymous work with a great name asserted its sway throughout the Christian world.

This uncertainty of tradition forces us to rely on internal evidence as the most important factor in determining the authorship. The claims of Barnabas, St Luke, Clement of Rome, scarcely need serious

¹ Tertullian (*de Pudicitia* c. 20). "Extat et Barnabæ titulus ad Hebræos, adeo satis auctoritatis viri, ut quem Paulus juxta se constituerit in abstinentiæ tenore (1 Cor. ix. 6)... Et utique receptior apud ecclesiasticas epistola Barnabæ illo apocrypho pastore moechorum (sc. Pastor of Hermas). Moneus itaque discipulos 'omissis omnibus initiis...'" (Heb. vi. 4—8).

² Irenæus, in his work against Heresies, quotes every one of St Paul's epistles except the short epistle to Philemon, yet refrains from adducing one of the many apposite passages he might have found in this epistle.

This can only be explained by his not accounting it as St Paul's. If Photius be correct (*Bibl.* 232), Stephen Golar asserted explicitly: Ἰππόλυτος καὶ Εὐρημαῖος τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολὴν Παύλου οὐκ ἐκείνου εἶναι φασιν. Some doubt however has been thrown on the accuracy of this statement in consequence of Eusebius having taken no notice of the fact.

³ Eusebius (*H. E.* vi. 20): ἦλθε δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς καὶ Γαῖον, λογωτάτου ἀνδρός, διήλογος ἐπὶ Ῥώμης... ἐν ᾧ... τῶν τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀποστόλου δεκατριῶν μόνων ἐπιστολῶν μνημονεύει, τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους μὴ συναριθμήσας ταῖς λοιπαῖς.