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THE DEITY OF CHRIST
IN
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

A Thesis
Presented to the faculty
of
Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis,
Mo.

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of
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for
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of

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Approved by Course:

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THE DEITY OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

One perusal of the Epistle to the Hebrews will suffice to disclose its distinctive grandeur. The Letter may be spoken of as the Holy of Holies in the temple of New Testament literature. In beauty of style and symmetry of content it surpasses every other book of the New Testament.*) "Within the confines of thirteen short chapters (303 verses) the essential features of Jewish worship are depicted in their consummation by Christ Jesus.**)

Many conjectures have been made as to the probable author of Hebrews. No definite conclusion can ever be reached. The superscription in the Authorized Version seeks definitely to ascribe the authorship of the Epistle to St. Paul. But the words of the title are to be taken no more seriously than the verses appended to the various epistles of the New Testament that seek to establish the place of the writing of the several epistles. The Greek New Testament takes no definite position, entitling the Letter merely as ΤΙΤΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥΣ. We can feel reasonably sure that, even if St. Paul did not write the Epistle personally, it at least had its origin within Pauline circles; for that dominant note of St. Paul's letters is to be found in so many words also in Hebrews: "Now the just shall live by faith" (Hebr. 10, 38). This fact makes it

*) Goodspeed, E. J., The Story of the New Testament (p. 22), "The language of Hebrews shows more elegance and finish than that of any other book of the New Testament". Also Deissmann, The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research (p. 68), "... a well-educated Christian brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, for the first time, a work of Christian art-literature."

**) Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 29: "The Christian scholar who undertook to meet this situation took as his theme the complete and final character of the revelation made in Christ".

all the more surprising that Luther hesitated to put this Epistle on a par with the Homologoumena of the New Testament and chose rather to group it with Jude, James, and Revelation. Luther's views notwithstanding, this Epistle in no way stands in conflict with the tenor of New Testament theology. In fact, it agrees in every detail with the teaching of Jesus Christ. Of supreme significance is the fact that the Epistle to the Hebrews is in full accord with the fundamental tenet of the New Testament: that Christ is the Son of the living God (Mat. 16, 13-18). Hebrews in "divers manners" emphasizes the Deity of Jesus Christ.

There are, of course, those who will deny the fact that this Letter does uphold the Deity of Christ. But such denials are as a rule based upon "malice and irreverence*"); and their protagonists deserve no kinder treatment than that accorded by St. Paul to Elymas, the sorcerer, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all unrighteousness wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13, 10). To any unbiased mind the fact remains incontrovertible that the author of Hebrews thought and wrote of Jesus Christ as the Son of God in the fullest sense of the word.

The purpose of this thesis shall, therefore, be a twofold one: first, to demonstrate that the Epistle to the Hebrews does teach the Deity of Christ (matter); and, secondly, to show how this truth is taught (manner). That purpose will be executed in a combination of dogmatical and exegetical methods. Exegesis must furnish the content; Dogmatics the outline. No improvement can

*)E.g., funeral address for Chief Justice Howard Taft.

be made upon the conventional dogmatical contention that the Deity of Christ is demonstrable from the fact that (1) divine names are applied to Him, that (2) divine attributes are ascribed to Him, that (3) divine works are attributed to Him, and that (4) divine honor and glory are bestowed upon Him.

I. DIVINE NAMES

A preliminary consideration may quite appropriately deal with the various personal names of Him whose Deity is most remarkably proclaimed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The name Jesus is found exactly seven times in the Letter; namely, in 3,20; 7,22; 7,28; 10,19; 12,8; 12,24; 13,20. The name Jesus is usually understood as referring specifically to Christ's humanity, which lends emphasis to the fact that in Hebrews 4,14 Christ is spoken of as Jesus, the Son of God. The latter epithet in this case occupies the position of the other designation commonly considered as especially referring to Jesus' Deity; namely, Christ. The name Christ is found in exactly nine cases: Hebrews 3,8; 3,14; 5,5; 8,1; 9,11; 9,14; 9,24; 9,28; 11,26. The two appellations are combined in at least four instances: 3,1; 10,10; 13,8; 13,21. Of all these names it still remains true that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved". On the pages of history no such names are to be found as those bestowed upon Jesus Christ. It is indeed true that "he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (the angels)". The titles bestowed upon Jesus of Nazareth by the Epistle to the Hebrews give evidence of His superiority even over the angels and amply illustrate

His Deity.

God

Hebrews 1, 8:1, 9:3, 4:3, 13.

No mortal man, no ministering spirits, no idols were ever called God (δ $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$), in the singular with the definite article! "But unto the Son he (God) saith, Thy throne, O God (δ $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$), is for ever and ever," Heb. 1, 8: $\alpha\theta\eta\iota\varsigma \kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$. Four times the author calls Jesus God. The first passage has just been quoted. The second one is disguised in the Authorized Version, where we read in Hebrews 1, 8, "... therefore God, even thy God, hath appointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows". That is not what the Greek has. The Greek version has $\delta\iota\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\chi\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma \sigma\iota, \delta \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma, \delta \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma \sigma\omicron\upsilon \theta\lambda\alpha\iota\omicron\nu \epsilon\chi\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$, which Luther quite correctly translated: "... darum hat dich, o Gott, gesalbet dein Gott, mit dem Oel der Freuden ueber deine Genossen". It is the first $\delta \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ that comes into consideration at present. As in verse 8, it is best taken as a vocative. (Luenemann, Weiss, et al.) *) The entire passage is a direct quotation of Psalm 45, 7(8) in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew: $\sigma\theta\eta\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota \kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota \kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$. Hence even the Father of Lights refers to His Son as God; certainly no greater testimony could be required. :

In Hebrews 3, 4 we have an indirect reference to Jesus as God. There Christ's glory is spoken of in its superiority to the

*) "The Expositors' Greek (New) Testament", sub voce. Robertson and Davis, New Short Grammar to the Greek Testament, 341, c: "The articular Nominative as Vocative", where the authors point out, for instance, that in Matt. 11, 26 $\delta \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ is the equivalent of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in the preceding verse (p. 215).

honor that befell Moses. The comparison is drawn by the assertion that "he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house." In the ^{comparisons} ~~translation~~, Moses, as the representative of all believers, is meant as the house (v.6); and the builder, Jesus Christ, is God; "but he that built all things is God."

The fourth instance in which Jesus Christ is designated as God draws in the whole subject of the angel Yahweh (אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה). This passage is Hebrews 6,13. The verse reads in part, "For when God made promise to Abraham...". The incident referred to is that of the sacrifice of Isaac told in Genesis 22. There the אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה speak to Abraham the second time, saying, אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה.

This is the "angel of the Lord" that appeared unto Moses in the fiery bush (Ex. 3,2) and later dealt with Israel in the desert. Of Him Paul says, "... they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10,4). Here, in Heb. 6,13, this Christ is spoken of as God.

Son of God

Hebrews 1,2:1,5:1,8:3,6:3,7,8(his voice!):4,14:5,5:5,8:6,8:7,3:7,28:10,29:1,8(first begotten!)

The passages quoted in the preceding section establish the significant truth that Jesus Christ is of one essence with the Father, being very God. At the same time the Epistle draws attention to the difference in the persons of the Father and that of the Son, Jesus Christ being set forth as "very God of very God." This truth has already been indicated by the dialogue recorded in Hebrews 1,3,9. But special notice is given that fact in at least thirteen passages. In ten of these He is called the Son of God outright. Most significant of this group is the passage that

has already been adduced; namely, Hebrews 4,14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." These words leave no room at all for doubt as to who may be the Son of God.

The definite article emphasizes the fact that Christ is the Son of God in a very special sense, that He is, indeed, the first begotten (ὁ πρωτόγενετός) of Chapter I, verse 8, the "firstborn of every creature (πρωτόγενετός π. κτίσεως)" mentioned in Col.1,15. In four other passages this unique filial relationship to God the Father is depicted by the use of the article: Hebrews 1,8, "Unto the Son" (πρὸς τὸν υἱόν); Hebrews 8,6, "... they crucify to themselves the Son of God (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ) afresh"; Heb.7,3, "... made like unto the Son of God (τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ)"; Heb.10,38, "... the Son of God (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ)".

Already in the opening sentence of the Epistle, Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, is spoken of as God's Son. "God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son (ὁ υἱός)". In this case the definite article is not found with υἱός. Without the article the word υἱός is also found in Heb.3,6: ἡ-θεὸς υἱός; 5,8: καὶ ἡθεὸς υἱός; 7,28: υἱόν. Exegetes have taken this υἱός as of the strength of a proper name to explain the absence of the article. But that is not necessary; for even as the distinctiveness of the filial relation is emphasized by the article even so the filial relationship to the Father, as such, is connoted by the word υἱός. This assertion can be corroborated from Heb.1,5, "....I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son (υἱός): These are words of the Father!

This brings up the point that God the Father personally accepts and claims Jesus as His Son. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Hebr.1,5;5,5) are words adduced by the author from the second Psalm and put into the mouth of the Father:

: **וְיֵשׁוּעַ בְּרִי יְהוָה כְּבָרֵךְ יְהוָה וְיֵשׁוּעַ בְּרִי יְהוָה כְּבָרֵךְ יְהוָה**. Though He be but the Son, yet even the Father recognizes Him as His equal in the words of Psalm 110, " Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Hebr.1,13): **יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ**.

Also the seventh and eighth verses of the third chapter can be brought into the picture by correlating them with Mat.3,17 and 17,5: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him!" It is His voice to which the author of Hebrews refers, ".... Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts....". It is the voice of Him to whom Moses pointed in the words of Deut. 18,15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto Thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken". And He is the Son of God!

Lord

Hebrews 1,10;2,3;7,14;13,20.

Upon the Son of God the Epistle to the Hebrews also bestows the title of Lord (**אֲדֹנָי**) in four notable instances. In Hebrews 1,10, the Father addresses His Son with the words, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation" of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands". In the Hebrew of Ps.102,35, from which these words are taken, we have the word **אֲדֹנָי**, related to **אֲדֹנָי**. This same word is found also in Isaiah 9,6 in the combination **אֲדֹנָי צְבָאוֹת**, "the mighty God". Psalm 50,1 combines **אֲדֹנָי** with **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** and **אֲדֹנָי**, "the mighty God, even the Lord

hath spoken."

In Hebrews 2,3 Jesus is again referred to as the Lord ($\delta \kappa \alpha \tau \acute{\alpha}$
 $\epsilon \iota \varsigma$), which is the equivalent of the Hebrew יְיָ and is
used in a very special sense. Hebrews 7,14 brings Jesus' lordship
into its relationship with us by calling Him "our Lord" ($\delta \kappa \alpha \tau \acute{\alpha}$
 $\epsilon \iota \varsigma \kappa \alpha \sigma \mu \acute{\iota}$). Lest there be any doubt that Jesus is meant, the au-
thor of the Letter clinches this series of passages, which con-
tain the name Lord, by writing of "our Lord Jesus" (Hebr. 3,20).

Son of Man

Hebrews 2,3.

This section on the Divine Names would be far from complete
without a mention of the most distinctive title bestowed upon Je-
sus of Nazareth; namely, the Son of Man. This name is found in a
quotation taken from Psalm 8. In the original Hebrew the word for
"son of man" is אָדָם בֶּן אָדָם . At first blush אָדָם בֶּן אָדָם might seem
to refer to mortal man as a class. But this Psalm is of Messianic
import and significance, as the Savior Himself indicates in Mat.
21,15,18. אָדָם בֶּן אָדָם is, then, not used here in the general sense as
in Ez. 3,1; Num. 23,13; or Job 25,6; but is applied in a very spe-
cific and individualized sense even as in Daniel 7,13, where we
have the Aramaic equivalent בְּנֵי אָדָם . This name is peculiar to
Jesus Christ. In it are combined the human and divine natures. The
term was the favorite designation by which the Savior called Him-
self; for seventy-eight times in the four Gospels He adopted it
to speak of Himself as $\text{ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$. As Grezer suggests, the
title usually emphasizes the humility and lowliness of the Savior.
But in at least one instance it exalts Him as God: Matt. 13,28,
"When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory". More-

over, St Stephen (Acts 7, 58) applies the name in reference to Christ as God, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God". The two titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man", declaring that in the one person of Christ there are two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, joined together, but not confused, are presented to us in two memorable passages of the Gospel, which declare the will of Christ that all men confess Him as God and man.

The first passage is found in Matt. 14, 13, 18, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?.... And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God".

The second passage is also recorded by Matthew (28, 63, 64) and is no less significant: "... And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven".

All of which most emphatically proves that when Jesus Christ is designated as the Son of Man, He is spoken of as such in a manner which implies not only His humanity but also—— and that is significant for the present discussion!——His Deity.

II

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The Epistle to the Hebrews is quite profuse in ascribing divine attributes to Jesus Christ. In fact, it will be difficult to find anywhere expressions that will quite equal the stately eloquence of the opening verses of Hebrews, in which Jesus Christ

is described as the "brightness of his (God's) glory" (*ἀπαύλας τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*) and "the express image of his person" (*ἑκφάνησις τῆς ἰσότητος*).

Majesty

Hebrews 1:3:1,9:1,13; 4:14; 6:13; 7:26:8.1; 9.11:9.24; 10.12; 10.15
12.3:12.25.

"With such epithets*) the author of Hebrews, whoever he may have been, certainly intended to ascribe to and bestow upon Jesus Christ the majesty of God the Father. *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* is the Lord's *כְּבוֹד* which covers the heavens (Ps.19,1; Hab.3,3), which appeared in the cloud to Israel in the desert (Ex.16,10), which later filled the Temple (1 Kings 8,11). Of this *כְּבוֹד* Jesus Christ is the *ἀπαύλας*, not with the mere connotation of refulgence**) as the reflection by the moon of the light of the sun, but with the thought that the radiant glory manifested by Christ even here upon earth (Jno.8,11; Mat.17) was in every way "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1,14). Christ perfectly radiates the majesty of God so that "he that hath seen me (Jesus) hath seen the Father" (John 14,9). This glory was revealed once to the disciples on the Mt. of Transfiguration in its full splendor. Otherwise, excluding a few occasional glimpses, it was hidden from mortal eyes. Had it not been so, Jesus' contemporaries would have seen "the God of Israel: and... under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" (Ex.24,10). But as Saphir re-

*) Farrer insists that this phraseology is taken from Philo, "The Early Days of Christianity", p.198.

**) Commentators distinguish between effulgence and refulgence, radiance and reflection. Athanasius: "Who is so void of understanding as to doubt concerning the eternal being of the Son? for where has one seen light without effulgence?" Theophylact: "The Sun is never seen without effulgence, nor the Father without the Son."

marks*), "It is because that Sun is so exceeding glorious, so exceeding bright, so exceedingly unbearable in its majesty that it shines forth in another sun--- and yet not another, but one with Him--- which God, in His wonderful wisdom and power, hath given unto all worlds; that in this sun they may behold the brightness, the effulgence, the outflow of His glory".

[It may be of interest in this connection to draw attention to the fact that in Ez.1,28.39;10,4;43,2 the glory of the Lord appears as a person. This is of primary significance for Is.40,5, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed". Again, in Exodus 33,19, by a related thought, Moses asks the Lord, "Show me thy glory." The request is granted with, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee". How well that fits in with John 1,14, "... and we beheld His glory, the glory^{as} of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". Jesus is the true, complete effulgence of God's majestic but gracious glory.]

Christ is described, moreover, as the *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως*. He is the exact expression (*χαρακτήρ*) of God's essence (substantia, Vulgate): *ὁ ὁμοῦς ἕως ἁπλάσεως*. This bears out the Lord's assertion of John 10,30, "I and my Father are one". In essential majesty Jesus Christ is one with the Father; for he "sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high (*καθήμενος ἐν δεξιᾷ*)" (Heb.1,3). "Sitting" on the right hand" signifies equality with the Father in majesty (*ἰσότης, ἰσότης*). Indeed, "thou art clothed with honor and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his throne" to the Hebrews, I, 57, 58.

chariot; who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire; who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever" (Ps. 104, 2-5). Then Jesus "passed into the heavens" (4, 14; 8, 24) after His work of redemption had been completed. The Father asked Him to assume once more His full majesty—which he always had but as man did not often choose to use!—by asking Him, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (1, 13) ~~and by anointing Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows (1, 9).~~ We read that Jesus did follow the Father's bidding to sit "on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" (8, 1; 10, 13; 12, 2).

The quotation from Psalm 110 cited immediately above lays bare the sovereign majesty of Jesus Christ. The Father has appointed Him as ruler of the universe. All things are shaped toward the ultimate and complete glorification of Jesus Christ. All things happen as they do that they may eventually be put in subjection under his feet (8, 8; cf. 10, 13). To that end the Father has anointed the Son with the oil of gladness as a token of recognition and approval of His royal majesty. True, some commentators insist that this anointing is that of a marriage feast or that it refers in general to an anointing on any festive occasion.*) But here, in Hebr. 1, 9, naught else than the solemn anointing to royal dignity can be referred to.**) The very use of the preposition *ὑπὲρ*, indicating the superiority of Jesus Christ, would suggest that thought. His dignity and majesty is of a higher order even than that of His "fellows"— Joshua, Aaron, Moses, the angels!

*) "Expositors" Greek (New) Testament", sub voce: Westcott and Alford.

**) Weiss, Davidson, v. Soden; cf. "E. G. T." sub voce.

There is none greater than He; for "when God (the angelus increatus, the melchiah Yuhweh) made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by none greater, he swore by Himself" (8,13). His majesty even extends over the heavens, being made higher than the heavens (ὁ θεὸς ὑψίστος τῶν οὐρανῶν); 7,28. Of Jesus Christ it is true, as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed says, that He is "Light of light".

Eternity

Hebrews 1,8:1,11:1,13:5,6:8,20:7,2:7,8:7,16:7,17:7,28:7,25:13,8.

Among the attributes that distinguish God, and therefore also Jesus Christ, from ought else is that of eternity. The Epistle to the Hebrews leaves no room for doubt as to this distinctively divine attribute in its relation to Jesus Christ. No less than thirteen passages form the cumulative evidence for that fact. Outstanding among these is the passage near the end of the book (13,8), "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever (ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται)". Of course closely connected with the thought of eternity is the attribute of changelessness as brought out by ἀκίνητος in the passage just quoted. Jesus Christ is, therefore, depicted as one "without shadow of turning" (James 1,17) for ever. "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (1,12). Yes, all things "shall perish, but thou remainest" (1,11). The author of Hebrews uses the expressions ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται or their equivalent ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται (4,4; 4,14; 7,26; 7,27), and once even ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται (1,8), but never do we hear of ἀκίνητος ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται. From ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ ἔσται alone mere immortality can be derived. In the comparison, however, drawn in Chapter seven between Melchisedec and Jesus Christ both are said to agree in one feature; namely,

that they have "neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (*αἰὶν ἀρχῆν καὶ τέλος*). In these words lies the *ἰσχυρὸς ἀθανάτου* (*ἰσχυρὸς*). This is the only passage in Hebrews from which the pre-temporal existence of Jesus Christ can be shown in so many words. Naturally, the thought that "he liveth" (*ζῶν*) (*78*) and "he ever liveth" (*ἀθανάτος ζῶν*) (*78*) "after the power of an endless life" (*ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως ζωῆς ἀκαταλόγου*) sufficiently emphasizes the post-temporal existence of Jesus Christ and after a fashion also imply His eternal existence "before the foundations of the world were laid". And the fact that eternity is ascribed to Jesus Christ argues for His Deity in no uncertain manner.

Omnipotence

Hebrews 1:3; 2:5; 1:2; 1:13; 13:28.

"With God nothing is impossible". Mortals are incapable of many things; not so God. He has created and still rules and guides the universe. All things are under His control. The very idea portrayed by the word God suggests the attribute of omnipotence. Noteworthy, Jesus Christ is credited with this very omnipotence in the Epistle. He is depicted as the one "who upholds all things by the word of His power". Only God can shake heaven and earth. At least it is *ἰσχυρὸς ἰσχυρῶς* who in *Haggai 2:7; 9* shakes heaven and earth; for heaven and earth are part of the *ἰσχυρῶς* which God rules. Now in *Hebrews 13*, significantly enough, it is Jesus (v.24) that is represented as shaking heaven and earth, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven". It is Jesus' voice that shakes the earth (*Heb. 13, 28*). As a matter of fact, the Father "has" put all things in subjection

under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that was not put under him" (2,8). Jesus is even "expecting (ἐκδέχεται) till His enemies be made his footstool" (10, 13) even as the Father promised Him in the words, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (1,13).

In the face of such heaped evidence for the omnipotence of Jesus the thought of His Deity is inescapable.

Righteousness

Hebrews 1.8:1.9:7.2.

Jesus Christ, according to Hebrews 7, is the true Melchisedec of the New Testament. The King of Salem, too, was but a shadow of Him who was to come; "but the body is of Christ" (Col.2,16). Jesus is to each believer "MY KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" and a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of His kingdom (1,8). The name Melchisedec stands in close relationship to Jeremich's renowned prophecy concerning "The Lord our Righteousness" (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ צְדָקָה), Jer. 23,8. Righteousness is not found in man, nor is it ever ascribed to angels by Holy Writ. Only Jehovah has the absolute attributes of צְדָקָה and אֱלֹהֵימָּהּ (the אֱלֹהֵימָּהּ of Hebrews 1,8). God alone imputes that righteousness to us through His Son. The mere fact that this righteousness is ascribed to Jesus Christ designates Him as God.

Perfection (Holiness)

Hebrews 2.10:4.15:5.9:7.28:7.28:8.28. ----- אֱלֹהֵימָּהּ , אֱלֹהֵימָּהּ

Closely akin to the attribute of righteousness is that of perfection and holiness. Although the Lord demands perfection of us (Mat.5,48), only He is holy, in the absolute sense. It is this absolute holiness that is attributed to Jesus Christ. He

was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"(4,15; of. also 3,39). He is described as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"(7,26). This phraseology is certainly never used of a mere man, nor does Scripture use such language when speaking of angels. Perfection and holiness are certainly attributes of God alone; [and thus, when Hebrews speaks of Jesus as the captain of our salvation who was made perfect through sufferings (2,10), perfected forevermore(7,28), nothing less than the Deity of Jesus Christ can be implied.]

Mercy (Grace)

Hebrews 3,17:4,16.

Christianity can boast of a merciful God. "I am merciful, saith the Lord..."(Jer.3,12). In at least two Scriptural descriptions of Jehovah mercy and grace head the list of divine attributes. In Ex.34,6, "The Lord, the Lord God" is described as being "merciful and gracious, longsuffering...". Joel 2,13 presents a similar picture, "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil". That is in these passages ascribed to יהוה יישיב is attributed by the author of Hebrews to Jesus Christ. In Chapter 4, verse 13, men are encouraged to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$). The throne is that of Jesus Christ (v.14). The striking thought of Romans 4,5 is contained in Hebrews 3,12, too, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. Hebrews 3,17 represents Jesus as a merciful and faithful high priest.

Hebrews 3.17:3.2.

The last passage alluded to in the previous section bestowed upon Jesus the epithet of being a faithful high priest(3, 17). He was "faithful ($\pi\ \sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$) to him that had appointed him"(3, 2). This attribute of faithfulness is given to God in Deut.9,7, "...the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God". Isaiah, too, speaks of "the Lord that is faithful"(Is.49,7)

Although the consideration of the attribute of faithfulness per se would be of little significance; yet in the argument from the Divine Attributes bestowed upon Jesus it plays an interesting and corroborative rôle.

III. DIVINE ACTS.

Unfortunately, in a discussion of this kind which is grounded about certain arbitrary heads and does, therefore, not follow the order of passages as they occur in the Epistle, a few features of one section will of necessity overlap with what has been said previously and also with that which is to follow. Just so in the present consideration of the Divine Acts which are attributed to Jesus Christ, a number of passages that have been cited previously must necessarily reoccur. Many of the prominent passages in Hebrews can be viewed from a number of angles. There is, for instance, Hebrews 1,10, which has already been used to show that the title Lord is applied to Jesus Christ. That same passage ascribes to the same Lord Jesus the divine work of creating the universe.

Creation

Hebrews 1.2:1.10:3.10:11.3.

Hebrews 1,10 reads, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning

hat laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the
 works of thine hands". These are words of God the Father directed
 to His Son and are taken from Psalm 102, the twenty-fifth verse
 of which reads, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth;
 and the heavens are the work of thine hand". The reference can be
 only to Gen.1,1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the
 earth". What Moses attributed to אֱלֹהִים the author of Hebrews
 ascribes to Jesus, the Lord. Therefore, Jesus is God, the Son of
 God, "by whom also he (the Father) made the worlds"(1,2). The
 whole Logos-doctrine of St. John here swings into line with the
 thought of Hebrews. In the beginning "God said (אֱלֹהִים), Let there
 be light!" Although, in a sense, the Father may be called the prime
 cause of creation (note the difference between אֱלֹהִים of Heb.3,10
 and אֱלֹהִים of Heb.1,2!); yet the Son , the Father's Logos, is
 the immediate agent. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens
 made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"(Ps.33,
 6). Right here Hebrews 11,3 will fit, "Through faith we understand
 that the worlds were framed by the word (λογος) of God...".
 To be sure, the word λογος is not used here; but the distinc-
 tion between λογος and λογος is so small*) that the two words
 may be regarded as referring to the same fact that Jesus Christ
 is the personal, eternal, and life-bestowing λογος of the Father.
 "And the Word is (was) God... All things were made by him"(Jno.1,
 1.3).

Preservation

Hebrews 1.3: 2.7:2.8.

Even as the worlds were created by Jesus Christ, the

*) At least, the definitions given by Thayer (Lexicon) would seem to indicate that a mere philosophical nuance is an additional feature in the word λογος.

Word of the Father, so all things are upheld by the word of His power. Jesus is the true Atlas, as it were, *ῥῆμα ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ διὰ τὸ ῥῆμα πάντα κτίσθησαν*. On this verse the "Expositors' Greek Testament" remarks, "The meaning of *ῥῆμα* is seen in such expressions as that of Moses in Numbers 11, 14 *ὁ θεὸς ἐπέταξε ἐμὸν μῦθον ῥῆμα πατρὸς καὶ ἐπέταξε*, where the idea of being responsible for their government and guidance is involved". In Athens St. Paul told the philosophers of the world that the "God that made the world.....giveth to all life, and breath, and all things"-----a passage which clearly gives God credit for the preservation of the world. The Father has given the Son full control of all things by setting Him over the works of His hands (Heb. 2, 7) and by putting all things in subjection under His feet (2, 8). From these considerations we again conclude that Jesus is God.

Redemption

Hebrews 2.14; 2.15; 1.3; 2.9; 5.9; 9.12; 9.15; 9.26; 9.28; 10.13.

The redemption of the human race is no work of man. The greatest insult to God on high had to be expiated with the greatest sacrifice: the death of the Son of God. Naught else would have appeased an angry God. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin" (Heb. 9, 4). Man could not have helped himself; neither would the sacrifice of an angel have availed ought. But the Son of God, God Himself, had to become man to redeem men. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice of sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (10, 13). "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might re-

ceive the promise of eternal inheritance"(9,15). Of course, the Redemption was the work of the God-man. God assumed the nature of mortal man"that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"(3,9) "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"(9, 26) "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"(8,14.15). Thus, "when "he had by himself purged our sins"(1,3) He "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (5, 9). Human hands soiled with the filth of sin could never have been extended to the throne of grace; "so Christ was once offered to bear (ἀναπέτεω) the sins of many"(3,23).

Jesus redeemed men in His official capacity as the Priest and High Priest of mankind. A considerable portion of the Epistle is devoted to a discussion of Jesus Christ as the High Priest. In fact, just that is the aim of the entire Letter: to establish the fact that Jesus Christ is the consummation of the Old Testament ritual since He is superior to all else. That is the whole tenor of chapters 7-10, in which we are led by the author into the Most Holy Place of the Christian faith in the company of Jesus Christ who "by his own blood.... entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"(9,13). On nine different occasions during the course of the Epistle Jesus is called the High Priest:2,17;3,1;4,14;4,15;5,5;5,10;6,20;8,1;10,31. Six passages testify to His priesthood:5,6;7,15;7,17;7,21;10,13;7,11. The entire seventh chapter compares the priesthood of Christ with that of Melchisedec. Of primary significance for the present is the

assertion that Christ Jesus performed His priestly function as the Son of God (7,3). He was not a mere man; hence the superiority of His priesthood to that of Aaron (Chapter 5). The effect of Christ's high-priestly functions are superior to those of the tribe of Levi in the same proportion that He is superior to the tribe. In other words, His work is the consummation of all sacrificial efforts. Hebrews 10,10 expressly states that we are sanctified "Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all!"

Intercession

Hebrews 7,25;9,24;3,17.

The second feature of Jesus Christ's work as High Priest is that of intercession for His people. For "he ever liveth to make intercession for us"(7,25). In this capacity He demonstrates His superiority over all creatures in that He is able to "appear in the presence of God for us"(9,24). Now, no man can see God and live(Ex.33,20). No man can and would dare to appear before God. But he that is in the bosom of the Father (John 1,18) can approach a holy and righteous God. Only He could be our "high priest in things pertaining to God(3,17); and, thank God, He is. We are justified, therefore, to show from the work of Redemption and that of Intercession that Jesus Christ is God.

Sanctification

Hebrews 2,11;9,14;10,10;10,14.

According to Philippians 2,13 "it is God which worketh in us (you) both to will and to do of his good pleasure". Human nature is such a wretched affair after the Fall that it requires the omnipotence of the God of Creation to renew and sanctify it.

(3 Cor.4,8). This work of divine omnipotence is in the Epistle to the Hebrews ascribed to Jesus Christ. He it is "that sanctifieth" (2,11). It is the blood of Christ that purges "our conscience from dead works to serve the living God"(9,14); for "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"(10,14). The will of God that the Old Testament sacrifices could not accomplish was carried out by Jesus Christ for the sanctification of the believers(Hebr.10,9-10). This is a work that only God can do. Jesus performs it. Therefore, Jesus Christ is God.

IV. DIVINE GLORY AND HONOR

Hebrews 1,3:2,7:3,3:3,3:5,5:13,21:4,8:7,11:3,3.

Despite the opinion of the American revisers of the New Testament that προσκυνία refers only to a gesture of polite reverence accorded to a mere human being, it can be definitely shown from the Epistle to the Hebrews alone that more is meant by the act of worshipping (προσκυνία). For even angels are asked to worship Jesus Christ, 1,3: καὶ προσκυνήσατέ μου ἀδελφοὶ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ. Angels would never be asked to bow to (the literal meaning of προσκυνία!) a mere mortal. The Father asks them to worship Jesus Christ, because He is their superior. In this "greater" Epistle Jesus is declared to be greater than Joshua(4,8), greater than Aaron(7,11), greater than Moses (3,3). He is no less than the Son of God, God Himself. "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor(δόξα, ἰμῶς)"(2,9). This glory and honor is not alone of His choosing. "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee"(5,5). The Father has crowned him with divine honor and glory(3,7). This crowning refers spe-

cifically to the exaltation of the human nature of Christ; for in 2,9, the first part of the verse deals with Jesus' being made a "little lower than the angels". This is the Septuagint version of Psalm 8,5, where the Hebrew reads **וְיָשָׁב עַל עֲלֵי שָׁמַיִם** and means that Jesus was made to lack of God a while, a prophecy fulfilled when Jesus cried on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Holy Spirit has chosen to adapt the Greek translation of these words to express the thought that Christ was made man, was made "a little lower than the angels", to taste death for us. This human nature was then exalted through death and crowned with glory and honor. Christ's divine nature, of course was not changed; it can not change. But "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. 2, 8-10).

For the comfort of every believing heart and especially of the persecuted Jewish Christians of the day when Hebrews was written, the author describes the superiority of Jesus over all else, exhorting his brethren to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (3, 1). For, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (3, 5). Our salvation is Jesus Christ, the Lord, "to whom be glory for ever and ever" (13, 21).

AMEN!

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NOTE: After reading some material on the Epistle to the Hebrews, it soon became evident that it was utterly foolish to do much more reading, except for personal edification. In a paper on the nature of the DEITY OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (which is a compilation) all the reading beyond a certain degree is merely deepening a rut that has already been made. After all, the Epistle itself and the parallel passages in the Old and New Testaments are the chief and only authority. This, merely by way of apology for a meager Bibliography!