

Pauline parallels in Hebrews.

In 1 Corinthians 8:6, we have the expression: ‘... One God, the Father, of (*ex*) Whom are all things ... and one Lord Jesus Christ, by (*dia*) Whom are all things’. This is paralleled by Hebrews 2:10, ‘For it became Him, for (*dia*) Whom are all things, and by (*dia*) Whom are all things’, and this is found nowhere else in the New Testament. Similarly note also Romans 11:36.

‘*The Living God*’. In the epistles this title only occurs in Paul’s writings, where it is used seven times: (Rom. 9:26; 2 Cor. 3:3; 6:16; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:10; 6:17). The writer of Hebrews employs it four times (3:12; 9:14; 10:31 and 12:22).

The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Image of God, is a Pauline conception (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). It is found elsewhere only in Hebrews 1:3, ‘Who being the brightness of His glory, and the *express Image* of His Person’.

The *Ascension of Christ* is vital to Paul’s ministry, especially the doctrine concerning the Body of Christ, so closely identified with the Head that it is looked upon as being seated in the heavenly places where He is now enthroned (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6); consequently we have the Ascension stressed *first* in Ephesians before the position of the Body is dealt with. In the same way Colossians 3:1-3 emphasizes this, and urges the believer to set his mind upon and seek those things which are above ‘where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God’. The doctrine of the Ascension, likewise, is stressed in Hebrews, where it is referred to seven times: (1:3; 4:14; 6:19,20; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). Used in this manner, it is peculiar to Paul’s writings and the Hebrews epistle. Peter makes but one reference to the Ascension, 1 Peter 3:22, and it is not essential to the theme set forth in his epistle.

Related to the Ascension is the present intercession of the Lord Jesus:

‘Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also *maketh intercession* for us’ (Rom. 8:34).

The only other mention of this in the New Testament is Hebrews 7:25:

‘Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to *make intercession* for them’.

The destruction of Satan, death and its power by the Lord Jesus, is characteristic of Paul’s ministry:

‘... our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath *abolished* death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel’ (2 Tim. 1:10).

‘So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*’ (1 Cor. 15:54,55).

This is another peculiar link with Hebrews:

‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might *destroy him that had the power of death*, that is, the devil ...’ (Heb. 2:14).

So also is the thought that Christ, having died once, will never die again. His one sacrifice for sin is all-sufficient, and never to be repeated:

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‘Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead *dieth no more*; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin *once*: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God’ (Rom. 6:9,10).

‘... But now *once* in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ... So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many ...’ (Heb. 9:26-28).

‘But this man, after He had offered *one sacrifice* for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God’ (Heb. 10:12).

Though we must be careful with the ‘alls’ and ‘everys’ of Scripture, there is another doctrinal link between 2 Corinthians and Hebrews:

‘... because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were all dead: and that He died for *all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves ...’ (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

‘But we see Jesus ... for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*’ (Heb. 2:9).

Both Hebrews and Paul’s epistles treat the law of Moses in a special way. The law cannot save, give righteousness, inheritance or life, and has been done away as a means of salvation:

‘... for if *righteousness* come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain’ (Gal. 2:21).

‘For if the *inheritance* be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise’ (Gal. 3:18).

‘... for if there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law’ (Gal. 3:21).

‘Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace’ (Gal. 5:4).

‘For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof’ (Heb. 7:18).

‘For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second’ (Heb. 8:7).

‘... He *taketh away the first*, that He may establish the second’ (Heb. 10:9).

Not only this, but special stress of the law as a *shadow* is peculiar to Hebrews and Paul’s writings:

‘Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a *shadow of things to come*’ (Col. 2:16,17).

‘For the law having a *shadow of good things to come*, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect’ (Heb. 10:1).

The trinity of graces: faith, hope and love, are characteristic of the apostle Paul:

‘Now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love)’ (1 Cor. 13:13).

They also occur in Romans 5:1-8 in pairs; Galatians 5:5,6; Ephesians 1:15-20; Colossians 1:4,5; 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and twice in Hebrews and nowhere else (Heb. 6:10-12; 10:22-24, where ‘faith’ in verse 23 should read ‘hope’, see the Revised Version).

Paul is the only New Testament writer who requests *prayer for himself*, and this usually comes at the end of his epistles:

‘Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit ... *and for me* ... that I may open my mouth boldly ...’ (Eph. 6:18,19).

‘Withal *praying also for us*, that God would open unto us a door of utterance’ (Col. 4:3).

‘Brethren, *pray for us*’ (1 Thess. 5:25).

‘Finally, brethren, *pray for us*, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified ...’ (2 Thess. 3:1).

To which may be added Romans 15:30, Phil. 1:19 and Philemon 22.

Hebrews likewise requests prayer in the same way:

‘*Pray for us*: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly’ (Heb. 13:18).

And this feature is not found in Peter, James, Jude or John.

Another point needs to be made. The stress in Romans on Abraham and Sarah’s physical incapacity to have a son and heir in their old age, and the quickening power of resurrection is seen also in Hebrews:

‘... Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him Whom he believed, even God, Who *quickeneth the dead* ... and being not weak in faith, he *considered not his own body now dead* ... *neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb*’ (Rom. 4:16-19).

‘Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age ... Therefore sprang there even of one, and *him as good as dead*, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude ...’ (Heb. 11:11,12).

This power operated too in the willingness to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise (Heb. 11:17-19). No other New Testament writer treats of this matter.

Paul’s Sign Manual.

One of the ways the enemy of truth was seeking to hinder the progress of the Gospel was by circulating spurious epistles purporting to come from the apostle:

‘Now we beseech you, brethren, ... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, *neither by spirit*, nor by word, *nor by letter as from us*, as that the day of Christ (the Lord, revised text) is at hand’ (2 Thess. 2:1,2).

In order to guard against this, Paul decided to end all his letters in one special way, in his own handwriting:

‘The salutation of Paul *with mine own hand*, which is the token in every epistle: *so I write*’ (2 Thess. 3:17),

and then follows a reference to the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, this, so fitting, coming from one who was predominantly the apostle of grace. This is the way that all the thirteen epistles associated with his name ends. Not one of the other epistles concludes in such a way, and it must surely be obvious that if anyone else used the same formula, its use as a guarantee of genuineness would have been null and void. *But the epistle to the Hebrews ends with it* and this is another definite link with the apostle Paul and his writings.

Not only this, but there are remarkable doctrinal parallels between Philippians and Hebrews, as Charles H. Welch has shown in his *Alphabetical Analysis*, Part Two, page 108. These cannot be ignored by anyone who is studying this subject with an unbiased mind. We now exhibit them: (*see next page*).

From all the foregoing facts, it surely is clear that behind the epistle to the Hebrews is the *mind of Paul*, if not his actual *pen*.

How expositors can deny this passes our comprehension. Some may ask: does it really matter who the human author was? From one standpoint we answer ‘no’, for, whoever he was, God the Holy Spirit overruled what he wrote, so that it could become part of inspired Scripture, and He is the real Author. From another point of view the answer is ‘yes’, for if Hebrews cannot be included in the Pauline collection of epistles, then the perfect arrangement and balance is upset.

There are 21 epistles in the New Testament, and with Hebrews included in Paul’s writings there is a perfect balance of sevens:

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|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| (1) Galatians | (1) Ephesians | (1) 1 Peter |
| (2) 1 Thessalonians | (2) Colossians | (2) 2 Peter |
| (3) 2 Thessalonians | (3) Philippians | (3) James |
| (4) 1 Corinthians | (4) 1 Timothy | (4) 1 John |
| (5) 2 Corinthians | (5) Titus | (5) 2 John |

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(6) Hebrews	(6) Philemon	(6) 3 John
(7) Romans	(7) 2 Timothy	(7) Jude

HEBREWS		PHILIPPIANS	
Things accompanying salvation	6:9	Work out salvation	2:12
Heavenly city	11:10; 12:22	Citizenship in heaven	3:20
Reproach	11:26; 13:13	Fellowship of sufferings	3:10
Reward	10:35; 11:26	Prize	3:14
The race set before us	12:1	I press toward the mark	3:14
Leaving ... let us go on	6:1,2	Forgetting things behind	3:13
Obtain a better resurrection (condition attached)	11:35	Attain unto an out-resurrection (condition attached)	3:11
Power of His resurrection	13:20	Power of His resurrection	3:10
Work in ... His will	13:21	Work in ... His will	2:13
Christ the Image	1:3	Christ the Form	2:6
Angels worship Him	1:6	Every knee bow	2:10
Thou, Lord, in beginning	1:10	Jesus Christ is Lord	2:11
A little lower than angels	2:9	No reputation ... He humbled Himself	2:7,8
Cross endured for the joy and used as an example	12:1,2	Cross suffered ... wherefore ... exalted ... Let this mind be in you	2:5,9
Crucify to themselves afresh	6:6	Enemies of the cross of Christ	3:18
PERFECTION (6:1; 10:39)		or PERDITION (3:12,19)	
Fight of afflictions (<i>athlesís</i>)	10:32	Strive together (<i>sunathleo</i>)	1:27; 4:3
Discernment	5:14	Discernment ... differ	1:9,10
Look diligently	12:15	Mark them that walk	3:17
Esau ... for one morsel of meat sold his birthright	12:16	Whose God is their belly	3:19
That generation - tempted God in the wilderness	3:7-10	Perverse generation ... without murmurings	2:14,15
Be content with such as ye have	13:5	Whatsoever state ... content	4:11
Communicate	13:16	Communicate	4:14,15
With such sacrifices well-pleased	13:16	Sacrifice ... sweet smell ... well pleasing	4:18
Fruit of righteousness	12:11	Fruit of righteousness	1:11
Compassion in bonds	10:34	Partaker in bonds	1:7
Whose faith follow (<i>mimsomai</i>)	13:7	Be followers together of me (<i>summimetes</i>)	3:17
Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods	10:34	Let your moderation be known unto all men	4:5
You have in heaven an enduring substance (<i>huparchonta</i>)	10:34	Our citizenship is in heaven (<i>huparcho</i>)	3:20
Salutation from Italy	13:24	Salutation from Caesar's household	4:22
Paul's sign manual	13:25	Paul's sign manual	4:23

While we do not wish to imagine or invent sevens in the Scriptures, the employment of this number by God from the very beginning of creation (seven days), its reiteration in the economy of Israel (the Sabbath; seven weeks (Pentecost); seven years, (Sabbath of the land); (7 x 7 years to the Jubilee; 70 x 7 years of Daniel 9 and the seven times of Leviticus), and in addition the accumulation of sevens in the book of the Revelation and elsewhere show us that the purpose of the ages in Christ is divinely designed in sevens, and we therefore are not surprised to find the same feature in the epistles of the New Testament and we should not lightly set this aside.

If Hebrews is not linked with Paul, then we have *thirteen* epistles from him (an ominous number, and linked with Satan in the Scriptures), the balance of epistles during and after the Acts is upset, and moreover we have no epistle during the Acts which gives the doctrine of the practical outworking and perfecting of faith with reward in view. Hebrews stands to the Pentecostal church much in the same way as Philippians and 2 Timothy do to the prison ministry of the apostle Paul, through which ministry the joint-Body, i.e. the Body of Christ, is unfolded.

If we were asked whose pen wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, we should hazard the opinion, for what it is worth, that Luke was the amanuensis or editor, or possibly Silas. Luke was the close companion of Paul right to the end (2 Tim. 4:11). We have not only his own writings (The Gospel and Acts) with which to compare, but also his reporting of Paul's speeches in the Acts period. We have before remarked on the likeness of Luke's Greek style to the Hebrews epistle, a feature which has been noticed by many scholars, and the Lucan tradition goes back, as we have seen, to the beginning of Christianity.

As regards Silas as the possible pen-man, we know for a fact that he was closely linked with Paul during the Acts. His name appears for the first time in Acts 15, where he is described as belonging to the 'chief men among the brethren' (Acts 15:22). He was commissioned together with Barnabas by the apostles and elders to write the Jerusalem Council's decisions and to take and explain the letter at Antioch.

He then became attached to Paul and accompanied him on his second missionary journey and both were imprisoned at Philippi. He was with Paul at Corinth where the Thessalonian epistles were probably written in the joint names of Paul and *Silvanus* and Timothy. *Silas* is probably the Jewish and *Silvanus* the Latin form of his name. There are two other references to him, in 2 Corinthians 1:19 and 1 Peter 5:12, where he seems to be associated with the writing of 1 Peter.

Thus there are four passages leading one to think that he had a part in the production of some document. This assumes that the Silas of the Acts and the Silvanus of 1 Peter are the same person. Although Silas was a common name and therefore one cannot be dogmatic on this point, this seems most probable, as Lightfoot suggests in his *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*. One would have expected some distinguishing remark if this were not so.

Some scholars look on Silvanus as only the *bearer* of 1 Peter, but as E.G. Selwyn points out, if he were the bearer only, *epempsa*, 'sent', not *egrapsa*, 'have written', would have been the more natural word. Selwyn looks on Silas as Peter's pen-man and maintains there are striking affinities between this epistle and that to the Hebrews. Among them are the following. *Geuesthai*, 'Taste', in 6:4,5 may, in view of its context, be derived, as in 1 Peter 2:3, from Psalm 34:8; and *eulogian* with *kleronomein* in Hebrews 12:17 and 1 Peter 3:9 may have a similar connection.

The command to 'pursue peace', in Hebrews 12:14 has also, as in 1 Peter 3:11, the same source. The classical word *komizesthai* occurs in Hebrews 10:36; 11:39 and 1 Peter 1:9; 5:4 in contexts which are strikingly similar to other words and phrases which reflect similarities, as 'the word of God is living' (Heb. 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23). The Lord Jesus is the Shepherd (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25); the 'last time' and the 'last days' and the 'little while' before the Lord's Second Coming are parallels. There is a close affinity in the doctrine of redemption and atonement, as expressed in Hebrews 9 and 1 Peter 2 and 3. Christ was *amomos*, 'without spot' (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19); He suffered for sins 'once', *hapax* (Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 3:18); He 'bore our sins' (Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24); His blood was the 'blood of sprinkling' (Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2).

The Pauline idea of the imitation of Christ is reflected in Hebrews 12:1,2. Both epistles were written with a background of persecution. Both deal with the 'reproach' that believers suffer (Heb. 10:29-33,37; 1 Pet. 4:14, 17-19) and in such circumstances, believers are 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth' (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11).

E. G. Selwyn comments:

'I cannot get away from the impression of a relationship between Hebrews 13 and 1 Peter, which goes beyond what common sources or common doctrinal tradition, or even common circumstances, will explain. There seem to be the same problems of church life, the same attitude to them behind both, the same need of hospitality, or sympathy, of active well-doing, of inner cohesion, and subjection towards the Church's leaders; the same sense of reproach and of being without an earthly home; the same necessity to imitate Jesus in His suffering; the same

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hope of an inheritance awaiting believers at the last. And the great chapter of Hebrews reaches its climax in the words redolent of 1 Peter, and of 1 Peter when most near to 1 and 2 Thessalonians’.

(*The First Epistle of Peter*, 1946, p. 241).

The possibility therefore exists, that Silas may have had a part in writing Hebrews, if he fulfils the other conditions. We know that the writer and readers were known to each other (6:9; 13:18,19,23,24). Now whether the readers were Hellenistic Jewish Christians at Jerusalem or Rome, they would be known to Silas who had connections with both places.

Hebrews 13:23 shows that Timothy was known to both the writer and readers. 1 Thessalonian 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Corinthians 1:19 make clear that Silas was known to Timothy, and it would appear that Timothy was with Paul at Rome and would therefore be known to the church there.

The writer of Hebrews was familiar with the hieratic ritual. Before Silas joined Paul in his missionary journeys, he was attached to the Jerusalem church and would be well acquainted with the ritual of the Temple.

The author of Hebrews was a classicist who constantly made use of the LXX. The writer of 1 Peter has a wealth of vocabulary and is deeply steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures, as he shows by direct quotation and frequent indirect allusions, and he knows them in the LXX form.

Thus, the background and personality of Silas, his circumstances, divine knowledge, style and vocabulary are not against the theory that he was the author of Hebrews.

However, no one can *dogmatically* say who the amanuensis was, and we feel a little modesty may not be amiss here. If early Christian scholars were not sure, how can we be, living more than 1900 years later? We believe Origen summed up the position well when he stated that he believed that ‘the *thoughts* are the thoughts of the apostle, but the *language* and the composition that of one who recalled from memory and, as it were, made notes of what was said by his master ... it was not without reason that *men of old time* (Origen was born A.D. 185) have handed it down as Paul’s ... But who wrote the epistle (i.e., as the amanuensis) God only knows certainly’. There must have been an ancient and genuine tradition concerning the Pauline authorship of Hebrews for the Eastern church to give such a united testimony in this way.

From the foregoing Scriptural facts we have brought forward, we unhesitatingly take the same standpoint as Origen of old, although it may not be the fashion in theological circles at the moment to ascribe this magnificent and important epistle to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

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