

## THE WORD "CHRIST."

BY THE REV. A. KAMPMEIER.

AS a result of a recent correspondence with the Editor on the word *Christos* and at his request I make the following comments:

On Professor Cornill's authority it is generally accepted that the Solomonic Psalms in their present form must have originated between the years 48 and 37 B. C. Since the Septuagint appears to have been completed about 150 B. C. it cannot be said that the word *Christos* first occurred in the Solomonic Psalms, but that its first appearance is to be found in the Septuagint.

In eight passages the Septuagint uses the word *Christos* to translate *Mashiach*, "the anointed one" in the sense of "king." (In its more complete form the expression is *Meschiach-Jahveh*, "Jahveh's anointed.") The passages are 1 Sam. ii. 10, 35; xii. 3, 5; xvi. 6; xxiv. 7, 11; xxvi. 9, 11; Ps. ii. 2; xviii. 51; xx. 7. Cyrus is also called *Christos* (Isaiah xlv. 1). In Ps. cv. 15 the plural form *Christoi* is even used for the patriarchs. Of course in all the passages mentioned there is no reference whatever to the New Testament Messiah, but simply to an ordinary Jewish king, with the exception of the last two passages, referring to Cyrus and the patriarchs. And Cyrus is again referred to in the passage Dan. ix. 25, where *Christos* also occurs, accompanied by the word *nagid*, "prince," which according to the orthodox interpretation refers to the Christ of the New Testament. In the following verse (26), however, the *Christos*, who will be "cut off" very probably refers to the High-priest Onias III, whose assassination was one of the causes of the Maccabean wars, for the term *ha kohen ha maschiach* occurs in the Hebrew Bible for the "anointed High-priest." I just mention this Daniel passage here, as it has always been and is yet considered as one of the stock prophecies referring to the death of Jesus, and because the context in which it occurs has always been

and is even yet the foundation, without any ground whatever, of all that absurd and futile labor spent on the Apocalypse to find out the exact time of the coming of the Antichrist and the second coming of Jesus.

Now to the grammatical part of the question. The form *Christos* is a passive participle of the future, meaning "one who is to be, or one who must be, or one who shall be anointed." But the word *Christos* has also the meaning "anointable" or taking the neuter form *christon*, "something to anoint with" or "to be rubbed on," as salve. Æschylus uses this neuter form in connection with *piston*, "something drinkable," "a draught," and *brosimon*, "something to be eaten," when speaking of different remedies in Prometheus, section 480.

Now the question is whether the word *Christos* can ever be used in the sense "one who has been anointed." Strictly the present passive participle *chriomenos*, "the anointed one," or the perfect participle *kechrimenos*, "one who has been anointed," would be expected.

But I think there is satisfactory evidence that the passive participle of the future, the form *Christos*, has imperceptibly changed from the meaning of "one who is to be anointed" into the meaning of "one who has been anointed." It has received a perfect passive participial meaning. In the Antigone of Sophocles, the messengers say they have seen her (Antigone) hung by the neck. She had committed suicide. The messengers say: "*Ten kremasten auchenos kateidomen*."<sup>1</sup> Now *kremasten* (accusative case, fem.) is formed exactly the same way as *Christos*; *kremastos* is a passive participle of the future of the verb *kremannumi*.<sup>2</sup> Here plainly the meaning is not: "We saw her to be hanged," but "we saw her hung by the neck." And there are other forms formed exactly the same way as *Christos* from the future of the verbs, but having imperceptibly gone over into the past passive participle meaning. Thus *kerastos*, "mingled," *plastos*, "moulded," *pristos*, "sawed," *phryktos*, "roasted."

I therefore think that *Christos*, has in the face of the afore mentioned examples passed over into the meaning "one who has been anointed." At least from the number of examples in the Septuagint the form *Christos* is indisputably shown to be used in that sense. I therefore think, that there is no need to assume, that *Christos* stands in any connection with or is a corruption of the word *Krishna*, although I would not deny that the Indian God-

<sup>1</sup> τὴν κρεμαστὴν αὐχένος κατείδομεν.

<sup>2</sup> κρεμάσω, fut.

incarnation ideas stand in connection or have influenced Western Asiatic ideas in this respect, especially if we take into consideration the legends of Krishna being born among the shepherds and the massacre of the children of his age by a king who feared to be deposed by the new-born king.

If the evidence of the Septuagint shows that *Christos* is used in the sense of "the anointed," i. e., "king," and if it is a fact of Jewish history, that ever since the decline of the glory of the old Davidic kingdom the hope was fondly cherished that the old glory would be renewed by some future scion of the Davidic house, which hope was even yet expected to be fulfilled in the person of Serubabel after the return from the Exile, (compare the post-Exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah) but of course in vain; and if as late as the Solomonic Psalms this hope of a Messiah from the house of David was kept up; why is it not natural that such a national Messiah- or *Christos*-idea became amalgamated with the Persian *saoshyant* and other "saviour" and god-incarnation ideas and that under the word *Christos* were subsumed all hopes, the national, social, spiritual and moral, among the Jews just preceding the times of Jesus? Especially since, as we know from the New Testament, among the primitive followers of Jesus, the national and spiritual Messianic hopes seem to have been blended together and could not be parted from each other. And to give utterance to my own opinion, I suspect that Jesus, whom I take as a historical person, in some way or other, perhaps not clearly, thought himself to be the Messiah, because he was a descendant of David, according to Romans i. 3, one of the oldest and most authentic writings of the New Testament, written about 59 A. D., and because any such descendant might consider it possible to become the Messiah, as the noted Jewish Medieval writer David Kimchi has said. And further the promises Jesus gave to his disciples, that they should sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in the final restoration; as also other sayings in the Gospels point to the view that the Messianic ideas of Jesus were not entirely of a spiritual character.