

Der Sohn und die Söhne
Julius Kögel
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This is a most interesting and instructive exposition of an exceedingly difficult passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It forms the first installment of a series of similar expositions on other parts of the Epistle to be published, we infer, in the same periodical. Dr. Kögel's licentiate's dissertation published in 1899 had for its subject "The Hidden Character of Jesus as the Messiah the Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews." In this he endeavored to show that the danger to which the readers were exposed and which the writer seeks to meet sprang from their religious externalism. They found fault both with the lowly form of Jesus' life on earth and with the invisible mode of His later existence in heaven, because both lacked the external, palpable glory for which they craved in the Messiahship and for themselves. Hence the two main points which the author elucidates in the epistle are the reasonableness of Jesus' humiliation, suffering and death, and the reasonableness of his invisible, spiritual mode of activity in heaven. The former he does chiefly in the second chapter, the latter in the subsequent discussion of the high-priestly office of Christ. It will be perceived that, according to this view, the doctrine of the high-priesthood of Christ and of His sacrifice are not dealt with on account of any direct relation in which the readers stood to the Old Testament form of religion, but only because they offered the writer a suitable point of vantage to counteract the externalistic tendency of the readers and to open their eyes to the spiritual glories of the Christian religion. Of course it is not excluded that the Hebrews may have been Christians from the Jews; perhaps even their externalism may have had something to do with their nationality and religious antecedents. In fact Dr. Kögel, over against modern proposals to make the readers Gentile Christians, adheres to the old view that they were largely Christian from the Jews. Only he does not base this conviction on the prominence which the ritual conceptions of priesthood and sacrifice obtain in the epistle, but on other grounds. Dr. Kögel's proposal to find in the externalism of the readers the key to the understanding of the epistle as a whole is not altogether new. Its main principle is found already in Riehm's well-known work. But here it was still coupled with the old view that the externalism assumed the specific form of reliance on the sacrificial cult, still in existence at the time of writing, because this satisfied their craving for something they could see and feel. As already stated, Dr. Kögel entirely dispenses with this, and besides this, both in the thoroughness and in the originality with which the principle is carried out, his dissertation is far in advance of the position of Riehm.

So far as chap. 2:5-18 are concerned, we are prepared to admit that the author has succeeded in making his view highly plausible. The main test lies in the light it throws on the exegesis, both as to connection of thought and as to details of expression. There can be no doubt that the writer of the epistle here deals with people who took offense at the humiliation, the suffering, the death of Jesus during His earthly life and seeks to remove the offense by proving the reasonableness of these facts. He shows, on the one hand, that for Jesus the humiliation He underwent was the ground of His glory, and, on the other hand, that the reason for thus attaining to glory lay in the identification between Him and mankind, which identification finds its most profound and succinct expression in this, that as He is the Son so they are destined to become the sons of God. This unity, in view of the actual condition of mankind subject to misery and death, entails for the Savior participation in the same experiences. Dr. Kögel convincingly shows how this idea of identification between Christ and man requires us to assume that the author understands and applies the quotation from the

eighth Psalm in v. 6-8 generically and not with exclusive reference to the Messianic "Son of Man." Only thus the word of the Psalmist furnishes the keynote to the subsequent demonstration that in Jesus the human race has reached its destiny of lordship over the world to come. A more satisfactory discussion of this mooted point we do not remember having seen anywhere. We are not prepared, however, to give the same full assent when Dr. Kögel further assumes that in the contrast between the natural weakness and insignificance of man and his exalted destiny as drawn by the Psalmist, the author of Hebrews found a sort of prefiguration of the contrast between the two stages of humiliation and glory in Christ's Messianic career, and that by this understanding of the Psalm he was partly justified in giving the words *βραχυ τι*, where they are applied to Christ in ver. 9, the temporal sense of "a little while." In our opinion, the author of Hebrews emphasizes the smallness of man by nature in order to bring out the marvelousness of the fact that to such a small creature has been given the lordship over the universe. In harmony with this we would also understand the *γαρ* of ver. 5 in dependence upon the "so great salvation" of ver. 3, while Dr. Kögel thinks that it serves to introduce the proof of the reality of the proposition "God has spoken in a Son." There are other points of detailed exegesis in which we differ from the author's conclusions. The emphasis placed on *υπερ παντος*, ver. 9, in the sense of an absolutely unqualified universalism of the atonement, we think beside the scope and intent of the passage. In our view the point of the quotation from Isaiah 8 in the thirteenth verse is that the Savior exercises trust in God as believers do and is thus identified with them, not that He exercises trust *for their benefit* and thus identifies Himself with them. Of the latter the words quoted say nothing, and this thought was clearly enough expressed in the quotation preceding and that following. That "the power of the devil" is a power exercised in the state of death and not merely through the indirect or direct infliction of death, and that the "fear of death" which Christ has removed relates to the future state, not to the momentary experience of dying, might have been more clearly stated. Excellent, however, is the observation that to the writer's mind this bondage to Satan forms the opposite of the lordship for which man was originally destined and that this explains the introduction of the reference to Satan, whereas otherwise only the deliverance from death might have been mentioned. Over the construction of the words in ver. 18 we would not seriously dispute with the writer, but we think it worth while to maintain that the verse speaks not of Jesus' temptations as a source of suffering, as Dr. Kögel implies, but of His sufferings as a source of temptation. Most of these, however, are minor points, which in no wise interfere with the convincing character of the discussion as regards its main thesis. We are all the more grateful for Dr. Kögel's discussion of the theme of the identification between "the Son and the sons," because it steers clear of the error into which Westcott and others have fallen through emphasizing the same thought, viz., that the Messianic Sonship and the incarnation are independent of sin and redemption. In an appendix the author discusses at some length the two rival readings *χαριτι θεου* and *χωρις θεου* in ver. 9, deciding in favor of the former. We note in conclusion that in a just published collection of *Theologische Studien Martin Kähler dargebracht*, Dr. Kögel contributes a study on "the conception of *τελειουν* in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with its New Testament usage."