

"The Priesthood of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews"
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The Epistle to the Hebrews deals mainly with the two great offices of Christ as Revealer and as Priest. It is clear that the author consciously coordinates the two. In the opening verses, which serve as a prelude to the entire Epistle, we have side by side: "God spake in a Son" and "Having made purification of sins He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." But especially 3:1 is interesting from this point of view. Here the Savior is called "Apostle and High Priest of our confession." The article, put only once, binds the two conceptions most closely together: He is Apostle and High Priest in one, and His chief value for the believer consists in His being the two jointly; hence He forms as such the content of the confession, and the readers are exhorted carefully "to consider" Him in this twofold capacity.

While the Epistle has in common with the other New Testament writings the representation of Christ as Revealer, it stands practically alone in explicitly naming Him a Priest. It were rash to infer from this that the conception was first created by our author. The sacrificial character of the death of Christ was a common article of faith long before. This was held in connection with Isaiah 53. Now it is precisely in Isaiah 53 that the Servant of Jehovah figures not merely as the passive lamb of sacrifice, but also as He who actively and freely pours out His soul unto death (vs. 12) or even, according to the rendering, made his soul an offering for sin (vs. 10). Psalm 110 had been interpreted Messianically by Jesus Himself: His followers cannot have forgotten that thereby He ascribed to His own Person the character of a Priest-King. Also the prophecy of Zechariah 6:12, 13 might easily have led to the same conception, although there seems to be no positive evidence to this effect. According to Paul, Christ is not merely the sacrifice, but also the one who brought the sacrifice (Eph. 5:2), and throughout the Apostle emphasizes the fact that He gave Himself up to death freely. How easily the idea of a mediatorial position between God and man closely approaching that of the priesthood might associate itself with this appears from 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, who gives Himself a ransom for all." Closely related is the further thought that Christ makes intercession for believers in heaven (Rom. 8:34). This again leads on to the conception of the *παρακλητος* in the Gospel and Epistles of John, especially in 1 John 2:1. Further the Apocalypse represents believers as made by Christ "kings and priests to God," or "priests of God and of Christ" (1:6; 5:10; 20:6); inasmuch as Christ's kingship is prior to that of believers, indeed the source of the latter, it is likely that the writer on the same principle derives the priesthood of believers from a priesthood of Christ. A similar representation is found in 1 Peter 2:5: Christians are "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ." It ought not to be overlooked, however, that these last analogies differ in one essential point from the teaching of Hebrews: they speak of believers being priests jointly with Christ, whereas according to our Epistle the Savior's priesthood is something unique and incommunicable (cf., however, 13:15, "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips which make confession to his name").

In Jewish literature analogies are not lacking. In places of the Talmud, where the heavenly sanctuary is spoken of, Michael or the Metatron appears as the officiating high priest. The thought is likewise expressed that the Messiah is dearer to God than the high priest Aaron.¹ In a Targum-passage, the Messiah is represented in connection with Isaiah 53 as making intercession for the sins of the people

and bearing their sins.² Philo speaks much of his Logos as high priest; he calls him *μεγας*, depicts him as sinless, emphasizes his mildness and benevolence, makes Melchizedek his type, ascribes to him the work of intercession. He even speaks of the Logos as having the twofold office of representing sinful man with God and of being God's messenger to man. But a great difference exists between Philo's conception and the doctrine of our Epistle. It concerns the total absence in Philo of the soteriological, expiatory element. Philo's main interest lies in cosmical speculation and spiritualizing, and this controls his treatment of the Old Testament institutions as well as of other things. The antitypical sanctuary is the kosmos or the soul. In these the Logos is high priest. He stands metaphysically between God and the world. He is pledge to God that the world will not sink back into chaos, pledge to man that God will always retain interest in His creation, and thus he is the herald of peace from God to man. He represents not humanity alone, but the physical world and its elements, for which he makes prayers and offers thanksgiving. It is true Philo speaks of the reconciling of man with God as a function of the Logos. But even for this no real expiation is required. In the ethical sphere his task is simply to separate the good from the evil, to stand between the people of God and their pursuers. From the ritual sacrifices Philo does not rise to a truly expiatory sacrifice of a higher order, but simply to the spiritual sacrifice of the heart.

In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* occurs a remarkable passage (*Test. Levi*, 18), being a prediction about a priest-king, also compared to a prophet, who will perform various eschatological acts. There are several features in this passage which render it analogous to the representation in Hebrews. It is probably based on Psalm 110. The priest-king is brought into connection with Abraham. It is said that he will have no successor in eternity. At the time of his priesthood all sin disappears, the wicked cease doing evil, he opens the gates of paradise, removes the sword that threatened Adam, and gives the saints to eat of the tree of life. He binds Beliar and gives to his own children power to tread on the evil spirits. On the other hand, it should be observed that this Messianic priest is here derived from the tribe of Levi and no reference is made to any expiatory function.

The question why in the Epistle to the Hebrews, among all New Testament writings, the conception of Christ as Priest and Sacrifice, the whole expression of the gospel in terms of the ritual, plays such a prominent part still presses for an answer as much at the present day as ever before. It is true on the old view, which up to Roth (1836) held undisputed sway, and according to which the Epistle is addressed to Jewish-Christians living in Palestine and personally interested in the temple-service, the answer appeared obvious. But this view seems of late to have been losing ground, especially after the searching criticism to which it was subjected by von Soden in 1884. Even Zahn abandons it. The new view is not, however, necessarily distinguished from the old in that it affirms the Gentile-Christian character of the readers. It may do this, as is the case with von Soden, but it need not. Zahn, while absolutely detaching the Epistle from the local Jewish environment of Palestine and the temple-worship, yet advocates the Jewish nationality of the Christian readers, whom he seeks in Rome. Harnack is unjust in accusing Zahn of having only partially emancipated himself from the old tradition, simply because he continues to affirm that the readers were Christians from the Jews. This is unjust, we say, because the grounds on which Zahn affirms the latter are altogether independent of the old view, have in fact nothing whatever to do with the ritual content of the Epistle, and therefore, if sound, demand recognition, wherever the readers may be located, and whatever interpretation may be placed upon the teaching of the Epistle. The specific difference of the new and spreading opinion is rather exclusively this, that it holds the ritual character of the content of the Epistle

should not be explained from any direct personal concern of the readers with the Jewish ceremonial; and that it upholds this negative even where on other grounds the Jewish nationality of the readers is still maintained.³ No matter whether the readers were Christians from the Jews or the Gentiles, some other explanation is sought for the prominence of the ideas of priesthood and sacrifice. Now this modern view, it must be acknowledged, is able to present a respectable array of evidence in its favor. It is hard to acquit Bruce of rashness when he simply brushes it aside as a “brilliant paradox.” But Bruce was quite right in his perception, that what was the strong point of the old view constitutes the weak point of the new view, viz., its manner of dealing with the pronounced ritual character of the Epistle. The old view accounted for this with ease and naturalness; of the new theory the same can hardly be said. Of course, if the Epistle be not a true letter, but a theological homily, as among others Reuss, Deissmann, and quite recently the late Wrede,⁴ have asserted, there is no further explanation required for this peculiarity than the individual taste or preference of the author. We hardly believe, however, that this view, even after Wrede’s skillful advocacy, will gain wide acceptance. The epistolary conclusion of the document is against it, and to declare this the product of an afterthought of the writer is a critical *tour de force*.

But, if we are dealing with a true letter, then the reason for the prominence and pervasiveness of the ritual element must be sought with the readers, not with the author in the first place. And here the new view has certainly made too light of the problem in hand. Von Soden held, and it has been extensively repeated after him, that the whole comparison between the two covenants and the two rituals serves no other than a mere theoretical purpose; it is simply the most convenient argument by means of which the writer seeks to convince the readers of the ideal character of Christianity as the perfect religion. The aim is nowhere to depreciate the old covenant, but exclusively to exalt the new. The Old Testament was the only Scripture to which the author could resort in theological argument, hence what more natural than that he should make extensive use of it? But is this really an adequate explanation? The problem is not why the writer operates so largely with the Old Testament, nor even why he so insistently places the new dispensation above the old, but, far more specifically, why he proceeds in both respects in such a peculiar way as to concentrate his argument almost exclusively upon the question of priesthood and sacrifice. By a mere dependence on the Old Testament this can scarcely be accounted for. There are after all many other important things in the Old Testament besides the ritual. We find it impossible to believe that the purport of the entire comparison is purely theoretical, that its concrete character does not stand in any connection whatever with the practical difficulty of the readers. Let us grant that the modern view has succeeded in overthrowing the notion of a threatened relapse into Judaism and an argument aimed at preventing this is, after all, no more than a negative conclusion; as to the positive problem what the whole discussion of priesthood and ritual is for, we are left in the dark. So far as we know the only serious attempt to throw light upon this subject is that made by Kögel in his treatise, *The Hidden Character of Jesus as the Messiah, the Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1899,⁵ a treatise which in our opinion has not received the attention it deserves. Kögel’s trend of thought is as follows. The author addresses himself to readers who were in a deplorable spiritual condition due to religious externalism. What he offers them is intended as an antidote against this fundamental defect. More particularly, the externalism of the readers had assumed a Christological form, whence the writer immediately places the figure of the Son in the foreground. There was a lack of appreciation of the true spiritual value of Christ’s Person and work. In the second chapter it appears to what cause this was specifically due. From the fifth verse onward the writer is occupied with demonstrating the reasonableness and necessity of the

humiliation, the sufferings and death of Christ. The readers evidently had shrunk from the idea of the Savior's humiliation, and they shrank from this because of the thought of extreme glory they associated with the conception of Messiahship. Already in the second chapter the subject of the priesthood of Christ is lightly touched upon (vss. 17, 18), and that for the purpose of convincing the readers of the necessity of Christ's earthly humiliation and weakness. This renders it probable that in the sequel also the elaborate presentation of the same theme will be in some way intended to meet the same difficulty. The first reference to a topic which lay uppermost in a writer's mind would almost inevitably reflect the point of view from which he had been mainly considering it. As a matter of fact, the author does handle the theme of the priesthood of Christ in the sequel so as to make it meet an objection arising from the externalistic prepossessions of the readers. As they took exception to the humiliation, so they took exception to the exaltation of the Savior, not of course as such, but because it involved His absence, invisibleness, the unostentatious character of His ministry in a remote sphere. On earth the Messiah's glory was veiled by His lowliness, in heaven it is withdrawn from sight through His exaltation. But the disposition which finds fault with both is in each case in principle the same: it is the desire to see, to have near, to touch, in a word, religious externalism. Now in order to meet this, the writer follows the same method he had followed in the second chapter. He explains that the very point of objection constitutes the source of value and efficacy in the Savior's career. The invisibleness, the remoteness of the present activity of Jesus, far from interfering with its efficacious character, is precisely the ground of the latter. And for the purpose of doing this no better plan could possibly have been pursued than to represent Christ's work under the aspect of a ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. The whole discussion of the priesthood serves primarily the end of justifying the necessity of Christ's heavenly state of existence and heavenly mode of ministry. It is intended to bring out the superiority of the spiritual, invisible, as over against the sensual, and visible. Because he desired to work out this contrast, and for no other reason, the author has drawn the elaborate comparison with the Old Testament ritual within the scope of his argument. The Old Covenant, through the very externality and visibleness and earthliness and temporalness of its institutions, furnished an admirable foil to exhibit the glories of the spiritual, invisible, heavenly, eternal aspect of the work of Christ. It was a mistake to infer from the historical comparison which the Epistle draws that the difficulty of the readers lay likewise in the historical sphere. Closely looked at, the whole historical comparison appears to be subservient to the setting forth of the theological contrast between the sensual and the spiritual worlds, and it is in connection with this latter antithesis that we must look for the writer's diagnosis of the evil he seeks to correct. The readers were not at fault in showing any preference for the forms of the Old Testament cult in the concrete; theirs was a spirit of externalism, which virtually reproduced the Old Testament standpoint, even though it involved no craving for the ceremonies of the Old Covenant religion.

It is interesting to observe that this view of Kögel follows closely along the lines of the view of Riehm in his well-known work on the *Teaching of Hebrews*. Riehm already recognized the main fault of the readers to which the Epistle addresses itself as religious externalism. He likewise perceived that this fault did not concern exclusively the question of ceremonial, but bore also a Christological and eschatological aspect. But with Riehm all this was still coupled with the old opinion that the readers were Jewish-Christians of Palestine, and that their externalism assumed the specific form of reliance on the sacrificial cult, still in existence at the time of writing. Dr. Kögel entirely dispenses with this, and besides, both in the thoroughness and in the originality with which the principle is carried out, advances far beyond Riehm. The nationality of the readers becomes entirely immaterial on his view.

While in point of fact, over against the modern proposal to make them Gentile Christians, Dr. Kögel adheres to the old theory that they were Christians from the Jews, this has nothing to do with his main argument. 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. Acceptance of his view by no means carries with it assent to this specific opinion. Religious externalism, while a typical fault of Judaism, was certainly not a fault to which Gentile Christians were immune.

The view just presented throws an interesting light on the fact that the Epistle by preference calls Jesus high priest. It is true both priest and high priest are used. But the two are not used indiscriminately. Wherever priest is found there is a special reason for its appearance. High priest is the normal designation. In the quotation from Psalm 110 it was necessary to use "priest" because the Messiah is there so designated in dependence on the title given to Melchizedek in Genesis. The only exception is 5:10, where the quotation, however, is somewhat free. Wherever the contrast is between the Melchizedek order and the Levitical order of priesthood, "priest" was, of course, specially in place (chap. 7, up till vs. 22, also 8:4). In 10:21 we would expect "high priest," but here probably the addition of the adjective *μεγας* made the prefix *αρχι* appear superfluous. But as a rule the author reveals a special interest in representing the Savior as high priest, not merely as priest in general. The explanation for this will suggest itself on observing that the one transaction in the Old Testament ritual on which the Epistle dwells more than on any other feature and the act to which it makes the central act of Christ's priestly ministry correspond, is the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies on the day of atonement. The Savior is a high priest because in the discharge of His ministry He enters into heaven. This is of the very essence of His priestly work, whence also in 7:26 the "made higher than the heavens" is placed, as one of the two great requisites, side by side with "separated from sinners" (cf. further 4:14; 6:20; 8:1, 4; 9:11; 10:25). But, if the subject of the priesthood is pointedly treated in such a way as to make it in its central aspect identical with entrance into heaven, then the inference lies near, that the whole discussion of this subject ultimately serves the purpose of showing the necessity of the exaltation, of the heavenly state of existence of the Savior. There is reason, as has been shown, to believe that the readers took offense at this, because it clashed with their externalistic conception of Christ and His work and with their practical desire for a visible, present Savior. In answer to this the author emphasizes that the Savior is a high priest and that as such the only place where He can properly dwell and effectually minister is the heavenly sanctuary.

The first and most general element entering into the author's conception of a priest is that of leadership based on identification with those who are led. A priest is one who stands at the head of others and thus mediates their approach unto God. Thus the movement of the priestly function is in a direction opposite to that of the prophetic function. The prophet officiates from God to man, represents God with man; the priest officiates from man to God, represents man with God. In the passage 5:1-10, which sets forth the qualifications of a high priest, this is expressed by the words: "Every high priest is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God (*τα προς του θεου*, cf. 2:17). Priesthood, however, is not leadership in general; it is distinctly leadership based on and involving identification of nature and experience. The rendering of the term *αρχηγος* in 2:10 and 12:2 by either "author" or "captain" is inadequate precisely for this reason, that it leaves the element of identification in experience unexpressed. While *αρχηγος* etymologically and according to usage may mean both "author" and "captain," the writer in the two passages cited attaches to it a more specific sense. The *αρχηγος της σωτηριας* is one who leads others unto salvation by himself treading the

path of salvation before (cf. 5:1); the *αρχηγος της πιστεως* is one who leads others to faith by himself exercising faith in an ideal manner. Similarly the *αρχηγος τας ζωης* in Peter's speech, Acts 3:15, is not merely the Ruler of life, but the one who first entered into life for His own person and now dispenses life unto others. That the author of Hebrews uses the term with this specific connotation appears from the fact that elsewhere, where the content requires no reference to it, he contents himself with employing the quite general term, *αιτιος* (5:9), "author of salvation." The word *προδρομος* in 6:20 so shares with *αρχηγος* this reference to identification in experience, the "forerunner" being one who not merely leads and opens access, but also anticipates in himself the enjoyment of the access he mediates to others. Back, however, of the identification in experience lies the more fundamental identification of nature. The priestly leadership is such that it cannot be performed by the one who stands outside of the circle in whose interest he serves. The author accordingly emphasizes in the definition of 5:1ff. that a high priest must be *λαμβανομενος εξ ανθρωπων*, "taken from among men." The force of the present participle should be noticed: "one who is constantly, in each case, taken from among men," the permanent force of the requirement thus being brought out, as Westcott has strikingly observed. In this respect the priesthood differs from the prophetic and in general the revealing office. Angels can be and have been revealing agents. In connection with the revealing work of Christ the author nowhere reflects upon the fact, of which the modern Christian consciousness is so apt to make overmuch, viz., that in order to perform this work properly Christ needed to be man. On the contrary, here all the emphasis is thrown upon the thought that the Son's unique greatness, His difference from, His exaltation above man constitutes His chief qualification for the revealership. As a revealer He represents not man but God; therefore the nearer He stands to God the better He is qualified. As a priest, on the other hand, He represents man and His qualification is measured by His nearness to man. It is of importance to notice this point, because in Judaism a tendency prevailed to place intermediate angelic beings between God and man, because direct contact between God and the world had come to be regarded as derogatory to the divine majesty. This tendency showed its influence not merely with regard to the manward movement of revelation, but likewise with regard to the Godward movement of religious approach, as, e.g., when the archangel Michael is represented as ministering at the altar in the heavenly sanctuary. Our author not merely makes the high priest a man, but insists upon it that the very nature of his office requires him to be a man.

Back of the identification of experience and the identification of nature lies a still deeper one, that of spiritual relation to God. This finds expression in 2:11, "He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of One." "To sanctify" is the specific work of a priest, so that we may substitute: "The priest and those whom he serves as priest are all of One." But the "oneness" here spoken of does not relate to physical oneness through descent, as if by the *εις* Adam or Abraham were designated. It is a spiritual bond of unity, the One of whom all are is God. They are all sons of God in the religious sense, as appears clearly from the following quotations, by which the author shows that Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, speaks of them as His children, and trusts in God His Father, as they trust in Him. Only, because they are one in this deeper, spiritual sense, it becomes necessary that they shall be identified in the common possession of flesh and blood. The author therefore adds this by way of inference in the 14th verse: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also in like manner partook of the same." And similarly on the participation in flesh and blood is built the further assimilation in all things, i.e., in all experiences of human life, according to verses 16, 17. In this passage, then, the three successive steps through which the priestly identification with the people passes are carefully marked.

To understand the reason for this identification we must first inquire into what the Epistle teaches concerning the connection between the covenant and the priesthood. Briefly this may be formulated to the effect that the priesthood is center and substance of the covenant, that in which the covenant actually subsists. The clearest expression this principle finds is 7:11-25, containing the comparison between the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant and the Melchizedek priesthood of the New Covenant. The two priesthoods are here compared from the point of view of their efficacy in giving “perfection,” τελειωσις. The comparison of the priesthood passes over, however, almost imperceptibly, into a comparison of the two covenants, although the word διαθηκη is not used until verse 22. In the very first statement, verse 11, the centralization of the whole religious system in the priesthood finds striking expression, viz., through parenthetical statement: “for the people under it hath received the law.” This parenthesis serves to explain how a demand can be made of the priesthood that it shall lead to perfection. Perfection may be expected of every priesthood, because the whole religious system is centered in it; whatever is true of the system is true of the priesthood, and of course the system is a means to perfection. The priesthood was, as it were, the basis on which the entire structure of Old Testament religion had been reared, επ αυτης ο λαος νενομηθηται. The same thought finds formal expression in verse 12, “Where there is a change of priesthood there is made of necessity a change also of law.” The very fact that another priest, a priest of different lineage, arose, one not called after Aaron but after Melchizedek, this very fact proved that the organism of the covenant was being changed by God. The new priest was not simply an αλλος but a ετερος, something heterogeneous, we might say, to the law of the Old Covenant. The author proves this first in a rather external way, by the descent of Jesus, not from the priestly tribe of Levi, but from Judah. As soon as the priesthood is transferred from the priestly tribe to another tribe this betokens the breaking up of the old system. Then, however, he proceeds to show the same thing in a much broader and more fundamental way in verses 15-17.⁶ That the law changes with the priesthood is even more evident from the fact that the new priesthood introduced is of a totally different nature, such as the old law could never have produced. Here it is not merely the law of Levitical descent which is said to have been abrogated, but the law of fleshly descent in general, nay the legal character of the dispensation as a whole, because νομος (notice the anarthrous κατα νομον) is supplanted by δυναμις, verse 16. It is not a change of species within the genus, but a change of the genus itself. The new priest is ιερευς ετερος, not αλλος. With the appointment of Christ as priest after the order of Melchizedek there follows “the disannulling of a foregoing commandment” and this is equivalent to “the introduction of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God,” i.e., of a totally new religious position and outlook. All this already presupposes that the covenant and the priesthood hang inseparably together. Still, it is worked out rather from the point of view that under the Old Covenant, at least, the system, the law, the covenant created and determined the priest- hood. In verse 20, however, the author proceeds beyond this point of view to a representation which makes the covenant depend on the priesthood, so far as the new covenant is concerned. The excellence of the new covenant is in proportion to the excellence of the priesthood as evidenced by the oath which God swore at its introduction.⁷ By so much as the oath lends weight to His priesthood, by so much also has Jesus become surety of a better covenant. It becomes very clear from this passage that in virtue of His priesthood Jesus is the εγγυος, “surety,” of the new covenant. “Surety” means here the one who guarantees that the covenant shall accomplish what it is designed to accomplish. The idea stands in contrast to the inefficacy of the Old Covenant, which possessed no such guarantor. What the writer means is that Jesus by His supernatural personality, by His whole character, affords the assurance that the covenant administered by Him will be efficacious.⁸ The place taken here by

εγγυος is taken in 8:6; 9:15; 12:24 by μεσιτης, “mediator.” The μεσιτης is one who stands between parties, especially parties in discord, to bring about a union. But sometimes the word has a more specific sense, in which it approaches εγγυος and signifies the one who obligates himself to render the mediation effective. The word μεσεγγυος, which is the classical term for the Hellenistic μεσιτης, expresses by its very form the combination of these two ideas in one. It is not possible to determine with absolute certainty whether our author uses the term in the general or the more specific sense. In the former case Christ’s work as μεσιτης might have reference only to the initiating of the covenant at the beginning, being distinct from His work as priest under or in the covenant. In 9:19ff. the mediatorship of Christ is contrasted with the mediatorship of Moses. Now the mediatorship of Moses was something that was confined to the initiation of the covenant and in no wise identified with the priestly λειτουργια under the covenant performed by the Aaronites. Probably, however, the author did not mean to draw a hard and fast distinction between the μεσιτεια and ιερωσυνη of Christ, whatever might be the case with Moses. The emphasis in chapter 9 naturally falls on the mediatorship as a work of inauguration, because the covenant is here represented as a testament set in operation by the death of Christ. In 8:6 and 12:24 the mediatorship certainly includes the continuous priestly ministrations. And if the author made the mediatorship coextensive with the priesthood, it becomes probable that he ascribed to it the same assured, infallible character which the priesthood possesses, in other words that he conceived of the μεσιτης as a μεσεγγυος, as not merely endeavoring to unite but as guaranteeing and effecting the union between God and the people. Even the death of Christ, which set the testament in operation, made it operate with absolute certainty. Both terms, therefore, μεσιτης as well as εγγυος, are expressive of the principle that the priesthood is the heart and center of the covenant.

From what has been said it follows that the purpose of the priesthood can be accurately determined only in the light of the purpose of the covenant. Now the covenant is conceived of in the Epistle in a twofold way. On the one hand it is an instrumental institution, a means to an ulterior end, which end is variously described as salvation, rest, inheritance, arrival in the heavenly country or the city with the foundations, receiving of the unshakable kingdom. On the other hand it also appears as constituting in itself the ideal of religion realized, the perfect covenant being the consummate approach and nearness to God. As such it is the highest category of religion itself. On the whole, the Epistle follows the former representation. Back of the covenant lie the promises of God, and it is for the fulfillment of these promises that the covenant serves. Hence it is said that the covenant “is enacted upon better promises” (8:6). This instrumental character of the covenant further appears from its relation to the idea of τελειωσις “perfection.” The covenant and the priesthood are for the “perfecting” of men (cf. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1). From this point of view they have merely to do with the removal of obstacles that keep man separated from God, and after these obstacles have ceased to exist might be conceived of as passing away, having become unnecessary. But, although this side stands in the foreground, the other side is by no means overlooked by the writer. In the passage he quotes from Jeremiah the reality of the covenant is placed in this, that Jehovah is a God to Israel and Israel is to Jehovah a people (8:8-12). Believers are in virtue of the covenant “a household of God” (3:6). Their life is essentially a λατρευια, a religious service, and this λατρευια is nothing else but the outward manifestation of the covenant (9:14). The covenant is also designated an “eternal covenant” (13:20), which implies that it embodies the religious ideal, since as a mere means to an end it could not be eternal. And what is true of the covenant is true of the priesthood. The priesthood also is viewed as embodying in itself the result of all instrumental processes, the attainment of the goal of all religion.

Through the priest the people enter representatively into the sanctuary of perfect communion with God. Thus the priest not merely works in their interest, but also receives and enjoys in their behalf the fruit of his own labors. He dwells with God as the first heir of the blessedness to which his ministry has opened the way. And even after they themselves have attained to the position of the same religious privileges, he may still be conceived as retaining the old preeminence and as continuing in this function, because in him the actual approach to God is concentrated in a single point and made externally visible. Thus, according to 12:24, the priesthood has its place among the eternal realities of the heavenly world; it forms part of the abiding things believers have “come unto.” And the Savior is called “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” because to His ministrations there is no end.

Now, insofar as the priesthood is viewed alongside of the covenant as eternalized, it in a certain sense extends beyond and appears detachable from redemption. Christ will remain a priest even after redemption shall have fully run its course. To this idea, which undoubtedly has a solid basis in the Epistle, an interesting speculation has attached itself, for which the authority of the Epistle can hardly be claimed. If the priesthood extends beyond the redemptive stage, why, it is asked, should it not in the author’s conception have preceded, both logically and chronologically, the redemptive stage? Why not conceive of a head, an ἀρχηγός, a priest of unfallen humanity, furnishing the point of contact between men and God, gathering up in Himself the united concerns of men with God, voicing their religious approach to God in its various forms of expression? May not the author have followed Philo, who in some such general sense invests his Logos with priestly character, although here the redemptive phase is entirely lacking? From more than one side it has been affirmed that the Epistle’s teaching on the priesthood actually has this wider background of a representative relation apart from sin. It is especially Westcott who by his advocacy of it has given a certain vogue to this view. According to him in the general scheme of Christ’s relation to the world, the atonement is a mere incident, a modification made necessary through the entrance of sin. If sin had not entered, the Son would none the less have become the religious head and leader of the human race, and would just as much have become incarnate to discharge this function as He is now under the redemptive economy. Westcott bases this favorite idea of his on two or three passages and does not allow sufficient weight to the fact that it is rather discountenanced than favored by the general trend of the Epistle’s teaching on the priesthood of Christ. From the everlasting and intrinsic significance of the priesthood of Christ we may perhaps infer, that in a world without sin there would be a priest to lead and represent humanity in its approach to God, but that in such a case this priest would be the incarnate Son the Epistle gives us no reason to suppose. So far as the priesthood of Christ is concerned, the author everywhere speaks in soteriological terms. In the definition of 5:1 it is expressly stated that the high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. If the correct reading here be δώρα τε και θυσιας υπερ αμαρτιων, the “for sins” belongs only to θυσιας and the δώρα will appear as not directly connected with sins. The usual sequence, “gifts and sacrifices,” instead of “sacrifices and gifts,” might seem to favor this. If, on the other hand, the τε be stricken out, both gifts and sacrifices are affirmed to be “for sins.”⁹ But even on the former view it does not immediately follow that, because the gifts are not gifts for sins, the need of a high priest for offering them, has nothing to do with the presence of sin. Non-atoning gifts require a priest, not, perhaps, because a priest is absolutely and under all circumstances necessary, in every human approach to God, but simply, it may be, because sinful man cannot directly bring any gift, not even a non-atoning offering, without a priestly mediator. Westcott’s conclusion, therefore, as if the passage taught that “man

needs an appointed mediator even to bring his gifts to God,” is not warranted. Only when for “man” we substitute “sinful man” can we be certain that we do not go beyond the intent of the author. In 2:17 “the things pertaining to God” are likewise more closely defined by the following clause: “to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” In 7:25 the effect of the unchangeable priesthood of Christ is placed in this, that He can save to the uttermost. The main act of Christ’s high-priestly work was the entering in, once for all, into the heavenly holy place, and by this He obtained eternal redemption (9:12). The purpose of His priesthood is to cleanse the heavenly things by sacrifice (9:23). And all that is said in chapters 9 and 10 about the sacrificial work of Christ presupposes that it has reference to sin.

Westcott appeals to 1:2, God made the Son “heir of all things.” This heirship, he thinks, must be an heirship of the world as such and under all circumstances, not merely an heirship contingent on and determined by redemption, because it corresponds to the mediatorial activity of the Son in creation: “Whom He made heir of all things, through whom He also (i.e., in correspondence with the part assigned to Him in the consummation of the world) made the worlds.” As to this last point it might well be urged that the correspondence expressed by the “also” is fully preserved when the inheritance of the world on the part of the Son is understood as a redemptive inheritance. As God made the Son the mediator of creation, so He made Him the heir of redemption. The parallelism does not require that the world shall be inherited by Christ as a purely created, i.e., natural, world, as distinguished from redemption. But, altogether apart from this, we must make the two strictures that heirship is not equivalent to priesthood and that heirship, if kept separate from redemption, does not involve incarnation. The Son could become heir of the (sinless) world without becoming man; He could not be priest of even such a world without being man. The context does not speak of the Son as incarnate Son exclusively; some of the predicates given Him obviously go back to the state of preexistence, so that, if the thought of hypothetical heirship of the world under all conditions be found here, there is no need to join with it the thought of incarnation under all circumstances. The passage, therefore, teaches nothing of a priesthood of the Son which He would have discharged in the flesh as the incarnate head of an unfallen race. Nor is such an idea found in another passage quoted by Westcott in support of his view, viz., 2:5-10. Here, we are told, the inheritance of the world to come which the exalted Christ receives appears as the realization of the destiny set before the human race at creation according to the words of Psalm 8. Therefore, the reasoning is, even before the fall in the creation-design of the world it was contemplated that the race should reach its destiny through the incarnation of the Son of God. On this we would comment as follows: If the words of the psalm on “the Son of Man” were taken by the author of Hebrews as a direct reference to Christ the Messianic Son of Man, a view actually held by not a few commentators, then the passage would actually lend support to Westcott’s contention. For in that case it would affirm that, in setting the destiny of the world at creation, God had assigned the sovereignty over the world to His Son, and that as Son of Man, i.e., as incarnate Son. In other words, provision would have been made from the outset for the incarnation. Even then, however, the question might be raised, whether we had anything more here than a sort of supralapsarian representation, in which creation appears as subordinated to redemption, and therefore subordinated to redemptive heirship, not to non-redemptive heirship. But, as a matter of fact, this personal Christological interpretation of the phrase “Son of Man” is almost certainly incorrect. Westcott himself does not follow it. He assumes, and in our opinion quite correctly, that the writer of Hebrews interprets the “Son of Man” of the psalm as referring to humanity generically. What the writer therefore affirms on the basis of the psalm is that the creation

sovereignty over the world was destined to the human race. Up to verse 9 the “Man” and “Son of Man” of which he speaks is not an individual, not Christ, but mankind. Then in the ninth verse he makes the affirmation that the fulfillment of this promise given to mankind originally, can be in principle beheld in the exalted Christ. But this is entirely an *a posteriori* statement. The author by no means affirms that, contingently speaking, if sin had not entered, the form of fulfillment of the promise given to the race, would have been the same as it is now. This was a purely speculative question, which he hardly put to himself. It is quite true, God must have known from the very first, when He instituted the order of creation with its implied promise to the race, what would be the concrete form it was to assume in its realization. But God also knew from the very first that sin would come into the world. Beyond the common supralapsarian representation this does not carry us; it does not demonstrate that there was a divine purpose or promise to make the Son the human heir of humanity’s destiny apart from sin and redemption. And even though all this were to be overlooked, it would still have to be remembered that not the priesthood of Christ, but rather His royal office, His lordship over the world to come, is here spoken of. Application of the principle expressed to the priesthood would have to rest on inference.

Leaving, then, this speculation to one side and keeping ourselves within the limits set by the explicit statements of the Epistle itself, we are now prepared to answer the question why the priest must be identified with the people in the manner indicated above. Both for the absolute and for the instrumental significance of his office this is necessary. If He is to express in His own Person the nearness of men to God, then He must obviously partake of human nature, since otherwise no direct contact between God and man could be established. A priest who was not man would make a separation between the two parties in the covenant, just as a revealer who was not “the Son” would fall short of bringing the ideal direct speech of God to mankind. Whatever such a priest might do for the covenant in other directions, he could not realize in himself the consummation of the covenant in which God and man directly meet without any intervening agent of a different nature. This is the meaning of Christ’s being αρχηγος and προδρομος. As He fulfills the destiny of the race in His lordship over the world to come, so He fulfills its destiny in entering upon the closest contact with God. He is within the veil. If we draw nigh to God it is through the fresh and living way He Himself has dedicated. Hence also it is not human nature in the abstract that is demanded for Jesus, but human nature placed in that specific spiritual relation to God which is expressed by the ideas of sonship and faith, as the quotations in 2:11-13 prove.

Most of the statements of the Epistle, however, bring the necessity of the identification of Jesus with human nature and human experience into connection with the instrumental aspect of His priesthood. The possession of human nature was necessary for the great act of sacrifice which consisted in His death. In a subsequent article we intend to discuss the much-mooted question, whether the writer represents Jesus as acting with reference to His death in the capacity of a priest or rather makes the priesthood begin with the entrance into heaven, so that the death would be excluded from it. It is not necessary to prejudge this question here, because, even in case the answer were given in favor of the latter opinion, still the death would remain the necessary basis of the subsequent priestly ministrations in heaven, and what is indispensable for the act of dying is indispensable for the priesthood resting thereon. In two passages at least, Christ’s partaking of human nature is treated from this point of view that it created the possibility for His death and through it the possibility for His subsequent priestly work. These passages are 2:14 and 10:5-7. The former teaches that the Son became partaker

of flesh and blood, that through death He might bring the devil to nought. The latter declares that a body was prepared for the Messiah in order that thus He might be enabled to execute the will of God concerning His sacrificial death. Still, this by no means exhausts what the Epistle teaches under this head. For to the προσφέρειν, “offering,” belongs more than the self-surrender in death; its culminating part is the self-presentation in heaven. It is not merely necessary that a sacrifice be slain; it is equally necessary that the sacrifice be brought into the immediate presence of God as He dwells in the heavenly tabernacle. The sacrifice is not completed until this is done. This is not a result of the sacrifice; it is an integral part of the sacrificial transaction itself. And that this must be done by man, by a priest who is man, follows from the intimate connection between the two acts of self-surrender and self-presentation. Both together constitute one Godward movement; what is necessary for the one is necessary for the other. If he who dies the sacrificial death must be a man, then he who presents the sacrifice in heaven must be a man, the latter being but the carrying out of the former. In connection with this aspect of the matter, it is true, the author does not dwell so much on the possession of human nature by Christ in the abstract, but rather on the possession by Him of human nature in a sinless state. But the one presupposes the other. The very point which the Epistle brings out is that no sinner, even if he had an adequate sacrifice of expiation, could accomplish anything effectual by means of it, because, being a sinner, he would not be able to bring it near to God. The act of presentation being integral to the sacrifice, being required to complete it, could not be allowed to anticipate the effect of the completed sacrifice. And yet such would be the case if a sinful man could come near to God to present his own expiatory offering. The privilege of drawing near would involve that the sacrifice had been accomplished, while as a matter of fact it was still incomplete. Consequently, there must be a sinless one to appear before God in the place of man. While in 4:15 the words “without sin” are not added for any specific reason, but simply to guard the perfection of the Person of Christ in general, as a saving clause to the preceding statement, that He was tempted in all things like unto us, in 7:26 the Savior’s sinlessness is brought into direct connection with His priesthood and that from the point of view of His presence as a priest in heaven. The predicates here enumerated are not in the first place associated in the writer’s mind with Jesus’ earthly life under temptation; they rather describe what He is at present in His glorified state as the “become higher than the heavens” at the close indicates.¹⁰

It was not, however, for the purpose of becoming capable of death alone that the Son had to assume human nature. There is a much wider range of human experience which constitutes an important preparation for the discharge of the instrumental aspect of His priesthood. This will be the first subject for consideration in a subsequent article.

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At the close of a previous article it was stated that not merely in the possession of human nature, but also in the acquisition of a certain class of human experiences, is Jesus, the high priest, identified with His people. The passages that chiefly come under consideration here are 2:10, 17, 18; 4:14-16; 5:7-10. Their peculiarity consists in this, that they bring into connection the four ideas of the suffering, the temptation, the sympathy, and the perfecting of the high priest of the New Covenant. The precise sense in which these ideas are conceived by the author and the precise relation into which he places them to each other depend on the detailed exegesis of the passages cited. It is clear that in a general way the sufferings and temptations of the Savior result in the development of His sympathy and

that they likewise bring about His perfecting for the priestly office. But as soon as we go beyond this general scheme of connection a number of questions emerge: Are the temptations and the sufferings of which the Epistle speaks as entering into the experience of Jesus and as finding their analogy in the experience of the readers, two coextensive categories, so that the sufferings He had to undergo proved for Jesus temptations, or conversely the temptations to which He was exposed became to Him a source of suffering? Or are these two different categories, the temptations being wider in extent than the sufferings and being considered from other points of view by the writer? Does the sympathy which arises from these experiences consist of pity, compassion in general, so as to answer to suffering as such, or does there enter into it a specifically ethical element, so that it is concerned with the suffering as a source of ethical danger, in other words as temptation? Is the perfecting of Christ confined to the production of sympathy out of sufferings and temptations, or does it also have another side, so that we can speak of a development of the ethical and religious nature of the Savior generally? Finally, does the term τελειουν, "perfecting," where it is used in connection with these experiences, bear the moral-subjective sense of rendering Jesus perfect in holiness, or does it express the official-objective idea that these experiences somehow fitted, equipped Him for the discharge of His high-priestly work?

In 2:10 we have the general thought that because Jesus is αρχηγος σωτηριας, the instrument by whom God leads many sons to glory, it was fit that God should perfect Him through sufferings. Sufferings are here the means to perfecting, but it is not directly stated how this nexus is to be understood. It has been proposed to make the τελειωσαι δια παθηματων of verse 10 equivalent in meaning to the "being crowned with glory and honor on account of the suffering of death" spoken of in verse 9. The connecting γαρ at first sight seems to favor the equivalence of the two statements. The sense would then simply be that God used the sufferings, on the principle of "cross and crown," to introduce Jesus into the state of consummate glory, and τελειωσαι would contain no reference to this glory as an equipment for further, either priestly or other, service. There are, however, two details of expression which this exegesis fails to explain. The substitution of δια c. gen. for δια c. acc. and that of the plural "sufferings" for "suffering" must both be significant. If the former shows that the perfecting is conceived rather as an end aimed at on the part of God than as a reward reaped on the part of Christ, the latter proves that the "sufferings" come under consideration in their plurality, as successive events, as a course of training leading pedagogically to the τελειωσις. Jesus' sufferings were intended by God to fit or equip, and in so far to perfect, Him for His work as αρχηγος σωτηριας. But the author does not immediately proceed to explain how the sufferings served this purpose. Whether they worked through the production of sympathy or in some other way as a course of ethical training, we are not told as yet. More light on this is shed by the relation which verse 10 bears to the following context, and especially to the climax of the latter in verses 17, 18. For it is plain that verse 11 takes out of the specific affirmation of fellowship in suffering expressed in verse 10 the idea of fundamental identification in standing before God in general, and that the following statements by a process of particularizing again bring down this general thought to the point where it reaches its special application to the suffering of human life, the "in all things," as verse 17 expresses it. If this understanding of the progress of thought be correct, it follows that to the δια παθηματων τελειωσαι of verse 10 essentially the same meaning must attach as to the more explicit formulas employed in verses 17 and 18 to explain the philosophy of Jesus' suffering and temptation in connection with His priesthood. Now of verses 17 and 18 the meaning cannot be doubtful. The identification between Christ and the readers in suffering fits Him for the discharge of the priesthood: it does this by enabling

Him to become “a merciful and faithful high priest.” And the quality of mercy thus developed is not mercy in general in response to suffering as such. In two ways the author makes plain that he has in mind a specific ethical sympathy which is concerned with the sufferings of the readers on their moral side, in their bearing on the fact of sin. For ἐλεημων (as well as πιστος) is defined by the following: “for the propitiation of the sins of the people.” If mercy operates towards the propitiation of sins, there must be some connection between the suffering which excites it and these sins, for otherwise it would exhaust itself in the relief of suffering as such. In the abstract here again more than one possibility suggests itself. The mercy might aim at the removal of sin as the source of suffering. Or it might have reference to sin in its character of suffering, as necessarily involving ethical pain. As a matter of fact, neither of these two ideas is involved. What is meant verse 18 explains, if we follow the rendering given by the Revised Version in the margin: “For having been Himself tempted in that wherein He hath suffered, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Because Christ’s sufferings were not sufferings in general, but specifically temptation-sufferings, sufferings which became for Him a source of temptation, therefore He can succor those who are in an analogous situation, i.e., tempted to sin by their sufferings. The aorist participle πειρασθεις has causal force and assigns the temptation-aspect of His sufferings as the ground for His ability to succor. It is not the memory of suffering in general that evokes His sympathy: the thought is much more concrete and specific: the sufferings which He has behind Him and carries with Him as a past experience (notice the perfect tense πεπονθειν) enable Him to know what force of temptation suffering exerts to make the sinner fall. His mercy thus grasps the sufferer in his moral capacity, in the very crisis where suffering threatens to issue into sin or actually issues into the same. And thus it becomes to Him the priestly incentive for propitiating the sins that have resulted from the temptation. What verse 17 calls “to propitiate” verse 18 calls “to succor.” The latter term in itself might be of wider application, but probably the author in the present case connects the same meaning with it as with the former, understanding it of the priestly succor which consists in the propitiation of sins. It should be observed in this connection that ιλασκεσθαι does not here denote the single act of atonement on the cross, but the subsequent activity whereby the Savior continually applies the propitiatory power of His sacrifice. Taken in this wider sense it could be easily replaced by the general term βοηθησαι, “to succor.”

In the second passage, 4:14-16, we reach essentially the same conclusions. The γαρ at the opening of verse 15 is intended to guard against the mistaken inference, as if the exalted nature and position of the heavenly high priest detracted in any way from His sympathy with men in their miserable state as sinners. Christ can sympathize with the “weaknesses” of the readers. The word ασθενειαι may in itself denote “weaknesses” with or without a sinful connotation (cf. 5:3, where it is connected with the necessity for atonement in the case of the earthly high priests). In the passage before us, however, it is more than likely that the author thinks of weakness with which sin is not necessarily connected, though it may render human nature susceptible to temptation and sin. For it is emphasized that Jesus was “tempted in all points like as we are” and, if sinful weaknesses had been meant, such unqualified affirmation of the likeness between His temptation and that of the readers would hardly have been made. The added phrase χωρις αμαρτιας does not restrict the likeness of the temptation but relates exclusively to the outcome of the latter. Its proper rendering is not “except by manner of appeal to sin in Him,” but “without the result of sin in His case.” The analogy, therefore, between Christ’s temptations and those of the readers remains unimpaired. Christ has sympathy with their weaknesses because by experience He knows these weaknesses Himself. But that the weaknesses become the occasion for sympathy from a specifically moral point of view appears here also in more

than one way. It was as temptation that the weaknesses entered into the Savior's experience, and it is as temptation that they draw forth His sympathy. The readers are assured that His pity goes out towards them as tempted, as potential sinners. Besides this, they are exhorted to seek not mere mercy, *ελεος*, but *ελεος και χαριν*, a mercy accompanied by forgiveness, whence also "the throne of grace" is named as that which they are to approach unto with boldness. We can, however, determine still more closely from the context what the author is specifically thinking of in connection with this temptation of Jesus and of the readers. The words *κρατωμεν της ομολογιας*, "let us hold fast the confession," show that a temptation to apostasy, to a denial of their Christian state, is meant. If we remember that the temptation had its rise in "weakness" of a sinless kind, the conclusion lies near that the sufferings which the readers had to endure for the sake of their faith are referred to. Thus the analogy between Christ's case and that of the Hebrews appears first in its true completeness. Like they, He had been called upon "to hold fast the confession," when the human *ασθενεια*, consisting in the fear of suffering, tempted Him to swerve from His appointed path. Having this experience behind Him, He can, when sufferings tempt the readers to the denial of their faith, extend to them the intelligent sympathy which results in mercy and grace. Here also, as in 2:18, the exercise of this priestly function is described as a "helping," the supply of *βοηθεια*.

The passage, 5:7-10, primarily serves to prove the proposition that Jesus complies with the qualifications of a true high priest, because He did not take the office to Himself in any self-assertive manner, but was called of God. As a fact tending to show this, the author dwells upon the course of preparation He had to pass through on earth and which issued into His *τελειωσις*. This course of preparation had for its aim that He might be identified with His people. The point of identification here is the experiential knowledge of obedience, as appears from the correspondence between this conception in verse 8 and verse 9: "having learned *obedience*, He became the author of salvation to those that *obey*." It has been too quickly inferred, however, from this statement that the author of Hebrews ascribes to Jesus a progressive moral development in general and associates this with the *τελειωσις* he predicates of Him. It must be plain to the most superficial reader that "obedience" here has a very specific meaning: it is obedience to the call of suffering, for the Savior learned it "from what He suffered." If in the two preceding passages the suffering appeared as a school in which was learned the strength of temptation as inherent in suffering, here we meet with the positive counterpart to this conception: the suffering as a school of obedience through the overcoming of the temptation proceeding from it. Because the obedience developed itself in suffering, the period of its development is called "the days of His flesh," i.e., the days in which He was subject to the weakness of the natural earthly life, and therefore had to conquer the dread of pain and death which is inseparable from this state. The prayers and supplications which He is said to have offered up were not that He might be saved from death, but that He might be saved out of it; they were expressions of that obedience He was learning, not expressions of a mood of weakness He had to unlearn. For the writer adds that He was heard, He obtained what He prayed for, and this was not escape from death, but salvation through and out of death. From the above it appears how we must understand the statement that "He learned obedience." "Learning" is not here equivalent to acquiring what was not previously there in principle, far less to acquiring that of which the opposite was previously there. Chapter 10:5-7 shows that the writer ascribes to Jesus the spirit of perfect obedience at the very moment of His coming into the world, for he makes Him say in the words of the Psalmist: "Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God," and the will of God here referred to is specifically the will that the Messiah should suffer and die. "Learning" simply means to bring out into the conscious

experience of action, that which is present as an avowed principle antecedent to the action. There is a difference between the desire and resolve to obey and the carrying through of this attitude of mind in the concrete circumstances of life, whilst natural inclinations assert themselves in the opposite direction. It should be noticed that the article stands before υπακοη, which shows once more that a specific type of obedience is in the author's mind. The contrast also indicated in the words "although being a Son" is not a contrast between sonship and obedience in general, but between sonship and obedience evinced in suffering. It is natural for a son to obey, it is not natural for a son to have to learn obedience in this way. Now it is this training in obedience that the passage brings into connection with the τελειωσις of Christ. Having learned obedience and having been made perfect, He became the author of salvation. It is most natural to take the "having been made perfect" here as resumptive of "having learned obedience," so that it adds not a second qualification to the first, but interprets the fact of the obedience which Christ learned in its significance as a qualification for His office. The rendering strictly ought to be: "having learned obedience and thus been made perfect." This, however, does not yet decide how the author understands the "perfecting." Does he mean to say: having learned obedience and having been made perfect in obedience, He became the author of salvation? Or is his meaning rather: having learned obedience and thereby been made a *perfect high priest*, He became author of salvation? The latter is to be preferred, because the emphasis in the context rests on the likeness between the obedience of Christ and that of believers. Because He practiced obedience Himself, He can appreciate and reward the obedience of those who follow Him. To introduce the thought of the absolute perfection of the Savior's obedience would tend to obscure this parallelism. Of course the author conceived of Christ's obedience as absolutely perfect. But here it was out of place to call attention to this. What he affirms is simply that through the practice of obedience Christ became a perfect high priest, since now He is able to endow with eternal salvation all those who obey Him in however imperfect a degree.

Finally we must, in order to complete our survey of what the Epistle teaches on the τελειωσις of Christ, cast a glance at 7:28, although this passage is of a different nature from those already discussed. The Savior's entire separateness from sin and sinners is emphasized as essential to His priesthood. The comparison is between Christ and the Old Testament high priests, and the former is here described not as He was in His earthly life but as He now is in His exalted state. The contrast is twofold: The law appoints *men*, the word of the oath-swearing appoints *a son*; the men appointed are men *having infirmity*, the son appointed is a son *made perfect forevermore*. This second contrast creates some difficulty. The participle perfect, τετελειωμενον, undoubtedly implies that a perfecting took place with Christ during His earthly life, that there was a time when He did not yet possess this τελειωσις. And the antithetical structure of the sentence seems to require that the "perfecting" consisted in the laying aside of the "infirmity" which clung to the Old Testament high priests: they had weaknesses, He has been made perfect and is now perfect. But this exegesis, simple and inevitable as it may seem at first sight, is excluded by the observation that the author in the present case uses the term ασθενεια, "infirmity," with a sinful connotation, for it is said that the Old Testament high priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, and the γαρ of verse 28 shows that it is precisely in this that their "infirmity" consists. It is impossible, therefore, that the statement should mean: "the law appoints high priests having sinful infirmities, the word of the oath-swearing appoints a son made perfect of these sinful infirmities." We shall have to understand the antithesis in a different, more pregnant way. Its probable meaning may be best paraphrased as follows: "The law appoints as high priests men having infirmity, the word of the oath-swearing appoints a Son (who

not only has no infirmity but), who has been made a perfect high priest forevermore, by the practice of perfect obedience on earth and by translation into the heavenly world from which all infirmity is excluded. The contrast to “having infirmity,” which finds expression in τετελειωμενον, sums up in a single word the attributes severally enumerated in verse 26, “holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

We are now able from the passages discussed to answer the questions formulated at the beginning of this article concerning the temptations, the sufferings, the sympathy and the perfecting of the Savior. Wherever the Epistle speaks of temptations of Christ, it always means to refer concretely and specifically to the temptations that arose from His call to suffer. Of temptations in general it never speaks in connection with Jesus. In thus doing it limits the sphere of the Savior’s temptations to that class of experiences wherein a real appeal to His feelings and desires was possible, and yet the mere presence and force of such an appeal could not endanger His sinlessness. For the inclination to escape from suffering, which made the temptation a real one, is in itself a natural, innocent inclination. It could assert itself in the Savior’s heart and require a positive choice of the will to overbear it and keep it down, without depending for its power on the presence of evil. A great deal that is written in connection with Hebrews on the comforting aspect of the temptations of Christ as analogous to our common experience, does not observe the careful restraint which the writer has imposed upon himself. We further learned that the writer nowhere, not even in 2:18, speaks of temptation as entailing suffering for Jesus, but always of suffering as involving temptation. Still further, the pity which these experiences of suffering and temptation call out in the Savior is not, according to the writer’s description, compassion in general answering to misery as such, but specifically ethical compassion, which views the suffering as a source of moral and religious danger and treats it in that capacity. Finally, the “perfecting” of the Savior, which is made so prominent in the Epistle, has two sides: it is perfecting in the sphere of sympathy with exposure to temptation and perfecting in the sphere of appreciation of obedience which overcomes temptation. In both respects the perfecting is an ethical process, since it took place by means of an ethical experience through which the Savior passed: He became acquainted with the force of temptation and learned the practice of obedience. But so far as the notion of τελειωσις in itself and from a formal point of view is concerned, the Epistle does not know this as an ethical but as an official conception. The term nowhere designates that Jesus was made ethically or religiously perfect, that His character was developed in either sense; it always designates that His qualifications for the high-priestly office were perfected, that He received the full-orbed equipment which His priestly ministry requires. The subject of the τελειωσις is always the priest, never the man. That the means through which the τελειωσις of the priest takes place lie in the moral sphere cannot alter this conclusion in the least. The author has nowhere said, and hardly would have said, that in His moral or religious character Jesus was made perfect.¹¹

While thus, as we have seen, the Savior’s identification with man was necessary for His priesthood, on the other hand His divine sonship also appears in the Epistle as qualifying Him for the office. In 1:2, 3 the unfolding of the idea of sonship explains the possibility of Christ’s making purification of sins. Only so great a person can discharge so high a function. In 4:14 the greatness of Jesus as high priest, His heavenly ministration, is summed up in this, that He is the Son of God. A connection between the sonship of Jesus and His high-priesthood is also traced in 5:5. The author here applies to the case of Christ the second general qualification which a true high priest must possess, viz., that he does not take the honor to himself, but accepts it at the call of God, even as did Aaron. The

office involves so great an honor that a divine appointment is absolutely necessary. The honor lies in the immediateness of approach to God and in the position of authority over others. Now in verse 5 God, who appointed Jesus, is designated as the one who said unto Him: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Some assume that the author finds in these words of the psalm the formal appointment of Jesus to the high-priestly office, so that "God who said" would be equivalent to "God when He said." But the author everywhere distinguishes sonship and priesthood. The correct view is that he wishes to bring out the congruity, from the point of view of honorable position, between the sonship of Christ and His high-priesthood. The same God called Him to the high-priestly office who had also declared Him to be His Son. In both respects He was possessed of high honor with God. Further, in 7:28, the sonship is named as contributing to the perfection of the high-priesthood. The law appoints to the office such as are men, the word of the oath a Son. This, it will be observed, implies a contrast between human nature and sonship: the Son as Son is not human, but divine.

The difficult passage 9:14 must also be considered in the present connection. Here it is said that Christ "through eternal spirit offered Himself blameless unto God," and this is given as the reason why the readers may confidently believe that His blood will purify their consciences from dead works. The clause *δια πνευματος* is to be explained from the fact that the purification which the readers need is a purification in the sphere of the spirit, a purification of the conscience. The Old Testament sacrifices sanctified unto the purity of the *σαρξ*, because they themselves belonged to the sphere of the *σαρξ*; as they were external, ceremonial, so their effect was confined to the sphere of the external, ceremonial. Nevertheless in their own sphere they were truly effective, and from this the author derives *a fortiori* the confidence that the blood of Christ, who offered Himself *δια πνευματος* will be equally effective in the sphere of the spirit.¹² There has been much dispute among expositors as to whether *πνευμα* here occurs with a metaphysical or an ethical connotation. Those who insist upon the former usually find the idea expressed that through His having eternal spirit Christ was able to keep His life through death, and afterwards to present Himself before God, an interpretation which would make the *πνευμα* here identical with the *ζωη ακαταλυτος* spoken of in 7:16. Of a reference to any such thought, however, there is no trace in the context. Those who insist upon the ethical connotation of spirit, if they do not understand it directly of the Holy Spirit, associate with it the voluntariness and self-determination of Christ's offering. The latter appears to us the correct interpretation in substance. The author evidently is intent upon emphasizing the fact that Christ's offering was free and spontaneous. Hence he does not say that Jesus offered up Himself *as eternal spirit*, which form of statement would have formed the exact counterpart to the offering up of the animals under the Old Covenant; he says that *through eternal spirit* He offered up Himself. And he also further indicates by giving *εαυτον* the place before the verb that Christ Himself was the object of the offering, that it was an act terminating on Himself. Both features undoubtedly point in the same direction: the personal initiative, the voluntariness forms the most important element in the *πνευμα*-character of the offering. Still, we should surely misunderstand the author if we combined these features with the *πνευμα* on a purely ethical or even generally psychological principle. He does not mean to say that through His goodness, as a fruit of the *πνευμα* Christ was enabled thus to offer Himself, nor even that through His being spirit in general, as all men are spirit, He could do so. The whole sharp antithesis between the ethical and the metaphysical is foreign to the author's way of thinking. We must take *πνευμα* as contrasted with *σαρξ* in accordance with the broad meaning the Epistle as a whole ascribes to this antithesis. The *πνευμα* is that which is characteristic of the higher, heavenly world. In its ethical or religious aspect it has its subsistence and background in a

metaphysical sphere of being. If Jesus could voluntarily offer up Himself and thus impart a unique efficacy to His sacrifice, this was because He belonged to the higher world of the πνευμα to which such absolute self-determination is possible. That this is the true view of the author appears from the addition to πνευμα of the attribute αιωνιος, with which it is impossible to connect a purely ethical meaning. Αιωνιος most frequently in the Epistle has the connotation of what belongs to the heavenly, pneumatic world; it assigns to a sphere and not merely removes limitations of time; πνευμα αιωνιον, therefore, is such a spirit as has its home in the heavenly world. A spirit belonging to this sphere imparts to every transaction mediated by it absolute efficacy in that same sphere. But that Christ in this sense has or is πνευμα αιωνιον belongs to the heavenly world is, of course, something that cannot be separated from His sonship. It is in fact but another name for that sonship, for as Son also He belongs to that same higher world of divine realities of which His πνευμα marks Him as the inhabitant. The passage actually implies the deity of the Savior and the familiar dogmatic thought of His deity imparting transcendent efficacy to His sacrifice, not so much, however, in virtue of the bare fact of its being deity, but rather because in virtue of its specific character of heavenly spirit it suited exactly the sphere in which the purification was to be accomplished and the finality, absoluteness which was required for it.

The sonship of Christ appears also as the determining principle of His priesthood in what the author teaches concerning the Melchizedek-order of this priesthood. In 7:3, after having enumerated the various features which render Melchizedek a type of Christ, he declares that Melchizedek was in these features “made like unto the Son of God.” This cannot refer to the Son of God in His historic appearance and priestly activity, for of these the Epistle everywhere affirms that they were after the order of Melchizedek. Here, on the contrary, Melchizedek is declared to have been after the likeness of the Son of God. The Son of God designates Christ in His eternal, heavenly, divine existence, and Melchizedek was made like unto Him, partly in the general greatness which belongs to the delineation of his figure in Scripture (compare vs. 4, “consider how great this one was,” and vs. 7, “without any dispute the less is blessed of the better”), partly in the eternity character imparted to this figure by the narrative in Genesis. It is the Son of God as a Person, apart from His office, who thus forms the pattern after which Melchizedek was fashioned, and undoubtedly the author means to affirm the eternity-predicates which he gives to Melchizedek of the latter also as a scriptural personage, antecedently to and apart from his priestly office. The latter half of verse 3 draws a formal inference, “because he was made like to the Son of God (as a person), he abideth (as to his office) a priest continually.” The underlying principle on which the writer proceeds is that the dignity of office follows the worth of personality. Hence also the eternity ascribed to both the Son of God as the pattern and to Melchizedek as the copy, is an eternity *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post*, which fits the conception of an eternity of person, while the eternity of office is from the nature of the case restricted to the latter kind. In having no “beginning of days” as well as no “end of life,” was Melchizedek made like unto the Son of God. Now, if the greatness and eternity of the Person of the Son of God determined the greatness and eternity-appearance of the figure of Melchizedek, and in consequence also determined the character of Melchizedek’s priesthood, and if further the priesthood of Christ was, historically speaking, copied after the order of Melchizedek, then it follows that it is ultimately nothing else but the divine eternal nature of the Son of God by which His priesthood is shaped and from which it derives its unique character. His sonship makes His priesthood what it is in distinction from every other kind of priesthood. As to the eternity of His life in particular, this is represented as influencing His priesthood in a twofold respect, first in regard to power, second

in regard to duration. The former thought is worked out in verses 15-19. It should here again be remembered that *αιωνιος* is for the author a predicate of quality as well as of duration. "Eternal" is that which belongs to the heavenly world and partakes of its nature and power. Thus the eternity of Christ's priesthood involves that He was made priest "after the power of an indissoluble life." The life here spoken of is not, as some have thought, the life which Christ received at His resurrection, but the eternal life of the Son of God. It was *ακαταλυτος* precisely for this reason that it could not be dissolved by death. Its indissoluble character made His priesthood effectual, because it enabled Him to pass through death, and as a heavenly high priest to bring His sacrifice to full fruition. The second thought, the effect of the eternity of His Person on the duration of His priesthood, is worked out in verses 23-25. The Old Testament priests were many in number, because by death they were hindered from continuing; He, because He abideth forever, has His priesthood unchangeable, because He ever lives to make intercession for those who draw near unto God through Him. In this connection it is quite possible that the author meant the *σωζειν εις το παντελες*, in part at least, in the sense of duration, of "saving to the uttermost point of time."

The last question we have to consider is where the author makes the priesthood of Christ begin. This has long been a controversial point. On the one hand it is urged that the Savior's earthly work, especially its culmination in the sacrifice upon the cross, must to the author's mind have formed an integral part of His priestly ministry. On the other hand, it is said that the Epistle explicitly identifies the beginning of Christ's priesthood with His entrance into heaven. The dispute obtained doctrinal importance through the Socinian controversy. The Socinians were bent upon showing that the death of Christ was not in any true sense an atoning sacrifice. It seemed much easier to maintain this position with the death detached from the priesthood than otherwise, because the priestly aspect of the transaction would naturally suggest its atoning significance. Further, by confining the priesthood to the heavenly state, and separating it entirely from the death, it was no longer found difficult to modify its conception also. For the Socinians the heavenly priesthood came to mean no more than a general position of influence with God. The error of this teaching lay not so much in denying that Jesus acted with reference to His death as a priest at the moment of its occurrence, but rather in severing the death from the priesthood generally. The principle to be strenuously maintained is that the priestly activity of Christ in heaven rests on the preceding sacrifice and therefore derives from the latter a strictly propitiatory character. Where this is once recognized it becomes a matter of secondary importance whether or not the death itself at the time it took place be considered in the light of a priestly act performed by the Savior Himself, provided the atoning nature of the death be not denied. It has been observed that the slaying of the sacrifice was not under the Old Testament law the work of the priest, but of the offerer. Jesus might therefore be conceived as first acting in the double capacity of offerer and victim, and then acting, in His exalted state, in the capacity of priest on the basis of the preceding sacrifice. The question thus becomes largely one of dogmatic classification. That which Dogmatics subsumes under the one head of the priestly office of Christ could be distributed over the two rubrics of His sacrifice and His priesthood, and yet materially remain the same.

Our concern with the problem is the purely biblico-theological one, as to what the Epistle actually teaches concerning it. The answer is that it contains two sets of statements, the one of which seems to favor the one, the other the other position. We notice in the first place that the high-priestly ministry of Christ is frequently spoken of as connected with the heavenly sanctuary, from which it

would seem to follow that only with His entrance into heaven did His priesthood begin. In the very first passage which explicitly refers to the priesthood of Jesus, 2:17, His being made like in all things unto His brethren is said to have been for the purpose that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest. The likeness unto the brethren includes death, consequently the priesthood, as to its actual discharge, could not begin until after the suffering of death had been experienced. It is farfetched to explain that the passage speaks not of the Savior's becoming a high priest in general, but of His becoming a merciful and faithful high priest, thus placing the former at an earlier point than the latter. In 5:10 also the implication is that Christ became a high priest after the order of Melchizedek after He had been made perfect, and it would certainly be against the author's intention to say that, while having been a high priest in general before, the Savior became a high priest after the order of Melchizedek with His entrance into heaven. Again, in 6:20, Jesus' entrance into the place within the veil as forerunner marks also the moment when He became (γενομενος) high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, and here as little as elsewhere is there any reason for distinguishing between a Melchizedek-priesthood and another priesthood in His case. Chapter 7:26-28 also, as we have already observed, in describing Christ as high priest, describes Him as He exists in His heavenly state, and declares that His appointment by the word of the oath was the appointment of one who had been made perfect forevermore; in other words, it places His ministry after His τελειωσις, and 5:10 places the τελειωσις at the close of the earthly life. According to 8:2 Christ is minister of the heavenly sanctuary, therefore His priesthood could not begin until after He entered that sanctuary. The strongest statement of all, 8:4, because it seems to deny every connection of His priestly ministry with the sphere of earth, will be discussed presently.

Over against these stand certain other passages, in which the priestly character of Jesus and His acting in a priestly capacity before His entrance into heaven are implied. Not quite conclusive is 1:3, where it is said that the Son sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high after He had made purification of sins. The making of purification of sins is undoubtedly a priestly act and it precedes here the sitting down at the right hand of God. This does not necessarily prove, however, that it also precedes the entrance into heaven, or that the author identifies it with the death upon the cross. It is quite possible that the writer in connection with the phrase thought of the entrance itself of Christ into heaven, of His appearing before God, of His cleansing, as it elsewhere is expressed, of the heavenly tabernacle (cf. 9:23-28). No more decisive, perhaps, are the statements in 9:11, 24, where the Savior is represented as entering into heaven as high priest. It has been argued from this that He must have been a high priest before entering, but the possibility exists that the author looked upon the entrance itself as the first act and in so far the beginning of the high priesthood. The ανιστασθαι of the "other priest" in 7:11 is perhaps most naturally understood of Jesus' historical appearance on earth. The same applies to παραγενομενος in 9:11. The αγιαζειν of the people to which 13:12 refers was certainly a priestly act, and it took place when Jesus suffered outside the gate. In 10:20 the dissolution of the σαρξ of Jesus, which happened at His death, is represented as the dedicating of a fresh and living way into the holy place by His blood. The dedicating of the way into the sanctuary is the work of a priest, therefore Jesus acted in a priestly capacity when He shed His blood and let His flesh be dissolved. Those passages also come under consideration in which the act of προσφερειν is ascribed to Christ. From 5:1 it appears that προσφερειν is a priestly act. Still, it cannot be indiscriminately inferred from all such passages that the author conceived of the Savior as a priest at the moment of His death. The identification between the προσφορα and the crucifixion is not a necessary one and in each case requires special demonstration. For the προσφερειν can also

include and even mean exclusively the self-presentation of Christ in heaven, or the application of His blood to the heavenly things, or however this act may be called. An indiscriminate argument, therefore, cannot be drawn from the use of this expression. In 8:3 the context immediately shows that under the προσφέρειν a heavenly act must be understood, for in verse 2 Jesus is called minister of the true tabernacle which God pitched, not man, and in verse 4 His offering is distinguished from that of the Old Testament priests, because it takes place in heaven. On the other hand it should be remembered, that προσφέρειν is in the Septuagint the translation of the entire act of giving the sacrifice to God, including the bringing of it to the altar before it is slain. The presumption therefore is that in our Epistle also it will be used sometimes so as to include the self-surrender of our Lord to death on earth. And this presumption is confirmed by at least two passages. In 9:25-28, while the προσφέρειν includes the appearance of Christ in heaven, it also includes the Savior's death; the passive participle προσενεχθεις requires this, because in His entrance into heaven Jesus was active rather than passive. Further, the statement "He was manifested" proves that a visible transaction must be thought of, such as His suffering was, not His entrance into heaven. And this is still further shown by the parallelism drawn in verses 27, 28 between the death of man in general and Christ's having "been offered," as well as by the statement that He will be *seen* again a second time without sin, viz., at the future judgment, the implication being that the first time, the time of His offering, He was *seen* with sin, which could only refer to His death. It is also probable that in verses 25, 26, "nor yet that He should offer Himself often—since in that case He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world," the author includes the suffering of Christ in the προσεφερειν εαυτου. But here we can speak only of probability, because the author may have argued on this wise, that offering in heaven presupposes death on earth, and that for this reason a repeated offering would presuppose a repeated death.

The other passage coming under consideration here is 10:10. Here we read of a προσφορα του σωματος, a form of statement scarcely applicable to the presentation in heaven, because of the latter "the blood" or "Himself" would be the natural object.

We thus undoubtedly find in the Epistle a twofold mode of representation. On the one hand the priesthood of Christ is identified with His ministry in heaven, on the other hand His death is included in the priestly ministry. Some think we must go further than this and say that the author viewed the entire earthly life in its obedience as a priestly ministry. But this finds no support in the Epistle. The obedience is viewed as a preparation for the priesthood, not as a priestly ministry in itself. It is true that in 5:7 the verb προσφέρειν is used of the prayers and supplications offered by Jesus, and it has been assumed that this ascribes to these prayers and supplications the character of sacrifices. This is, however, far from certain. The word προσφέρειν, while describing frequently the presentation of sacrifice, is also commonly used of the bringing of prayers before God without sacrificial connotation. And elsewhere the author speaks of the sacrifice of Christ as having happened once for all.

The question must now be put: How are these two representations related to each other? It has been suggested by way of solution of the problem that the author distinguishes between two orders of priesthood, both of which were successively possessed by Christ, first the order of Aaron, then the order of Melchizedek. This is the view of Bruce in *The Humiliation of Christ*, though not repeated in his later work, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Among the older expositors it is advocated by Riehm. It

finds no real support in the Epistle. It would be impossible to point out in which respect the high-priestly ministry of Jesus, while on earth, and as connected with His death, differed or fell short from being a ministry after the order of Melchizedek. If the essence of the latter be taken to consist in its eternity, its infinite duration in time, then the Savior possessed this already while on earth. His death could hardly be considered a cessation of His priesthood, since it in itself was a priestly act. But even granting that before His resurrection He could not have been rightly called "a priest forever," in other respects than that of mere duration His priestly ministry performed on earth certainly partook of the characteristics of the Melchizedek-order. It was eternal in its absoluteness, in its spiritual nature, in its reference to the heavenly world. In all these respects it was the very opposite of the Levitical ministry after the order of Aaron, so that it certainly could in no wise be identified with the latter. Nor is it possible to separate between the high-priestly ministry connected with the death and that performed in heaven, because the latter is but the carrying out of the former, the two constituting one continuous service, inasmuch as Jesus presented before God in heaven the offering brought on earth. For this reason, evidently, Bruce found it necessary to include in the high-priesthood after the order of Aaron not merely the offering up of Jesus on earth, but also, as inseparably connected therewith, Christ's presentation of Himself before God in heaven. But such a view deprives the Melchizedek-priesthood of the one concrete act in which it embodies itself, so far as the sacrifice is concerned, and leaves to it only the continuous intercession as based on the sacrifice. It will have to be admitted, therefore, that the distinction between two orders of priesthood does not solve the difficulty encountered.

The true explanation of the peculiar doctrine of the Epistle on this point must be sought elsewhere. It lies first of all in the Pauline conception of the exalted Lord, who in His exalted state sums up and carries in Himself all the saving power which flows from His work in the flesh, from His death on the cross. The believer's faith, according to Paul, does not terminate upon the historical Christ but upon the Christ in glory. Nevertheless, in the glorified Christ the believer's faith grasps all the atoning significance of the cross, because the state of glory is the product and crown of the atonement. Here we have something broadly corresponding, it will be seen, to the view of our Epistle. Apply this Pauline idea to the conception of Christ as a priest, and the peculiar representation of Hebrews will naturally result. The emphasis will rest throughout on the exalted state of the Savior. This for all practical purposes will figure as the priesthood. It alone can be the expression of the absolute, final, unchangeable significance of Christ as the author of salvation. In this state the Savior actually brings to fruition all that He has done to save the people of God. But just as little as in Paul's teaching does this mean that the author possesses no interest for His death on earth. The latter is not only the indispensable presupposition of the ministry in glory, but the ministry in glory is a perpetuated, eternalized proclamation of what the death of Christ meant. Expressed in priestly terminology, this reads that Jesus through His blood has entered into the heavenly sanctuary, that there He makes His blood purify.

But in the practical purpose of the Epistle also there was something that led to this representation. We have found reason to assume that the doctrine of Christ's priesthood was seized upon by the writer because it furnished a ready explanation of what the readers took offense at, the invisibleness and remoteness of the Savior's mode of existence and activity, and offered a corrective for the religious externalism in which this offense had its root. In other words, Christ is represented as priest to explain why He must of necessity be withdrawn into the heavenly world and conduct His

saving work from that invisible sphere. Of course, it was only the doctrine of a heavenly priesthood, not of priesthood in general, that was adapted to render this practical service. If Christ could have been a priest on earth, then His remoteness and invisibleness remained as unexplained as before. Hence the author is intent not so much on showing that He is a priest, but rather that He must be, if a priest, a priest in heaven, because nothing else, nothing less, will suit the dignity of His Person, the absoluteness of His work. It is from this point of view that we can best understand why the author has introduced into the Epistle the peculiar typology, with its contrast between earth and heaven, that is so characteristic of its teaching as a whole. This so-called Alexandrianism of its construction of the religious universe is in reality but another argument it employs to convince the readers that a Savior visibly existent and operative in the world of sense would be far less exalted and efficient than the Christ who forever lives and rules in the spiritual realm of heaven.

But the question may still be put: Why, if the author was intent upon thus emphasizing the heavenly priesthood of Christ, has he not been consistent in doing so? Why has he in not a few instances placed side by side with this the representation that the Savior, at least in the great ministry of His death, was also a priest on earth? And how did he reconcile the two apparently discordant representations to himself? The problem would be insoluble if we had to interpret 8:4 as an explicit denial of the possibility of any priestly ministrations by Christ on earth: "Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things." This has been understood as implying that when Jesus was on earth He was not yet a priest. But the author in making the statement evidently had not in mind the question of the locality of the performance of any single priestly act, but only the question of the locality or sphere in which the Savior's priestly ministry is performed *as a whole*. What he means to say is that if Christ's priesthood *now* and *as a whole* were exercised on earth, He could not legitimately be a priest, since the Aaronites are appointed for that and He is not of the family of Aaron. For a priestly ministry entirely exercised on earth would be a carnal, typical ministry, since earth is the sphere of the carnal, typical. But it by no means follows from this that Jesus could not perform a single priestly act while yet on earth. The possibility of this would depend altogether on the nature of the act and the circumstances under which it was performed.

The author, therefore, has not by any absolute denial of the possibility of a priestly act on earth precluded the adjustment of Jesus' death on earth as a priestly act to the heavenly character of His ministry as a whole. In some way or other He must have reconciled these two in his own mind. As to how he did it we can offer only suggestions. Two observations may be made in regard to this. In the first place the author does not so much compare the ministry of Christ to the work of the Old Testament priests in general, but rather to the ministry performed by the high priest on the day of atonement. Now in the law for the day of atonement it is expressly prescribed that the high priest must with his own hand slay the sacrificial animal (Lev. 16:15). Of course, this act was not a menial act, which might just as well have been performed by somebody else; it was in the strictest sense of the word an official, high-priestly act. In analogy with this the author may have looked upon the self-surrender of Christ to death as an act of priestly nature. But the slaying of the animal by the high priest took place outside of the tabernacle, and the analogy would require that Jesus' self-sacrifice also should occur outside the heavenly tabernacle, i.e., on earth. Still, from this single act of the high priest outside of the tabernacle it did not follow that his ministry as a whole pertained to the court, and as little does it follow that, because Jesus offered Himself up on earth, His ministry as a whole

cannot pertain to heaven. The ministry of the high priest under the Old Covenant belonged to the holy of holies, where he alone could officiate, and so the ministry of Christ belongs to heaven, where He alone can be a priest.

In the second place we must remember that according to our author the heavenly eternal world projects itself into the lower temporal sphere. Even now believers are come to the heavenly city and stand in true communion by faith with the eternal realities. If this applies to believers in general, how much more will it apply to Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. And, altogether apart from faith, though He walked on earth, yet in virtue of His origin, nature, and destiny He continued to form a part of the celestial order of things. What He did was determined in its reference to sphere or place by what He was, rather than by the locality where it might be performed. It was *δια πνευματος αιωνιου* that He offered up Himself. The act was performed by a Person who belonged to the heavenly world; in its intrinsic nature it was a heavenly act, it looked forward to a permanent priesthood to follow in heaven; to all intents, therefore, it was an act which fell in the sphere of the *αιωνιου*. Thus on closer investigation the problem, how an earthly sacrifice can co-exist with a heavenly priesthood, is seen to disappear. The sacrifice on the cross was one of the events in which the eternal enters into the temporal, as the headlands of a continent, to use Dr. Davidson's striking figure, project into the ocean.

(Footnotes)

¹ *Aboth*, R. Nathan, chap. 33.

² Quoted by Schöttgen, *Horae hebraicae et talmudicae in theologiam Iudaeorum*, p. 653.

³ The detachment of the Epistle from the circle of Jewish-Christians in Palestine does not necessarily involve that the readers could have no practical personal interest in the temple-worship. Not even the dating of the Epistle after A.D. 70 would necessarily involve this. Among the Jews of the dispersion a lively interest in the temple and its service was kept up. After the destruction of the city and temple, the religious interest of the diaspora still continued to a certain extent to revolve around them. The Jews could not know and did not believe that the destruction would be permanent. In the Epistle of Barnabas the Jews are accused of still placing their confidence in the temple. Holtzmann has shown that the present tenses used where the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Old Testament ceremonial, occur also in Josephus, 1 Clement, Ep. ad Diognetum, all writings from after the year 70. (*Z. f. Wiss. Theol.*, 1867, pp. 9ff.) It might be argued that if such an attachment persisted among the diaspora-Jews, it might likewise have continued among the Jewish-Christians of the dispersion. Still, how an attachment of this kind could, in the case of Christians, give rise to any serious danger, is hard to conceive, and, as a matter of fact, not much use has been made of the above possibility in more recent attempts to solve the riddle of Hebrews.

⁴ *Das literarische Rätsel des Hebräerbriefs*, 1906.

⁵ Cf. also, by the same author, *Der Sohn und die Söhne, eine exegetische Studie zu Hebräer, 2:5-18*, 1904, reviewed in this Review, July 1905.

⁶ The words *και περισσοτερον ετι καταδηλον* at the beginning of verse 15 refer back to the proposition of verse 12, "where there is a change of priesthood there is made of necessity a change also of law," and *καταδηλον* stands on a line with *προδηλον* of verse 14.

⁷ The point of the reference to the oath-swearing is that the new priesthood must be of supreme dignity and power, since God does not swear except in relations of extraordinary importance. The beginning of the Levitical priests lay not in an oath but in a legal ordinance. In their case law determined priesthood, hence the sequence is: oath—priesthood—covenant.

⁸ The representation is a metaphorical one and should not be pressed so as to make it correspond in concrete detail with the forensic or commercial conception of the modus of the atonement. The old controversy as to

whether Jesus became εγγυος with God for man, or with man for God, or in both capacities, lies outside the scope of the passage.

⁹ In 8:3, where the same phrase occurs with the τε, the reading does not vary.

¹⁰ It might be objected to the foregoing that in 5:2, 3 the qualification of the Old Testament high priest is in part sought precisely in this, that he is himself also compassed with infirmity and by reason thereof bound to offer for his sins. But the author is led to this statement only by his desire to emphasize the importance of sympathy. What was a relative qualification in the case of the typical priesthood of the Old Covenant becomes a disqualification for the ideal priesthood as realized in Christ. In point of fact, the main reason why the Old Testament priests were not ideal, truly effective priests lies in this, that they stood in need of offering for their own sins. They bore that in themselves which virtually annulled their priestly character (7:27; 9:7).

¹¹ Compare for a fuller discussion of this point, especially as to linguistic usage, Kögel, *Der Begriff τελειουν im Hebräerbrief*, in *Theologische Studien Martin Kähler dargebracht*, 1905.

¹² Intertwined with this is the other thought, that the purification effected by the blood of Christ will be eternal, i.e., absolute, not standing in need of repetition. Verses 13 and 14 are by means of γαρ joined to the closing words of verse 12, the words "having found eternal redemption." This, obviously, is the reason why the predicate αιωνιον is added to δια πνευματος; because through *eternal* spirit Christ offered Himself, therefore He found *eternal* redemption.