

# The Princeton Theological Review

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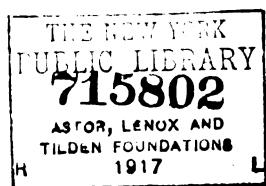
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# The Princeton Theological Review

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## HEBREWS, THE EPISTLE OF THE DIATHEKE

So far we have considered the Epistle's idea of revelation only from the practical point of view.\* It has, however, a more theoretical side and this also shows the influence of the covenant-conception. More than any other New Testament document Hebrews develops what might be called a philosophy of the history of revelation. This is partly due to the fact that the writer is theologically inclined in general, and evidently attaches importance to the doctrinal presentation of the Christian faith. It would be a mistake to explain this from speculative tendencies followed for their own sake. Of a purely scholastic interest there is no trace whatever. But the writer entertains a firm belief in the effectiveness of doctrinal enlightenment as a remedial method where the soundness and balance of practical Christianity are endangered. We certainly gain the impression that from the outset he brings to the writing of the Epistle a well-defined doctrinal conception of the structure of the Christian religion. It can cause no wonder that, when a mind of this cast is led to occupy itself with the history of revelation, as is actually the case in our Epistle, a more or less philosophical or theological construction of the history of revelation results. We should, moreover, remember, that from the very earliest times the covenant-idea stood not merely in the service of revealed religion in general, but had also lent itself to the very particular use of marking the historic progress of the movement of redemption and special revelation. The successive stages of God's redemptive and revealing work in the pre-Christian era are measured by successive covenants, each introducing new forces and principles and each imparting to the ensuing

\* In this REVIEW, 1915 (xiii), pp. 587-632.

period a distinctive character of its own. Thus the covenant-idea is an eminently historical idea, most intimately associated with the gradual unfolding of God's self-disclosure to His people. This reaches even back of the régime of redemption and characterizes God's dealings with man in the state of rectitude. For, although it is generally considered a dogmatic anachronism to carry the covenant-idea back into the original religious status of unfallen man, as the Reformed Theology has done in its doctrine of the covenant of works, a most striking confirmation of the biblical warrant for this view has of late come from an altogether unexpected quarter. No less a scholar than Wellhausen has observed that in P, the so-called priestly document, the ancient history is represented as determined in its onward movement by the four covenants which in succession God makes with man, whence also the name of "the four-covenant-book" has come into use to designate the peculiar structure of this document. And as the first of these four covenants, it is maintained by Wellhausen and others, the author must have counted the arrangement entered into by God with our first parents in their original state. Thus the much ridiculed "covenant of works" has been exegetically rehabilitated and it has been shown that the Reformed theologians were not so utterly lacking in historic sense as their critics believed. In regard to the redemptive developments recorded in the Old Testament, it is plain that these result in large measure from the repeated and progressive subsumption of the people of God under the principle of the berith. With the critical contention that this is a later dogma first introduced into the older documents by the redactors we need not here occupy ourselves, since the writer of Hebrews could reckon and did reckon only with the Old Testament in its present form, in which the influence of the berith-idea is confessedly present. The comparative tenor of the Epistle would therefore of itself invite the representation of this idea as one of the chief factors in the development of sacred history.

But the actual extent to which this is done by the writer is due to still another more specific cause. The Epistle does not content itself with dividing the history of redemption and revelation into two *διαθήκαι* from a purely soteriological point of view: it brings the covenant-idea into connection with eschatology and by doing this first introduces into it the breadth and absoluteness that pertain to the eschatological outlook. So long as the consciousness of redemption contents itself with living in the present moment, or ranges over a limited outlook backwards and forwards, the theological impulse may remain dormant and no desire need be felt to bring order and system into the wealth of the divine acts and disclosures as one after the other they enter into the cognition or experience of man. But the matter becomes entirely different when eschatology posits an absolute goal at the end of the redemptive process corresponding to an absolute beginning of the world in creation; for then, no longer a segment but the whole sweep of history is drawn into one great perspective and the mind is impelled to view every part in relation to the whole. To do this means to construct a primitive theological system. Thus eschatology becomes the mother of theology and that first of all of theology in the form of a philosophy of redemptive history. While it is true that theology in the technical sense should not be sought in the Bible, because the appearance of it presupposes the completion of the process of revelation, nevertheless rudimentary preformations of it can be clearly discovered in certain Biblical writings. These emerge precisely where the mind of the organs of revelation becomes more or less clearly conscious of the historical structure of revelation, especially where this consciousness attains to the broad sweep of the eschatological vision. So we can speak of a theology of Isaiah and a theology of Paul, because in both the idea of redemption as a God-guided process moving to an appointed goal and rounded off in itself exercises a degree of unifying and systematizing influence on all their religious knowledge.

The fundamental scheme of which this eschatological theology in early times, even before the New Testament period, avails itself is that of the two ages, the present age and the age to come, a scheme which has passed over from Jewish thought into New Testament teaching. In this developed form it is not found in the Old Testament. But the substance is found there, and, what is even more important, this substance has in one passage of the Old Testament created for itself another form in the distinction between the two beriths, the old berith made at Sinai and the new berith to be made in the future. This distinction, where it occurs in Jeremiah, has eschatological significance; it is not the meaning of the prophet that the new berith which is promised may in course of time have to give way to a newer one; the consciousness lying back of this utterance differs essentially from the earlier consciousness, which counted a succession of beriths one replacing another. To the prophet the future berith promised is a final and absolute arrangement, beyond which in the perfection and permanence of its appointments nothing can be conceived. It gathers into itself all the wealth of eschatological expectation. The distinction between it and the old berith assumes for Jeremiah the character of a great bi-section of history; and at the beginning of each of the periods thus distinguished stands a fundamental redemptive self-disclosure of God. It is this idea of a succession of two beriths that has yielded the earliest and the inspired form of the philosophy of redemption—a form older than the doctrine of the two ages. But the peculiarity of Hebrews consists in this, that it brings into fructifying contact these two distinctions, that between the present age and the age to come and that between the first covenant and the second covenant. The new *διαθήκη* is to the writer of Hebrews as little as it was to Jeremiah something temporary and provisional. It embodies the consummation of all the work of God for His people; it is the ocean into which all the rivers of history roll their waters from the beginning of the world. Al-

though the first covenant does not quite coincide with the first age, since it dates from Sinai and the first age began with creation, yet in regard to the second covenant and the age to come there is complete identification; those who are under the one are in principle in the other; Christians do taste the powers of the age to come and have arrived at the eschatological Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. The revelation of the New Covenant is not only better comparatively speaking; it is final and eternal because delivered in a Son, than whom God could send no higher revealer. That the New Covenant actually has this comprehensive eschatological significance, and is not a mere soteriological episode, is easily obscured by the prominent place which the ideas of priesthood and sacrifice with their typical antecedents in the history of Israel occupy, whereby it might appear as if for the writer they formed merely a counterpart of what was characteristic of a definite historical development, and so themselves also were to be regarded in the same light. What corresponds to an intervening episode may seem to partake of the nature of an intervening episode. This would be a false inference if for no other reason than that the author counts the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ among the eternal realities. But the error may also be corrected by observing that in the opening chapters of the Epistle, where the outcome rather than the process of the Christian salvation is dwelt upon, a form of statement prevails which represents Christianity as the counterpart and fulfilment of the original order of things instituted at creation. The New Covenant as the goal of God's special dealings with man is determined by the point of departure of this divine procedure in the primeval state of man. The Christian order of things, the great salvation as the author calls it, involves according to the second chapter subjection of the entire *oikouμένη* to mankind. And this subjection is described in words of the eighth Psalm, a creation-Psalm which relates to the world-rule God at the beginning placed before man

as his destiny. The implication therefore is, that in the new *οἰκουμένη* this original destiny of mankind is first realized through Christ. The 14th verse of the same chapter speaks of redemption as deliverance from the power and fear of death and from the devil who reigns through death, a representation which clearly points back to the account of the temptation and fall of man. Again in the fourth chapter, where the Christian state of salvation appears as a "rest", the author, though in part speaking of this in terms derived from the rest of Canaan, nevertheless finds its deeper and ultimate basis in the rest of God, the *αὐθεντός*, which crowned the creation of the world.

The New Covenant then coincides with the age to come; it brings the good things to come; it is incorporated into the eschatological scheme of thought. Such a way of looking at the Christian state is, of course, not confined to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Other writers of the New Testament, especially Paul, are quite familiar with this point of view and not infrequently represent even the present life of the believer on earth as semi-eschatological, as an anticipation in principle of the conditions of the life to come. But the difference between this and what we meet with in Hebrews should not be overlooked. Paul does not apply this train of thought to the idea of the covenant, the Epistle to the Hebrews does. As a result, what Paul gives in his distinction between the present world and the world to come and in the equation of Christianity with the latter is a religious philosophy of the history of the race in general. The present age and the present world stand for the reign of sin and evil, "the flesh", as Paul calls it; the age or world to come is the realm of redemption, the reign of the Spirit. "The present age" and "the present world" always have for Paul an evil connotation: the two eras of eschatology are ethically contrasted. The writer of Hebrews on the other hand, by specifically equating the world to come with the New Covenant, is led to identify the first age with the first covenant. The distinction between the two

ages is drawn entirely within the sphere of redemption and revelation and the primitive philosophy or theology attaching itself to this distinction becomes specifically a philosophy of redemption and revelation. While the conception produced by this inter-marriage between the covenant-idea and eschatology is not so great and sweeping as the Pauline scheme, it represents within its narrower limits a most valuable positive supplement to the more negative outlines of redemptive history as drawn by Paul.

The service rendered by the author of Hebrews in this field is not, however, confined to the recognition of the principles of progress, comprehensiveness and finality inherent in the covenant-idea. Profound perceptions as these are, they do not touch the fundamental problem of the philosophy of history, which is likewise the basic problem of the philosophy of redemption and revelation. It is not enough to know that history moves towards a goal; the great question, without the solution of which the thinking mind cannot rest satisfied, concerns the element of identity in the flux of development. What is the stable, the constant substance that underlies the ceaseless never-resting change? To what extent and where and in what form is the goal that beckons at the end present at the beginning? Derive the past and present all their value from the future, or do they contain a solid reality of eternal worth in themselves? These questions are urgently pressing in the sphere of religion, where the dignity of God and the dignity of man's spiritual relation to Him do not at any point allow the human subject and its Godward experience to be regarded as a mere transitory phase, a passing ripple on the surface of the stream. And they become most pressing of all when we enter the field of revealed religion, of special redemptive history, of the covenant of grace, where the bond between God and man becomes so intimate and precious that the postulate of a fixed essence inalterably the same through the ages will not be denied. God is not a God of the dead, but a God of the living; to Him all in all

times must live; and an evolution which would leave no room for the presence in every one of its stages and moments of such a true life unto God is incompatible with the idea of religion itself. There is a catholicity of religion not merely in the form of space but as well in the form of time. It is the distinctive merit of the Epistle to the Hebrews that, in connection with its doctrine of the covenants, it has raised this great problem and found for it an answer that satisfies not only the religious mind in general but satisfies the heightened covenant-consciousness of the Christian believer in particular.

Let us briefly consider this solution and endeavor to trace the way in which the Epistle has arrived at it. The idea that the Old Covenant prefigures or foreshadows the content of the New does not of itself furnish it. For the figure and the shadow are not the reality, and it is precisely for the reality during the time that they flitted across the scene of history that we are looking. Here again it is by the identification of the two covenants with the two ages and the two worlds of eschatology that the Epistle approaches the solution of the problem. In order to understand this we must recall the peculiar manner in which the older eschatology was affected by the Christian belief in the advent of the Messiah. Previous to Christianity the two ages and the two corresponding worlds were conceived as purely successive. The present age must come to an end before the coming age can have its beginning; the present evil world must pass away, before the coming perfect world can take its place; between the two no overlapping is conceivable. But no sooner has this scheme passed over on to Christian ground than a remarkable change in this very respect appears. The distinction between two chronologically successive stages becomes, in part at least, the distinction between two contemporaneous states or worlds. This is brought about by the appearance of the Christ and the accomplishment of His work. In Christian eschatology the Christ occupies from beginning to end the center of the

stage. All developments, all transactions, all gifts, all experiences that make up the drama of the great world-change are related to Him and derive their significance from Him; He is the representative and exponent of the future life in its totality. "To be forever with the Lord" is the succinct expression of what the eschatological hope means to a Christian. But, where eschatology and the Christ are thus closely identified, there inevitably the appearance of the Christ and even the partial accomplishment of His work must be interpreted as ushering in the initial stage of the future world, the opening chapter of the life of eternity. We can actually observe this in Paul, who teaches that through the cross of Christ the believer has been in principle snatched out of this present evil world and translated into the eternal kingdom of the Son of God's love. The resurrection of Christ is to the Apostle the first act in the general resurrection that will introduce the final kingdom of God. Christians have in effect passed over from the age that is into the age to come. Their commonwealth is above, where they sit with Christ in heavenly places, and all that is necessary in the future is that they shall undergo the last change which will make them, in body as well as in soul, redeemed, supernatural, eschatological creatures.

Now the point to which in this development our attention should be directed concerns the resulting coëxistence between two things that hitherto had been considered purely successive. If the second world has received its actual beginning through Christ, and if nevertheless, as cannot be denied, the first world, this present world, is still continuing in its course, then it is clear that both now exist contemporaneously. From thinking of the eschatological state as future the Christian mind is led to conceive of it as actually present but situated in a higher sphere. The horizontal, dramatic way of thinking gives place in part to a process of thought moving in a perpendicular direction and distinguishing not so much between before and after, but rather between higher and lower. Within the Epistles of Paul we

can trace the gradual transition from the one habit of thought to the other. Although the later representation is in germ present from the beginning, and although the earlier is retained until the very last, yet, broadly speaking, the dramatic conception is more in evidence in the first group of Epistles, while the other view-point prevails in the Epistles of the first imprisonment. In the latter the contrast between here and there in a local sense, rather than between now and then in a chronological sense, prevails.

In the content of this higher world to which the Christian belongs two elements must be further distinguished. It is in part a product of the historical redemptive process. The completion of Christ's work and His return in glorified state to the heavenly sphere have first given this sphere its final character and as such it now exists alongside of this present lower world. But, of course, they have not created heaven. When the world to come was once identified with heaven the reflection lay near that it was not only existing now but had been existing previously to the Messianic epoch. The higher world was there from the beginning; it had a stable, original content, before it was affected by the appearance of the Messiah. Both these elements are recognized in the later Pauline teaching. The second one, that of the original existence of the main content of the heavenly life, finds expression in this, that Paul in the later Epistles speaks of the eschatological word not as having been produced or created but as having been revealed. The Christ Himself, who constitutes its center, shows in His life this twofold aspect in which it may be viewed. He belongs to it ever since it existed. His coming was an apokalypsis, a manifestation of its content. As a heavenly Being He abode upon the earth. But His resurrection and return to it likewise contributed to its perfecting. Thus it derives its being from the first and second creation alike. While, however, these two constituent elements of the higher world are clearly present with Paul, they are much more clearly and pointedly distinguished in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It

is in Hebrews for the first time that conscious reflection is observed and positive emphasis placed upon the primordial, constant, stable existence of the higher world, antedating and overarching and outlasting all temporal developments, a world of the *aiōniov*, not subject to change and harboring the supreme realities. Hebrews recognizes, with Paul, that the finale of the great drama of redemption in the death and ascension of Christ has put its impress upon the things above. The heavenly sanctuary was cleansed; through Christ's sacrifice the spirits of just men were made perfect; He carried with His new life the supreme form of the rest of God into the Sabbath that had been celebrated above from the beginning. Still the main stress is laid on the other side, on the fact that in reality all along the world to come had preexisted in its heavenly form. The chronological relation is reversed; that which in course of historical development appeared the last was in a deeper and truer sense the first. Broadly speaking the Christian things are not a new product of time; they are rather the descent into time of the essence of eternity. We touch here upon what expositors are accustomed to call the Alexandrianism of the Epistle and in which they recognize the influence of Philo and of the older Platonic speculation with its distinction between the two worlds, that of ideas and that of sense, but what in our view can better be explained as the direct outcome of the internal development of Christian eschatology itself.

We shall now be prepared to understand how the recognition, that the two worlds exist and have existed side by side from the beginning, enables the author of Hebrews to solve the chief problem of the history of redemption and revelation. For it is in Hebrews that the first age and the first world are identified with the first covenant. When, therefore, the question is raised, how the Old Covenant can be identical in substance with the New, what is the common essence, that notwithstanding the great progress from the one to the other, makes them two coherent stages in the

expression and conveyance of the same spiritual reality, the answer is immediately forthcoming: that same world of heavenly spiritual realities, which has now come to light in the Person and work of Christ, already existed during the course of the Old Covenant, and in a provisional typical way through revelation reflected itself in and through redemption projected itself into the religious experience of the ancient people of God, so that they in their own partial manner and measure had access to and communion with and enjoyment of the higher world, which has now been let down and thrown open to our full knowledge and possession. In other words, the bond that links the Old and the New Covenant together is not a purely evolutionary one, inasmuch as the one has grown out of the other; it is, if we may so call it, a transcendental bond: the New Covenant in its preëxistent, heavenly state reaches back and stretches its eternal wings over the Old, and the Old Testament people of God were one with us in religious dignity and privilege; they were, to speak in a Pauline figure, sons of the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of all.

This is a profounder solution than is offered in the well-known formula of Augustine: "the New Testament is latent in the Old, the Old Testament lies open in the New". More profound, because, together with the statement of the fact, it gives the reason for the fact. The latent existence of the verities and potencies of the Christian religion in the old dispensation are due to no other cause than that the Christian religion lived even at that time as redemptive truth and redemptive power in the heavenly world and from there created for itself an embryonic form of existence in the life of Israel. The writer of Hebrews would have subscribed to the belief that Christianity is as old as Abraham and as old as Moses, nay as old as Paradise, because it is heaven-born and not the child of earth.

In a variety of ways the Epistle gives expression to this truth. First of all in what it teaches about the Old Testament forms of religion as partaking of the nature of

shadows, *σκιὰς*. It is easy to miss the exact meaning of this, because it is often too rashly identified with the Pauline formula containing the same figure: "which are a shadow of the things to come but the body is Christ's" (Col. i, 17), and which yet is quite differently oriented. Paul in thus formulating it thinks along the horizontal line of historic development: the shadow is the obscure outline which the reality approaching through time casts before itself. Hence the correlative to the shadow is the body. The author of Hebrews on the other hand lets his thought move along the perpendicular line that runs from heaven to earth: the shadow is a shadow not of something that comes after, but of something that lies above; it is not cast before, but reflected down; hence its correlate is not the body, but the *εἰκών*, the image, by which is meant the celestial prototype. According to ch. x, 1 the law has the shadow of the good things of the world to come, not the image itself. That image the New Covenant possesses; but it existed in the presence of God in heaven when He gave the law to Israel, and from it the shadow came forth which the law presents. True, the Old Testament forms also prefigure what is to follow in the line of historic emergence, they are forecasts in the Pauline sense, but they are this only because first they are reflexes of a heavenly reality which was destined at the end of the ages to come down to earth and fill the New Covenant. If the painter first draws a sketch from the work of art that lives in his inner vision, and then projects the picture from its spiritual form of existence into the form of canvas and color, the sketch will be a prophecy of the finished painting, precisely because it was a shadow of the picture in concept. In a somewhat similar sense the author of Hebrews means by shadow the sketch which God drew on the ceremonial canvas of the law of the eternal things that form the object of His vision in the world above. In another passage (viii. 5) this is said in so many words. Here we read that the Old Testament priests serve that which is a copy and a shadow (*ὑπόδειγμα καὶ σκιά*) of

the heavenly things. The term "copy" explains the term "shadow" and both are equally related to a celestial reality. But perhaps even more strikingly the author's way of thinking in this respect reveals itself in the peculiar use he makes of the ideas of type and antitype. He follows in this matter a terminology which is apt to be confusing to the ordinary reader, because it apparently is the opposite of that usually combined with these words. We say, as a rule, that the Old Covenant has the type, the New Covenant the antitype. And this is Scriptural; for the Apostle Peter so conceives of it when he represents the water of the deluge as the type, the water of baptism as the antitype (1 Pet. iii. 21). And yet the author of Hebrews distinctly tells us (ix. 24) that the Old Testament tabernacle was the antitype, not the type. The explanation is very simple. It lies in this, that antitype means copy, that which is fashioned after the type, and the Old Testament tabernacle was copied, fashioned after the tabernacle in heaven. Likewise the author also finds it significant that Moses was shown a type, a model of the sanctuary on the Mount. (viii. 50 cpr. with Ex. xxv. 40.) And all the Old Testament things in general are in this sense called copies of the things in the heavens (ix. 23).

Still another means of tracing the author's view of the relation between the heavenly world and the make-up of the Old Testament religion is afforded in the peculiar meaning he attaches to the predicate *ἀληθινός*, translated in the English versions by "true", but more adequately rendered by "veritable". This is a predicate reserved for the things in heaven because, in contrast to the shadows of the Old Covenant, they constitute the solid reality, the veritable substance. In this characteristic use of the word *ἀληθινός* Hebrews coincides, with the Fourth Gospel. There the Evangelist speaks of the Logos as "the true light" and our Lord calls Himself "the true vine", "the true bread", and defines the latter as "the bread that comes down out of heaven, the bread of God" (vi. 33). And even more closely approaching the view-point of Hebrews is the contrast

drawn in the prologue between the law given through Moses, and the grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ, for here, it will be observed, the Christian revelation is characterized as "truth" in distinction from the Mosaic law to which this predicate does not belong. The meaning is not, of course, that the Mosaic law is untrue or false in the ordinary sense of the word; in fact this misunderstanding is carefully guarded against by the form of statement employed: the law was given "through" Moses, which implies that Moses in the lawgiving was only the instrument of God, from whom nothing false or untrue can come. "Truth" here means what it means in Hebrews; it expresses the heavenly character of the Christian realities of revelation and redemption in which the higher world directly communicates itself, and the opposite of "the true" is the typical, wherein the connection with the heavenly world is present only in a mediated, shadowy form. And Jesus, because He is the center and exponent of this great projection of the supernatural into the lower world is called "the Truth". In the well-known answer to Thomas concerning the way to the place whither Jesus is going, our Saviour declares that He Himself personally is the way. His way is into heaven, and through identification with Him the disciples can reach the same goal. But our Lord further explains this fact, that the way to heaven lies through Him, from His being "the truth", and "the life", which means nothing else than that the veritable higher world has come down in Him, and that particularly the heavenly life has made its appearance on earth in His Person. All this is but the statement in a more general form of what the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms with specific reference to the sphere of priesthood and sacrifice.

A couple of very instructive examples of the twofold relation in which the Epistle places the things of the Old Covenant as on the one hand looking upward to the world of heaven, on the other hand looking forward to the New Covenant, may be found in what it teaches about the figure

of Melchizedek and about the conception of the promised rest. In the historical sequence of things Christ is said to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Here we have the ordinary correspondence between type and antitype, the former pertaining to the Old the latter to the New Covenant. To Melchizedek belongs the first, to Christ the later appearance on the scene of history. But in the third verse of the eighth chapter the author reverses this relation, representing it in this way, that not Christ was made like unto Melchizedek, but, on the contrary, Melchizedek was made like unto the Son of God. The introduction of the name "Son of God" here is highly significant. It describes Christ in His divine, eternal nature. From this eternal life that places the Son of God above all time and history, the eternity-character enveloping Melchizedek in the record of Genesis was copied, that thus delineated he might again in the time-perspective of history prefigure the historic Christ. The same observation may be made with regard to the "rest" promised the people of God. The rest of the land of Canaan given to Israel of old was a type of the supreme rest opened up by Jesus in the New Covenant. But this rest of Canaan was by no means the first or original embodiment of the religious idea of rest. Back of it and above it lay in the heavenly world the "sabbatismos" of God spoken of in the account of creation, and which is identical with the Christian rest, since believers are received by God into the rest that is His own. Generalizing this we may say that according to the teaching of the Epistle the Old Testament things are both copies and copied from, and the latter because they are the former.

It needs, after what has been said, no lengthy demonstration to show that Hebrews vindicates by this philosophy of history in the most satisfactory manner the identity and continuity of the Old Covenant with the New. Still it is not a work of supererogation to call attention to this. The concrete purpose for which the Epistle was written gave occasion for placing great emphasis on the superiority of the

New Covenant to the Old. And this undoubtedly is also the proximate purpose in the mind of the author when he formulates that antithesis: there the shadow, here the image itself. But the antithesis would be overdrawn and the author's mark overshot if we were to interpret this as meaning: the old has only the shadow of the new. As we now know, the author's real intent is this: the old has only the shadow of heaven, the new has the full reality of heaven. And therefore to do the author full justice the stress should not be laid exclusively on the statement that there is "only" a shadow, but equally on the fact that there "is" a shadow of the true things of religion under the Old Covenant. The word in the prophets cannot take the place of the word in the Son, but it is a word in which God spoke. The sacrifices and lustrations could not do the work for which alone the priestly work of Christ is adequate, but they were in their own sphere faithful adumbrations and true means of grace, through which a real contact with the living God was actually maintained. When again and again, in pursuance of the immediate end in view, the author declares their weakness and unprofitableness (vii. 18), this is meant comparatively, but is not intended to void them of all religious efficacy. If taken in an absolute sense, such statements would warrant the inference that the Old Covenant had no spiritual substance at all, that the saints of old moved wholly among shadows, for which no body was yet in existence. This would be the same erroneous impression that is sometimes derived in an even stronger degree from the Pauline statements in which the Apostle speaks of the religious life under the law, statements which seem to allow nothing for this life in the way of positive spiritual privilege and enjoyment, and dwell only on the condemnatory, cursing, slaying function of the law. And yet we know from Paul that he was well-acquainted not only with the objective foreshadowing which the facts of the Christian redemption had found in the Old Covenant but also with the subjective prelibations which had been tasted by the saints

of those days. And so it is in Hebrews. With whatever degree of clearness or dimness they might themselves apprehend the fact, God stood in spiritual relations to the people of Israel, they were not cut off from the fount of life and blessedness. Through the shadows and ceremonies and all the instrumentalities of the flesh, God controlled with a sure and sovereign hand the religious destinies of each member of His covenant people. Not only under the influence of special inspiration were a David and other Psalmists or a Jeremiah enabled to take to themselves prophetic draughts of the waters of life, which their vision saw springing up in the coming age, there was a direct and contemporaneous interaction between the redemptive approaches of God in the religious forms of that day and the believing and unbelieving responses with which they were met on the part of man. Instructive in this respect is the description given by the author of the dealings of God with the people during the wilderness journey and the people's attitude during that journey to the rest that had been promised. So far as the form was concerned, this promise had come to them only through the medium of the *στρέψις*; it was enveloped in the prospect of the inheritance of the land of Canaan that God had held out from of old and renewed at the time of their redemption from Egypt. And yet it is clearly the author's conviction that far deeper and more tremendous issues were decided on that occasion with reference to each of the participants in the history than the mere question, who of them would survive to enter the promised land. Through the shadowy forms, in the midst of which the actors moved, a great drama of belief and unbelief was enacted, the outcome of which was by God reckoned decisive in the eternal sphere. It was not only from the typical but from the everlasting rest that the unbelievers were excluded, when God swore that fearful oath that they should not enter in. And those who believed were then and there given the right of entrance into all that the divine rest did mean and would come

to mean in the future. The author is so vividly impressed with this that he does not content himself with comparing this Old Testament method of procedure with the method now pursued under the new dispensation but approaches the comparison from the opposite end. He does not say: *they* as well as *we*, but *we* as well as *they* have had an evangel preached unto us, whence also he is able to hold up the unbelief of the Israelites as a warning example to the readers of his own day. No more striking proof than this could be afforded of the fact, that he regarded the same spiritual world with the same powers and blessings as having evoked the religious experience of the Old and the New Testament alike.

Having thus traced the influence of the idea of the covenant on the Epistle's view of revelation, we next enquire whether the same influence can be discovered within the other hemisphere of teaching, that relating to the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. The author consciously co-ordinates this with the doctrine of Jesus' revealing function: these two taken together constitute for him the full orb of the official significance of our Lord. He calls Christ "the apostle and high-priest of our confession" (iv. 1). The two terms are subsumed under one article so as to bring out their intimate coherence. Moreover in this their conjunction they are made the substance of the Christian confession, which presupposes alike their fundamental and comprehensive character. Finally, the readers are invited to consider Him in this twofold capacity, and this means that not merely in objective doctrinal presentation but in the practical experience of what Jesus is and does for them these two categories stand out prominently before their minds.

This precludes our regarding the idea of the priesthood of Christ in the light of a novelty first conceived by the author of the Epistle. It must have been familiar to the readers; and this appears from the fact that they are charged with a lack of proficiency in Christian understand-

ing because of their failure to perceive the significance of Melchizedek in his typical relation to the priesthood of Christ. And yet, what seems to have been familiar in the circle to which the Epistle addresses itself does not appear with the same sharp delineation anywhere else in the New Testament. No doubt the substance of the teaching embodied in it was common Christian property; only this substance seems nowhere to have taken the form that Christ is and acts as a priest. Leaving out of account the well-known passage in the Apocalypse, in which certain parts of the high-priestly apparel are introduced into the description of the glorified Christ, there is no New Testament statement outside of Hebrews which explicitly calls Jesus a priest. Since, therefore, much that is subsumed under the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews is likewise present in the other writings, and yet has not there resulted in investing Him with the office of a priest, it clearly follows that there must have existed in the minds of our author a specific reason for expressing in terms of priesthood what could be expressed and was commonly expressed without the use of this title. Besides the common conception of the Saviour's sacrificial, expiatory work there must have been a peculiar point of view, an original turn given to the old established belief, a certain plus in the apprehension of Jesus' saving significance, and to this it must be due, that the idea of priesthood comes to the front. This peculiar element we must endeavor to discover, and in it, if we mistake not, will be seen the mutual adjustment between the covenantal aspect of religion and the Saviour's priestly office.

It will be best to proceed analytically, i.e., by resolving the conception of priesthood into its constituent elements. The Epistle makes this easy for us by the degree of reflexion almost approaching to definition which in one passage it expends upon the idea (v. 1 ff.). The first element entering into the office is that of "representation of man with God": "Every high priest . . . is appointed for men in things pertaining to God". The movement of the priestly

function is in a direction opposite to that of the prophetic function. The prophet officiates from God to man, the priest officiates from man to God, represents man with God. This at least is, broadly speaking, the case, although there are some aspects of the priestly task in which, after the culmination of its God-ward movement, it turns back, as it were, upon itself and conveys from God to man such things as the priestly benediction, forgiveness and help. In the main, however, the Epistle remains true to its own definition: the priest takes care for man of the things pertaining to God.

Closely connected with this is the second requisite of the office which we may define as "solidarity" with those represented. Here again the priesthood differs from the prophetic office. We have already seen how strongly the Epistle, in describing Christ's revealing function, emphasizes His eternal sonship, His divine nature. It is different where His priestly work is concerned. Here He represents man, and His qualification is measured by His nearness to man. The author, therefore, does not fail to include this in the definition: Every high priest, "being taken from among men", is appointed for men. The work is of such a kind that it cannot be performed by any one who stands outside of the circle he is called upon to represent. Angels can serve as revealing organs, ministering servants, but they are not qualified for acting in the priesthood. It is of importance to notice this point, because in Judaism the tendency to interpose angelic beings between God and man from fear that a direct contact with the creature would injure the divine majesty, showed its influence not merely upon the manward movement of revelation but likewise in the God-ward movement of the priesthood, as when the archangel Michael is represented as officiating at the altar in the heavenly sanctuary. Over against such a view Hebrews insists upon it, that there must exist antecedent solidarity between the priest and the people. And the author conceives of this solidarity on deeper lines than is commonly

appreciated. It is customary to say that he insists upon the possession by Christ of our human nature as essential to His priestly representation of us. But this is not saying enough. The line of reasoning followed in the second chapter shows plainly that the solidarity lies back of this, that the assumption of human nature through the incarnation is not its basis but only a form in which the principle asserts itself. When we are told that "both he that sanctifies and they that are being sanctified are all of one" (ii. 11), it would be a mistake to interpret this phrase "of one" of the common descent of Christ with us from Adam or Abraham. That something else is meant the working out of the idea in the sequel convincingly shows. For the author proceeds to prove the fact of this solidarity from the observation that Christ calls believers His spiritual brethren, and that He resembles them by assuming the same trustful attitude towards God which marks them as children of God, nay that He Himself sustains to them the relation of a father to his children. All this lies in the spiritual sphere and while, in its concrete form, not possible without the incarnation, is not in principle caused by it. On the contrary the author represents the incarnation as the further carrying out of a spiritual solidarity already given: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same" (ii. 14). The joint-sonship of Christ with believers does not follow from the incarnation, it produces the incarnation: because those with whom He was spiritually identified, those whom He resembled in sonship, partook of flesh and blood, He carried His solidarity with them to the point of the assumption of their nature. It is obvious that the root of the identification of Christ with us which underlies His priesthood is sought in His standing before God, in the divine appointment by which His destiny and the destiny of the people of God were forever united. It is what the old theology used to call the federal oneness of Christ with believers that is here taught. That this idea is actually in the writer's

mind follows from one striking feature in the representation which is often overlooked. Believers are not merely called joint-children of God with Christ, but are called "children of Christ". The writer puts upon the lips of Jesus the Isaianic utterance: "Behold I and the children whom God has given me" (ii. 13) and joins to this the affirmation that, because the children, i.e. Christ's children, were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same. They were His children because back of all temporal developments in either His birth or their birth, they had been given to Him of the Father. He stands not only in general solidarity with them, but in that specific form of solidarity which constitutes Him the Father and them the children—a representation which, is unique in the New Testament, where believers are elsewhere called the children of God and not the children of Christ.

While thus resting on a federal basis and carrying with itself the incarnation, the solidarity extends to the further concrete aspects of the human life of Christ. "It behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren" (ii. 17). In these words the author for the first time touches upon the subject which later is repeatedly reverted to: the identification of Christ with us in the common experiences of human life, especially in those common experiences that belong to the sphere of weakness, suffering and temptation. It is a favorite motif of the modern theology, to find in this a sign of reaction from the increasing deification of Christ in the early church with its tendency to dehumanize Him and to bury the historic Jesus under the rank growth of mythology and speculation. Hebrews is then given the credit, together with the Synoptic Gospels, of having rescued for us the human Christ from the danger of entire obliteration. This rests on a misapprehension of the facts. So far as the intent of Hebrews is concerned, the feature in question certainly has nothing to do with the desire to do justice to the humanity of Christ for its own sake. The motive is

a strictly doctrinal one; it is for the sake of the Saviour's priesthood, as a functional necessity, that His solidarity with believers in nature and experience is emphasized: "It behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren" to the end "that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (ii. 17)..

The third element entering into the priestly function is that of "offering". This also the author includes in the definition: "Every high priest being taken from among men is appointed for man in things pertaining to God, that He may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." In connection with the term "sacrifice" we are inclined to think too narrowly of the slaying of the victim. To do so leaves out of account an act of co-equal if not of greater importance in the ritual. For this reason it is better to avail ourselves, as the author throughout does, of the verb "to offer" which, owing to the peculiar point of view from which it regards the transaction, is precisely adapted to call to mind that which follows the death of the sacrifice. Where the author refers to the offering of Christ, he by no means restricts the range of this act to what happened on Calvary; to his view the offering was not finished there; its culminating stage lay in the self-presentation of Christ or in the presentation of His blood, as it is variously expressed, before God in heaven. Sometimes he even refers to this latter act, not as a part or the climax of the offering, but as "the offering" par excellence. And what is true of the offering is true of the "expiation". This also is not confined to the cross: Christ expiates in heaven as well as on Calvary. Evidently the process as a whole is covered by the terms, which consequently can be applied to each half of it, yet so that the second stage more clearly brings out its real significance and throws back its light upon the first. The death of Jesus, no less than His appearance in heaven, the Epistle places under the aspect of an offering, a movement of self-presentation to God: there is a continuous

approach realizing itself in two steps. At this point the ritual conception of Hebrews differs from that of the Old Testament law. In the law the slaying of the animal is not the act of the priest, but of the man who brings the sacrifice for himself. The two acts of the offering, that of the slaying of the victim, and that of the presentation of the blood, here fall to two different persons, the former to the bringer of the sacrifice, the latter to the priest. In Hebrews, on the other hand, the priest performs both. Nor is this an insignificant variation from the Old Testament rule made necessary by the fact that no distinct person, apart from Christ, existed who could act in the capacity of the giver of the sacrifice. For the whole trend of the Epistle's teaching, which is towards laying the scene of Christ's priestly function in heaven, would naturally have predisposed the author for representing Him in connection with His death on earth, not as a priest, but merely as a sacrifice. When notwithstanding this, as we shall see, he insists upon it that Jesus officiated as priest at His own death, there must be a positive reason for this. Two motives probably coöperated towards leading his mind in this direction. In the first place, the close identification of Christ with the people on whose behalf the offering is brought made it appear natural that He should act as their representative at this point also. He is not merely priest and victim in one, but also plays the part of the Old Testament giver; through Him the people of God bring to the altar the required gift that is to make covering for their sin. He represents us both in dying and in offering Himself to die. And, in the second place, the ministry of Christ as priest at His own death helps to bring out a principle considered by the author of the Epistle as of the highest importance, this principle viz., that the surrender of Christ to death was a spiritual, voluntary one. While ascribing real efficacy to the death of Jesus, the Epistle does not attribute this to the death as a mere passive, physical experience. The blood, the death were necessary, but as bare

physical things they were not enough; they derive their ultimate value from the concomitant psychical state. What renders the death effectual is precisely that which distinguishes it from the death of the Old Testament sacrifices, which was a purely passive and physical experience. It was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins (x. 4) and therefore a different sacrifice had to be provided; for the death suffered without a will, there is substituted the death of Christ, which was the doing of the will of God by the will of the sacrifice: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; a body didst thou prepare for me; . . . then said I, lo, I am come to do thy will, O God". "By that will we have been sanctified through the self-presentation (*προσφορά* verse 10) of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." In ix. 13, 14 also the blood of goats and bulls and the blood of Christ are put in contrast from the same point of view. The one operates in the sphere of the flesh, because it is an offering of flesh, the other cleanses the conscience, because it is an offering of Spirit. Hence also there is a further difference in the necessity of their respective operations: the argument is à fortiori: "how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your consciences". The animal offerings under the old covenant cleansed even the flesh not so much through any inherent necessity, but in result of a sovereign appointment of God. It is different with the sacrifice of Christ: His blood operates in the sphere of the conscience, not merely because God sovereignly appoints for it such an effect, or condescends to attribute to it such value, but because in the eternal nature and constitution of things such effect and value are inseparably connected with it. The offering of Christ is an *aiώνιον* because it brought to God eternal Spirit, a sacrifice of self, brought by a divine Person, who as such alone has the absolute right to dispose of Himself, because He is absolutely His own. Now it seems that in order to give emphasis to this important train of thought the author joins to the passion of Christ as an offering the action of Christ

as a priest. It is as priest that He represents the spiritual, voluntary, spontaneous side of the transaction. It is as priest that He carries into the sacrifice that inward God-seeking and God-reaching movement which from the beginning makes it a true gift to the Father. It is a striking confirmation of this that in the passage last quoted the author does not say: Christ offered Himself "as" eternal Spirit, as in the context it might have been expected, but "through" eternal Spirit He offered Himself. It is not only what was offered, but through what it was offered that determined the efficacy. And precisely this category of "throughness" is represented by the priesthood.

The offering of Jesus is specifically connected with the fact of sin, as the author's definition again takes pains to remind us: "Every high priest being taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins". In this statement, it is true, the offering of "gifts" and the offering of "sacrifices for sins" are distinguished, and from this it has been inferred, that there is a side to the priestly function that has no connection with sin. This inference is unwarranted. The only thing that the distributive form of the statement implies is that not all priestly offerings are sin-offerings, that is, offerings for the direct and main purpose of expiation. Besides these there are "gifts" intended for consecration. But that does not prove the coming of these gifts of consecration through a priest, to be the normal thing, so that even in a sinless state a priesthood would be required to offer the gifts of consecration to God. That a man cannot in his own person bring even his gift of consecration to the altar is due to no other cause than his sinfulness. The defilement of sin not merely requires expiation; it also precludes personal approach of whatever kind to God. The definition, therefore, means nothing else than that the priest exists for offering gifts to God on account of the fact of sin, and sacrifices to God for the expiation of sin. It is, of course, in the abstract quite

possible to conceive of a representative head of unfallen humanity furnishing the point of contact between the race 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. Serious doubt, however, may be felt as to whether the ideal relation of man to God in a sinless state ought not to be so direct and immediate as to forbid the interposition of a priest between him and God. The representative position of Adam furnishes no true analogy, for here no religious approach to God on behalf of others is involved, as would be in the case of the priesthood. The difficulty might perhaps be met by conceiving of the Son of God as the hypothetical incumbent of this unsoteric priesthood in the state of rectitude; for the Son of God, as partaking of the divine nature, would not by His priesthood interfere with the immediacy of contact with God. We ought to realize, however, that, on the premises of the Epistle, such a construction would carry with itself the belief in the incarnation of Christ as contemplated in the normal order of the universe irrespective of the entrance of sin; for the Epistle, as we have seen, insists upon it, that a priest on behalf of mankind must partake of the nature of mankind. Consequently in the form which this theory of a hypothetical priesthood under a sinless régime has assumed, that advocated by Westcott, the incarnation of the Son of God is actually represented as in its ultimate analysis not contingent upon sin. Sin and redemption are a mere intervening episode in a scheme of things which made provision for a priesthood of the Son of God under all circumstances.

We need not pursue this line of speculation any further. It suffices to observe, that, if it lay at all in the mind of the writer, which cannot be disproven, it has left no trace upon the actual teaching of the Epistle. The priesthood of Christ is everywhere explained soteriologically. The very emphasis placed upon the sinlessness of Jesus as an indispensable qualification for the office indicates that His

priesthood serves to accomplish something for sinners which sinners cannot accomplish for themselves. The difference between the Epistle and Philo lies precisely in this that the latter invests his Logos with a priestly function that is absolutely devoid of the expiatory element, whereas in Hebrews everything is staked on the thought of expiation. Close upon the definition of the priest in v. 1 follows the statement that he has to deal with the ignorant and erring, so that in the case of the Old Testament typical incumbent of the office his own sinfulness even became a helpful feature because, being compassed himself with infirmity and having to offer for his own sins no less than for the sin of the people, he was able to have a medium pathos (*μερπονταθεῖν*), as the Epistle strikingly expresses it, that is to bear gently, to have patience with the failings of those whom he represented. In ii. 17 "the things pertaining to God" are likewise more clearly defined by the following clause "to make propitiation for the sins of the people". And even where the unending duration of the Saviour's priesthood, as typified by Melchizedek, is dwelt upon, and where consequently the eternal perspective might most easily have suggested to the author the final surmounting of every thought of sin and redemption, this result does not follow, but the writer continues to speak in soteriological terms no less than in the other contexts relating more specifically to Christ's priestly work for the present. The effect of the eternal, unchangeable Melchizedek-priesthood is said to consist in this that He can save to the uttermost (i.e. either to the utmost point of time or to the utmost degree) by making everlasting intercession. By entering into the heavenly holy place, which is the central act of His priestly work, He obtained eternal redemption. The redemption also is an *αἰώνιον*. Over the entire eternal world, so far as the author's vision extends, redemption spreads its wings not as a dark shadow, but as a glorious consciousness capable of being perpetuated, because from it the pain of sin is forever removed by the superabundant expiation. The saints above breathe forever the atmosphere of grace.

As a matter of fact, where the Epistle means to contemplate the Saviour's eternal significance, under a not-specifically redemptive aspect, but from the point of view of a carrying into effect of the original destiny of creation, the author avails himself for this purpose of another conception than that of the priesthood. In such connections he represents the Son as the "Heir" of all things. As the world was made through Him, so the world was made for His inheritance. This corresponds strictly to Paul's teaching that Christ is the goal of creation. To Him the inhabited earth that is to come (*οἰκουμένη μελλουσα*, ii. 5) has been made subject. To be sure, in the historical outcome of the world-process, this also has been fulfilled in a form which is not independent of sin and redemption, because it has been realized through the incarnate Christ, and as a crowning reward for the suffering of death. But from the concrete, actual form of fulfilment we can here distinguish the general possibility of the inheritance of the world as such which, had no sin entered, would not have required the incarnation of the Son of God and might have been a glorious eternal reality. To be priest over the race the Son would have to be incarnate; the sovereignty over the eschatological world He could have received, if the element of sin be discounted, without the assumption of our human nature.

The next element to be taken into account in the analysis of the conception of priesthood is that of "leadership and participation in attainment". The priest is not one who stands personally outside of the movement he directs or has no share of his own to realize in the end he serves. His close unity with the people and his representative relation to them already indicate that the opposite must be true. The Epistle emphasizes that the priest himself is the first to travel the road and reach the goal to which it is his task to bring others. In the definition of the priest that has so far guided us this element also is referred to: a priest is one who "is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to

offer for sins". It is true, in applying the definition to Christ, this particular feature cannot be transferred from the Old Testament high priest to Him without restriction. For the Aaronic high priest is sinful and therefore in the most literal sense and along the whole line of his own ministry partakes of the expiating and saving effect of the same. Jesus is the sinless One, nay, to the efficacy of His priestly work His separateness from sin is absolutely essential. None the less the Epistle upholds the general validity of the principle also with reference to Christ. Even in the case of the Old Testament high priest it was not his sinfulness which occasioned such a participation in the benefits of his office: the circumstance of his sinfulness only causes a trait that is inherent in the conception of the priesthood as such to stand out in clearer relief. The ideal priest, although not personally involved in sin, and consequently not capable of experiencing the cleansing of sin, must, with this one exception, share in the result he is set to accomplish. The Epistle does not hesitate to ascribe to Jesus, and that in His capacity as priest, the experience of salvation: He, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, having offered up in the days of His flesh prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, was heard for His godly fear, and so became the author of salvation unto all that obey Him (v. 6-9). The Epistle employs two technical terms to express this precession of Christ on the pathway along which believers follow Him. The first term is *ἀρχηγός* occurring in two passages, ii. 10 and xii. 2. In the former Jesus is called "the *ἀρχηγός* of salvation"; in the latter "the *ἀρχηγός* of faith". The word can denote both the producer of an effect and the leader of a line; hence the twofold rendering of "author" and "captain". The context in each passage shows that both elements are represented in the pregnant meaning the author puts into the word, and that not by a purely external combination, but as resulting the one from the other. Jesus does not as an outside person procure

salvation for the race; by breaking His own way to the goal He has carried the others in His wake. And again Jesus has not produced faith in us while Himself living above the plane and beyond the need of faith; it is through His own perfect exercise of faith that He helps believers to follow in His footsteps. This pregnant meaning of the word is also proved by the uses Peter makes of it in two passages recorded in Acts (iii. 15; v. 31) where he calls Jesus "the ἀρχηγός of life" and "an ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ". The rendering of the English versions "Prince of Life" and "Prince and Saviour", correctly brings out the thought that Jesus to the view of the Apostle through His resurrection was the first inheritor of life and at the same time the source of life to His followers. To the translators of the Authorized Version at least "prince" admirably rendered this, though it scarcely any longer conveys the idea to us, because, when that version was made, the etymology of prince from *princeps*, *qui principium capit*, was still perspicuous. He as a beginner took this life to Himself, and then opened it to others. In "Prince and Saviour" the two elements are distributed. Jesus is first of all the leader in salvation, then the giver of salvation. For the reason stated, in Hebrews the rendering "captain of salvation" and "captain of faith" is to be preferred to "author of salvation," "author of faith," because the function of a captain always suggests a degree of authorship, while the function of an author conveys no suggestion of leadership in the fruition of what is produced. The second term in which the same idea finds expression is even more illuminating for our present purpose because more directly connected with the Saviour's priestly work. In vi. 20 the author calls Jesus *πρόδρομος* "forerunner" because as the first He has entered into that which is within the veil, and through that act of first entrance with His own blood has made it possible for us now to project our hope as an anchor of the soul into the same holy place and hereafter to follow Him in person.

The four ingredients of the conception of priesthood so far distinguished are by it naturally and easily held together. We cannot, however, assert that for the expression of any single one of them, or even of all in their combination, the priestly formula is absolutely necessary. As a matter of fact we find all these ingredients, sometimes singly, sometimes variously combined, in other types of teaching, notably in Paul, where yet the formal concept of the priesthood of Christ does not emerge with them. That Christ's work has a God-ward reference, that He sustains a representative relation to believers, that in His lot both in the state of humiliation and in the state of glory He is closely identified with His people, that through the voluntary sacrifice of Himself in death He has wrought expiation, that as the first heir and participant of the eschatological state He leads us in the attainment unto glory—all these are characteristic Pauline ideas, and yet, as we have seen, the idea of the Saviour's priesthood does not become explicit in Paul. The point we must now notice is that in Hebrews all these ideas, while substantially identical with the corresponding trains of thought elsewhere, yet possess a physiognomy of their own. The cause of this is that in the mind of the author of Hebrews they are from the outset construed with reference to a very specific idea, the idea of approach unto God. It is towards this idea that the whole conception of the priesthood gravitates. A priest is one who brings his people into the divine presence. From this the feature that he is appointed in things pertaining to God receives its more concrete interpretation. The God-ward reference of his office is not an abstract logical one, but that of a real movement of life. That he represents man and is identified with man to the extent of assuming human nature looks towards the same end. It is true, this was also necessary for and is explained by the Epistle from the vicarious death of Jesus: He partook of flesh and blood that through death He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, and God prepared Him a body that He

might fulfill the divine will through suffering (ii. 14; x. 5). Still, the human nature of Jesus obtains its highest and final use in this that through it we are brought representatively into the presence of God: Christ entered into heaven to appear before the face of God for us (ix. 24). That He offers gifts and sacrifices for sins is in the last analysis directed towards the end that by the expiation all obstacles may be removed which prevent the sinner's access unto God. Finally that Jesus Himself shares in the outcome of His priestly ministry is fully accounted for by the fact that the sole purpose of this ministry is to come near unto God. Thus of the several elements into which the conception resolves itself all are seen to tend in the same direction and to propel each other with commulative force to the point where they reach their highest functional fulfilment in the priestly introduction of man into the immediate presence of God.

The correctness of the view taken may be verified by observing how it throws light on some outstanding features of the Epistle of which no very satisfactory explanation can otherwise be furnished. Two of these may here be briefly commented upon. The first has to do with the relative absence of a theory of atonement. In a writing which makes the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus the center of its theme, one is *à priori* inclined to expect such a theory. On the whole the expectation is disappointed. Paul, with whom the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ occupies a comparatively subordinate place, nevertheless offers far more in the line of a philosophy of sacrifice than the Epistle to the Hebrews. Various views have been taken of this surprising phenomenon. Some endeavor to deny its reality. They say: the author of Hebrews theorizes as much about the death of Christ as Paul does, only he does so in a different way and with different results. According to them the whole forensic frame of mind that underlies the Pauline soteriology is foreign to him. Paul looks upon sin as transgression, unrighteousness, entailing the curse of the law,

and therefore as requiring penal suffering of a vicarious nature in order to expiation. The author of Hebrews looks upon sin as defilement, entailing exclusion from the presence of God and therefore as requiring lustration, cleansing. There is, as we shall see, a grain of truth in this form of statement, so far as the contrasted definition of the end of the atonement is concerned. But, when it offers itself as an exact reproduction of two contrasted theories as to the rationale of the process of atonement, it is utterly misleading. To impute to the author of Hebrews the view that sin is defilement which needs washing and that this is provided by the blood of Christ, is not to furnish him with a theory, that could be set over against the clean-cut doctrinal deliverances of Paul on the subject. The language of defilement and of lustration is figurative, symbolical language obviously borrowed from the Old Testament ceremonial law. But for this very reason it cannot take the place of a theory. When one wishes to explain on a theoretical basis how it is that the blood of Christ washes away sin, he has to reduce the physical figure to moral, spiritual factors; not the symbolism itself but only its spiritual counterpart is something that can be fairly placed by the side of the Pauline doctrine with a view to formulating a judgment on the agreement or disagreement of the two. To compare "washing" and "satisfaction", is as hopeless a procedure as to discuss the relative merits of baptism and regeneration as two distinct theories. Setting then this confusion of thought aside, we find that only two attempts have been made and can be made to make the symbolism truly commensurable with any other theory of atonement. The one lies in the direction of ritualism, the other in the direction of subjectivism. As to the former, it has been represented that the author was fully satisfied with the ritual transactions as such, that being impervious to their symbolic character he did not look for any deeper reason of their efficacy than the bare fact of their institution by God. That blood cleanses would, on this view, be a mystery

of hieratic magic, and it would be quite legitimate to appeal to this as clear proof of the dependence of the teaching of the Epistle on the contemporaneous mystery-religions. A moment's reflection shows how utterly untenable this stand-point is. The whole trend of Hebrews is away from ritualism and in the direction of spiritualizing. It is altogether incredible that a mind like the writer's should on this one point, in flagrant inconsistency with its own genius as shown at every other point, have been satisfied with the blind fact of the shedding of blood without feeling the need of enquiry into its spiritual significance. It is true, the author reduces the necessity of the sacrifice of Christ to the will of God. According to x. 5, 7, 10 the Messiah received a body that He might be able to offer it up in death and thus fulfill the will of God relative to His death. And in this will of God, carried out by Jesus, lies the cause of our sanctification. But it should be noticed that precisely in this context the writer takes pains to emphasize the preferential and therefore reasonable character of the will of God in this respect. God set the execution of this His will by Christ above the carrying out of His will embodied in the Old Testament law regarding animal sacrifice. Speaking in the words of the Psalmist the Saviour says: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for me; then said I, Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God. . . . He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." The divine will, therefore, was not an arbitrary will, it had a reasonable content founded in the principles of the divine mind. Elsewhere also attention is called to the God-worthiness of the procedure of the atonement: there is in it a divine *πρέποντ*, an intrinsic suitableness and decorum, it is in strict keeping with the nature and position of God as God: "For it behooved Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (ii. 10). Still further, we have already seen that the contrast between the relative efficacy of the blood

of the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant as restricted to the sphere of the flesh and the absolute efficacy of the blood of Christ as applying to the sphere of the conscience is explicitly based on the intrinsic difference between the two transactions. The effect of Jesus' death was determined by His nature and attitude in regard to it: it was not then a blind act of ritual magic, but spiritualized through and through, which is but another way of saying that it stood in some intelligible relation to the divine necessities of the case, in other words, that objectively at least in the mind of God, and probably to the mind of the writer also, a philosophy of atonement lay back of the symbolism in which the teaching is clothed.

The other proposal lies in the direction of subjectivism. The attempt is made to differentiate between Paul's teaching on the death of Christ and that of Hebrews in this way, that the former puts the effect in the objective sphere of satisfaction of the divine justice, whereas the latter finds the effect within the heart and mind of man. The symbolism of defilement and cleansing would then find its spiritual counterpart in the moral change produced in man's subjective state. Some of the forms of statement employed by the Epistle with reference to the blood of Christ might, when interpreted according to the modern sound of the words, seem to favor this, as when the blood is said to purify and to sanctify and to render perfect. But no sooner do we bring to bear upon these modes of expression the light of strict, contextual exegesis than it is seen that they will not possibly bear such a subjectivizing interpretation. It is not the heart in the modern sense, nor the mind and will but the conscience, that is, the consciousness of sin, which is throughout regarded as the object of the purifying and sanctifying and perfecting influence of the death of Christ. The subjectivistic appearance of these phrases is delusive; in reality they pertain just as much to the objective sphere as the most characteristic Pauline phraseology. A difference in theory with Paul cannot be made out along this line.

What then is the true explanation of the self-restraint of the writer in respect to theorizing about the atonement? We believe it is simply as follows: The author deems it unnecessary to accentuate his theory of the atonement, partly because he takes for granted the vicarious theory of Paul, and all the time, while using the language of the ritual, in the background of his mind silently translates this into the terms of Pauline doctrine; but mainly because for the present moment he is far more interested in the outcome, the terminal point of the atoning process, than in its intrinsic operation. Looking at the atonement as a priestly ministry, the Epistle singles out for emphasis that aspect of it, in regard to which the priest is most in evidence. Not what the atonement is, but how Christ the priest makes it serve the supreme object of His office, this is the focus to which all the rays of light in the author's presentation of the subject are directed. And this explains not merely the negative feature of the relative absence of a theory; it also explains the peculiar terms in which the effect of the death of Christ is positively spoken of. For the terms above named "to purify", "to sanctify", "to render perfect", have this peculiarity that they all describe the death of Christ as instrumental in fitting the believer for that very thing to which it is the function of the priest to lead him. He is purified, that as being pure He may enter into the presence of God. He is sanctified, that in being holy he may live out his dedication to God. He is made perfect, that as being thoroughly equipped he may meet all the demands which the service of God imposes on him. In a word, the conception of the atonement is here subordinated to that of the purpose of the priesthood and viewed almost exclusively in relation to it.

This cannot be taken to prove, however, that the author in every connection lacked all interest in the working out of a theory of the reasonableness of the death of Christ. Every indication goes to show that he knew and cordially accepted the teaching of Paul in respect to this. In ix. 12

we read of eternal redemption as having been obtained by the Saviour's offering; and redemption is an idea belonging to the vicarious train of thought. This redemption is further defined as a redemption away from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, the implication being that these transgressions, personified, held the Old Testament saints in bondage until they were ransomed from that bondage by the death of the Saviour. And in the twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter we meet with the most explicit substitutionary language: Christ was offered up to bear, that is, to take upon Himself, the sins of many, and shall appear a second time, apart from sin. This is language borrowed from Isa. liii. 12 and it is almost identical with the statement borrowed by Peter from the same source (1 Pet. ii. 24) "who His own self carried our sins in His body upon the tree", with this difference only, that by the local turn here given to the phrase in connection with the cross, the vicarious assumption of the sin of believers by Christ is more realistically brought out. The idea of substitution also clearly shines through in what is said about the purpose of our Lord's incarnation in ii. 14. He partook of flesh and blood that He might be able to die, for it was through death only that death could be overcome. All these incidental modes of statement show that the author was quite familiar and in thorough sympathy with this central doctrine of the Pauline teaching. He makes no more of it simply because it lies to one side of the center of gravity in his conception of the priesthood.

The second interesting phenomenon in regard to which a similar observation may be made concerns the locality to which the Epistle assigns the priesthood of Christ. It is throughout represented as a priesthood exercised in heaven. The days of our Lord's flesh were the days of His perfecting, that is of His equipment for the office, and this equipment included the event of His death, so that the actual entrance upon the function lies beyond His earthly life and coincides with His entrance into heaven (ii. 17).

He becomes a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek when He enters within the veil as our forerunner (vi. 20). In accordance with this He is called a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man, so that, it would seem, His priesthood could have begun only when He entered that heavenly sanctuary (viii. 2). Even stronger is the statement made in the immediate sequel (viii. 4): "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". The question arises: how is all this to be reconciled with the other statements of the Epistle according to which Jesus made purification of sins before He ascended to the right hand of God (i. 3), that in suffering without the gate He sanctified the people through His own blood (xiii. 12), that He was manifested at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (ix. 26) ? It cannot be denied that all these acts are priestly acts and, insofar as they took place on earth, make it hard to understand how the writer can, as unqualifiedly as he does, assign the priestly ministry to the sphere of heaven. It has been suggested as a solution of this difficulty, that the author distinguishes between two orders of the priesthood in both of which Christ successively officiated, first the order of Aaron, next the order of Melchizedek. But nothing that is said in the Epistle really supports such a view. It would be impossible to point out in what respect the priestly ministry of Jesus connected with His death fell short of being a ministry after the order of Melchizedek. If, as is necessary, the essence of the latter be found in its eternity, then this character cannot be denied to the offering He made of Himself on Calvary, since plainly an everlasting effect is ascribed to it. It was eternal in its absoluteness, its spiritual nature, its reference to the heavenly world. Even in point of time the predicate of endless duration was not lacking to the ministry exercised by Jesus on earth. His death afforded no reason for regarding it as terminated or suspended, for in and through the death itself it was from the writer's own point of view

continued on its uninterrupted course by means of the indissolvable life of the Son of God (vii. 16). In dying and in being dead the Son of God remained a priest forever. The distinction also violently separates, by assigning to two separate orders of priesthood, the two stages of the offering which the Epistle conceives of as most intimately and organically united, the offering upon the cross and the offering before the throne of God in heaven. The latter is based on and derives its efficacy from the former; hence they must belong to the same ministry: the Melchizedek-character could not inhere in the heavenly priesthood, unless it were also inherent in the sacrifice of Calvary. Obviously then the explanation required must be sought along a different line. And again we may find it in this, that the author determines the sphere to which Christ's priesthood belongs according to his view concerning the location of its center of gravity. Since this center of gravity lies in the act of bringing near to God, and not in the preparatory operations which were necessary for its accomplishment, the priesthood must have its true home where the approach to God is effected. And this is nowhere else than in the heavenly sanctuary. Perhaps the author's point of view in the matter may best be illustrated by a comparison with the one office of the Old Testament ritual which has most powerfully influenced his conception of our Lord's priestly work. This is the office performed by the high priest on the day of atonement, which constituted, as a matter of fact, the culmination of the sacrificial system. Now in this ministry of the day of atonement, prefiguring to an exceptional degree of exactness the high priestly ministry of Christ, the center plainly lay in the high priest's appearance before the face of Jehovah in the most holy place. This and no other act differentiated the task of the high priest from that of every other servant of the tabernacle. He and he alone could thus come near to God and representatively bring the people near. Therefore the place of his priesthood was emphatically the holy of holies, not the first

tabernacle, far less the court. It might have been truly said that he officiated and could officiate nowhere else than there, and that if he had had to minister in the other compartments of the tabernacle, he would not have been a high priest at all, since ordinary priests and Levites performed this service leaving nothing distinctive that he could have claimed as his own. And yet, in the law of the day of atonement it is explicitly prescribed that the high priest must with his own hand slay the sacrificial animal in the court (*Lev. xvi. 15*). Of course this 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 a high-priestly act, though from the nature of the case it could not be performed in the high priest's own specific sanctuary. Now it is altogether probable that the author of *Hebrews* looked upon the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as exactly corresponding to this act which by the hand of the high priest on the day of atonement took place in the court before the altar of burnt-offering. And since this single act of the high priest in the court does not prevent the Old Testament from assigning him to the holy of holies as the one true scene of his ministry, where alone this can develop its consummate function, so the single act of self-offering by Christ on the earthly mountain does not prevent the author from affirming that His priesthood belongs to heaven as the only sphere where it can truly accomplish its highest purpose, the bringing of the sacrifice and those for whom it is offered near to God. Finally, we must not overlook the part which the factor of personality plays in the shaping of the environment of the priestly office of Christ. This factor in general imparts to our Lord's priesthood a unique character and power. He carried into His office according to the Epistle the eternal resources of the Son of God. He was made priest according to the dynamic of an indissolvable life. But the same principle would also affect the question of the locality of priesthood and of sacrifice. In the New Covenant the heavenly eternal world projects itself into this lower sphere. Even of believers it is

true that they have now come to the heavenly city and stand in real connection through faith with the congregation above. If this applies to believers in general, how much more will it apply to Jesus, who not merely is the captain and finisher of faith, but who also, in virtue of His divine nature, continued to be part of the celestial order of things wherever He might abide in space. What He did was determined as to its local appurtenance by what He was. He created His own environment. It was within the boundaries of His own personality that the sacrifice was made. Through eternal Spirit He offered Himself up to God, and therefore the acts of His priesthood, though spacially taking place on earth, really belonged to the sphere of the *aiōniov*. Its ideal reference was not to any earthly order of priesthood but to the ministry in heaven for which it proved the necessary basis. Of Calvary it might have been said what Jacob said of Bethel: "This is none other than a house of God, this is the gate of heaven".

It will now have become clear, that the ideas of the priesthood and the covenant interlock no less closely than those of the covenant and revelation. The priesthood fulfills itself in being and bringing near to God and the purpose of the covenant is precisely the same. Both look to communion with God. There is no risk in affirming that the author was clearly conscious of this parallelism. The priesthood is to him center and substance of the covenant, that in which the covenant actually subsists. Both from the instrumental point of view of the covenant, and from the point of view of its eternal permanence, this holds true. As the covenant is an instrument of salvation, so is the priesthood. In the seventh chapter the comparison between the two orders of priesthood, the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament and the Melchizedek priesthood of the New, turns with perfect naturalness into a comparison of the two covenants. In no other way than through the priesthood can the covenant as an instrument accomplish its purpose. The old Latin name "instrumentum" as a rendering

for *διαθήκη* was from this point of view most felicitously chosen. The author is so thoroughly convinced of the central place of the priesthood in both dispensations that in vii. 11 he even represents the Levitical priesthood as the higher category under which the whole law is subsumed: "Under it the people received the law". The entire legislation was grouped around it. The same thought finds formal expression a little later (verse 12) in the statement: "Where there is a change of priesthood there is made of necessity a change also of the law". The reason is not, as some think, that the law regulates the priesthood, and that consequently a change in the latter proves the former to have become invalidated. The author means it in the opposite sense: the priesthood, being changed, becomes a center from which the transformation of the religious system radiates in every direction. Hence also it is not a question of the new priest being another person individually considered, but a question of His being differently constituted; He is not merely *ἄλλος* but *ἕτερος*, heterogeneous in character, and this explains why with His arrival on the scene the old order must pass away. It is a small thing that in the point of priestly genealogy the rule has been changed, descent from Levi no longer being required; the great revolutionary fact is that in the place of a priest deriving his position from legal appointment consisting in a carnal, that is a perishable, commandment, there arises a priest who owes His office to the power of an endless life. Still in another form the same thought recurs in the twentieth verse. Here the difference between the Levitical priests and Jesus is said to appear in this, that they were made priests without an oath, He with an oath. The two priesthoods are different at their very source, the one flows from a legal ordinance, the other from an oath, and the oath has in it all the determination and all the energies of a supreme divine undertaking. In the legal ordinance God expresses His authority, in the oath He pledges Himself with the fulness of His prestige, and all His divine resources. There-

fore the oath-begotten priesthood is incomparably superior to the other. But, because the priesthood makes the covenant, the author draws straightway from the rôle played by the oath in His appointment the conclusion that Jesus is the surety of an intrinsically better covenant; thus once more confirming the rule that the excellence of the covenant is in exact proportion to the excellence of the priesthood. The synonymous terms "surety" and "mediator" also mark the interdependence of the priesthood and the covenant, for it is precisely as priest that Jesus becomes the surety, the sponsor of the New Covenant: because He is an oath-appointed priest He is a better surety. Through the manner of His priesthood He renders the effectuation of the covenant assured.

If the priesthood of Jesus is thus seen to be the heart of the instrumental covenant, it occupies the same place in the covenant as a permanent reality. This aspect of the matter finds expression in xii. 24: among the eternal possessions to which believers have come in the heavenly Jerusalem the author here assigns the highest place to Jesus and that in His capacity of mediator of the New Covenant. Both the covenant and the priesthood retain in the eternal world their abiding significance. In the eternal priest the covenant has become eternalized. For this reason the blood with which Jesus was brought back from the dead, that is the expiation which in His endless resurrection-life He makes available, is called the blood of an everlasting covenant, and in virtue of it Jesus never ceases to be the great Shepherd of the sheep of the Israel of God.

The equivalence of the priesthood to the covenant will become still more clearly apparent if we trace the formative influence of the one upon the other in the Epistle's descriptions of the subjective religious life of believers. This life is frequently referred to in terms directly drawn from, or at least colored by, the priestly conception. These terms all attach themselves not to the intermediate, preparatory stage of the priesthood, but to the final act in which the priesthood

issues, which shows once more how firmly the author's interest in the priesthood is centered there. A standing name for believers as benefited by the priesthood of Christ is "those who draw near". "Having then a great high priest . . . let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace" (iv. 14-16). Jesus, by virtue of His eternal priesthood "is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him" (vii. 25). And the writer exhorts the readers: "Having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith". This, it will be seen, is terminology drawn from the official life of the priest: it is his business to draw near; the people through his work are enabled to do after him what he has first done alone. By thus being transferred to the daily covenant-life of every believer, the description imparts to the latter a peculiarly active, mobile character; its distinguishing feature is not merely to stand in communion with God, but to tend, to draw towards God in an ever-renewed approach. The resemblance becomes even more pronounced when not only the movement of drawing near but also the act of offering up is transferred from the priest to the Christian: "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips that make confession to His name" (xiii. 15). This assumes a still more generalized form when the Christian life is called a *λατρεία* a "service". As the word in the original shows, we must keep away from this conception all the modern associations of altruistic endeavor in the cause of God: it stands strictly for the service of worship which directly terminates upon God. It too has been taken from the ritual vocabulary of the Old Testament. Of the priests it is said that they "serve" in the tabernacle. "They that draw near", and "they that serve" are used in entirely the same connections to describe believers in their central religious occupation (ix. 9; x. 1). The purifying of Christ's blood is for this purpose that believers may be enabled by it "to serve the living God". It does this because it cleanses the conscience from dead works, i.e. from the defilement

of sin, and thus restores to the sinner the privilege of appearing as a worshipper before the face of God (ix. 14). It ought to be observed, however, that the Epistle does not go so far in this direction as the Old Testament representation of the covenant-status of Israel on the one hand, and on the other, in dependence on it, the First Epistle of Peter and the Apocalypse do, when they definitely invest the people of God with priestly character. In placing the covenant before Israel Jehovah promised them that under it they would be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, in other words that in their collective capacity they would sustain to Him the same relation that a priest sustains to the deity in whose temple he ministers (Ex. xix. 6). Peter transfers this to the New Testament congregation, addressing his readers as "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5). And the seer of the Apocalypse bases a doxology upon the fact that Christ has made believers joint-kings and priests with Himself and God, or priests of God and of Christ (i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6). But to the writer of our Epistle, the priesthood of Jesus has assumed such stupendous proportions and been brought into such close connection with His divine sonship and with His specifically redemptive function that he naturally hesitates to include believers in its exercise even after a secondary and metaphorical fashion. Still upon the fundamental duty of the believer to make his whole covenant-life a worship-service of God he insists. At this point the opposite pole of the *διαθήκη*-conception, that representing the sovereignty and majesty of God, exerts its influence. As in the making of the covenant there is no absolute two-sidedness, the divine prerogative being paramount, so in the resulting covenant-intercourse there can be no absolute co-equality; the fellowship with God which stands at the goal inevitably assumes the form of a service, a worship of God by man. It is covenant-communion exercised in a sanctifying atmosphere that enters the stamp of His own majesty and dominion. The covenant-life of Israel concentrated in theocracy, where God alone is supreme and where He sets upon

tabernacle already bore this character; it belongs in a heightened degree to the covenant-life of the New Testament church, but its fundamental significance is best seen from this, that it remains the constitutive principle of the eschatological congregation, whose component orders are enumerated according to the rank they occupy in the heavenly service of God. No small part of the practical value of the Epistle consists in the great energy with which it upholds the direct Godward function of worship as lying at the very basis of Christianity. Hebrews is the Epistle of the cultus and the Christian life it portrays is a cultus in the noblest sense of the word. At a time when the man-ward functions of religion are in the ascendant, especially when the word "service" is being almost monopolized for the Christian activities that aim at the promotion of the well-being of man, it can do no harm to let ourselves be reminded by the writer of this Epistle that there is such a thing as a service to God that is not rendered by indirection, but is as exclusively and directly appropriated to Him as the gift that is laid upon the altar, an alabaster-vase of ointment whose very preciousness consists in this that it cannot even be sold and the proceeds given to the poor. It will be said perhaps that the cult-terminology employed by the Epistle in the description of the Christian life is a mere transparent allegory, occasioned by speaking of the New Covenant in terms of the Old, and that therefore no positive significance can be attached to it except that of a momentary accommodation to the exigencies of the argument, or possibly to the Jewish-Christian standpoint of the readers, who would be pleased to find in the Christian institutions a reflex of their own ancestral rites. This explanation is hardly adequate, partly because it is far from certain that the Epistle is addressed to Jewish-Christian readers, but mainly for another reason. The Old Testament ceremonial institutions were to the author not matter-of-fact customs such as this theory of accommodation assumes; they were to him the product of revelation in the strictest sense of the word; that they were revealed involved on his premises, as we have seen, the em-

bodiment in them of everlasting principles of religion; therefore the cult-aspect in which he represents Christianity reproduces in his opinion these same principles, which amounts to saying that it is more than a form, that it represents something inseparable from the Christian religion. The best proof of the soundness of this position lies in the eschatological use which the Epistle makes of the same terminology. The language of priest and altar and sacrifice and cultus is transferred to the consummate, heavenly state; this would not have been possible had the author looked upon all such forms of statement as pure symbolism. His intense spiritualism should not be confounded with idealism. It is opposed only to materialism, not to the sound realism which the New Testament writings everywhere uphold with reference to the future world. It may be difficult for us, and probably would have been difficult for the writer, to define in the concrete what exactly is meant by the higher tabernacle not made with hands, not of this creation; by the heavenly altar; by the appearance of Christ before the face of God; by the cleansing of the things above; but human inability to form of this any other than a sense-conception does not warrant the inference that, where sense is excluded, all objectivity disappears and that everything taught of the heavenly life may be safely dissolved into internal processes and mental states. No, the archetypes of these things are real to the author; he believes in the concrete objective existence of the contents of the celestial life, though the wings on which he soars to it are of the finest, most ethereal spirituality. And, inasmuch as the Christian life on earth anticipates the conditions of the world to come, it likewise must needs bear the impress of the eternal moulds into which it will be cast hereafter.

Still another respect in which the covenant and the priestly conception have jointly put their stamp upon the Epistle's view of the Christian life may be briefly touched upon in this connection. It is characteristic of covenant and priesthood alike that they emphasize the collective no less than the individual status of the religious subject. This

follows directly from the preceding point. If Christianity is a worship, a service offered to God, then it must organize itself on a collective basis, for the worship of God cannot fulfill itself unless it proceeds from the congregation as a whole. In fact the Old Testament berith and the Old Testament priesthood had this very thing as their main purpose, that a proper cultus should be offered to Jehovah through the providing of a proper cult-unit in the congregation of Israel. Not merely the individual Israelite has to render this service; the people are obligated to it and responsible for it. On its behalf the regular sacrifices are offered and the regular offices of worship discharged. Hence Paul represents the *λατέλα* or "service" as one of the great distinctive privileges of Israel, coördinate with such things as the adoption, the Shechinah, the *διαθήκα*, the giving of the law, the promises, the fathers, and the giving birth, after the flesh, to the Christ (Rom. ix. 4, 5). The writer of Hebrews transfers this collective manner of speaking to the New Testament. He speaks in a number of passages of Christians as constituting "the people", "the people of God" (ii. 17; iv. 9; viii. 10; xiii. 12), just as he applies this name to the Old Testament Israel (v. 3; vii. 5, 11, 27; ix. 7, 19; x. 30; xi. 25). It is a mistake to draw from this an argument for the Jewish extraction of the readers of the Epistle, as if the writer meant that from a racial, national point of view they form the continuation of the people of Israel. With bodily descent this whole way of speaking has nothing whatever to do. It is not an ethnic but a theocratic designation. Even in regard to the Old Testament Israel, where the author introduces it, he is not led to do so by the thought of their common physical descent. Israel in the last analysis became a *λαός*, a people of God, because Jehovah in the berith organized them as a congregation for His service. And so it is under the New Covenant. It will be observed that in most of the passages where the terms "people", "people of God" occur, their mention has been induced by the connection of the statement with the covenant or priesthood. Jesus makes ex-

piation for the sins of the people (ii. 17). There remains a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God (iv. 9). Jesus suffered that He might sanctify the people with His blood (xiii. 12). The high-priest offers for sin both for himself and for the people (v. 3; vii. 27; ix. 7). The Levitical priests take the tithes of the people (vii. 5). Moses sprinkled the people (ix. 19). The representative position which the priest occupies with reference to the beneficiaries of His office of itself brings about the consolidation of these into a people of God.

Another name for the body of believers is "the house of God". This also is connected with the idea of the priesthood, for Jesus is called in one of the passages where it occurs "a great priest over the house of God" (x. 21). In this name "house of God" the principle of organic continuity of grace is implied, which elsewhere in the New Testament and throughout the Old appears as one of the important correlates of the covenant-conception. If God enters into the covenant relation not with men in their individual capacity only but as members of a priestly organism, then the perpetuation of this organism is ipso facto provided for. The Old Testament emphasizes throughout that Jehovah establishes His covenant not merely with the parents but with their offspring in the successive generations. Both Peter in his speeches in Acts (ii. 39; iii. 25) and Paul in Galatians (iv. 24-31) represent the covenant as a procreative organism, having its sons and daughters through the ages of redemptive history. It must be acknowledged, however, that this side of the matter, while doubtless implied, is not made explicitly prominent in the Epistle. Apart from the covenant idea the element of continuity is found by the writer inherent in the promises given to Abraham. These promises he does not call a covenant, for the old *διαθήκη*, with which the new is coördinated, begins according to his representation at Sinai, not with Abraham. But the promise underlies the whole subsequent development; it is the broad basis on which the two successive covenants rest; New Testament believers have an equal interest

in it with the saints of the old dispensation, and in this way the uninterrupted continuity of grace is recognized (vi. 13-18).

We have now traced the influence of the covenant-idea in the Epistle along the two lines of revelation and of priesthood. It is easy to see that these lines represent two mutually complementary movements, each beginning at the point opposite to that from which the other proceeds, and having for their common destination the realization of fellowship between God and man. In revelation God makes His approach to man; through the priesthood man makes His approach to God; where both reach their ideal perfection, there the ideal covenant is given. The covenant movement must necessarily flow through these two channels. And, since Hebrews makes the covenant-idea central, by far the larger part of what it has to teach concerning the interplay of religion between God and man attaches itself to these two conceptions. Still there is an element in the description of the subjective side of religion in the Epistle which shows no outward and formal dependence upon the idea of the covenant. This element is found largely in the account given by the author of the patriarchal history, of the annals of faith during the period when the old Sinaitic covenant was not yet in existence. And the interesting feature of this description is, that, while the formal notion of the covenant plays no part whatever in it, yet the same outstanding and characteristic traits which the account of the later religious life assumes under the influence of the covenant-conception appear in it with striking distinctness. The significance of this phenomenon lies in the witness it bears to the inherence of the covenant form in the very idea of religion itself as the writer conceives it. Religion is to his view so essentially and so inevitably a matter of mutual union and fellowship in the conscious sphere, that its manner of appearance and mode of exercise cannot help suggesting the thought of the covenant even where there is no conscious desire on the writer's part.

to obtrude it upon our attention. The description of faith in the eleventh chapter is well-adapted to illustrate this. Faith is not here set forth from the specifically Pauline point of view as saving trust in Christ as the exponent of the grace and power of God. At first sight it may even seem to possess far less personal concentration than the Pauline conception of faith. The author defines it in an impersonal way as "assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen" (xi. 1). And yet that this is more so in appearance than in reality follows from the other eminently personal statement: "Without faith it is impossible to be pleasing unto God, for he that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him" (verse 6). Though faith is the organ of perception of the unseen and future realities and takes in with its vision a comprehensive realm of objects, there is in this circle which it sweeps a center, a focus; the things not seen and the things hoped for have a true unity, and this unity lies in God. No greater mistake could be made than to imagine, that the faith illustrated in this chapter is no more than the innate human faculty to believe in things that cannot be perceived by the senses. The heroes of this faith are the great figures of the history of redemption, and this of itself proves that its objects are the supernatural realities of the world of redemption—whence also hope is a species of faith. Though not in the specific Pauline sense of justifying faith, it is saving faith no less than the faith preached by Paul. And it is furthermore portrayed by the author as in the highest degree an intensive faith for the reason that at the time when it was exercised the redemptive realities had not yet been manifested, and all sight, all concrete experience and enjoyment of these realities was absent. All these died not having obtained. It was a faith that, subjectively speaking, had nothing but itself to fall back upon. This, however, is but another way of saying that it was faith in the promises. Now faith in a promise can from the nature of the case have no other than a pointedly personal reference. Belief in the fulfilment of

the promise can only rest in trust in the promising Person. A personal occupation of the religious consciousness with God who stood back of the promises was therefore essential to the faith of the patriarchs. Only the author gives this occupation a far wider range than the line of reasoning just followed would seem to require. Faith in the fulfilment of a promise might be concerned only with the veracity of the one who gave it and hence might lead to personal touch with Him only at this single point of His character. The Epistle means far more than that the patriarchs relied on the truthfulness of God. Its view is rather this, that through the absence of the concrete temporal gifts of salvation the patriarchs were brought to an immanent apprehension of the source of these gifts in the character of God Himself, and that not along the line of the divine faithfulness alone but in a most comprehensive manner along the line of all the elements that the nature of God as revealed to them contained. Having naught but promises their faith was stimulated to approach the content of salvation on its ideal side as it lay in God, the expression of His mind, His purpose, His nature with reference to them. The proximate result of this was a strong spiritualization of their religious life. The promise, the word, is the most spiritual form in which the gifts of God can be apprehended. The next result showed itself in that otherworldliness or heavenly-mindedness which the author has so beautifully portrayed in his account of the character of Abraham. The patriarchs confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth: and this was because they could see and greet the promises only from afar. It is evident from this form of statement that their faith did not rest in the historical satisfaction that it might obtain by projecting itself through the vista of time to the point of fulfilment. On the contrary, because the vista was long and their faith eager, it made the sublime leap to the heavenly eternal things; to the seeing, the greeting of the promises from afar, there was added the seeking of a better country. And it is important to notice how the author

represents this ascent of the patriarchs' faith to the heavenly world as in no way mediated by the typical fulfilment of the promise that was to intervene between them and its final New Testament realization. The ascent to the heavenly country did not use as a stepping-stone the thought of the earthly Canaan; it was made directly from the vantage ground of the promises of God. It greeted from afar the Christ and drew near to the heavenly country above; in sublime sacrifice it surrendered whatever of earthly developments lay between. In this close touch and intense preoccupation of the patriarchs with the celestial world, the Epistle almost seems to find a sort of preexistence of the Christian relation to the same world, something of the same directness of approach to it and of the same absorption by its interests that the New Covenant has brought and which were unknown to the intermediate period when believers were dependent on shadows. As Paul found in the patriarchal period the preformation of the religion of grace and of universalism which the law coming in after could only obscure but not abrogate, so the author of Hebrews finds in it an earlier stage of that thorough spiritual-mindedness and of that profound other-worldliness of Christianity which it was his specific task to set forth.

Even this, however, is not yet the highest aspect in which the Epistle invites us to consider the faith of the patriarchs. As spirituality led to heavenly-mindedness, so heavenly-mindedness in its turn assumes the form of a personal attachment to God. As the spiritual and the heavenly are to the author at bottom identical, so of both the center of attraction lies in God. Faith in its last analysis was to the patriarchs the apprehension, the possession, the enjoyment of God Himself. Throughout the music of this chapter the dominance of the personal note makes itself distinctly heard. Those who looked for the city that has the foundations sought it for no other reason than that its maker and builder is God. It is because it is the city of God, the structure in which He has embodied His own

perfection, in which His thoughts and purposes for His own stand objectified, that it forms a worthy object of the supreme religious quest of the believer. In it is God at every point and those who dwell in it see His face continually. The measure of their desire for it becomes the measure of their love of God. Herein also lies the defense against the charge that otherworldliness is a sickly strain in the religious consciousness, because inspired by selfish, eudaemonic motives and because apt to hinder the development of a wholesome interest in and faithful performance of the duties of the present life. This would be so if it were anything else but God-centered. The root of all that is ugly and injurious in extreme eschatological preoccupation can always be traced back to this, that it is insufficiently religious, that people seek something else in the other world than the perfect union with and service of God. Hence the two widely different types of other-worldliness that go side by side through religious history, the one disappointed with present conditions for self's sake and projecting into the future or into heaven the quenching of its own unpurified desires, and therefore apt to show itself in times of spiritual decline or secular adversity; the other unsatisfied because the highest religious experience in this life cannot still a thirst for the living God that has capacities made for the world to come, and therefore apt to appear in times of deep and pure religious revival. The eschatological interest of the early church was very keen, but it was prevailingly of the latter kind. So far as the authoritative teaching of the New Testament books is concerned, it consistently emphasizes the thought that what believers seek in the world to come is the perfection of their religious relation to God. Where any lower motive came into play, as among the new converts who as yet were but imperfectly Christianized could not fail to happen, and where the acute belief in the nearness of the end or the sharp disappointment at its delay, threatened to interfere with the normal conduct of the life of the present, the needful corrective was immediately applied, and it consisted always in this that

an appeal was made to the Christian's allegiance to God, whom to love and whom to serve should be his supreme concern alike in this world and in the world to come. We can observe this very thing in our Epistle. Several indications point to the existence among the readers of an eschatological preoccupation which was largely concerned with externals and which, when the external developments failed to come as quickly as had been expected, gave rise to discontent and through discontent to unbelief. It is in order to correct this evil that the author shifts the emphasis from the external to the internal, that he spiritualizes the content of the future life, and that in spiritualizing it he puts its center in the believer's desire for God, all of which enabled him to show that in principle the treasures of the world to come are not shut up in an inapproachable future but lie now and here open to the experience of the Christian. Hope is made a species of faith and faith is encouraged to enter in and lay hold upon what is behind the veil. Through this whole noble description of faith rings the note of personal attachment, covenant-loyalty to God. It is a faith through which, like Moses, the Christian can endure as seeing Him who is invisible, which chooses rather to share ill-treatment with a people that belongs to God, than to inherit the treasures of Egypt. It is the responsive act on the believer's part to the act of covenant-committal on the part of God. Religion consummates itself in a mutual avowal, the people bearing God's reproach and offering up a sacrifice of praise to Him continually, even the fruit of lips that make confession to His name, and God not being ashamed to be called their God and preparing for them a city. Thus the Epistle's idea of faith falls into line with its teaching on revelation and on the priesthood and back of all three equally is seen to lie the covenantal conception of religion.

With this result we may consider ourselves to have reached the conclusion of the task set for our enquiry. It is a noble view of Christianity that the Epistle holds up to

us. The writer unites profound historical grasp of the organic development of redemption with keen theological insight into the unchanging essence of revealed religion and fine psychological feeling for the generic forms which it assumes when entering into the conscious experience of man. In all these respects the teaching of Hebrews has done its full share in laying the foundations on which the later structure of Christian doctrine has been reared, a more generous share perhaps than, judging from its compass, might have been expected. And in no other theology have the principles that shape the Epistle been so fully and faithfully incorporated as in that produced by the Reformed churches. We do not mean by this that the Reformed theology is to a large extent, like that of Hebrews, a covenant-theology, for that might be a matter of mere superficial resemblance. It is not that the label or the bottles are the same; the wine is the same in both cases. In some measure this may be explainable from the fact that the representatives of the federal theology drew upon Hebrews as their source. On the whole, however, we have to do here not with a slavish borrowing of material but with a free and living reproduction of identical principles. Both in Hebrews and with the Reformed teachers a peculiar insight into the highest possibilities of religion instinctively chose for its form of expression the covenant-idea.

It may be briefly pointed out how in the Reformed theology the same great perceptions lie embedded that we have found shaping the doctrine of the Epistle. The first place should be given to the recognition of the majesty and sovereignty of God in the whole process of religion and redemption. It is all embraced in a *διαθήκη*, a comprehensive system, and in this system all things are of God. His is the originality in conceiving, His the initiative in inaugurating, His the monergism in carrying out. There is no room for any fortuitousness of chance, any uncertainty of issue, no point anywhere where the hand of God is not in absolute control. It is a system that has an oath of God and a sponsorship of Christ back of all its provisions. And

the principle thus recognized in the redemptive sphere also asserts itself in the general religious attitude of man towards God. A deep impression of the divine majesty colors all intercourse with Him. For Him are all things and through Him are all things. The creature exists for His sake. He is the living God into whose hands it is fearful to fall, for those who disobey Him a consuming fire. A consciousness of strict accountability in view of God's sovereign rights over man has always characterized the Reformed religion even to such an extent as to invite the charge that its puritanic practice savors of a spirit of legalism more at home in the Old Testament than in the New. But legalism has nothing to do with this; it is here as in Hebrews simply the correlate in life of the vivid impression of the majesty of God in belief. Legalism lacks the supreme sense of worship. It obeys but it does not adore. And no deeper notes of adoration have ever been struck than those inspired by the Reformed faith, no finer fruit of the lips making confession to God's name has ever been placed upon the Christian altar.

In the second place, and as in a sense counterbalancing the foregoing, we may notice the stress laid in Reformed doctrine upon the directness and spirituality and intimacy of the intercourse of God with the soul of the believer. The supreme contact is made not in the mystical regions of the unconscious, nor through magical sacramentarian processes, but in the luminous sphere of conscious fellowship through the interchange of thought and affection. The God who dwells in the high and holy place comes nearest to the humble heart and the contrite spirit. This is not saying that it is unworthy of God to touch and influence man on the subconscious side. It only implies that such contact and influence are always a means to an end, not religious ends in themselves. The religious process tends to vision in the light, to knowledge face to face, precisely because it has to interact with and form part of the life of Him who is a light and in whom there is no darkness at all. For this reason the ultimate root of every believer's relation to

God lies in the most intimate and individual act of election, an act wherein the love of God consciously chooses and sets up over against itself a human spirit to be bound to God in the bonds of everlasting friendship. Election and the covenants answer to each other as the root and the fruitage of the highest type of religion.

In the third place the Reformed Theology ascribes to the Christian life a unique degree of devotion to the interests and the glory of God. The believer does not merely desire to have intercourse with God, but specifically to make this intercourse subservient to glorifying God. Hence on the one hand the high place which the direct worship of God holds in the exercise of the religious function, on the other hand the consistent effort to organize the whole of life on the principle of a comprehensive service of God, the religious impulse imparting to every human activity and achievement that spirit by which they are made to redound to the honoring of God's name. No brighter examples of absolute devotion and self-surrender to God in unstinted covenant service can be found anywhere than in the annals of the Reformed faith.

In the fourth place the Reformed Theology has with greater earnestness than any other type of Christian doctrine upheld the principles of the absoluteness and unchanging identity of truth. It is the most anti-pragmatic of all forms of Christian teaching. And this is all the more remarkable since it has from the beginning shown itself possessed of a true historic sense in the apprehension of the progressive character of the deliverance of truth. Its doctrine of the covenants on its historical side represents, the first attempt at constructing a history of revelation and may justly be considered the precursor of what is at present called Biblical Theology. But the Reformed have always insisted upon it that at no point shall a recognition of the historical delivery and apprehension of truth be permitted to degenerate into a relativity of truth. The history remains a history of revelation. Its total product agrees absolutely in every respect with the sum of truth as it lies in the eternal

mind and purpose of God. If already the religion of the Old and New Testament Church was identical, while the process of supernatural revelation was still going on, how much more must the church, since God has spoken for the last time in His Son, uphold the ideal absoluteness of her faith as guaranteed by its agreement with the Word of God that abideth forever. It is an unchristian and an unbiblical procedure to make development superior to revelation instead of revelation superior to development, to accept belief and tendencies as true because they represent the spirit of the time and in a superficial optimism may be regarded as making for progress. Christian cognition is not an evolution of truth, but a fallible apprehension of truth which must at each point be tested by an accessible absolute norm of truth. To take one's stand upon the infallibility of the Scriptures is an eminently religious act; it honors the supremacy of God in the sphere of truth in the same way as the author of Hebrews does by insisting upon it, notwithstanding all progress, that the Old and the New Testament are the same authoritative speech of God. In these four vital respects we may truthfully say that the covenant theology has the high credentials of being in agreement with the lines along which the covenant idea is worked out in Hebrews. And, insofar as this is the case, it is not an unimportant variation, but a reversion to type, in which the conception of the Christian life comes nearest to one, and that not the least attractive, of the forms in which it is portrayed in the New Testament.

*Princeton.*

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