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The Significance of Hebrews 1:1-2a for the Method and Message of 1:1 – 10:18 Toward a More Efficacious Ministry

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**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HEBREWS 1:1-2a
FOR THE METHOD AND MESSAGE OF 1:1 - 10:18
TOWARD A MORE EFFICACIOUS MINISTRY**

**A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

Charles E. Dube

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INTRODUCTION

The Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the least used books of the NT. Its picture language is that of the Jewish cult, and this is much too foreign to our culture to allow for its use in personal devotions. Even more distressing is its apparently bizarre method of OT exegesis, for there is considerable commentary material which denies that there is much value in studying this aspect of the epistle.¹

This paper, however, is an attempt to make some sense of the message of Hebrews and its method of dealing with OT material. The opening sentence of the book has been used as the key to this operation. Thus a formal statement of the question with which we shall be dealing is: "What is the significance of Hebrews 1:1-2a for the method and message of 1:1-10:18?"

10:18 is a natural break in the flow of the argument of Hebrews. Up until this point there has been a predominance of doctrinal material. "From 10:19 to the end of Hebrews the writer enforces the practical consequences derived from his conclusions established in the doctrinal discussions."² The greater amount of exegetical methodology is found in the first part of the book. Therefore we shall limit the scope of our examination to 1:1-10:18.

Since our attention shall be on the method of OT interpretation and its implications for the message of Hebrews, there will be only incidental discussion of isogogical material. Little can be taken for granted in this area since there is so little in the book which might identify its author, addressees, or destination. In this paper "the author" refers to the anonymous writer of the epistle.

We shall be dealing with the hermeneutical question, "How does the

author use the OT?" To ask why he chooses his particular method is outside the scope of our examination. The methodology used in this paper is basically deductive, for Chapter I draws a large conclusion on the basis of little actual evidence. At any rate, we shall tentatively assume that the author of the epistle holds to a conception of history similar to that of the OT prophets. This view of history is covered by the intentionally vague term "Heilsgeschichte" or "eschatology". Ultimately our conclusion concerning the exegetical method of Hebrews shall be that the author does take the historicity of OT texts and types seriously, that he sets Jesus Christ and the OT into a typological relationship which requires some historical sensitivity. The message of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the OT in that he actually reveals God and effectively cleanses man from the sin which defiles them and blocks them from the presence of God.

1:1-2a is the key to the argument of Hebrews and the basis for the structure of this paper. B. F. Westcott has a somewhat extended comment on the structure of this passage,² and the division he notes is used as a basis for our approach. There are four pairs of phrases in the passage: lalēsas - elalēsen, palai - ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn, en prophētai - en huiō, and tois patrasin - humin. There is also an implied contrast with only one member actually present: polumerōs kai polutropōs. In our outline we shall closely follow Westcott's comment concerning the "three particulars" which mark the contrast, i.e. "(a) in the method, and (b) in the time, and (c) in the agents of the two revelations".⁴ Thus our examination shall fall into four chapters which shall concern respectively the times, the subject, the agents, and the modes of revelation.

CHAPTER I

TIMES OF REVELATION

Under the contrasting expressions for the times and addressees of God's revelation spoken of in Heb. 1:1-2a (palai...tois patrasin -- ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn) this chapter will deal with that which is apparently basic to the method and message of the epistle, the prophets' eschatological view of history. It is not the purpose of this paper to prove the existence of such a conception in Hebrews. However, there are certain indications in the epistle that such is the case, i.e. the use of the prophetic phrase ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn and its position of contrast over against a previous age of revelation. The greater portion of this chapter shall consist of a review of (1) some characteristic features of this conception of history and (2) the typological method of interpretation which is companion to this view. The remainder of the paper will pick up and illustrate these considerations with portions of the epistle.

With the phrase ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn the author places himself in a very particular temporal situation. This phrase (or its equivalent) is used in the LXX to signify the present condition as opposed to that which is future (e.g. Gen. 49:1; Num. 24: 14; Mi. 4:1; etc.). Beginning with this distinction, Jewish teachers "distinguished 'a present age,' 'this age' from 'that age', ' the age to come'..."¹

The usage came to mark a special view of history, for the prophets made a technicus terminus of it (cf. Is. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; Ho. 3:5; etc.). It marked a point of change in the general course of things,

generally in the good interests of God's people (except Ezek. 38:16!).

In Heb. 1:2a the phrase indicates that the appearance of Christ 'once for all at the end of the age' (9:26) has inaugurated the second age of revelation, the time of fulfillment.² The past is considered a closed period already, for palai in contrast with proteron ("formerly", 4:6; 10:32) refers to a past which is already "sealed".³ The eschaton tōn hēmerōn really came with the coming of Jesus, but the present time of the author is a temporary suspension of complete consummation.⁴

The implication of the author's use of this phrase is that he thinks in the mainstream of a specifically eschatological perspective.⁵ There are several characteristics of this approach which will be pertinent in our further consideration of this epistle.

The first of these is that history is considered to ^{be} unified and holistic. That which effects this unity is the constant and continuous activity of the one God in his relation with man and the world, a unity which stretches from creation to consummation. Coupled with the unquestioning conviction that God always acts in accord with his own nature, the conception of continuity takes the form of a belief that history unfolds according to God's own plan. One implication of this unity of history is that "what has happened is not really past, but a continuing fact."⁶ According to the perfect constancy of God, that which he has done in the past is an ever present pattern for that which he is presently doing and will do in the future.

If the constancy and continuity of God's action are the formal principle of history viewed eschatologically, its content is the coming of God himself. The great tandem theme of judgment-salvation in the OT

prophets is the concrete expression of the conviction that God moves into history to meet man in wrath or mercy. The expression "to seek the Lord" denotes the response of obedience and worship through which man meets with the God of grace and mercy, as exemplified for instance in Hosea 10:9-12. This dialogical motion, however, is always seen as the result of God's initiative.

The course of history is open to the eyes of men because it is determined by God's word of promise. This again is an aspect of history as the expression of God's constancy. He speaks a promise, warning, or threat, through the prophets as his own agents. The prophets, however, recognize this promise in that which God has already done at some past time. Therefore, Jeremiah prophesied a new covenant in light of the old one which God had previously established (31: 31-34), while the Exodus became the hope of both personal (Ps. 77) and national (Isa. 51:9-11) deliverance. A particular feature of this OT conception of the promise of the future being contained in the past action of God is that tendency to view the consummation in terms of the creation, the end in terms of the beginning (Isa. 66:22).

Finally, we must indicate the difference between the eschatological and the apocalyptic views of history and its consummation.⁷ The basic theme of God being the Lord of history who is coming soon to give salvation to those who worship him is common to both these views. The eschatology of the prophets with its more immanent conception of God and his actions expected the consummation of the "latter days" to be within history. Apocalyptic, however, with its emphasis on dualism and the cosmic scope of God's activity looked for a consummation in terms of a

supra-historical judgment and salvation.

According to this distinction the NT writings "are eschatological scriptures in the sense that their authors are convinced that the new day has dawned, the 'last times' foretold by the prophets have begun."⁸ This eschatological character of the NT brings with it several basic attitudes toward the OT and its meaning.

The basic posture of the NT toward the OT is that of respect, submission, and expectation, for it holds the OT to be the Word of God. God speaks in the OT (II Tim. 3:16), and its unique authority (Jn. 5:39) rests upon its being the record of God's dialog with his people.⁹ The nature of that which he speaks is basically regarded as promise, which in turn is seen as fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 5:18; Lk. 4:16-21; Acts 2:14-36; Rom. 9-11). C.R. North provides a neat summary of this relationship of Christ and the OT as viewed by the NT.

"The OT ends, somewhat hesitantly, on a note of expectation. The NT begins, without any hesitancy at all, on the note of fulfilment... It is as if all the loose ends of the OT promises are gathered together, to find their culmination and explanation in a unique event of history, the coming of Christ."¹⁰

This is precisely the controlling attitude of the author in seeking the meaning of the OT and the methodology used in that search.¹¹ This is evident from the opening sentence of the book, for in contrasting the times or periods of revelation his purpose is to highlight that revelation which has come ap' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn ... hēmīn en huiō. This is to say that Jesus Christ, the Son, has brought the final revelation. Then throughout the book the author proceeds to demonstrate how this revelation -- this "speech" of God in Jesus Christ -- has bound together and superseded all the partial revelations given palai.

How does this understanding of the "latter day" revelation in 1:1-2a manifest itself in the message and exegetical methodology of the author? We have laid the background for illustrating the use he makes of OT scripture as the form of promise, but now we must give brief consideration to the methodology he used to explicate God's promise in the persons, institutions, and events of the OT. We shall also give some attention to a few of the problems which arise from his use of this methodology.

Sidney Sowers gives the name Heilsgeschichte to that which we have termed the eschatological understanding of history which appears in this epistle.¹² Hebrews distinguishes two periods in this history of God's activity.¹³ The contrast between these ages is the basis of his methodology for interpreting OT symbols, and that methodology we call typology.

The author of this epistle, as is true of all NT writers, assumes the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's OT word of promise. The use which he then makes of the OT and its figures is "not dialectic or rhetorical, but interpretative."¹⁴ The direction in which the writer moves was not from the OT to that which fulfilled its promise, but he begins with the fact of his faith in Jesus Christ and then searches the OT to discover "who exactly the One who has come is, and what he is before God and means for man."¹⁵ While this may seem an extremely arbitrary method, its safeguards were "the fundamental principle of fulfillment ... (and) the prerequisite of harmonizing prophecy with fulfillment."¹⁶

This looking back into the OT for explication of Jesus' true identity is a product of the reverence in which the NT writers held that revelation given palai...tois patrasin. The NT expresses its

faith in the constancy and continuity of God's action in both ages of the Heilsgeschichte by illuminating the new revelation with those things through which God had previously (palai) revealed himself.

It is not the mere factualness of these persons, events, and institutions (used as types) which, by means of some discovered similarity with corresponding New Testament realities, validates them as types. Rather it is the intercourse of God with his people, represented, warranted, and actualized by them, that validates them. In other words, their religious and theological significance in the historical revelation of the Old Testament gives to them their significance as divinely established pre-representations of important elements in the salvation manifested in Christ.¹⁷

This "factualness", however, is not to be discounted when considering the criteria by which the prophets chose a person or thing as a typical promise. In examining and summarizing some of the most definitive contemporary works on typology, Walther Euchrodt makes the historicity of the type "the essential presupposition for the use of it."¹⁸ Leonhard Goppelt himself finds that the types interpreted in this epistle meet this "presupposition" of historicity.¹⁹

Some commentators, however, have questioned whether the author of this epistle is at all acquainted with or concerned about the historicity of the types he interprets. According to one theory the approach of Hebrews is an application of Platonic idealism through the allegorical method of Philo of Alexandria. Of the modern commentators surveyed only two hold out for this interpretation. Alexander Purdy comments, "(The author) is controlled by a two-story view of reality: on the ground floor the shadowy, transient, fugitive events and institutions; in the upper story the permanent, perfect realm of reality;"²⁰ James Moffatt contends that "like Philo...he interprets the past and present alike in terms of the old theory...that the phenomenal is but an imperfect, shadowy transcript of what is eternal

and real."²¹ However, Sidney Sowers in his exhaustive study on the relationship of the hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews concludes that this author uses a strongly typological method of interpretation and thus does not spiritualize comparisons of Christ and the OT.

Why did he not argue...that the various types of Christ and the sacrificiaal victims of the O.T. were Christ according to the hidden meaning? The answer must be because his theology of Hails-geschichte, in an adroit way, has put the old and new covenants in typological parallel without blurring their distinctions. For the cause of so changed a view of the Bible and its history as we find in Heb. compared with Philo we must look somewhere other than to the Jewish background of the letter. It must have been a result to the common thinking and faith of the whole body of Christ.²²

G.B. Caird argues that while there are some "Alexandrian affinities, ...the dependence of the author on Philo was too superficial to be a dominant influence on his theology."²³ Another possible objection to historical sensitivity in Hebrews arises out of the testimonia theory of C.H. Dodd²⁴ and F.C. Synge.²⁵ These men posit the existence of a collection of OT passages which were commonly accepted by Christians as proving that Jesus was the savior promised by God in the OT. The theory itself is credible and well supported, but the conclusions which Synge draws from it ~~are~~ endanger any extensive eschatological presuppositions which would emphasize the historicity of the OT figures or texts. "Hebrews expounds (the testimonia) as they stand in the Testimony Book, not as they stand in the Bible...The context of the citations is of no consequence."²⁶

To deny that the author has any concern for the biblical context of his citations (while perhaps true of the quotes in chapters one and two, which F.C. Synge uses ^{to} support this conclusion) would leave little room for a concern for the historical context of the typical persons and events from the other OT citations. Concerning Ps. 94:7-11 (Heb.

3:7-19; 4:7), however, the author makes use of the history of Israel's desert wanderings and the fact that David wrote the psalm "so long afterward." The section on Ps. 109:4 (Heb. 7:1-17) depends upon the historical encounter of Abraham and Melchizedek to make its point concerning the "superiority" of the prophesied priest. Such usage is a telling evidence against the assertion this epistle exhibits no concern for literary (and, therefore, historical) content.

Simon Kistemaker, however, flatly denies that such a position can be maintained in the face of the "predominant role" which the historical context plays in the exegesis of two major Psalm passages.²⁷ R.U.G. Tasker chooses a more moderating tone and expression when he uses the ambiguous word "sacramental" to define the authors conception of the nature of history. He then proceeds,

(The author) realizes that the divine words spoken to the fathers in the prophets did not find their full or final meaning within their original historical setting. Consequently the historical figures and the historical situations in which the revelation was first given, though they are always in the writer's mind, tend to take a secondary place.²⁸

Only in this limited sense could one maintain that the Epistle to the Hebrews considers the OT words of promise to be valid prophecy independent of this historical context.

Finally, there are certain features of the typological relationship which shall be important in our study of the hermeneutics of this epistle.²⁹ It obviously involves two members which are being compared according to a certain quality or function; the dimension of comparison is more on the plane of the qualitative rather than merely the quantitative. The theological importance of the relationship is the emphasis on that one element (to the exclusion of many others) which is not

only common to the two members being compared but also characteristic of some element in the relationship between God and man. In Christian typology this element is seen as imperfectly developed in the member of the comparison which is under the old revelation (palai) but fully developed in the member which represents the revelation in Jesus Christ. With the arrival of that which is perfectly developed, that which pre-figured it in outline form loses its independent meaning. The type, however, remains as a representative sketch by which one might more fully identify, understand, and/or explicate the nature and function of the antitype or fulfillment.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews manifests his artistry in discerning certain "analogies between certain past, present, and future acts and words of God."³⁰ He repeatedly underlines the heils-geschichtliche distinction between the two ages of revelation by frequent use of Hillel's gal wahomer principle. ("If something is true of this less weighty situation, how much more true it must be in this more weighty." E.g. 2:2f.; 3:5f.; etc.) There is even a hint of this emphasis on the distance between the two ages in the manner in which the addressees of the revelation of the two times are mentioned, for hoi patres is hardly used in the NT without the qualification of either hēmōn or humōn. By the use of such an absolute form the author implies that the fathers stand in the isolation of the "former" age as a type of the Church (hēmīn), which stands at the brink of the consummation.³¹

In conclusion we present a series of summary statements.

- 1) The temporal phrase ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn, especially when contrasted with palai, denotes the prophetic, eschatological

understanding of history as divided into two ages, one of promise and one of fulfillment.

- 2) By the constant and continuous activity of the one God this history is made a unity.
 - a) It is of a whole in that it unfolds according to God's plan.
 - b) It is of a whole in that the constancy of God's action implies that the past action of God is related to the present as a pattern and promise of what he will do.
- 3) The content of history viewed eschatologically is the coming of God to confront man.
- 4) History is open to interpretation because God's past action is promise of what he will do; the beginning is the promise of what to expect in the future.
- 5) History is the stage of the consummation of God's promises.
- 6) The NT sees in the event of Jesus Christ the beginning of the age of fulfillment of past promises; Hebrews implies this in 1:1-2a.
- 7) Typology is the heilsgeschichtlich method of interpreting the event of fulfillment against the background of the promise.
 - a) It requires that the types have been previously significant in the "former" revelation.
 - b) It requires that the types and texts used to interpret the fulfillment be qualified by a historical context.
 - c) It requires that type and antitype share (in a qualitatively inferior to superior relation) some element which also appears in some way in the relationship of God and man.

CHAPTER II

REVELATION'S ONE SOURCE

This chapter shall deal with some of the implications of the subject-verb construction in 1:1-2a. Ho theos lalēsas...elalēsen: what does it have to say about the concept of the history of revelation in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

Here a grammatical fact is also the most significant theological truth -- God is the subject. If the epistle indeed does open with a statement which governs the whole argument's methodology and message, then the abrupt switch to the Son as subject in v. 3 indicates the end of that statement. The first two verses are so constructed that there is a corresponding phrase on each side of the contrast (except for polumerōs kai polutropōs which will be dealt with later). The sentence, however, is not composed of two independent clauses but deals with a single action carried on by one subject at two different times, for two different audiences, by two different agencies, and in two different modes.

"The one God, who at some time in the past gave out revelation of himself, did at one particular time reveal himself." This is the whole message of Christian Heilsgeschichte. In this opening statement of the very heart of his theology the writer shows himself to be immersed in that which the prophets saw as constitutive of history, the continuing revelation of the one God. Ho theos lalēsas...lalēsan is an almost complete expression of formal and material principles which are at the heart of Heilsgeschichte, i.e. history viewed as the two stages of God's single revelation and as the coming of God himself.

God as the subject of the participle lalēsas indicates that however disparate the revelation in the OT may appear from the revelation in Christ, they are united at their one source. They are further united in the fact that God with his single will is the general content of all revelation. This unity of revelation is the basis of a typological relationship, for it is the common theological element shared by the type and antitype and is the ultimate message of the contrast.

The OT interprets God's revelatory activity in terms of "speech" in order to express the sovereignty of his will to communicate his will. "And God spoke," "Thus says the Lord" are phrases which leave all initiative in God's hands. In this sense the correlative response from man's point of view is the prophetic conception of history as the unfolding of God's plan. The majestic power of that Word which created the worlds, thundered at Sinai, consoled in Babylon, grasped men with the authoritative "Follow me!" is in control, standing at the same moment both within and without the history of the world it controls.

The participle-indicative construction is an artistic holding in tension of the disparity and the unity of the two ages of divine Heilsgeschichte. The participle lalēsas in its dependence upon the finite form elalēsen is "a preparation"¹ for it in both a grammatical and a theological sense. The aorist tense of the participle indicates the definite distinction between the two ages, for its force is to isolate God's OT "having spoken" in a punctiliar past action. The old came to an end when the new arrived.

The anonymity of the OT citations in Hebrews raises again the question of whether the author was aware of or concerned with their

literary or historical context. One should, however, notice that 1:1-2a-- which seems to control so much of the argument in the epistle -- emphasizes that God is the subject of even this preparatory revelation, and that the human authors are his agents. However, the author obviously is conversant with the matter of literary authorship of at least Ps. 109, for he cites David as the source of the quotation he heretofore attributed to the Holy Spirit (3:7). Apparently, therefore, the divine origin of almost all the OT quotations² and the anonymity of the rest do not indicate so much a negative attitude toward literary or historical context as they do a positive emphasis upon the divine origin of this "inferior" revelation.³

There is an intricate interplay in Biblical terminology between God's "speaking" of his "Word" and man's "hearing" and "hearkening unto" that revelation, and the prophet is not limited to "hearing" only that which God "speaks" in his day. The whole of Heilsgeschichte is the lalia of God, the revelatory events of which he is both subject and content.⁴ The prophet-author of this epistle demonstrates that he is attuned to the conversation, for in the many examples of interpretation of both text and type Hebrews demonstrates that a proper understanding of revelation must set God's word as fulfillment (ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn alalēsen) into the context of his word as promise (palai...lalēsas). Basic to all this is the conviction that history is open to interpretation simply because it is the same God who operates throughout its course to reveal himself to men.

Hebrews is prophetic in the sense of eschatology rather than apocalyptic, for it speaks in terms of a more immanent God whose revelation is addressed hēmin and not in terms of that very transcendent Judge who

gives visions only to specially privileged seers such as Daniel or John. Likewise Hebrews does not portray a great supra-historical consummation or struggle between cosmic powers for possession of men and their world. Instead the author addresses himself to the divine revelation which takes place in the lives of men. It is a historical phenomenon which can be properly understood only by one who has a healthy dose of historical sensitivity and who sees the types and texts of the OT against their several historical and literary backgrounds. Most likely even the term "heavenly" (e.g. 9:23) is not intended to suggest the apocalyptic Jenseits but indicates an immediate relationship to God, his glory, and his active will (cf. 9:23-28).⁵

It appears, however, that the paramount importance of the OT in this epistle is not its authority as "a divine oracle from first to last"⁶ but its character of promise as the word which God spoke palai. In Chapter I it was observed that this epistle does not view the OT as an authoritative catena of inspired allegorical figures but that it takes seriously the historicity of the types it uses. This again leads to the conclusion that interpreting the absence of references to the human authors of the OT citations to mean "that historicity which played a role in times past has now been relegated to an insignificant rank"⁷ is to misunderstand the real significance of this device. If prophetic eschatology is the formalizing principle in Hebrews, then this device is most likely intended to underline the continuity of God's revelation activity in the old and new ages.

Perhaps it would be helpful to include a short exposition of one of the sections in which the author treats an OT citation for which he has

not named the human author. The example most fitted for this purpose is the reference to Ps. 94:7 in Heb. 3:7,15, and 4:7. The psalm is first introduced at 3:7 with kathōs legei to pneuma to hagion, and the section which immediately follows the quotation applies it to the readers. The author does not mention any element of the historical context of the psalm. The second location at which the psalm verse is quoted is 3:15 where the introductory formula is an tō légesthai. Here again there is no mention made of any historical setting for the psalm. However, in vv. 16ff. this "psalm of David" is applied to the rebellious sons of Israel during the wilderness wanderings.⁸ In 4:7 it becomes obvious that the writer is aware of and concerned about the historical setting of the psalm, for it is basic to his argument that the words he quoted as those of the Holy Spirit should indeed have been spoken after the entrance into Canaan (cf. meta tauta, 4:8). The fact that David spoke these words after Israel entered Canaan indicates that the promise of rest was not fulfilled when Israel took possession of "the Promised Land" but remained open until the time of David (and, by extension, until the fulfillment in Christ Jesus). On the basis of this argument involving the historical setting of the psalm citation the writer could exhort his readers with the carpe diem! of 4:11.

How does the conception of constancy and continuity in God's activity fit into this thrice repeated quotation? When the quotation is introduced as the declaration of the Holy Spirit and not qualified by any references to its original context, one senses that the quotation is disconnected from history.⁹ This is in fact due to the pre-supposition of Hebrews that the revelation of God in his word (i.e.

God as he acts in history) remains constant above the vagaries of historical situations in which it might appear. By then applying the passage to Israel in the wilderness and by citing David as the human author, the author indicates the continuity of God's revelatory activity within history. The continuity of God's activity refers to God's entering history in every age with his promise (though in Ps 94: 7-11 the promise is in the form of a warning); the constancy of God's activity refers to the unchanging nature and purpose of that promise and of God himself (cf. Jas 1:17).

The imagery of Ps. 94:7 in speaking of God's revelation as "his voice" and of man's response as "hearing" is a pattern for the way in which the author has structured his epistle. Chapter 1 is "doctrinal", 2:1-4 is exhortation to obedience; 2:5-18 is "doctrinal", 3:1 is exhortation to a constant faith; 3:2-11 is "doctrinal", 3:12-14 is exhortation and warning;¹⁰ 3:16-19 is "doctrinal", 4:1-3 is exhortation, and so the pattern continues. The intensity of the revolving nature of this type of argument throws the revelation and response, Creator and creature into such proximity that the readers' emotions powerfully reinforce the intellectual vigor of the argument. The tremendous theological, intellectual, and literary significance of the author's use of this "speak-hear" motif is hardly a matter of fortunate coincidence, for this epistle stands alone in such a "meaning-filled" use of the "speech" imagery and the personal form of citing Scripture as God's Word.

Here follows a summary of the chapter.

- 1) The structure of Heb. 1:1-2a reflects the essence of Heilsgeschichte: two qualitatively different ages of revelation which find their unity in God as the single subject of that revelation.

- 2) That God "speaks" in revelation indicates that such revelation is given by God in the perfect freedom of his divine will.
- 3) That the participle lalēsas depends upon the finite form elalēsen reflects the typological principle of Heilsgeschichte which marks the past actions of God as the patterns and promise of his future fulfillment.
- 4) The biblical imagery of God's "speaking" used by the author of Hebrews implies that God is both subject and object of revelation, another principle of Heilsgeschichte.
- 5) Hebrews contains comparisons and contrasts of Christ and the OT which suggest the prophetic conviction that as history moves from the age of promise to the age of fulfillment, its unity is maintained in the constancy of the one God who reveals.
- 6) Heilsgeschichte's emphasis upon the historical and deemphasis on the supra-historical is reflected in Hebrews by the "speech" metaphor of revelation in contrast to the apocalyptic medium of a vision given to a seer.
- 7) The absence of citations of the human authors of OT texts in Hebrews is due to the author's strong emphasis upon the OT as God's word of promise, again, an emphasis of Heilsgeschichte.
- 8) The manner in which the author uses Ps. 94:7 in chapters 3 and 4 exemplifies his synchronous concerns with the constancy and the continuity of God's activity. "Constancy" refers to the unchanging nature and purpose of God and his promise, "continuity" to his making that promise known in a particular form and content to each age, to each situation.
- 9) Reflecting the "speaking-hearing" imagery which is common to Scriptural references to revelation, the literary structure of the epistle is a masterpiece of theological, intellectual, and literary treatment of a subject.

CHAPTER III

AGENTS OF REVELATION

This chapter will break down into two unequal parts. In the first we shall review the significance of the phrases en tois prophētais and en huiō in their context of 1:1-2a and in their expression throughout the section of 1:2b - 10:18. In the second and larger section we shall follow the themes of constancy in God's promise, continuity in its historical expressions, and fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Of the multitude of NT references to hoi prophētai only those in the Apocalypse could possibly refer to NT persons. The term in 1:1 is therefore a technical one referring to God's agents of revelation in the past OT era (palai tois patrasin). However, as is demonstrated both by the scope of OT books quoted¹ and the men to whom the epistle later refers (e.g. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David), Hebrews makes use of a definition which goes beyond those men esteemed as authors of the prophetic corpus within the OT. They are here set in contrast to God's ultimate revelation (pace Moffatt), and the subjects of contrast used throughout the first ten chapters is evidence of this intention.²

The author uses the preposition en in a local sense, i.e. God did not use the prophets as instruments (cf. 2:2) who handled something distinct from themselves, but he spoke "in them" as being a part of their very persons. There is no doubt about the correctness of what they spoke, for it was not their thoughts about God's word but God's own word itself which they related.

The phrase en huiō is at the end of the completely balanced thought

of 1:1-2a. This position and the logical flow of thought mark this phrase as the dominant emphasis. The syntax asserts that here revelation has reached its climax, and the method of contrast will embody this article of faith in specific forms which can then be applied as the author sees fit.

"The absence of the article fixes attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of the Mediator of the new revelation."³ F. F. Bruce offers the possible translation "in (one who is) Son."⁴ His sonship is that which marks him off as unique, and it indicated that en has a qualitatively different meaning in v. 2 from that in v. 1. Though there may be a parallel between the Son and the prophets as revelatory agents of the same God, their opposing positions in the structure of the two clauses and the grammatical implications of the article (or its absence) points to the totally unique character of the revelation in Christ.

This again leads us to those premises of Heilsgeschichte which we have seen in the previous chapters. In that it is God who is author of all revelation, the promises he gives must remain as constant as he is himself. This promissory revelation (palai...lalēsas) is continuous throughout history, bubbling up at intervals through the period of the OT (en tois prophētais) and coming to full bloom only recently in "one who is Son". By giving revelation in the form of promises which are repeated at intervals or which refer to conditions which obviously have not come to pass, the OT witnesses to its own inadequacy and inability to bring about fulfillment, though it does point forward to that fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Before illustrating how these general principles are actualized in the text a few remarks are in order concerning the general outline we intend to follow. The division of the argument in Hebrews 1 - 10 is not a matter of unanimous opinion on the part of the commentators. However, the approaches of Simon Kistemaker⁵ and George B. Caird⁶ are very similar in that they focus each of the major sections upon an OT passage which (1) is exegeted and (2) contains a reference to a promise whose conditions are unfulfilled. They agree that there are four major parts to the argument and that the core of each of the first three sections is a psalm citation:⁷ Pss. 8:5-7 (Heb. 2:6-8), 94:7-11 (Heb. 3:7-11), and 109:4 (Heb. 5:6). Kistemaker completes his outline with that section centered around the citation of Ps. 39:6-8 (Heb. 10:5-7). Since this psalm passage is more completely exegeted than is Caird's suggestion of Jer. 31:31-34 (Heb. 8:8-12), and since Kistemaker's arrangement concludes more logically with the emphasis precisely upon Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the OT citation, we shall prefer his outline above Caird's.⁸ This general approach to outlining this book boasts not only a logical breakdown of the argument, but it also uses certain OT citations as markers for the main sections. Thus Kistemaker's approach to outlining Hebrews reflects the same formal emphasis upon the OT which we found in the structure of Heb. 1:1-2a.

Ps. 8:5-7 refers to the majesty of man created by God only one step below the angels and God's viceroy over the earth. The author of the epistle can see in this psalm only a promise, for in 2:8 he argues that this proposed state of man has never been completely realized.⁹

There are two points of time which the author seems to have in

mind. The first is creation, that historical moment when God's eternal intention was expressed in living form of the first man. The second is designated by oupō, referring to all history up until the present (i.e. ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn, the time just before the consummation of God's plan for mankind). Caird has caught the author's intention in the exegetical section immediately following the OT citation: "The Old Testament expresses an aspiration and a vision to which it was (and still is) unable to furnish the fulfillment."¹⁰ Yet the promise of God remained constant as it met constant frustration during the time of its revelation in the prophets. When would there be fulfillment? 2:9 answers with the description of Jesus as the man (proven by the qualifying phrase dia to pathēma tou thanatou) who indeed has "everything in subjection under his feet."

The preceding context explains how it could be that "Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels." In 1:2b-14 the Son is described in terms of his pre-incarnate (v. 3c) and his ascended (v. 2b) glory.¹¹ The purpose of the contrasting of the Son and the angels seems to be twofold: (1) to demonstrate the greater majesty of the Son's revelation of salvation over the angels' declaration of the law (2:2-3); (2) to contrast the new-world lordship of the Son (2:9) with the angels' function of service to those "who are to obtain salvation" (1:14). The author uses the angels as a foil for the Son's inherent majesty.

Here appears that principle of Heilsgeschichte which views the end in terms of the beginning.¹² In the place of Adam and his failure (implied in the psalm cited and the oupō of v. 8) there comes Someone who actually is all that Adam was intended to be, the Lord of the world.

He who by right of sonship is heir, creator, and preserver of all the universe stands as a man in the place of man's father--God's Son in the place of man, obedience in the place of disobedience, life in the place of death. The Christian life is no longer just part of that period called "the latter days" but is a totally new beginning, the beginning within history of "the world to come".¹³

At this first major point of the argument the writer emphasizes the historicity of the fulfillment in that it centers in the suffering and death of Jesus. He qualifies all the superlative descriptions of the Son in chapter one by opposing to them the Son's human name, and he pinpoints the significance of this man by referring to his very human work of suffering and dying. The importance of the fulfillment's being historical may be noted from the fact that "Jesus", the Son's human name, occurs nine times in the epistle, each time providing the key to the logic of the context, and eight times occurring in an emphatic position at the end of the sentence.¹⁴

F. C. Syngé's comment is appropriate here.

If the key word for the understanding of the Old Testament be Promise, the key-phrase for the understanding of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament is, "The Word was made flesh." The Word of God, the Word of Promise was made flesh. The fulfillment of the Promise was an historical event; it was the Word made flesh in Jesus.¹⁵

In living his manhood to the utmost (i.e. in suffering and dying), the Son made the obedience of his Sonship complete (teleiōsai, 2:10) and thus received "glory and honor" (2:9) and session "at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3). In his obedient death (as seen from man's point of view) he replaced Adam as Representative Man (2:9) and so fulfilled the constant promise of God which was expressed in the

creation of man and verbalized by the psalmist.

As we have presented the argument of 1:2b-2:18, it illustrates well what Caird calls the "main thesis" of the epistle, "...that the Old Testament is not only an incomplete book but an avowedly incomplete book, which taught and teaches men to live by faith in the good things that were to come."¹⁶ In this first section it has been the OT doctrine of man as God's viceroy which has been demonstrated to be "incomplete" but brought to completion in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Moving into the second major section, we note that the author's transition from the first section, namely that the hope that springs from Jesus' fulfillment of God's promise of man's exaltation is the basis of the Christian's steadfast obedience (3:1,6,14). This leads to the introduction of another of God's promises, that of the "rest of God" as the certain perfection of believing (4:3) and obedient (4:11) Christians. This promise is continuously available as the writer shows in referring to its declaration to Israel in the wilderness (3:16), to those at the time of David (4:7), and finally to the readers themselves (4:3,9). The basic presupposition again seems to be that the promise of God is anchored at two points -- the constancy of God and the historicity of men. It is both expressed in the various historical situations of God's people and at the same time spoken by that God who stands above history.

The writer draws a theological conclusion on the basis of this dual character of the promise: the promise had not found fulfillment

in the past since it had to be repeated. "If Joshua had given (Israel) rest, God would not speak (at David's time) of another day (as an opportunity to win his rest through obedience)" (4:8). Where the OT gives a promise which is not completely fulfilled within its own time, there it confesses the inadequacy of its revelation.¹⁷

The future condition of the promise is again given in terms of the beginning, i.e. the rest which God took on the seventh day of creation. There is an element of ambiguity, however, when the writer speaks of the consummation of this rest for God's people. In 4:3 the appropriation of the promise is given in the present tense, eiserchomatha. The sēmaron in 4:7 is tacitly identified not so much as the day for obedience but for fulfillment, for the "sabbath rest of the people of God" (4:9). Yet verse 11 speaks of that rest as a future thing, and verse 10 identifies the rest as that time when one also "ceases from his labors," i.e. dies.¹⁸ However, even with the tension in which the writer holds present and future fulfillment, there is nothing unclear about the fact that the promised rest now has a clarity and immanence which it never had in the past. The promise has been fulfilled, although there is a future aspect of that fulfillment which is the focal point of Christian hope (3:6).

The promise which lies behind the two final doctrinal-hortatory sections is embodied in the picture which Hebrews uses for the ultimate goal of the cultic system, i.e. the worshiper's entrance into the presence of God. Except for the single occurrence of engidzō (7:19), proserchomai bears this technical cultic sense in Hebrews (4:16; 7:25; 10:1,22; 12:18,22).¹⁹ Heb. 4:14-16 introduces this verb, and in so

doing, it introduces the promise on which the next two OT citations rest. An outline of what follows upon this promise is suggested in 5:1 where these two elements appear in order: (1) the high priest and his appointment (by God) for the task of mediating between man and God; (2) his mediation in terms of the offering of gifts and sacrifices.

The promise of access to the presence of God is first concretized in the priesthood. The opus proprium of the priest is to mediate, i.e. to represent the people before God (5:1; cf. Lev. 3:5-10). In this epistle such a function requires two things of the priest: (1) that he be appointed by God (5:4) and (2) that he be identified with the weakness of the people (5:2). The writer has already discussed the second of these requirements (2:10-18; cf. 5:7-9). Since the author has already used Ps. 2 (an enthronement psalm) in reference to Christ (Heb. 1:5), he now uses it again as evidence of Christ's fulfillment of the second requirement, his "appointment" by God (5:5). This appointment is interpreted in reference to Melchizedek and the priesthood by the citation of another enthronement psalm, Ps. 109, which then becomes the core of the third major section of the argument of the epistle.²⁰

The argument abruptly breaks off after 5:10, and a lengthy exhortation and statement of purpose is inserted (5:11-6:20).²¹

When he again picks up the argument in 7:1, the author is intent upon demonstrating Scripture's own confession that the OT cultic system is inadequate to complete that promise on which it is based. On the basis of an exegesis of Scriptural testimony about Melchizedek²²

he argues that the priesthood of this obscure OT figure supercedes that of Aaron (7:4-10). "Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to rise after the order of Melchizedek rather than one named after of Aaron?" (7:11). Again we meet the author's exegetical principle that the repetition of a promise of God (here in the rise of another priesthood) is evidence that that promise had not been fulfilled.

Thus, when in vv. 15ff. the writer begins to present Christ as the fulfillment of the promise inherent in the Levitical priesthood, he does so in terms of the greater excellency of the promise as it appeared in Melchizedek and the priesthood patterned after him. Like Melchizedek Christ is priest not by the law's requirement of physical descent but by the fact that he enjoys a living relationship with God (7:16).²³ Therefore, in the light of Christ's fulfillment of the promise of God the Levitical priesthood and the law of obedience on which it is based have been set aside (7:12,18), and a "new hope" has come into existence.

In vv. 20-27 there are listed the ways in which Christ's office as priest of the better covenant excels the Levitical priesthood of the old covenant: it is based upon the sure oath of God (20-22; cf. 6:17-18), not limited to any period of time (23-25), and perfect in and of itself without need of its own sacrifices (26-27). The author sums up his whole intention in 7:28 in a paralleling of thoughts reminiscent of that in 1:1-2a. (1) ho nomos gar (2) anthrōpous (3) kathistēsin (4) archieais (5) achontas astheneian: (1) ho logos de tēs orkomosias

tēs meta ton nomon (2) huion (3) (unstated, but understood) (4) (unstated, but understood) (5) ais ton aiōna teteleiōmanon.

Through the establishment of the Levitical priesthood God gave an unfailing promise concerning man's "drawing near" to him. Since the promise crops up later in the OT in the form of a reference to "a priest after the order of Melchizedek," the promise obviously has not been fulfilled by the Levitical priesthood. This is the confession of the OT itself when it sees fit to repeat a promise of God to another time and in another form. That faith which identifies Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's promises sees in this OT confession an authoritative witness not only to the certainty of such fulfillment but also to the characteristic functions and marks which will identify that fulfillment as genuine and perfect.

In chapter seven the inferiority of the old revelation was a foil for the new revelation in Christ. In 8:1-10:18 the same legal covenant and Levitical priesthood become a type which is fulfilled by Christ rather than an antiquated cultic apparatus which is negated. The point of this section is not so much the contrast between the natures of the two orders of revelation but the continuity in their objective.²⁴ Christ's priesthood has indeed made the Levitical order obsolete, but the results of his work may be clarified and conveyed in terms of what the old order proposed to do, i.e. remove the sins of the people and effect their obedience.

The mention of nomos in 7:11,12 and especially the reference to diabēkē in 7:22 suggest the covenant theme of chapter eight. "The new covenant which (Christ) mediates is better (than the old), since

it is enacted on better promises" (8:6b). Immediately following this declaration the author implies the OT's self-confessed inadequacy by using another "if...then" construction similar to those which he has used twice before (4:8; 7:11) for the same purpose. "If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second" (8:7; cf. also v. 13).

Here again the writer employs that principle of Heilsgeschichte which posits God's breaking into history at various times, and again he uses this principle to prove his point -- in speaking of a new covenant the OT looks forward to the completion of that which it knows only in an imperfect sense. This confession of incompleteness is quoted from Jeremiah 31:31-34, which serves the function of defining precisely what Jesus Christ has accomplished in his unique revelation. The "new covenant" which Christ has inaugurated has a twofold implication: (1) the restoration and perfection of the covenant relationship as expressed by the people's perfect and willing obedience, and (2) God's merciful forgiveness for the people's sins (8:10-12).

9:1 - 10:18 argues that Christ has indeed mediated this new covenant with its dual effects and that he has done so through the device of his own death. Even the architecture of the tabernacle reflected the failure of its revelation to effect the possibility of the people's "drawing near unto God" (cf. 9:8). In 10:3 the author again interprets repetition as a confession of less than complete efficacy when he argues that repeated sacrifices are a reminder rather than a removal of sin. On the other hand the author illuminates the fullness of the freedom in the new covenant by contrasting the "puri-

fication of the flesh" effected by the OT animal sacrifices and the "purification of the conscience from dead works" which Christ won through his death (9:13-14). The cultic sacrifices could free only from the defilements which the system itself defined in minute detail; Christ freed men from the very necessity of following such rules, for obedience under the new covenant is spontaneous and free (8:12).

It is especially 9:15 -10:18 that deals with the climax to Hebrews' Christological affirmations, i.e. that Christ's death is the direct cause of the perfection of the believer under the new covenant. Taking the cue from the phrase "the blood of Christ" in 9:14, vv. 15-22 states the generally accepted conception that blood was necessary to validate a covenant or will. 9:23-26 contends that "heavenly" prototypes of the OT sacrificial system were purified by a "better sacrifice," the ultimate sacrifice by Christ of himself. Having thus presented all the evidence, the author states directly his conclusions concerning the OT sacrificial system: ho nomos...oudepote dunatai tous proserchomenous teleiōsai (10:1)...adunatonggar haima taurōn kai tragōn aphairein hamartias (v. 4).

Within this context there is another occurrence of the "if...then" form of statement (10:2) which introduces the OT citation that for the author expresses most clearly the OT's pre-presentation of the fact and means of the new covenant's superseding of the old, Ps. 39:7-9. Using the wording of a (presumably) corrupted LXX reading and placing it into the mouth of Christ, the writer draws together three of the major themes with which he has been concerned: the imperfect nature of the sacrificial system of the old order, the incarnation of Christ,

and the perfect obedience of the Son. In a two-verse exegesis of this citation he finds this psalm quotation acknowledging that the OT revelation with all its promises climaxed in the sacrificial system has been swept aside by the effective power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (10:8-9). In his offering men are truly purified (v. 10). He who through his own perfect sacrifice now exercises his rightful reign in God's presence (vv. 12-13) likewise has also brought the faithful to fullest perfection (v. 14). The wooden obedience and indelible sin which characterized life under the old covenant is gone, for the new covenant in Christ's death dissolves both these shadows of God's intention for men and in their stead creates the perfect and real thing, a people whose complete obedience matches their complete forgiveness (vv. 14-18).²⁵

In summary we offer the following statements.

1. Prophetai (1:1) refers to the whole range of OT books and persons whom God used to speak and act out his revelation previous to Christ.
2. The relative position of en huiō in the second half of 1:1-2a as opposite en tois prophetais and its lack of an article points to the ultimate and unique nature of the revelation in Christ.
3. The doctrinal-hortatory portion of Hebrews (1:1 - 10:18) breaks down into four sections, each of which centers around a psalm citation: (1) 1:2b - 2:18 (Ps. 8:5-7); (2) 3:1 - 4:13 (Ps. 94:7-11); (3) 4:14 - 5:10; 7:1-28 (Ps. 104:4); (4) 8:1 - 10:18 (Ps. 39:7-9).
4. Each of the four sections operates with three elements: (1) a promise of God which has remained constant throughout history; (2) an historical or literary expression of this promise with either a later repetition of the promise or conditions which were evidence that the promise had not been fulfilled; and (3) the paralleling of an element of the new revelation (usually the person or work of Jesus Christ) with the unfulfilled condition in the old in such a way that it illustrates Christ's fulfillment of the promise.

CHAPTER IV

MODES OF REVELATION

Polumerōs kai polutropōs is the most explicit reference in 1:1-2a concerning the precise manner in which the old and new periods of revelation are related. In considering the significance of this phrase we shall first examine its meaning according to definition and then according to its place in the structure of 1:1-2a and the method of the epistle. The major portion of this chapter shall be an examination of the implications of this phrase for the author's understanding of the relationship of the two times of revelation as manifested in their comparison and contrast in the epistle.

An examination of the apocryphal, pseudipigraphical, and other extra-biblical literature reveals no consistent pattern which would indicate any meaning for these adverbs other than the general "by many means and in many manners". The words are hapax legomana in the NT and do not even appear in their adjectival form. Thus the precise signification must be determined from the immediate and the more general context of the phrase.

Polumerōs kai polutropōs occupies a peculiar position in the structure of 1:1-2a, for it is the only phrase which concerns the old age of revelation and yet is not balanced by a contrasting member in reference to the new age. However, there is an implied contrast between the variety which this phrase suggests characterizes the old age and the unity implied in the new age. Thus the manifold nature of the old revelation must lie at least in part in the many prophētai whom God used to mediate the revelation of the old age.

The actual variety connected with God's speaking in the OT, however, implies much more than multiple prophetic agents. God reveals his will not only through men but also through institutions, such as the priesthood. Moreover, his speaking through different kinds of agencies involves a variety of specific messages or themes, such as the intended exaltation of man (3:6-8), man's participation in God's creation rest (4:4-7), and an effective priesthood (7:11), covenant (8:8-10), and sacrifice (10:5-7). If the emphasis of the implied contrast between the variety of the OT revelation and the unity of the Son's revelation falls upon the latter, then the comprehension and unity of this new revelation is total. It binds into one not only the fragments of revelation voiced in the prophets but also the revelation pictured in the OT institutional types and the variety of the many messages of OT revelation.

While speaking of the contrast between the two modes and times of revelation, one must also keep in mind their fundamental unity. Both are valid revelation. As the author phrases it, "God, having spoken... spoke." Essentially the revelation which comes in two different modes, at two different times, by two different agencies, is of one piece. Any attempt to contrast the differences must proceed from this basic unity. Theologically stated, revelation is of God, so that the constancy of God is reflected in the fact that what is revealed is always and essentially the same. The constancy of God's revelation is a function of the constancy of God himself.¹

This basic unity of the new and the old is an important presupposition for the specific relationship which the author apparently understands between these two modes of revelation. The term which seems to

fit this understanding best is "typology". In Chapter I "typology" denoted a relationship between promise and fulfillment characteristic of Heilsgeschichte, the prophetic or eschatological conception of history. The typological method of interpretation takes for granted the unity of revelation and history as it contrasts two objects (person, institution, action, etc.) which appear at different points along the one stream. The intention of the contrast is to indicate how the "greater" object completes and fulfills what was present only in an "inferior" manner in the previous member. The "inferiority" of the one element (promise) serves only to heighten the completeness of the other (fulfillment).

A typological interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews might begin by identifying the variety in OT revelation which apparently plays a part in the OT's inferiority. On the one hand it may be a static or lateral variety which has isolated and unrelated messages and forms of revelation popping up throughout the OT. A graphic illustration of this understanding might be that of a field of grass in which each separate blade (the various themes and forms of revelation) bend and point in the same direction (toward their fulfillment) under the force of a steady breeze (the constant revelation of God).

The author of this epistle, however, has again blended theological truth, historical sensitivity, and literary genius to greatly intensify this proclamation of final revelation in Jesus Christ. Again, there are various themes and forms of revelation. Yet there is here a dynamic progression from promise to fulfillment which begins already in the OT period. The author cites certain stages of this progression to indicate

that God's intentions were always becoming clearer and yet were also always frustrated in the OT. The tension between God's intention and its historical frustration builds to a peak along several different themes until that sudden and complete discharge produces the spark which is Christ. Various typical persons, events, and institutions group themselves along certain themes which run like rivulets into the mighty river of God's final and ultimate revelation in "one who is Son". The seventh day of creation, the desert wanderings of Israel to Canaan, and the words of David in Psalm 94 form a procession which portends the ultimate rest of God for his people -- but seems to lead nowhere. One of God's prophētai reveals that man will receive literally "everything", but "as it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him" (2:8). "Not yet" is a picture of the expectant leaning forward of the whole race in anticipation of fulfillment. God institutes a priesthood, a covenant, a sacrificiāl system to which Israel jealously clings in hopes of "drawing near to God", but they found only "a reminder of sin year after year" (10:3). The variety in OT promises is not lateral but linear, and the repetition of OT promises is a sure sign that fulfillment has not yet occurred. Jesus Christ is the final revelation, for in him all OT promises culminate and the age of the "unfulfilled condition" (cf. 4:8; 7:11; 8:7; 10:1-2, 11-14) closes.

How may one approach a specific definitinn of Christ's "superiority" over the OT? A typological relationship implies a certain element which is present in both members but in a qualitatively different manner. The author indicates this in the epistle by using the term kreittōn thirteen times in reference to "superiority" of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

The first category into which these references fall is that of a direct application to the person of Christ. The single instance of such usage is in 1:4 where the exalted Christ is described as "having become as much superior to the angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs." The occurrence in 1:2b-4 of several phrases and terms which are characteristic of Wisdom literature² suggests that the author is here conducting a polemic against the Jewish elevation of the Torah to the status of Wisdom as God's pre-existent agent in redemption and creation.³ The Torah was mediated to men by angels (2:2). Since, however, the author identifies the Son with Wisdom by the use of such hapax legomena as apaugasma and charaktēr, the angels have in fact mediated an "inferior" revelation and are themselves thus inferior to the Son as agent of the new revelation. The Son is therefore superior to the angels in his function of revelation and, as Wisdom, is superior to the Torah as the true revelation of God himself (1:3).

This suggests the second classification of kreittōn references, i.e. concerning the efficacy of the Son's revelation. In Chapter III passing reference was made to what might be used as the intended result of revelation, the "drawing near" of man to God. If this is a valid observation, then the advent of Jesus has actually produced that result. "A better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God...(but) on the other hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect)" (7:18f.). A divine oath "makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant" through which "he holds his priesthood permanently...(and) consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since

he always lives to make intercession for them" (7:22-25). On the other hand "those who formerly became priests (and) took their office without an oath...(are) prevented by death from continuing in office" (7:21,23). "The covenant (Jesus) mediates is better because it is enacted on better promises" which prophesy an innate, personal, and universal knowledge of God (8:6-11). Since "it was necessary for...the heavenly things (to be purified) with better sacrifices" than those which Moses offered, Jesus "appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:23,26). The author reminds his people that they are not facing an experience of terror as did Israel at Mount Sinai, but they "have come to Mount Zion...and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel" (12:22,24). In all these instances the author refers to Jesus and his revelation as "better", "superior", because they are effective in purifying men who can then "draw near to God".

The final category contains references to the "superiority" of those blessings which Jesus and his revelation have effected for the faithful. The "inferior" in these cases are this life and its accouterments. In contrast to the "thorns and thistles" produced in the lives of apostates whose end is destruction (6:7f.) the "work and love which you (the readers) showed for (Jesus') sake in serving the saints" means "better things that belong to salvation" (6:9f.). In contrast to material property which may disappear in a moment the believer has "a better possession and an abiding one" (10:34). The hope of the OT saint for a "better country" (11:16) and "a better life" (11:35) than that which he knew in his day was apparently reserved for the NT faithful "since God

had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (11:40).

Kreitton is closely connected with another concept which fits well into the scheme of Heilsgeschichte, namely teleiōō/teleiōsis. The interest in cultic terminology, institutions, buildings, etc. and the focusing of revelation's purpose in terms of enabling man to "draw near to God" suggests that the technical LXX use of this concept may also apply here. Westcott refers to "the phrase teleioun tas cheiras, 'fill the hands', which describes the installation of the priests in the actual exercise of their office (the making of their hands perfect by the material of their work), and not just their consecration to it: Ex.xxx.9(10)...29...33;35; Lev. viii.33; Num.iii.3."⁵ Teleiōō/teleiōsis takes only two basic objects in ten occurrences; men (or their consciences) and Jesus himself.

The LXX usage applies directly in the case of Jesus' teleiōsis. "Being made perfect (better: having been installed as mankind's priest) he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him". (5:9). As the priests of the OT took office through contact with the actual sacrifices and cultic paraphernalia peculiar to their function, so also Jesus took the office of savior by actually submitting to the sacrifice by which he "put away sin" (9:26). Crucifixion theology plays a major role in this epistle to people who have apparently suffered some persecution (10:34), for Jesus himself took office "through suffering" (2:10). The priesthood of Jesus is cast in a typological relationship with the Levitical order and found to be significantly superior. This new priesthood does make the law obsolete and sets it aside (7:11f). Its validity consists not in "a legal requirement concerning bodily descent" but in "the power of an indestructible

life" (7:16). Perhaps the most important text in this respect is 7:18f. which contrasts the old and new orders of revelation on the basis of what they were able to achieve. "The law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God" (7:19). At this point of juncture for many of the important themes of Hebrews the emphasis is upon the superior efficacy of Jesus' priesthood in producing "a hope" which brings about the purpose of revelation, man's "drawing near to God."

There are certain necessary cultic prerequisites for "drawing near" which are summed up in the concept of "purity." Purification was the object of the sacrificial system and the institution of the priesthood. In Hebrews teleiōō with man as its object assumes this very significance as a natural consequence of its connection with the form of installation of priests. For the first-century Jew the glory of OT revelation was the Torah, but in 7:19 the author terms the law ineffective as far as concerns its function of purifying man, "for the law made nothing perfect." The author points to the inefficacy and superficial nature of the ritual function of the Levitical priests under the first covenant when he says, "According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper, but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed only until the time of reformation." (9:9f.). Hebrews points out the hopeless futility of the OT means of purification: "Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (10:11-12, 14). Spoken long after the institution of the Levitical

priesthood, Ps 109 with its reference to "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" indicated the "unfulfilled condition" of the priestly task -- "For if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood...what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?" (7:11).

The interplay between teleiōsis and kreittōn clarifies the precise nature of Jesus Christ's superiority over the revelation of the OT. By his installation (teleiōsis) "through suffering" Jesus obtained that office of eternal and perfectly efficacious priest, while the OT with its Levitical priesthood, sacrificial system, and covenant was unable to purify men from sin. His superiority consist specifically in the purification he actually effects, enabling men to "draw near to God". Thus his ministry is superior to that of the old dispensation, and again the superiority rests upon the basis of efficacy. The blessings which he brings are superior to those of the OT because they are lasting and set into the context of a close relationship with God. On the other hand the law, which deals only with things of superficial importance (9:10), is incapable of producing blessings which have any greater significance than the source from which such blessings came. The comparison and contrast of the new and old eras of revelation does not consist of an "able--more able" relationship but one of "tately able--totally incapable".

Here follows a summary of this chapter.

- 1) The phrase polumerōs kai polutropōs denotes the variety of themes and media in the OT.
- 2) The contrast implied in 1:1-2a between OT variety and NT unity must rest on the continuity of revelation of which

they are both a part.

- 3) Hebrews presents OT variety in a dynamic, rather than static, manner. The various OT themes exhibit a kind of progression which gives promise but not fulfillment. The repetition of promises indicates their "unfulfilled condition."
- 4) The superiority of Christ in fulfilling the OT promises is expressed in the use of kreittōn in Hebrews.
 - a) He is the revelation of God himself and the agent in creation and redemption, a claim which the Jews made for the OT Torah.
 - b) His revelation is effective in enabling men to "draw near to God."
 - c) The blessings he brings to believers are more abiding than the characteristics of the life of unfaith.
- 5) The superior efficacy of Christ's revelation is defined by use of teleiōō/teleiōsis.
 - a) He alone was installed into the office of priest for all men and for all time; he is kreittōn because he has received teleiōsis.
 - b) Only his priesthood can purify men, take away their sin, so that they may "draw near to God;" his ministry is kreittōn because it brings men teleiōsis.

CONCLUSION

NOVUM TESTAMENTUM IN VETERE LAETET VETUS IN NOVO PATET

This paper has attempted to demonstrate a reasonable approach to understanding the message of the Epistle to the Hebrews and its method of interpreting the OT. It is my personal opinion that the epistle's author had made such artistic and sophisticated use of that method that many a contemporary commentator has completely missed its shape in the confusing collage of OT type and text. But when one pulls at the twin threads of constancy and continuity of revelation, the jumbled, formless mass falls into a logical pattern. Perhaps the term Heilsgeschichte is too sophisticated and specific to use in defining the determinant theology of the epistle. However, there are several important principles which are common to both: history as the stage of God's revelation, an age of God's earlier acts which become the pattern and promise of greater things to follow, and Jesus Christ as the inaugurator of the final age by his effective fulfillment of what the OT only promised.

The author of the epistle obviously does not have the modern scientific concern for facticity nor the contemporary theological concern for the original meaning of OT texts. At the risk of ignoring any serious difficulties I would argue that Hebrews by no means need be lost to the contemporary Church because of obscure argumentation or content. G.B. Caird has clearly defined its general attitude toward the OT, and his words are significant for a ministry to a church in danger of losing its direction along with its theology of history.

One author, of course, does not argue from the imperfection of the old covenant to the perfections of the new. He starts from Christ and from the Christian experience of salvation which he

shares with his readers. He goes back to the OT with his ears already attuned to the voice of him who has spoken from heaven. But the OT enables him to make his experience articulate, coherent and reasonable. Above all, it enables him to present Christ as the climax of the ongoing, historic purpose of God, the culmination of Israel's long pilgrimage, in the hope that his readers will return with new zeal to their own pilgrimage and find that it leads them also to him who is the perfection of their faith.

To a seminary whose faculty and students are proud of their scientific approach to Scripture William Manson gives a helpful reminder concerning their ultimate function of ministry.

It is in accordance with this finding of Christ in the Old Testament by an act of faith which is not conditioned by the conclusions of strict historical interpretation that we may now discover the full range of the truth covered by the writer's statement (xiii.8): "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever."...Look back on the entire history of the people of God...and you will find no past, no yesterday, in which the Christ of God has not been present and active; look forward to the future, and again there will be no period when He will not be there -- an entirely Christological and eschatological interpretation of history! In Jesus Christ eternity is manifested in time.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Caird acknowledges that his own venture into the subject of the exegetical method of this epistle is flying in the face of many commentators' evaluation of the worth of this book. "Whatever the commentators may think to be the permanent contribution of the author of Hebrews to Christian theology, most of them have been agreed on one thing -- that it is not to be found in his exegesis of the Old Testament; and many of them would be prepared to add that the abiding value of his message is actually obscured by the scriptural argument in which it is embedded." George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," Canadian Journal of Theology, V (1959), 44.

²Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1950), 3f.

³Simon Kistemaker, The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Amsterdam: Wed. G. Van Soest, 1961), 96.

⁴Westcott, 3.

CHAPTER I

¹Westcott, 6.

²F.F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, In The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 3.

³Westcott, 5.

⁴Gerhard Kittel, Ἐσχατολογία, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated and edited from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1964; German volume, 1933), II, 697.

⁵Otto Máchel, Der Brief an die Hebräer in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (8th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), 35. On the subject of the eschatological view of history, see Ernst Jennis, "Eschatology in the OT," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 126-133, and the first part of the study by Hans Walter Wolff, "The Understanding of History in the O. T. Prophets," Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, edited by Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964; German edition, 1960), 336-355, from which sources the material in this section was taken.

⁶Wolff, 342f.

⁷A definitive treatment of the apocalyptic approach and its characteristics may be found in D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic in The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), especially 104-139, 205-234.

⁸John Wick Bowman, "Eschatology of the NT," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 135-140.

⁹Marcus Barth develops a unique statement of hermeneutic on this idea of Scripture as God's dialogue with men. He devotes a complete chapter in his book Conversation with the Bible (New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1964) to demonstrating this approach, using Hebrews as working material.

¹⁰C. R. North, "History," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 610.

¹¹Though not original with him, this conception of the meaning and methodology of Hebrews is most fully developed by F. C. Syge, Hebrews and the Scriptures, (London: SPCK, 1959). He states this thought most concisely on p. 58.

¹²Sidney Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews: A Comparison of the Interpretation of the Old Testament in Philo Judaeus and the Epistle to the Hebrews, vol 1 of Basel Studies in Theology (Zürich: EVZ Verlag, 1965), 92.

¹³Bruce, p. 166, is thus correct when he refers to the relation between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries as "basically a temporal one" only if it is interpreted as being the contrast between two ages. There is ultimately no gradual progression in revelation when one is thinking in terms of Heilsgeschichte (eschatology).

¹⁴Westcott, p. 481.

¹⁵Barth, 207.

¹⁶Simon Kistemaker, The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Amsterdam: Wed. G. Van Soest, 1961), 89.

¹⁷Walther Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?" Translated by James Barr, in Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, edited by Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964; German edition, 1960), 226f. Surely this makes absurd the statement of A. H. McNeile: "The writing has a universal appeal, leading the readers to rejoice in their possession of the Real which has rendered the Copy obsolete. If something in pagan life could have been taken as the Copy the argument would have been equally sound, but the Old Testament was the only basis from which he could appeal to all his readers alike." A. H. McNeile, An Introduction to the Study of The New Testament, revised by C. S. C. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

²⁷Kistemaker, 141.

²⁸R. V. G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), 116f. Cf. also Westcott, p. lix: "In some sense, which we can feel rather than define, the eternal is declared to be beneath the temporal."

²⁹The material in this paragraph is culled from Goppelt, 213ff.

³⁰Barth, 223.

³¹Perhaps the directness of the hemim is also intended to communicate a message, i.e. a personal one of assurance and exhortation for those to whom God has spoken. This would be a possibility, especially if Mc Neile's hypothesis (p. 224) concerning a condition of tribulation is correct.

CHAPTER II

¹Gaerhardus Vos, The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), 70.

²Seventeen of the twenty OT quotations noted as such in the Oxford Annotated Bible (RSV) are indicated (directly or by implication) as having been spoken by God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.

³Contra Hermann Strathmann, Der Brief an der Hebräer in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), IX, 72: "Deutlicher kann man kaum zum Ausdruck bringen, wie unerheblich der menschliche Autor ist," and Kistemaker, 90f.: "Characteristic in the quoting of the Old Testament Scripture passage is the fact that historicity...has been relegated to an insignificant rank, as exemplified by the use of the clause, 'one hath somewhere testified' (Heb. 2:6)."

⁴G. S. Hendry, "Reveal," A Theological Wordbook of the Bible, ed. Alan Richardson (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 196.

⁵Goppelt, 201. "Himmlich' bedeutet fuer den Hbr...unmittelbarer zu Gott."

⁶F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), xlix. There is no intention of denying that this is a part of Hebrews' attitude toward the OT, but it is not this which dictates the use he makes of the Scriptures. The key to his hermeneutic is not that he accepts the OT as "directly uttered" oracles of God but that it presents to him in text and type that free and changeless promise of God, who moves continually into the history of man.

⁷Simon Kistemaker, The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Amsterdam: Wed. G. Van Soest, 1961), 90.

⁸The RSV here misses the fact that the most direct connection of this quotation of Ps. 95:7 is with vv. 16ff. and not with the preceding section. Westcott at this point argues strongly that tines gar separates verses 15 and 16 and marks the beginning of a new section; he takes v. 14 as a parenthesis and connects the quotation in v. 15 with the exhortation in v. 13. As I understand the structure at this point, v. 14 is too close to the core of the epistle's message to be counted a parenthesis all by itself, for it makes a strong, personal conclusion to the train of thought in vv. 12-14. Concerning the force of gar in v. 16, cf. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, editors and translators, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (translated from the German, Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur; fourth edition; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 151, gar, 1, f.: "Oft. in questions, where the English idiom leaves the word untransl., adds 'then, pray'..." According to F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament (translated by R. W. Funk; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 208, #404 (3), the articular infinitive in the present tense may indicate "a sense not purely temporal; the reference is given to the en tō legein in Heb. 8:13 as meaning "in speaking, in that he says". Arndt-Gingrich give for one possibility for the use of en (II, 3, p. 259): "to introduce an activity whose time is given, 'when, while, during.'" If (1) v. 15 is the beginning of a new section, (2) en tō legesthai is taken as indicating an indefinite temporal condition colored with the durative sense of the present, and (3) gar is translated according to the suggestion of Arndt-Gingrich, we may translate vv. 15, 16 as follows: "Whenever you hear the words (lit. whenever it is said), 'Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in rebellion,' then, pray, who was it rebelled when they heard God's voice?"

⁹This "sense of disconnectedness", is used here referring to the relationship of a text to its historical context. When transferred to the relationship of a typos to its original historical situation, it probably gave rise to that impression that Hebrews was Philonic not only in superficial features but also in its very metaphysical presuppositions. This "disconnectedness", however, is not metaphysical but theological in nature.

¹⁰In light of the sequence of argumentation (cf. Chapter III) this hortatory section as a whole is probably parenthetical, as is 4:1-4. Their parenthetical nature, however, is skillfully matched with the specific content and mood of the subject which happens to be under discussion; hence, they do not interrupt the flow of the presentation.

CHAPTER III

¹George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, V (1959), 46.

²On the basis of this opinion and of the fact that they are identified in 1:14 as leiturgika pneumata in contrast to him who rules (2:9) and in 2:2 as proclaimers of the law, the angels would also belong to this category. In this way the principle of the two revelations as stated in 1:1-2a would already be in force here, and this section of 1:5 - 2:5 would not be divorced from the structure of the epistle as we shall use it in this chapter. Vid. infra.

³Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 7.

⁴F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 1.

⁵Simon Kistemaker, The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Amsterdam: Wed. G. Van Soest, 1961), 101.

⁶Caird, 47.

⁷The psalm quotations are noted in this paper as found in the LXX, since this is the source used by the author. (Cf., e.g. Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Hebraer in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament [8th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949], 81).

⁸Kistemaker, 131, also argues this outline on the basis of an opinion that 2:17 is a summary statement of the four themes according to the order in which they are elaborated in the didactic part of the epistle. Moffatt's division does not take note of the first division, the parts of which he lumps together under the heading "The Personality of the Son". Neither does he take note of the centrality of the OT citations. James Moffatt, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews in International Critical Commentary (Revised edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), xxiv.

⁹Kistemaker, 105, destroys the argument that the author here is referring to Christ from the beginning of the quote through 2:9. "The conclusio (of the argument in 2:8) is introduced by ton de, which at all times denotes a change of subject. In this case the introduction unmistakably proves that 2:8 refers to man eo ipso. Whereas verse 8 is devoted to man as such, the following text is interpreted of Jesus.

¹⁰Caird, 49.

¹¹There is an interesting theory that chapter one contains psalm

citations accepted by the Jews as referring to a "Heavenly Companion" of God but used here to prove his incarnation in Jesus. Cf. F. C. Synge, Hebrews and the Scriptures (London: SPCK, 1959), 1. The roots of the argument are isogogical and thus are not treated in this paper. As interpreted here, the citations fit well enough into the context. For further discussion cf. Chapter IV, supra.

¹²Hans Walter Wolff, "The Understanding of History in the Old Testament Prophets," in Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, ed. Claus Westermann, (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox, 1963), 343.

¹³Geerhardus Vos, The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan:Eerdmans, 1956), 54.

¹⁴Westcott, 33. "That (name of the Lord) which is distinctive of the Epistle is the human Name, Jesus. This occurs nine times, and in every case it furnishes the key to the argument of the passage where it is found...In every case but xii.12, which is a simple, historic statement, the name 'Jesus' occupies an emphatic position at the end of the clause."

¹⁵Synge, 58.

¹⁶Caird, 49.

¹⁷Caird, 47. "It is not the purpose of the author to prove the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old, nor to establish the inadequacy of the old order. His interest is in the confessed inadequacy of the old order." (Cf. 4:8, 7:11; 8:7)

¹⁸Michel, 113. "Von den 'Werken Gottes' redete 1:10; 3:9; 4:3f.; erst an dieser Stelle wandet sich der Hb den 'Werken der Menschen' zu. In den 'Werken' spiegelt sich die Existenz des Menschen wider, so dass die 'Ruhe' sowohl Grenze als auch Vollendung der menschlichen Existenz ist. Einerseits muss der eschatologische Charakter der 'Ruhe' gewahrt werden, andererseits muss das 'Eingehen in die Ruhe' eine gegenwärtige Sorge und Mühe sein, die dem Hörer jetzt auferlegt wird."

¹⁹In 7:25 and 11:6 God is the object; in 12:18,22 Mount Sion is understood as object; in 4:16 it is the throne of grace; and in 10:1,22 the term is used absolutely. The LXX uses proserchomai occasionally in this sense (Jer. 7:16) but also uses engidzō and prosporeuomai.

²⁰The author again seems to demonstrate his knowledge of the historical intention of his OT citations, for the only apparent connection between these passages is the common character of their sources. Both Ps. 2 and Ps. 109 refer to the enthronement of Israel's king. The king whom God calls "my Son" in Ps. 2 is obviously fulfilled in type by God's true Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:5). To establish the nature of his priesthood the writer refers to another psalm which speaks concerning that same king-figure, i.e. Ps. 109. The appointment of Christ to his priesthood is presented in the form of the king's enthronement. Cf. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: World Publishing Co., 1956), 369.

²¹Kistemaker, 150. "With the expression dusermāneutos (Heb. 5:11) (the writer) indicated that the implications of Ps. 110:4 represent the heart of his theological argument; he cannot work with assumptions in the exegesis of this psalm passage. This citation called for detailed explication, which was new to the first recipients." On p. 123 he offers this explanation of the digression: "The recipients of the Epistle are rooted in the conception of an Aaronic priesthood on the basis of the pentateuchal law." This is the best explanation I found for the digression of 5:11 - 6:20.

²²At any rate this confusing statement in 7:1-10 may be understood as the writer's interpretation of the significance of what Scripture does and does not say about Melchizedek. For example, the absence of any biographical detail for an esteemed figure in the OT is conspicuous simply because such phenomena are rare. This proposed interpretation for 7:1-10 coincides with the thesis in this paper concerning the historical and contextual sense of the writer of this epistle. Thus I choose to view this section as interpretation rather than a reporting of what the writer believed to be fact.

²³Kistemaker, 120f. Melchizedek's "priesthood did not consist of works of atonement, but rather in the dedication of himself to God Most High. His priesthood signified nothing more and nothing less than the normal relationship between God and man.

²⁴The explanation as to how an institution may be used in both a relationship of contrast and of typological prophecy rests upon the fact that neither contrast nor typological similarity takes into account all of the characteristics of the two elements. Eichrodt points this out in reference to the whole typological relationship. "It is not the case... that the antitype corresponds to the type in all its properties, so as to form an almost photographic copy of it. On the contrary, the argument envisages only a few analogies, but these of special importance, between the two realities in question." Walter Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?", translated by James Barr, in Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, ed. Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox, 1964; German edition, 1960), 225.

²⁵Assuming the context of C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology", Allen Wikgren's coinage of "realized teleiology" is very helpful as a shorthand expression of Hebrews' doctrine of justification. The inadequacy of the law was not in its ideals or demands but in its power to effect obedience (cf. Bruce, 173). When the new covenant offered this power in Christ's sacrifice of forgiveness, none of the law's demands were negated except those which ineffectively promised forgiveness through obedience. The perfection of the believer entailed both his being perfectly forgiven and his correspondingly perfect obedience (cf. the exposition of 10:14 in vv. 15-17). In this epistle the concepts of faith and obedience are almost synonymous (cf. the equation of the concepts in 3:18,19; in 4:2,6, and in the biographical examples in chapter eleven). However, the theology

of Hebrews remains 'pure gospel' in that 'perfection' is at every point the direct effect of God's action in Christ (cf., e.g., 2:10; 7:11; 10:14). Cf. Allen Wikgren, "Patterns of Perfection in the Epistle to the Hebrews," NTS, VI (1959-1960), 161f.

CHAPTER IV

¹Gottlieb Lünemann, The Epistle to the Hebrews, translated from the fourth edition of the German by Maurice J. Evans, in Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the New Testament (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 391. "Common to both expressions is indeed, the notion of changeful diversity; but the former marks the changeful diversity of the times in which, and the persons through whom, God revealed himself; the latter, the changeful diversity of the divine revelations as regards contents and form."

²Hans Walter Wolff, "The Understanding of History in the Old Testament Prophets," in Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, ed. Claus Westermann (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox, 1963), 341.

³Lünemann, 391. "By the very choice of polumerōs kai polutropōs our author indicates the imperfection of the O. T. revelations. No single one of them contained the full truth, for otherwise there would have been no need of a succession of many revelations, of which the one supplemented the other."

⁴Apaugasma and charaktēr in v. 3 are hapax legomena in the NT and are used in reference to Wisdom in Philo ("Making the World", 146) and in other Wisdom literature (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon 7:26).

⁵W. D. Davies, "Law in first-century Judaism," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon, 1962), III, 94. In first century Judaism the Torah "was given, not only a redemptive, but also a cosmic, significance... (and) a precosmic existence. The way was prepared for this long before the first century, through the identification of Wisdom with the law. Wisdom in the OT, especially in Prov. 8, is the agent both of redemption and creation, its precosmic role being clearly defined. And, as early as Deut. 4:6, the law was associated with wisdom, and in Eccles. 24:33, the identification of the two was made explicit, so that, by the first century, the precosmic existence of the law and its agency in creation were well established (Bar. 3:14 - 4:1; IV Macc. 1:17; et passim)."

⁶After examining the usage of this whole family of words in this epistle, I determined that only these two forms carry the technical significance which I wish to treat. The other forms are as follows: telos -- conclusion, ultimate destiny (6:8, 11); teleios -- mature (5:14); unqualified by any of the conditions of the created order (9:11); teleiōtās -- maturity, full development (6:1); teleiōtēs -- one who makes complete, brings to maturity (12:2). Except for telos these words center

around the idea of completeness or maturity in the "sphere which is contemplated, as contrasted with that which is partial...imperfect...provisional...incomplete...immature or undeveloped." Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 64.

⁷Westcott, 63.

CONCLUSION

¹George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews!" Canadian Journal of Theology, V (1959), 51.

²William Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., 1951), 187.

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