

A THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE OFFICE,
SACRIFICE, MINISTRY AND PERFECTION OF CHRIST
AS HIGH PRIEST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,
AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE BELIEVER
AND THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH.

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ABSTRACT

In these last days God has spoken his last and most complete word to man in a Son, Jesus Christ. In his person and ministry Christ is the agent of creation and heir of the spiritual and material estate of God. He is the *locus* of the fulfilment of the revelatory plan of God, and, as such, is superior to the angels, the ministers of salvation within the created order, and Moses, the faithful minister of God's people Israel. Christ not only fulfils the necessary qualification for priesthood under the old covenant, that of divine appointment, but is appointed by God a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. This establishes and authenticates the high priestly office of Christ.

Jesus Christ, like the high priests of the old covenant, must offer gifts and sacrifices to God. The sacrifice of Christ fulfils the sacrificial code of Leviticus 1-7, his sacrifice being a gift to God, communion with God, and an expiatory sacrifice. But more than this the sacrifice of Christ fulfils the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16 as well as the covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24. The sacrifice of Christ is essentially once for all, being that unique action which alone can ultimately deal with sin. The uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice depends on the uniqueness of the person of Christ and his superior high priestly office. In his sacrificial action Christ is also the sin-bearer. The high priestly sacrifice of Christ determines the form of the high priestly ministry of Christ, which is also gift to God, communion with God, has expiatory significance, and is a ministry of the new covenant. The high priestly ministry of Christ is a ministry which is continuous through time and is both contemporaneous with and subsequent to his sacrifice. In this continuity through time the ministry of Christ

is the foundation of both the faith of believers and their perfection as sons.

In the execution of his high priestly ministry Christ is perfected by God through the learning of obedience. The humiliation of Christ and his learning of obedience becomes the foundation of the perfecting of believers. It is as the One who is perfected through suffering that Christ becomes the pioneer of salvation and the pioneer and perfecter of the faith of the people of God. Through faith in Christ the people of God constitute a pilgrim people who, on the basis of Christ's perfection, are themselves perfected and brought to glory. The pilgrim people of God share in the priesthood of Christ and constitute a priesthood of all believers. In their pilgrimage of faith they are to demonstrate their confidence, endurance, obedience, and discipline, and in their running of the race of pilgrimage are to exercise their own ministry as they progress to glory and the sabbath rest of God.

The high priesthood of Christ has implications for the common life of the people of God and is at the foundation of our understanding of the Christian life.

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PREFACE

When I began my academic association with Rhodes University as a candidate for the ordained ministry of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 1979, I did not envisage that academic association enduring beyond the final year of undergraduate studies. I am deeply indebted to Prof J N Suggit and Dr A P R Wakely for fostering and shaping a zeal for Biblical Studies which has provided a sound foundation for parish ministry as well as the impetus for postgraduate study. I am especially indebted to my supervisor, Prof J N Suggit, for his guidance during the years of my association with Rhodes University, and in particular during the past three years during which I have been engaged in the research of which this thesis is the product.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible has been adopted as the standard English text for purposes of research, and all quotations from the Bible in English are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated. The standard Greek text used is the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, and all quotations from the New Testament in Greek are from this edition of the Greek New Testament.

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INTRODUCTION

The epistle to the Hebrews is unique among the epistles of the New Testament in literary genre, style, and theological content. The absence of the customary superscript which was the usual opening form of letters of the New Testament era raises the question of whether the document should be considered a letter at all (cf 1 John, which poses the same problem). Within the epistle itself the author describes his work as a 'word of exhortation' (Heb 13:22), and this word should be considered rather as a homily or sermon in written form than as a letter in the conventional sense. In keeping with his own assessment of his work, the author's style, except for the epistolary ending (Heb 13:18-25), is hortatory and didactic. It must be recognised, however, that a number of scholars question whether chapter 13 was originally part of the epistle as a whole. An evaluation of the arguments in favour of and against the thesis that chapter 13 was a later addition is not possible within the scope of the present study and it must suffice to say that, for the purposes of this study, chapter 13 is accepted as integral to the message and theology of the epistle to the Hebrews.

Since earliest times the question of authorship has been disputed. Hebrews 2:3 seems to imply that the author was not an apostle and had not been a first hand witness of the ministry of Jesus. Hebrews 13:23 indicates a personal association with Timothy. Apart from these obscure references to his identity, the author remains known only to the recipients of the epistle, and any attempt by modern scholarship to identify the author is conjectural. The identity of the recipients of the letter is equally problematic. The only statement that can be made about them with certainty is that they were Jewish Christians whose faith was at a low ebb and who were in danger of lapsing back into not so

much the law but the ritual of Judaism. It appears that they were either Jewish Christians living in Rome or vicinity, or, less probably, Jewish Christians who had come from Rome (Heb 13:25). While many scholars argue for a date of composition before the destruction of the temple in AD 70, the present tense used in describing the temple ritual and priestly ministrations (Heb 9:1-10; 10:10; 13:10-11) may be a historic present and is therefore inconclusive as evidence for the dating of the epistle. Important as these issues are for the discipline of New Testament introduction, a thorough investigation of these issues lies outside the scope of the present study. If not a consideration of the traditional questions of New Testament introduction by way of historical and literary criticism, what then is the subject matter and methodology of the present study?

Traditionally, the task of exegesis has been to establish the exact meaning of the text for its own time, but the exact meaning of the text for its own time may not be as easily accessible as first thought possible. The very nature of the subject of the New Testament - God's act in Christ - demands that its meaning cannot be fixed in history. The contributions of historical and literary criticism have highlighted the diversity and complexity of the oral traditions and literary processes which lie behind the text of the New Testament. Ricoeur (1980:54) reminds us that the *kerygma* is first and foremost the announcement of a person, a *kerygma* which is expressed in witness, stories, and text containing the first confessions of faith of Christian communities. The New Testament texts themselves are thus interpretations, and '...we can believe only by listening and by interpreting a text which is itself already an interpretation' (Ricoeur 1980:54). If there ever was one original *kerygma* or message or story, it is certainly not recoverable today. The relation between the word, the

event, and its meaning is only apparent through a series of interpretations (Ricoeur 1980:49), and thus '...there was no *one* original story nor *one* biblical point of view which can be taken as original' (Williams 1973:220). Rather we have stories upon stories, interpretations upon interpretations, layer upon layer of constant reapplication of the *kerygma* to each successive context in which New Testament Christianity tried to make sense of it. The text as we have it before us embodies all of these, and so mediates not one but many points of view and perspectives. 'A search for one meaning, then, is futile. We must listen to a whole chorus of interpretive voices, a chorus which sometimes harmonizes and sometimes does not' (Williams 1973:220).

What, then, is the role of the interpreter of the New Testament today? It is clear that the relation of the interpreter to the text is a hermeneutic one (Ricoeur 1980:54), that is, the interpreter must submit himself to what the text says, to what it intends, and to what it means (cf Ricoeur 1980:67). This, however, is not as straightforward as it may at first seem. What the text says will vary according to each interpreter who tries to come to grips with it, and thus the intention and meaning of the text will be differently understood by different readers. Crosman (1980:152), in posing the question 'Do readers make meaning?', points out that meaning is made by a process of translation, and reading is translation. Thus a text only has meaning when it is fitted or translated into some larger context (Crosman 1980:151), or, to put it differently, meaning arises only within a specific social, linguistic, and cultural context. Even to set aside our own social, linguistic, and cultural context and to ask what meaning the original author wished to convey is to place the text within a specific context - the author's - and a context about which we do not know as much as we sometimes like to think. Not only does such an approach to the text raise the question of whether

or not we know enough about the author's context to permit adequate investigation of his meaning, but any decision '...to repress one's own personal religious preferences and to examine the text with detachment is itself a subjective decision which allows for certain kinds of insight and precludes others' (Williams 1973:226). If the author and recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews are unknown to us and the time and place of writing a matter of inconclusive scholarly conjecture (as is indicated by the debate about authorship, audience, date, and location), to what extent can we really begin to speak with certainty about the meaning the author intended to convey, or, for that matter, the meaning (or perhaps it should be 'meanings') which would have been understood by the original readers? Williams (1973:218,226) writes: 'No one can talk about the meaning of the Bible without describing what it means to him. And when he does that, he tells...as much about himself as he does about the Scriptures.' If exegesis cannot take place '...without a "bearer [teneur] of meaning", which belongs to the text and not to the author of a text' (Ricoeur 1980:68), it is primarily the reader who, in his interaction with the text, is addressed by this 'bearer of meaning' and who therefore becomes necessary in the production of meaning. The interpreter can only speak about the meaning of the text as it speaks to him in his time, and therefore there is no such thing as the meaning of a text. The power of the text lies in its ability to evoke meaning in the reader, and the reader becomes necessary to the production of meaning.

This recognition of the role of the reader in the making of meaning calls into question some of the traditional hermeneutic assumptions about the role of the text. Thus McConnell (1986:14) poses the question: 'Where is the text? In the letters on the page? In the mind of the reader? Or somewhere - but where? - in between?' One cannot speak about the meaning of the

text apart from speaking about the meaning evoked in the reader. This may seem somewhat eisegetical, but as Williams (1973:227) comments: 'Is not eisegesis the inevitable result of the human condition; can anyone see with eyes other than his own? The question is not exegesis or eisegesis but rather what is revealed to and about the interpreter in the interpretation.' Is there, then, any constraint which can be placed upon the text, the reader, or the interpretation in the production of meaning? Some would argue that there necessarily must be, but Crosman (1980:161) comments:

The idea that as readers we are constrained in our interpretations by the author's own interpretation is shot through with insuperable difficulties. For most texts we simply do not have a statement from the author on its meaning. If we *do* have such a statement, it is apt to be ambiguous or contradictory, and it must be subjected to the same process of reader interpretation that we are trying to avoid in the first place. If we have to infer an intention from the facts of the author's life, then we will have to study his biography, and of course different biographers will infer different intentions. Whichever biographer we decide to trust, his opinion will again be a text that we will have to interpret. This leads logically to an infinite regress, which can be stopped only by an act of will. That is, we arrive at the 'author's meaning' precisely when we decide we have arrived there: we *make* the author's meaning!

In other words, the dividing line between exegesis and eisegesis is not as well defined as we sometimes think it is. Any interpretation of the text will inevitably involve what Williams (1973:218) refers to as 'the baring of the exegete's soul', and when that takes place, the meaning that one interpreter encounters in the text will most certainly not be the meaning encountered by another. Thus there is no such thing as *the* meaning of the text, and the interpreter '...can never learn from the text how accurate and inaccurate are his views of it' (Iser, 1980:109). Through his interaction with the text the interpreter both encounters and makes

the meaning which the text has for him. In so doing he adds his voice to the chorus of interpretive voices (cf Williams 1973:229), and there will be those interpretations with which his own harmonises and those with which it does not. It is only in adding his own interpretation to this chorus of interpretive voices that the interpreter can begin to assess the validity of his interpretation and be fully aware of the presuppositions with which he has approached the text, and as a result participate in ongoing dialogue with the text in order to continue making meaning.

The present study is not a consideration of the traditional questions of New Testament introduction by way of historical and literary criticism. Given the results of historical and literary criticism, this study is what may be termed a 'reader-response' approach to the text of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is a contribution to the ongoing endeavour to make meaning of the text and offers an interpretation which, together with other interpretations, can contribute to the hermeneutic task of interpreting the epistle to the Hebrews for our time. The title of this study indicates that it is a theological consideration of aspects of the high priesthood of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews. As has been discussed above, there is no such thing as *the* meaning of the text. Similarly, one needs to recognise that there is no such thing as *the* theology of Hebrews. One can only speak about the theology of Hebrews in a broad sense, that is, that the message of Hebrews is a theological one. This study purports to be a theological consideration of aspects of the high priesthood of Christ in Hebrews, and as such is not a setting forth of *the* theology of Hebrews. As a 'reader-response' approach to the text of the epistle to the Hebrews, it sets forth in the theological terms of the reader (for who can avoid the language of theology when speaking about the message of the Bible?) the meaning that the text has for the reader, or, as some

would say, the meaning that the reader has made in his interaction with the text.

The present study will therefore be concerned with a 'reader-response' to the message and theology of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the message and theology of Hebrews specifically as they relate to the office, sacrifice, ministry, and perfection of Christ as high priest. Thus the present study is perhaps best described as a thematic approach to the high priesthood of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews. The consideration of the high priesthood of Christ under these four headings does not by any means exhaust the message or theology of the epistle to the Hebrews, nor does it exhaust the teaching of Hebrews on the high priesthood of Christ. Many of the secondary themes in this study are worthy of fuller consideration in their own right, and their relegation to a secondary place does not imply that they are considered to be of lesser importance than the high priestly office, sacrifice, ministry, and perfection of Christ as expounded below. The high priesthood of Christ is a vast subject, and the message of the epistle to the Hebrews is vast in its scope. One needs, therefore, to be selective in the scope of one's investigation if a comprehensive study is not possible.

The progression of this consideration of the high priesthood of Christ is not arbitrary, but reflects a progression and logical development within the high priesthood of Christ itself. The office of Christ as high priest must be established before Christ can make his high priestly sacrifice, through which he exercises his high priestly ministry both on earth and in heaven. Consequently he is exalted as the One who was perfected in his humanity by God, and as such becomes the One through whom believers are perfected and brought to glory as the pilgrim people of God. We begin, therefore, with a consideration of the office of Christ as high priest.

CHAPTER 1

1 THE HIGH PRIESTLY OFFICE OF CHRIST

The office that Christ holds as high priest is dependent upon both his personal and formal/ritual qualifications. Christ is personally qualified to hold a unique high priestly office because of the inherent superiority of his person and being. He has a unique place and performs a unique function within the revelatory scheme of God. Christ, the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation, is superior to the angels, but yet for a little while is made lower than the angels, becoming like man in every respect, yet without sin. As man he is greater and more faithful than Moses, fulfilling in his humanity the formal/ritual qualifications of the Levitical high priesthood. But more than this he fulfills the requirements of a superior priesthood, an eternal priesthood after the order of an indestructible life, that is, the order of Melchizedek. In preparation for a study of Christ's superior high priestly work his high priestly office and qualifications for this office must be given consideration.

1.1 The personal superiority of the Son

1.1.1 The Son as *locus* of a fulfilled revelation

In previous times God spoke to our fathers in the faith in many and diverse ways (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως) through the prophets, but now in the end time (ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων) God has spoken to his people through a Son (Heb 1:1,2). This act of speaking on the part of God which takes place in and through the Son is an establishing of the connexion between man and God by means of which foundation is laid for the mediatorial and high priestly ministry of the Son in

bringing God to man and man to God (cf Westcott, 1903: 139). The Son, as the agent through whom the created order of this present age (Heb 1:2; cf 11:3 [Note the use of the plural τοὺς αἰῶνας in both cases.]) came into being (cf Pr 8:22-31) and as the sustainer of the universe, represents the superiority of God's new way of speaking to the old revelation which took place through the prophets. This new act of God's speaking to man is indicative not simply of a progression from an inferior to a superior phase of revelation, but rather of a progression from promise to fulfilment (Heb 11:39-40), and it is in this fulfilment of his promises that the superiority of God's final and most complete revelation finds expression through the high priestly ministry of Christ (cf Bruce 1964:2).

This progression from promise to fulfilment of which God's new act of speaking is indicative is given expression in various ways in the epistle to the Hebrews: there is a progression from inferior agents of the divine will to a superior agent of the divine will, from angels and Moses to the Son (Heb 1:1-4:13); there is a progression from an inferior to a superior priesthood, from a temporal to an eternal priesthood (Heb 4:14-7:38); there is a progression from an inadequate covenant to a new and better covenant (Heb 8:1-13); there is a progression from an inadequate and earthly sanctuary to the ultimate and eternal heavenly sanctuary, from an inferior to a superior ritual, from an ineffective and often repeated sacrifice to a once for all sacrifice of eternal validity (Heb 9:1-10:18). In general, there is a progression from the imperfect and temporal to the perfect and eternal. Nothing can be perfect in any sense of the word τέλειος until its purpose is fulfilled by being in subjection to Christ (Heb 2:8) as the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2) and high priest of our confession (Heb 3:1). This means that the people of God is essentially a pilgrim people (Heb 4:9-11; 10:23-25; 13:14) experien-

tially involved in a progression from weakness and apostasy to perseverance in the faith and the attainment of perfection (Heb 10:19-12:2), a progression from despair to hope and new life (Heb 12:3-13:25). In this pilgrimage from apostasy to faith and from despair to hope we have a merciful and faithful high priest (Heb 2:17; 4:15) who of necessity had to be 'made like his brethren in every respect' (Heb 2:17) and who therefore knows the temptations and the agonies that are bound up with pilgrimage (Heb 2:10,18; 4:15-16) and who can offer mercy and grace.

As the *locus* of fulfilled revelation the Son holds a unique office in the economy of God in that the Son is the appointed heir of all things to whom has been ceded the material and spiritual estate of God, which embraces not only the created order but also the world to come (Ps 2:8; Heb 2:5-8). The Son is the agent through whom the created order came into being, and therefore, as heir of all things (Heb 1:2), does not receive something which he previously lacked. He is not in receipt of a 'lawful inheritance' in which the passing of ownership from one party to another takes place, but rather in inheriting the estate of God he receives what is by right his own possession (Montefiore 1964:34). As the agent through whom the created order came into being the Son is the bearer of divine glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης) within the created order and the imprint (χαρακτήρ) of the very nature and essence of God himself (Heb 1:3; cf Appendix). It is as the bearer of divine glory and the manifestation of the nature of God himself that the Son, in the incarnation, fulfills his ministry in making purification for sins and is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3; cf 2 Sm 7:18).

1.1.2 The superiority of the Son to the angels

The essential content of the Son's exaltation consists in his having become superior to the angels and the acquisition of a more excellent name (Heb 1:4) by which he is shown to be κληρονόμος (Heb 1:2). His seeming inferiority to the angels (Heb 2:6-9) was only temporary and was an essential part of his redeeming activity (Heb 2:10-11, 17-18), and his exaltation upon completion of that redeeming activity was not the gaining of a new status but a reclamation of what is rightfully his lawful place (cf Philp 2:6-11; Montefiore 1964:34). Christ's inheritance is therefore dependent upon his sonship and the name associated with sonship (κεκληρονόμηκεν [Heb 1:4], suggesting that the name is held as the result of an *act* or *process* of inheritance). Christ is both Son and heir quite apart from the fulfilling of his ministry as high priest. That he is both Son and heir has implications for the understanding of his high priestly ministry, but he is both Son and heir prior to his incarnation and prior to his high priestly work (Heb 1:2; 3:1; 5:10).

From the testimony of the Old Testament (Ps 2:7; 2 Sm 7:14; Dt 32:43; Pss 97:7; 104:4; 45:6-7; 102:25-27; 110:1) the superiority of the Son to the angels is confirmed. The Old Testament quotations in Hebrews 1:5-14 substantiate the superiority of the Son to the angels in three ways: he is superior as Son (Heb 1:5-6), he is superior as heir of all things (Heb 1:7-9), and he is superior as the one through whom the creation of the world takes place (Heb 1:10-12). This threefold superiority issues forth in the invitation extended to the Son to take his place at the right hand of God (Heb 1:13) while the angels remain servants of the cause of salvation (Heb 1:14; cf Westcott 1903:18-19).

The obtaining of the name is not simply the result of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, even though Hebrews 1:4 may at first suggest this. The name

is essentially Christ's even before his incarnation, and is inseparably an element of God's new act of speaking to man (Heb 1:2), even during the time of his humiliation (Heb 5:8). The obtaining of the name and the exaltation that is associated with the name are indications of the personal superiority of Christ and therefore also of the superior office he holds as high priest and his superior high priestly work (Heb 4:14-15). Christ is high priest both because of (Heb 2:5-8) and despite (Heb 2:9; cf Appendix) his superiority to the angels.

1.1.3 The incarnation of the Son: the true foundation of high priesthood

Because Christ is not concerned with (ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι) heavenly beings but with the descendants of Abraham (Heb 2:16), the incarnation becomes a soteriological necessity and prerequisite for both his high priestly office and his high priestly work. (The usual meaning of ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι is 'to take hold of', but the context of Heb 2:16 calls for preference to be given to the meaning 'to be concerned with/about'.) The author of Hebrews is here on common ground with Paul in understanding the true descendants of Abraham not exclusively as those who belong to Israel (Rm 9:6) but as those who belong to Christ (Gl 3:29). It is precisely in becoming like his brethren (Heb 2:17) that Christ is qualified to perform his high priestly work in making expiation for the sins of the people. This act of becoming like his brethren (ὁμοιωθῆναι) must of necessity involve an incarnation to the fullest extent in that '...unless he was fully human, he could not be the representative of men; and it was in this representative capacity that he became a merciful and faithful high priest in relation to God' (Montefiore 1964: 67). The incarnation was necessary for Christ to fulfil his high priestly ministry both on the human and on the God-ward

side. His ministry, both on the human and on the Godward side, is dependent upon his own sufferings and temptations (Heb 4:15; 5:7) which reach their high point in Gethsemane (cf, for example, Bruce 1964:99; Guthrie 1983:48; Montefiore 1964:97). It is because Christ has experienced what his people, and in fact all people, experience that they can, through his high priestly work, experientially be involved in a pilgrimage from weakness and apostasy to perseverance in the faith and the attainment of perfection.

1.1.4 The superiority of the Son to Moses

Moses occupies a unique place in the history of Israel, being both God's apostle to his people and the people's intercessor with God (Bruce 1964:56). Moses prefigures Christ in that Moses sympathises with the people of Israel whom he represents, pleading before God on their behalf in their time of weakness and apostasy (Ex 32:11-13, 31-32; Nm 14:13-19). Entrusted with the house of God (Nm 12:7) which is the people of Israel, Moses has proved himself faithful in the execution of his apostolic, sympathetic, and mediatorial role. Thus Moses becomes a pertinent figure in the author of Hebrews' discussion of Christ since Moses was considered to be superior to all other men and to the angels (cf Montefiore 1964:71), and even, by Philo (*VitMos* 2:3), to the priesthood as high priest by divine providence. According to Philo, Moses was the 'greatest and most perfect of men' (*VitMos* 1:1) who '...was named god and king of the whole nation, and entered...into the darkness where God was, that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things' (*VitMos* 1:158). Unlike the Son's superiority to angels, the Son's superiority to Moses touches on crucial issues of faith at the experiential level of human existence.

While Moses served in the household as one who is himself a part of the household and therefore a servant, Christ rules over the household as Son and therefore as its master and lord (Heb 3:5-6a), thereby being counted worthy by God of more glory than Moses. The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God (Heb 2:9) is God's recognition of the faithfulness of Christ in the twofold office of apostleship and priesthood to which he had been appointed (cf Hewitt 1960:78).

1.2 Qualifications for high priesthood

1.2.1 Qualifications for the Levitical high priesthood

The part of the priest is to establish a connexion between man and God. The priest '...brings man to God ...and he brings God to man' (Westcott 1903:139).

In accomplishing this connexion and the bringing together of God and man there are two points about the general qualifications of the high priest which are relevant to the argument of Hebrews: the high priest must be able to sympathise with those whom he represents (Heb 5:2) and he must be divinely appointed to office (Heb 5:1,4). In actual fact it was only Aaron and his sons (Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar) among the high priests of Israel who were personally called by God (Ex 28:1). As the true representative of humanity it is imperative that the high priest himself be of and from among human kind, a man chosen from among men (Heb 5:1) who of necessity must deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself bears the burden of human moral frailty (Heb 5:2). As a man among men he is the object of a divine call (Heb 5:4) and as such is appointed to act for and on behalf of men in the offering of gifts ($\delta\omega\pi\alpha$) and sacrifices ($\theta\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$) for sins (Heb 5:1), thereby bringing man to God and God to man.

1.2.2 Christ's qualifications for high priesthood.

Like the Levitical high priest Christ too is able to sympathise with those whom he represents (Heb 2:17; 4:15) and is divinely appointed to office (Heb 5:5-6). To be a true representative of mankind he had to experience what man experiences and therefore of necessity had to become one with his people, 'like his brethren in every respect' (Heb 2:17). Only in this way could he become '...a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people' (Heb 2:17-18). He can 'sympathise with our weaknesses,' for he 'has been tempted as we are' (Heb 4:15). Because he met temptation without sinning (Heb 4:15) he is 'holy, blameless, unstained' (Heb 7:26), and as such had no need to offer sacrifices for his own sins (cf Heb 5:3; 7:27), but was qualified to proceed to the offering of a sacrifice for the sins of his people (Heb 7:26-28). He did not take the honour of the high priestly role upon himself; rather he was appointed by God (Heb 5:5). Christ, as the high priest of Christian confession, occupies this office with the same qualification enjoyed by Aaron, that of the personal call of God (cf Bowman 1962:39). In the days of his flesh, although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, thereby attaining to the mature perfection which qualified him to act as the one true and effective high priest (Heb 5:7-9). He is now seated in glory and authority at the right hand of God (Heb 8:1), high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 6:20). In Christ we have a gracious and sympathetic high priest who fulfills the two fundamental requirements for high priesthood, those of sympathy (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15; 5:18; 7:26) and divine appointment (Heb 5:5). The high priests in the Old Testament were in fact noted for their cruelty and lack of pity (Yoma 9:1; Philo *SpecLeg* 1:116), although the ideal of what the character of the high priest should be like

remained the object of Jewish expectation and anticipation, as is illustrated by the description of Simon, the son of Onias, in Sirach 50.

Not only does Christ possess in ideal perfection the high priestly qualifications of sympathy and divine appointment, but he also possesses a high priestly office which is characteristically superior to that of the Levitical order (Heb 5: 6, 10; 6: 20; 7: 15-17, 21).

1.3 The order of Melchizedek

1.3.1 Melchizedek in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament Melchizedek is mentioned only at Genesis 14:18 and Psalm 110:4. One of the major difficulties in understanding the Melchizedek tradition in the Old Testament is that in both Old Testament passages where Melchizedek is mentioned the primary focus is not on Melchizedek himself, but on someone else. In Genesis 14:18 the focus is on Abram and the blessing he received from Melchizedek: in Psalm 110:4 it is on the exalted status and position of the Jerusalemite/Davidic king. That the Old Testament shows no interest in Melchizedek for his own sake makes exegesis of the Old Testament Melchizedek citations highly speculative, as a reading of the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature, the Qumran manuscripts, Philo, and Josephus (among others) will show. The pertinent exegetical issues must be briefly considered.

1.3.1.1 Genesis 14:17-20

In Genesis 14:17-20 Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of 'God Most High', joins Abram at Abram's meeting with the king of Sodom after Abram's success against Chedorlaomer. Cullmann (1963:83) supports the traditional interpretation of Genesis 14:20c without comment or question, taking Abram as subject with Mel-

chizedek being the one to whom a tithe of the booty was paid. In both the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Genesis 14:20c the subject of the sentence is not explicitly stated. If one looks back to verse 19 the subject is clearly Melchizedek and there is no indication in the text that a change of subject has taken place. It is therefore ambiguous as to who paid tithes to whom, and Melchizedek, as a vassal king, could well have paid tithes to Abram - an exegetical problem which even puzzled Jerome (cf Fitzmyer 1963:318-319).

Melchizedek is recognised as king of Salem (מֶלֶכְ שָׁלֵם), identified with Jerusalem (Ps 76:2), and as priest of 'God Most High'. 'Historically there is no reason for making any connection between Salem and Jerusalem, and the association of Salem with Jerusalem represents a theological tradition associated with Melchizedek's priesthood and the sacral kingship motif. 'God Most High' is a translation of the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן which was probably an appellation of the high god worshipped by the Canaanites, quite possibly in pre-Israelite Jerusalem - an appellation which was incorporated into Yahwism at a very early stage of Israelite history. Melchizedek is represented as a sacral king, exercising both royal and priestly authority. Historically Melchizedek was probably a Canaanite priest-king of a small city-state (possibly pre-Israelite Jerusalem), as was Adoni-zedek.

1.3.1.2 Psalm 110:4

The words of Psalm 110:4: 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,' are addressed to the Davidic King, upon whom both royal and priestly functions are conferred. Psalm 110 presupposes the enthronement ceremony of the king, a ceremony in which kingship is connected with the concept of an ideal priesthood. The idea of kingship forms the basis of messianism, and we have in Psalm 110:4, where Melchize-

dek is associated with the Davidic Messiah, a starting point for a messianic formulation of the figure of the high priest.

Melchizedek, as priest-king, appears as a prototype of the Davidic king who, upon his enthronement, becomes Yahweh's adopted son (Ps 2:7) and Yahweh's anointed (Pss 18:50; 132:17), and who, according to mythology (Horton 1976:37), has his true origins in the mountains of the North, the mythical land of Eden which is the dwelling place of God (Ps 110:3). In the Septuagint of Psalm 110[109]:3c the Davidic king is described as 'begotten from the womb before the morning' (ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε), an emendation which suggests that the king was begotten by Yahweh. As the ideal king the son of David establishes righteousness (צִדִּיק; Pss 72:1-7; 99:4) and peace (שָׁלוֹם). As ideal priest he plays a leading role in Israel's worship (2 Sm 6:17-19; 1 Chr 13:8) and a mediatorial role between Israel and Yahweh (1 Ki 8; Ps 132:9-10). In Mark 12:35-37 (cf Mt 22:41-46; Lk 20:41-44) Jesus, in quoting Psalm 110, assumes that the king addressed in the Psalm is to be understood as the Messiah.

1.3.2 Melchizedek in Jewish tradition

Melchizedek is never referred to as *high* priest in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, Philo, or Josephus. Apart from the absence of the high priestly title, Melchizedek is nevertheless recognised as possessing a priesthood that is superior to that of the Levitical order.

According to Philo Melchizedek is both 'Priest of God' and Logos who possessed a 'self-taught and instinctive' priesthood (cf Horton 1976:156):

And the oracle which was laid down after the victory prayers which Melchizedek, who possessed the unlearned and untutored priesthood, made....

(Congr 99)

Melchizedek is also a priest-king whose kingship is the foundation of his superior priesthood:

God has also made Melchizedek both king of peace (for that is the meaning of 'Salem') and his own priest, not having prefigured any work of his, but having made him at first a king both peaceable and worthy of his priesthood.

(Philo *LegAll* 3:79)

According to Josephus (*BJ* 6:438), Melchizedek was the first priest to serve before God and founder of the Jerusalem temple. The common assumption of both Philo and Josephus is that Melchizedek was the first priest of God because he is the first priest mentioned in the Torah (cf Horton 1976:157).

Later Judaism removed the high priestly office from Melchizedek and transferred it to Abraham (*Ned* 32*b*; *Sanh* 108*b*) on the grounds that in Genesis 14:19-20 Melchizedek names Abraham before he names God. In *Aboth* R Nathan 34 (cf Cullmann 1963:84) the Messiah is expressly declared to be superior to the high priest: 'You, Messiah, are a prince over Melchizedek and are therefore more beloved by God than this messianic high priest Melchizedek.'

1.3.3 The high priest as ideal figure in Judaism

The high priest is essentially a Jewish figure embracing elements of traditions about the Messiah-king. He becomes almost a messianic mediator: the returned Elijah sometimes appears both as prophet and as high priest of the end time (Jeremias 1964:932-933), although sometimes, as the eschatological priest, he appears independently beside Elijah as *כֹּהֵן צְדָקָה* (Priest of Righteousness); and in certain speculations about Adam, the priest-king, assumes also the characteristics of Adam conceived of as the ideal man (cf Cullmann 1963:85).

It would seem that Jewish and Gnostic notions have merged into Christian-Gnostic speculations about Mel-

chizedek in the speculations of the Church Fathers. In such speculations the high priest tradition has overtones of a tradition in which Melchizedek is seen as primeval man who returns as Messiah (Dinkler 1962:573), and who is to be identified with mythological figures of the beginning and the end time, figures such as Moses, Elijah, Shem, the Archangel Michael, Original Man, Adam, or Metatron (Cullmann 1963:85; Dinkler 1962:573).

Apparently Jewish tradition knew of an ideal high priest to come who would be the one true priest, and who, in the last days, would fulfill all the functions of the Jewish high priestly office (Cullmann 1963:86). This high priest, in Christian tradition, is identified as Christ, who fulfills his priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

1.3.4 The high priest, Melchizedek, and Qumran

In Hebrews 7:2-3 the etymology of the name Melchizedek is given as 'king of righteousness' and 'king of Salem', 'Salem' here being taken to mean 'king of peace'. Righteousness and peace are eschatological gifts identified with the new age of the end time. Melchizedek himself is described as being without father (ἀπάτωρ) or mother (ἀμήτωρ) or genealogy (ἀγενεαλόγητος), having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever. Apart from 'resembling the Son of God' parallels to all these epithets can be found in 11QMelch, but it is unlikely that there is any direct relationship between the Melchizedek of Hebrews and the Melchizedek of 11QMelch, although certain parallels do exist. Both figures are eschatological and play redemptive roles, especially in that both make atonement for sin; both receive exaltation in the heavens; both overcome the forces of evil opposed to God and bring the promise of a new age (Horton 1976:167). But the

Melchizedek of 11QMelch is neither a purely earthly figure of the past, as in Genesis 14:18, nor an earthly man whose appearance is expected in the future, but essentially of a different order than the Melchizedek of Genesis and Hebrews.

1.3.5 Melchizedek in the New Testament

In the New Testament Melchizedek is mentioned only at Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17. Not only is Hebrews the only New Testament book to mention Melchizedek or his priesthood, but also the only book in the New Testament to call Christ 'priest'.

1.3.5.1 The etymology of the name 'Melchizedek'

In Hebrews 7:1 Melchizedek is called 'King of Salem' after Genesis 14:18. The meaning of the phrase 'King of Salem' is uncertain, as the 'Salem' of Genesis 14:18 need not necessarily (Horton 1976:48-49) and probably does not (Fitzmyer 1963:313) refer to Jerusalem. According to Hebrews 7:2 the etymology of the name Melchizedek is both 'King of righteousness' and 'king of Salem', with the phrase 'King of Salem' being taken to mean 'King of peace' (מֶלֶךְ שָׁלוֹם). Just as 'Salem' probably had nothing to do with Jerusalem, it is most unlikely that 'Salem' (שָׁלוֹם, Gn 14:18) has anything to do with 'peace', although rabbinic interpretation could not fail to interpret it in this way. The most probable explanations of the name Melchizedek (cf Gn 14:18 and Ps 110:4 - מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צַדִּיק) are:

the/my king is Zedek [a deity];
Milki [a deity] is righteous;
the/my king is righteous(ness).

1.3.5.2 Melchizedek in Hebrews

The superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical priesthood has three facets which the author of Hebrews demonstrates from Genesis 14:18-20 (cf Fitzmyer 1963: 320). Melchizedek blesses Abram (Heb 7:1), receives tithes from Abram (Heb 7:2), and is without parentage and genealogy (Heb 7:3), having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

The lack of parentage and genealogy of Melchizedek is an amplification of the concept of the originality of his priesthood and not a proof of that originality (Horton 1976:159). It would have been an anachronism to provide Melchizedek with genealogy as the genealogical foundation of the Levitical priesthood had not yet been established. Unlike the Levitical priests, Melchizedek requires no external qualifications for his priesthood, but holds his priesthood by virtue of the strength of his personal dignity, and thus stands above the entire structure of law and priesthood (Hughes 1979:16). The words 'without father or mother or genealogy' have to do with Melchizedek's priestly qualifications and are taken by the author of Hebrews as a suggestion, not so much of miraculous birth (Horton 1976:162), but of supernatural origin (Montefiore 1964: 119).

The concern of the author of Hebrews is to show the superiority of Melchizedek to the Levites, the priests of the old covenant.

The ancestor of the Levites and thus of the Jewish priesthood is Levi. But Levi is the descendant of Abraham. According to the Jewish theory of ancestry which the writer presupposes, Levi already existed in the 'loins' of Abraham, so that what happened to Abraham therefore also happened to him. That Abraham received a blessing from Melchizedek is a sign of his inferiority to Melchizedek; he who blesses is superior to him who is blessed. Therefore Levi and the whole Israelitic priesthood which stems from him are inferior to Melchizedek. Melchizedek is the true

priest. He blesses and he receives the tithe. He is THE high priest. Since Christ realized this true priesthood, he is finally the true High priest, the true Mediator between God and man.

(Cullmann 1963:90)

Melchizedek's priesthood is different from Aaron's in that it rests on a different quality of life - the power of an indestructible life (Heb 7:15-16; Guthrie 1983:52).

Thus this Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, resembles the Son of God and continues a priest forever (Heb 7:3). Despite the exalted status and greatness of Melchizedek (Heb 7:4) the author of Hebrews has scant interest in Melchizedek *per se* and no interest in the fact that Melchizedek was, technically, a Gentile (Heb 7:6). The Old Testament Melchizedek tradition is offered primarily as scriptural proof of the superiority of Christ's mediatorial office over all earthly ministries. Melchizedek is chosen as a type of Christ not because of any personal virtue in himself but because he is the first priest (Horton 1976:164), and as such was the priest of humanity and not of Judaism alone, belonging to an era when he could discharge his priestly ministry with no member of humanity being excluded from the benefits of his priesthood.

In the case of the Levitical priesthood those who could not clearly prove their line of descent as members of the priestly tribe were not allowed to officiate until the matter was settled (cf Ezr 2:62-63; Neh 7:63-65). Melchizedek belongs to no priestly family, and therefore his priesthood has a validity which does not depend upon succession. As such Melchizedek prefigures Christ, whose priesthood is different from that of the old order in that he belonged to another tribe, the royal tribe of Judah (Heb 7:13-14). The use of the perfect $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\chi\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu$ in Hebrews 7:13 (cf Heb 2:14) suggests that Christ has a permanent share in that tribe (cf Hewitt 1960:120) and therefore, as a non-Levite,

his sacrifice and ministry could not take place within the confines of the Jewish sacrificial system and at a Jewish altar within the Jewish sanctuary (Heb 8:4).

Since Melchizedek is greater than the patriarch Abraham (Heb 7:4-10) and the high priest Aaron (Heb 7:11-17) he can serve as the type of Christ, whose royal and holy high priesthood transcends all human orders (Heb 7:23-28; 8:1-10:18). Although Christ is designated 'high priest after the order of Melchizedek' (Heb 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:21; cf Ps 110:4), it is not so much a case of there being a repetition of Melchizedek in Christ (Dinkler 1962:573) as of there being a prefigurement of Christ in Melchizedek, especially of Christ in his eschatological and concluding role as Messiah (Dinkler 1962:573).

1.4 Concluding remarks

In these last days God has spoken through a Son, and this last and most complete act of God's speaking to man is the conclusion and goal of a progression from promise to fulfilment. This progression from promise to fulfilment involves the people of God in a pilgrimage of faith towards perfection. In this pilgrimage towards perfection they are led by the Son who is the bearer of divine glory and imprint of God's nature among mankind. As such he is superior to the angels in that he is heir of the estate of God, has obtained a more excellent name than theirs, and is exalted to the right hand of God in glory. Nevertheless he was made for a little while lower than the angels, taking the form of man and becoming like man in every respect, but without sin. Greater and more faithful even than Moses he fulfils the high priestly requirements of sympathy with those whom he represents and divine appointment by God. He who is unsurpassed in excellence of name and exalted status becomes man, and in becoming man does for man what angels, Moses, and the high priests of the

old order could not do. The priesthood of the old covenant was not the last word in God's speaking to man and must of necessity be superseded by a final priesthood of the new covenant. The argument of Hebrews is that the supreme qualifications of Christ for the high priestly office entitle him to hold a superior priesthood, to be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

CHAPTER 2

2 THE HIGH PRIESTLY SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

In these last days God has spoken to us through a Son. This last and most complete act of God's speaking to man is a word of salvation addressed to man not only through the personal superiority of the Son but also through the ministry of the Son as high priest. The supreme qualifications of Christ for high priestly office entitle him to hold a superior priesthood, on the basis of which he exercises a superior ministry. The high priestly ministry of the Son constitutes the fulfilment of a progression from the imperfect and temporal to the perfect and eternal, and it is therefore the high priestly ministry of the Son which embodies the goal of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God. The author of Hebrews considers the high priestly ministry of Christ to be superior to that of the high priests of the Levitical order in that it is after the order of Melchizedek according to a divine oath which has never been revoked (Heb 7). A superior high priestly office implies a superior high priestly ministry (Heb 8, 9) which has as its foundation and culmination a superior high priestly sacrifice (Heb 9:11-10:18). As his superior sacrifice is the focal point of his high priestly work, it is fitting that the present consideration of Christ's high priestly ministry gives priority to a consideration of his sacrificial work, in the light of which the form and progression of the various aspects of his high priestly ministry logically fall into place. The present investigation into the sacrificial work of Christ as high priest will begin with consideration of the sacrificial code of the Old Testament. The high priestly sacrifice of Christ will be seen to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, on the grounds of which theological

comment will be made on the meaning of Christ's high priestly sacrificial work.

2.1 The sacrificial code of the Old Testament

Investigation into the sacrificial code of the Old Testament is not a simple procedure. The origins and development of sacrifice within the history of Israel are complex and shrouded in uncertainty. Besides the non-Israelite origins of the Old Testament sacrificial system (cf Ringgren 1966:167) the terminology used reflects an intricate process of historical development (during which the laws of sacrifice did not remain unchanged) as well as a fusion of various sacrificial practices which are similar to one another but of diverse origin (cf De Vaux 1973:415). The various terms used to describe different kinds of sacrifices in the Old Testament are not easily distinguishable: the same term can be used for different kinds of sacrifices and the same sacrifice can be described by a variety of terms. The earliest references to sacrifice are found in the J and E strands of the Pentateuch (ninth century BC) and in the Deuteronomic History (in its present form, sixth century BC, but with elements from centuries earlier), but these early texts have gone through much redaction at the hands of the priestly editors who sometimes made extensive changes or additions (cf Daly 1978:12). The most complete and most recent code of sacrificial practice and law, that of Leviticus 1-7, is clearly in its present form a product of post-exilic redaction, possibly as late as the third century BC, (Daly 1978:14; Ringgren 1966:167), but it nevertheless gives evidence of primitive pre-exilic sacrificial terminology and ritual which were less coherent and less integrated than the final product of priestly redaction. A similar redactive process has produced the ritual of the Day of Atonement of Leviticus 16 (De Vaux 1964:95; 1973:507), a ritual which is the culmination

of the whole of the sacrificial ritual of the Old Testament.

The study of comparative religion has identified three distinctive ways of understanding sacrifice - as gift to the deity, as communion with the deity, as atoning for guilt - and these three ways of understanding sacrifice are discernible within the sacrificial system of Israel (Daly 1978:42; Ringgren 1966:167), to a brief consideration of which we now turn.

2.1.1 The sacrificial code of Leviticus 1-7

2.1.1.1 Sacrifice as a gift to Yahweh

In the earliest strata of the Old Testament sacrifice in general is referred to by the term תְּנִיחָה (LXX - $\thetaυσία$), which has the basic meaning of 'gift'. In later strata תְּנִיחָה came to be used to describe the cereal offering (Lv 2:1-16) and קָרְבָּן (LXX - $\delta\omega\rho\omicron\nu$) was used as a general term to emphasise the aspect of giving, קָרְבָּן being derived from the verb קָרַב (from the root קִרַב - 'be near'), thus meaning 'that which is brought near/presented' or 'gift' (Ringgren 1966:167).

The burnt offering (Lv 1:3-17) or holocaust (LXX - $\delta\lambda\omicron\kappa\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\mu\alpha$ or $\delta\lambda\omicron\kappa\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$) should probably also be interpreted as a gift to Yahweh (Ringgren 1966:168), קָרַב meaning 'that which goes up', so described because the offering is 'taken up' onto the altar or, more probably, because the smoke 'goes up' when the offering is consumed upon the altar (De Vaux 1964:27; 1973:415). The term 'burnt offering' is used to describe offerings in which the sacrificial victim was wholly burnt upon the altar, save for the skin, and is to be distinguished from sacrifices in which only part of the animal was burnt upon the altar and the rest eaten by the worshipper and priests, or sacrifices in which none of the offering was burnt upon the altar. Occasionally the term קָרְבָּן כָּלִי , 'whole burnt offering', is used (translated by a

variety of terms in LXX). The laying on of hands upon the victim by the worshipper in the ritual of the burnt offering probably signifies a close association between the victim and the worshipper and not the transferring of the sins of the worshipper to the victim (Abba 1977: 134; Ringgren 1966:169), as is the case with the scape-goat on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:21). As with the expiatory sacrifice on the Day of Atonement the holocaust too has the idea of atonement associated with it (Lv 1:4; Ex 29:15-18). The burning of the victim upon the altar is a 'pleasing odour to Yahweh' (קִיחַ-נִיחֹחַ, Lv 1:9b [LXX - ὁσμὴ εὐωδίας]), possibly suggesting that Yahweh was pleased to smell the smoke. Elsewhere (Lv 21:6, 8, 17; 22:25; Nm 28:2) the suggestion is made that the sacrifice was an offering of food to Yahweh, the expression 'bread of God' reflecting ancient belief that in sacrifice food was in fact offered to the deity, as in the Gilgamesh Epic (XI,1.160) where the 'pleasing odour' is associated with food provided for the deity through sacrifice (cf Daly 1978:72; Ringgren 1966:169).

2.1.1.2 Sacrifice as communion with Yahweh

Various types of sacrifice are covered by the term חֶבֶל (LXX - θυσία), between which there is no precise distinction (cf Lv 3). Sometimes the term חֶבֶל is used, sometimes the term חֶבֶל-שְׁלָמִים, and sometimes חֶבֶל-שְׁלָמִים (LXX - ἡ θυσία τοῦ σωτηρίου). The חֶבֶל-שְׁלָמִים or communion sacrifices can be categorised into three: the חֶבֶל (thank offering) or sacrifice of praise (Lv 7:12-15; 22:29-30), the חֶבֶל-נָדָבָה or voluntary/freewill sacrifice (Lv 7:16-17; 22:18-23) offered out of devotion (as opposed to an offering because of a precept or promise), and the חֶבֶל-נֶדָבָה or votive sacrifice (Lv 7:16-17; 22:18-23) to which a person has bound himself by a vow (De Vaux 1964:31-32; 1973:417; Ringgren 1966:71). The term 'peace offering', which is usually used to render

חֶלֶב־חַיִּים in English, is inadequate and fails to convey the full meaning of the phrase. In the חֶלֶב־חַיִּים only the blood and fat of the victim are offered to Yahweh and burnt upon the altar, the rest being consumed by the worshipper (Lv 7:15-18), who must be ritually clean (Lv 7:20), in a sacred celebration after the priest has taken a share (Lv 7:14). The blood was thrown against the altar and the fat, together with certain other parts, was burnt upon the altar, the fat and the blood here both considered to be associated with the life force of the victim (Lv 3:3-5, 8, 16-17; cf 7:22-24). Leviticus 3 does not specify the occasion on which a peace offering was to be made. Probably the peace offerings were occasional in the sense that they were offered whenever the occasion demanded or was deemed appropriate by the worshipper.

2.1.1.3 Expiatory sacrifices

Two rites are described in Leviticus 4:1-6:7 (cf the differences between this passage and Nm 15:22-29) as a means whereby atonement is effected between the worshipper and Yahweh (cf Ex 29:14; 30:10; Lv 12:6-7; 14:10; 16:16; 19:20-22; Nm 6:10-11). These two rites are the rites of the sin offering and the guilt offering. The Old Testament does not provide any precise distinction between the two and it is therefore difficult to determine the exact nature of each as opposed to the other.

2.1.1.3.a) The sin offering

In Leviticus 4:1-5:13 חַטָּאת (LXX - ἁμαρτία) can mean 'sin' as well as the rite which does away with sin (De Vaux 1964:91; 1973:418). The significant differences between expiatory sacrifices and other kinds of sacrifice revolve around the use of the blood and the disposal of the flesh of the sacrificial victim. The

priest sprinkled some of the blood seven times against the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies, smeared some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of incense which stood before the curtain, and then poured the rest of the blood at the foot of the altar of burnt offerings. The expiatory sacrifices were the only sacrifices in which part of the victim (the blood) was taken so far into the innermost areas of the temple building. The important use of the blood in this sacrifice stems from Leviticus 17:11, the blood being the life force of the victim and a gift by Yahweh for the express purpose of making atonement (cf Heb 9:22).

The flesh of the victim was consumed by the priests since the worshipper, who brought the sacrifice and who in offering it admitted his guilt and therefore his impurity, could not partake of the flesh of the victim in any way. When a sin offering was offered on behalf of the community or the high priest, the priests themselves were not allowed to eat any part of the victim, all the remains being disposed of outside the sanctuary. The sin of the worshipper was not transferred to the victim through the laying on of hands on the part of the worshipper. This is shown by the priests eating the flesh of a victim offered by an individual. If the sin of the worshipper was transferred to the victim the flesh of the victim would have been considered unclean and as such could not have been eaten. The act of making an offering for sin made the offering pleasing to Yahweh who took away the sin of the worshipper in consideration of the offering made (cf De Vaux 1964:94; 1973:419).

2.1.1.3.b) The guilt offering

In Leviticus 5:14-6:7 the guilt offering, or reparative sacrifice, is described by the Hebrew word נִשְׁחָ (in the Pentateuch of LXX - πλημμέλεια). נִשְׁחָ has the root meaning of 'offence', then the means by which

the offence is righted, and finally the guilt offering itself. The ritual for the guilt offering is the same as that for the sin offering (Lv 7:7), but there seems to be a difference of occasion between the two types of offering (cf Lv 5:14-16; 6:2-7; Nm 5:5-8) possibly covering different types of transgression. A unique practice associated with the guilt offering, although not an integral part of the ritual (De Vaux 1964:98; 1973:420), was the payment of reparation, the monetary equivalent of the damage done plus one fifth.

2.1.2 The Day of Atonement: Leviticus 16

As with the sacrificial code of Leviticus 1-7 the ritual for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 is the end product of an intricate process of historical development and redaction (De Vaux 1964:95; 1973:507). The ritual of the Day of Atonement conflates two rites of diverse nature and origin - there is the Levitical ritual in which a bull is offered for the sins of the high priest and his house and a goat is offered for the sins of the people, and there is a rite in which a goat is consigned 'for Azazel'. Through the laying on of hands the sins of the people were transferred to this goat and the goat was then led out into the wilderness ('to Azazel'), carrying with it the sins of the people (Lv 16:8-10, 20-22). De Vaux (1973:508) draws attention to the similarity between the scapegoat bearing the sins of the people and the bearing away of the disease by a bird in the ritual for the cleansing of a leper (Lv 14:6-7). The transference of the sins of the people to the scapegoat and the resulting expiation are effective only because the goat is presented before Yahweh (Lv 16:10): it is Yahweh himself who brings about the transfer and the expiation. Once the sins of the people had been transferred to the scapegoat the animal became ritually unclean and therefore could not be used as a victim for sacrifice.

2.1.3 The meaning of sacrifice in the Old Testament

The Old Testament offers no theological interpretation or theory of sacrifice. The existence of the sacrificial cult is taken to be self-evident by the redactors of the Pentateuchal narratives. In primitive strands of the Old Testament there would appear to be references to sacrifices being offered in order to appease Yahweh and turn aside his wrath (1 Sm 26:19; 2 Sm 24:25), but for the most part the sacrificial code and its attendant statutes address technicalities and ritual and do not offer a theoretical or theological understanding of sacrifice. The sacrificial laws in the Pentateuch are more aptly described as 'a sort of handbook for priests' (Ringgren 1966:166) than as theological comment or exposition. As far as the individual worshipper was concerned, it would seem that he '...was left free to think of sacrifices in almost any way he chose' (Daly 1978:41). Anthropological studies have determined that ritual usually precedes explanation (cf Leach, E & Aycok, D A 1983. *Structuralist interpretations of Biblical myth*. Cambridge: CUP. for a more comprehensive discussion of the subject), and therefore, as is the case with Old Testament sacrifice, ritual will usually contain elements which are difficult to explain.

The killing of the victim was the responsibility of the worshipper on whose behalf the priest offered the sacrifice upon the altar, except in public sacrifices where it was the responsibility of the priest as the representative of the people. It is important to note that the killing of the victim took place with the least possible amount of pain, the death of the victim not in any way being understood as suffering (Westcott 1903:293). 'Sacrifice is the supreme act of life, and it implies far more than can be described as suffering' (Nairne 1915:77). The blood played an important part in sacrifice, the application of the blood being the

prerogative of the priest. In Leviticus 17:11 the blood of the sacrificial victim is said to contain its life and thus is not for consumption along with the flesh (cf Gn 9:4), but rather is given by Yahweh as a means whereby atonement can be effected. Sacrifice was, at one level, intended to 'make an impression or arouse an effect' in Yahweh (Daly 1978:76), but Yahweh was not obligated in sacrifice. His acceptance of sacrifice was a free act, and he was obligated only when he accepted a sacrifice and graciously chose to be so obligated. Sacrifice was effective, yet did not encroach upon the absolute freedom of Yahweh, and thus there is an inherent paradox within sacrifice similar to that which confronts the Christian in the theology of the sacraments - the sacraments are effective, but at the same time do not encroach upon the absolute immutability of God (cf Daly 1978:76-77).

Through the sacrificial ritual the gift brought to Yahweh by the worshipper is accepted, communion with Yahweh is restored, and the guilt of the worshipper before Yahweh is removed. Yahweh is free to accept or reject the sacrifice offered, and his rejection of sacrifice does not mean the ultimate rejection of the person concerned (Gn 4:4b-7a), even though the prevalent understanding in the Old Testament is one of rejection of offering = rejection of person, acceptance of offering = acceptance of person (Daly 1978:78-79). The external ritual of sacrifice should at all times have been an expression of sincere and humble devotion, the culmination of a life of obedience to the divine will (Is 58; Mi 6:6-8). Understanding sacrifice as gift to Yahweh, as communion with Yahweh, and as an expiatory rite atoning for sin implies that sacrifice be the true expression of such a life of obedience to the deity and the divine will. 'Sacrifice is not merely a gift, it is not merely communion, it is not merely expiation, it is all these and more all at the same time' (De Vaux 1973:451). Sacrifice is the appropriate expression of

total and unreserved devotion. It appears in Genesis 4:3-4 as the spontaneous expression of man's need for God (Abba 1977:124) and, in the understanding of Israel, presupposes the divine initiative in redemption.

2.2 The sacrifice of Christ in Hebrews: the fulfilment of the Old Testament ritual

While the epistle to the Hebrews lays particular stress on Christ as high priest and the sacrificial nature of Christ's high priestly work, the sacrificial theology of Hebrews should not be taken as the basis for a New Testament doctrine of sacrifice. Hebrews has a 'specialist' and limited interest in sacrifice developed in a specific and limited direction. There is no development or even mention of some of the important sacrificial themes found in the Synoptics or the Johannine literature, in the Pauline corpus or the Petrine literature (cf Daly 1978:262). There is no mention of the Last Supper as anticipation of Christ's death; the Passover motif is never mentioned, and neither is Christ in any way portrayed as the Paschal lamb; and, except for a few controversial references (Heb 10:5,10; 13:10-11), the Eucharist is neither mentioned nor alluded to as the ἀνάμνησις of Christ's Paschal and sacrificial death. The narrow and particular interest of Hebrews in sacrifice must be seen against the backdrop of Christ as 'the fulfiller and the fulfillment of the OT cult' (Daly 1978:263). The interest of Hebrews is in the fact of Christ's sacrifice (Heb 7:27), the necessity of Christ's sacrifice (Heb 8:3), its possibility (Heb 9:14), absolute efficacy (Heb 9:25-28), fullness (Heb 10:9), and continuous personal validity (Heb 10:12-14; Westcott 1903:229). The sacrifice of Christ is in particular but not exclusively the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifice for sin - the expiatory offerings of Leviticus 4:1-6:7. From the basis of Christ's sacrifice as a sacrifice for sin (Heb 9:11-14)

the author of Hebrews develops the sacrifice of Christ as the fulfilment of the covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24:3-8 (Heb 9:15-21) and of the sacrificial ritual of יוֹם קִפּוּר (Heb 9:23-28; cf 9:6-7). Christ offers a better sacrifice (Heb 9:11-14) embodied in a better covenant (Heb 9:15-22) characterised by the better service of one sovereign and all-sufficing act (Heb 9:23-28; cf Westcott 1903:271).

Nairne (1915:181-182) concedes the use of Levitical sacrificial terminology in the epistle to the Hebrews, but sees no further connections between the Levitical sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ, the death of Christ being the offering of a sacrifice rather than a sacrifice itself in the Levitical sense. The present thesis will endeavour to show that the author of Hebrews, in his presentation of the sacrifice of Christ, presents us with a sacrificial work on Christ's part that can be understood to fulfil the Levitical sacrificial code in both form and content. For this reason the ensuing discussion of the sacrifice of Christ follows the form and content of the sacrificial code of Leviticus 1-7 and the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16.

2.2.1 The sacrifice of Christ as gift to God

Every high priest chosen from among men is so chosen ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν (Heb 5:1). Προσφέρω in the Septuagint is explicitly a sacrificial term used for the bringing of offerings, for presenting one's offering at the altar. The content of the high priest's acting with regard to τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν is the offering of δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας (Heb 5:1; 8:3; 9:9). The offering of gifts and sacrifices is essential for the fulfilling of the divine appointment of the high priest (Heb 5:1; 8:3a) and therefore of necessity Christ too must fulfil this function of the high priestly office (Heb 8:3b).

The gifts offered according to the law by the priesthood which functions under the law (Heb 8:4) are the gifts of Leviticus 1:3-6:7, which at the same time are constituent of, and cannot be separated from, the concept of sacrifice. It follows that the sacrifice of Christ must of necessity embrace an understanding of sacrifice as gift to God. The sacrifice of Christ must be understood as fulfilling the Old Testament understanding of sacrifice as gift covered by the terms $\eta\eta\eta$, which has the basic meaning of gift (LXX - $\theta\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$) apart from being a technical term to describe the cereal offering, and $\eta\eta\eta$, meaning 'that which is brought near/presented' or 'gift' (LXX - $\delta\acute{\omega}\rho\omicron\nu$).

As gift to God the sacrifice of Christ is also the fulfilment of the burnt offering ($\eta\eta\eta$ or $\eta\eta\eta$) or holocaust (LXX - $\delta\lambda\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omega\mu\alpha$, $\delta\lambda\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$) of Leviticus 1:3-17. The entire consumption of the victim by fire on the altar distinguishes the burnt offering from sacrifices in which only part of the victim was burnt upon the altar and the rest eaten by the worshipper and priests, and sacrifices in which none of the offering was burnt upon the altar. As the complete and utter expression of sacrifice as gift the burnt offering must necessarily preclude any share of the victim reverting back to worshipper or priest. In the case of Christ the offering is not one of gifts and sacrifices but the offering of himself (Heb 7:27; 9:14), and it is this complete and utter self-offering of Christ that constitutes gift in its highest and most perfect form. The gift and the giver are one, and for this reason the term 'victim' becomes inappropriate as a description of Christ. He is 'our' gift only because he condescends to be such. By this condescension his self-offering as gift becomes his, and indeed God's, gift to us, and it is at this point that the sacrifice of Christ as gift transcends the understanding of sacrifice as gift in the sacrificial code of the Old Testament. Unlike the worshipper under the law the Christian cannot offer a

gift which he himself has chosen and which he can claim to be his own. The Christian draws near to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16) empty-handed and receives as gift from Christ identification with the gift offered, quite apart from any decision or initiative on the part of the Christian to offer such gift himself.

The citation of Psalm 40:6-8 (Heb 10:5-7) expounds the true nature of Christ's self-offering as gift. The essence of gift lies not in sacrifices and offerings (προσφοράς) or burnt offerings (ὀλοκαυτώματα) and sin offerings, but in obedience to the divine will (Heb 10:7). This obedience is not of the order of compliance with statutory or ritual requirements but the obedience of human life discovering the divine will experientially (Heb 10:5c). Obedience to the divine will can only be true obedience when it is the culmination of the existential encounter with the divine on the part of the human. Understanding the sacrifice of Christ as gift therefore involves an appreciation of the incarnation. Christ must partake of the same nature as every man (Heb 2:14) and be made like man in every respect (Heb 2:17) in order that his obedience may be of the nature of existential encounter. It is this existential encounter of the human with the divine that is referred to in Hebrews 5:7-10. The 'offering' (προσφέρω, used in LXX and elsewhere in Hebrews for the offering of δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας [Heb 5:1; 8:3; 9:9]) of prayers and supplications, which must be understood as a part of the 'learning' of obedience through suffering, thus has a double reference - to the incarnation as well as to the existential encounter of the human with the divine. Christ is made perfect (τελειωθείς, Heb 5:9) only because his gift involves an existential obedience within the realm of the human. Such existential and truly human obedience becomes the ultimate gift which is the foundation of exaltation (Heb 5:9) and, in the case of Christ, the foundation of true high priesthood (Heb 5:10).

2.2.2 The sacrifice of Christ as communion with God

The purpose of the communion sacrifice or 'peace offering' (זֶבַח-שְׁלָמִים) of Leviticus 3 is best illustrated by the three principal forms which the offering assumed, that of the thank-offering (תְּנֻנָּה) or sacrifice of praise (Lv 7:12-15; 22:29-30), the voluntary or freewill offering (נִדְבָקָה, Lv 7:16-17; 22:18-23), and the votive offering (זֶדֶקָה, Lv 7:16-17; 22:18-23). The emphasis in the peace offering is on the communion which takes place between the worshipper and Yahweh, communion here being understood as union between man and God on the psycho-spiritual and existential level. As a devotional act on the part of the worshipper the communion sacrifice gave expression to the worshipper's commitment and symbolised his praise and allegiance.

The author of Hebrews does not specifically interpret the sacrifice of Christ as a peace offering or communion sacrifice, although elements of Christ's sacrifice in Hebrews do give expression to the essential nature of the communion sacrifice. The self-offering of Christ is in essence a freewill offering (Heb 7:27b; 9:14, 25) to which Christ commits himself in the spirit of one who is bound by a vow (Heb 2:12-13; 10:5-9). The union between Christ and God expresses itself in Christ as Son being the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation, the bearer of divine glory and the manifestation of the nature of God himself (Heb 1:1-3). The allegiance of Christ is expressed through his faithfulness over the house of God (Heb 3:2, 6a), his obedience learned through suffering (Heb 5:8), and his commitment to the divine will (Heb 10:7, 9). By his example Christ reveals the true nature of communion with God as that of a life of faithfulness and obedience to the divine will, and such faithfulness and obedience are the characteristics of the sacrifice of praise that the believer is to offer to God as the fruit of his confession of Christ (Heb 13:15-16). Unlike the communion

sacrifices of the old order, which, like the expiatory offerings, had to be offered repeatedly because the worshipper was in constant need of re-establishing communion with God (Heb 10:2), the sacrifice of Christ is characteristically ἅπαρ (ἐφ' ἅπαρ, Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10) because of the perfect communion established which can never be impaired and therefore need never be re-established (Heb 6:4; 9:26-28), a communion in which the believer can have a permanent share (Heb 10:9-10).

2.2.3 The sacrifice of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice

The sacrifice of Christ is from the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews understood as a sacrifice for purification (καθαρισμός) for sins (Heb 1:3), the purifying (καθαρίζω) of the conscience of the believer (Heb 9:14), and the sprinkling clean (ῥαντίζω) of the heart from an evil conscience (Heb 10:22). The cultic technical terms ἱλάσκεσθαι and ἐξιλάσκεσθαι, from which are derived an entire range of cultic terms in the Septuagint (cf Grayston 1981:640-641, 646-648), are determinative for any understanding of the expiatory nature of sacrifice in the Old Testament. While ἱλάσκεσθαι is used only once in the Pentateuch of the Septuagint, ἐξιλάσκεσθαι is used some seventy times (Grayston 1981:640), probably without any variation in meaning. With regard to the meaning of ἱλάσκεσθαι and related words and the significance of blood with which they are associated, Grayston (1981:641) comments:

In ancient Israel blood is both potent and dangerous. It belongs to the most mysterious powers of the living world: hence it belongs to God or the demonic gods. Consequently the slaughter of animals puts the killer in danger unless he uses a protective ritual against the effects of shedding blood. He must on no account consume the blood but, if his victim is a wild animal, he must drain the blood out and cover it with dust...or, if a domestic animal, he must sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh.... By sprinkling the blood upon the

altar the sacrificial killing becomes a sacrificial communion between the killer and Yahweh, and Yahweh takes responsibility for protecting the killer....

Thus '...what began as an aversion formula became a cultic formula for the practice of sacrifice', and eventually a 'conventional forgiveness formula', by which the 'dangerous contamination' of sin can be removed by 'an even more powerful...protective device' (Grayston 1981: 651-652).

The present infinitive ἱλάσκεσθαι in Hebrews 2:17 (the only other occurrence of ἱλάσκεσθαι being Lk 18:13, ἐξιλάσκεσθαι not occurring in the New Testament at all) describes the once for all sacrifice of Christ as continuous in its application to men (Westcott 1903: 58), which is not the same as saying that Christ is continually making expiation (Montefiore 1964: 68). The use of the term ἱλάσκεσθαι does not necessarily suggest that the author of Hebrews was taking deliberate care to reproduce the liturgical language of the Septuagint with all its shades of meaning. His interest in Hebrews 2:17 is not in the exposition of the cultic terminology of the Septuagint but in a description of the general effect of Christ's high priestly work in the light of his humiliation, although such a description will in itself be expository to a degree. Important as the use of ἱλάσκεσθαι in Hebrews 2:17 may be as a description of Christ's high priestly work the meaning of Christ's sacrifice as an expiatory sacrifice and its atoning function cannot be deduced from this or other cultic language used in the epistle, but rather the meaning of Christ's sacrifice must be deduced from the author's description of cultic ritual (Heb 9:1-22). Illustration of this is found in the author's use of ἱλαστήριον in Hebrews 9:5 to mean 'mercy seat', the place where mercy can be found in the course of the ritual, rather than the means by which sins are forgiven (cf Rm 3:25, the only other occurrence in the New Testament).

Two expiatory rites are mentioned in Leviticus 4:1-6:7 as a means whereby atonement is effected between the worshipper and Yahweh, the distinction between the two being difficult to determine. Like the חטאת or sin offering (LXX - ἁμαρτία) of Leviticus 4:1-5:13 the sacrifice of Christ has the express purpose of removing, and purifying the believer from, sin (Heb 1:3; 2:17; 8:12; 9:26; 10:12, 17-18). In expressing the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ to the sacrifices of the old order the author of Hebrews lays emphasis not on the meaning of Old Testament cultic terminology but on liturgical protocol and ritual, and it is in Christ's sacrifice surpassing the liturgical protocol and ritual of the old order that true forgiveness is made available to the believer (cf Buchanan 1972: 150).

The first covenant has an earthly sanctuary (Heb 9:1) made by hand (cf Heb 9:2), into the outer tent of which the priests enter continually (Heb 9:6) taking the blood [of bulls and goats, cf Heb 9:12], offering gifts and sacrifices (Heb 9:9) which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper (Heb 9:9). The new covenant has a greater and more perfect tent (Heb 9:11) not made with hands (οὐ χειροποιήτου) and not of this created order (Heb 9:11) into which Christ entered once for all (Heb 9:11-12) by his own blood (Heb 9:12), offering himself (Heb 9:14), and thereby purifying the conscience of the believer (Heb 9:14).

In the use of the present εἰσάγειν (Heb 9:6) and in references to the daily (καθ' ἡμέραν) sacrifices and service of the priests (Heb 7:27; 10:11), the author probably had in mind the תמידית or daily offering, the only blood sacrifice offered on a daily basis, to which an atoning significance had been ascribed by New Testament times. However, the emphasis on the expiatory significance of the sacrifice of Christ in Hebrews 9:11-14 indicates rather that the author is contrasting Christ's sacrifice with the expiatory rites of the sin and guilt offerings of Leviticus 4:1-6:7. The absence

of cultic terminology makes it difficult to determine the true nature of the author's thought in Hebrews 9:1-14, his description of the sanctuary and its ritual being too indistinct to be of any significant help. The thought of the author in Hebrews 9:1-10 moves continually between the outer and inner tent, the ministry of the priests and the ministry of the high priest, the continual ministry of sacrifice and the annual sacrifice of the Day of Atonement. The picture therefore appears to be a conflated one with elements from the daily sacrifice, the expiatory sacrifices, and the annual *יום כיפור* sacrifice. The picture of the Old Testament sacrificial system presented in Hebrews 9 is further compounded by the reference to the '...sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer' (Heb 9:13; cf 12:24). The thought of the author of Hebrews is obscure at this point, the sprinkling of persons with the blood of bulls and goats not corresponding to any known rite of the Hebrew cult. In the Day of Atonement ritual the blood of a ram was used in an aspersive rite, but it was the mercy seat and the area in front of the mercy seat that was sprinkled, and not the people (Lv 16:3, 14). The sprinkling of the people with the blood of a bull did take place at the ratification of the covenant at Sinai (Ex 24:3-8), but there is nothing in the text of Exodus 24:3-8 to suggest that the blood had any atoning significance or that the people were particularly regarded as defiled, and therefore in need of such cleansing action. Sprinkling of the people with the blood of a goat is never mentioned in the Old Testament, while sprinkling with the ashes of a red heifer refers to the purificatory ritual of Numbers 19. In Hebrews 9:13, 19-21 elements from the sin offering and the rites for sprinkling with the water of purification (prepared from the ashes of the red heifer of Nm 19) are linked indiscriminately with the covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24:3-8. In his presentation of Old Testament

liturgical protocol and ritual the author of Hebrews presents his readers with a somewhat confusing and incoherent picture, the various elements of which cannot be integrated into a systematic consideration of the Old Testament sacrificial cult.

Despite the conflated and incoherent picture of Old Testament liturgical practice and ritual in Hebrews 9:1-22 (cf Camacho (1986:passim) who regards Heb 9:3-4 as an accurate portrayal of the ministry of the altar of incense and concludes that the author of Hebrews is familiar with and correctly portrays Old Testament temple ritual) the conviction remains that the sacrifice of Christ fulfils and surpasses the Old Testament sacrificial system in both form and content, and in particular as an expiatory sacrifice through which the believer finds forgiveness and atonement (Heb 1:3; 2:11,17; 7:27; 9:12-14,26; 10:12,14; 13:12; cf 5:9). This forgiveness and atonement is effected through the blood of Christ (Heb 9:12,14,25; 10:19; 13:12,20), which, because of its potency, stands over against the blood of goats and bulls (Heb 9:12-13) which, according to the author of Hebrews, was somewhat ineffective (Heb 10:2-4,11; cf Appendix on Heb 10:11). Hebrews 10:2 does not imply that no forgiveness at all was possible through the Old Testament sacrificial system, for this was not so (cf Lv 4:20,26,31,35). Rather it is the absence of any complete or final cleansing that is asserted, as the use of the perfect participle and the adverb ὅπως indicates (cf Kent 1972:185). In the case of both the expiatory sacrifices of the Old Testament and the sacrifice of Christ expiation is made for the 'errors' of the people (Heb 9:7), there being no expiation for sins committed with a 'high hand' (Nm 15:30; Heb 10:26). The author of Hebrews is intent on presenting the sacrifice of Christ as the fulfilment of the expiatory aspect of the Old Testament sacrificial system in its many and varied forms: if a rite had expiatory significance in the Old Testament, Christ ful-

files it (Heb 9:11-12), and thereby abolishes it (Heb 10:9b) once for all. In no way is this more so than with the sacrifice of *זֶבַח קָדֶשׁ* (Lv 16), the high point and culmination of the whole of the Israelite sacrificial system.

2.2.4 The sacrifice of Christ as covenant sacrifice

The covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24:3-8 is one of the foundation stones of the Mosaic cult (cf Daly 1978: 89). Moses, acting in a priestly capacity, builds an altar, commands some of the young men of Israel to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh, takes the blood of the offering and throws half against the altar and the other half over the people after the book of the covenant has been read. The covenant blood rite of Exodus 24:3-8 is unique among the blood rites of the Old Testament sacrificial system, being more similar to Arabian blood rites than to the later priestly directions for the application of sacrificial blood (Daly 1978:90). The unique significance of the blood in covenant rites lies in its power to bring into being a blood relationship between the parties to the covenant, rather than in its atoning value, which, in the case of covenant blood rites, is somewhat doubtful.

As discussed above, the '...sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer' (Heb 9:13; cf 12:24) does not correspond to any known rite of the Hebrew cult, although the sprinkling of the people with the blood of a bull did take place at the ratification of the covenant at Sinai (Ex 24:3-8), and it is this covenant rite that is referred to in Hebrews 9:18-20. Even here the author's thought is beset with problems. Exodus 24:3-8 makes no mention of the blood of goats, there being no such rite as the sprinkling of the people with the blood of goats anywhere in the Old Testament. The reference to goats in Hebrews 9:19 may well be a later addition, which

would make Hebrews 9:19 agree with the Septuagint version of Exodus 24:5 where calves are mentioned as the sacrificial animals used for the ratification of the covenant (cf Bruce 1964:214). Exodus 24:3-8 has no reference to water or scarlet wool or hyssop, water and scarlet wool together with the ashes of the red heifer being elements of the purificatory ritual of Numbers 19. The reference to hyssop is somewhat obscure, the only possible connections being with the rite of Exodus 12:22 where hyssop is used in the application of the blood of the Paschal lamb to the doorposts of the Israelite houses, or with the rite of purification for a leper (Lv 14:6-7; cf Jn 19:29). There is in Exodus 24:3-8 no reference to the sprinkling of the book of the covenant with the covenantal blood, half the blood being used for the people and the other half being thrown against the altar. As with the author's presentation of Old Testament liturgical protocol and ritual in Hebrews 9:1-14 his presentation of the covenant sacrifice is incoherent and inconsistent with Exodus 24:3-8.

Incoherence and inconsistencies aside, the author of Hebrews sees the sacrifice of Christ fulfilling the covenant rite of Exodus 24. He concludes that 'almost everything' under the law is purified with blood (Heb 9:22), without the shedding of which (ἀίματεκχυσία) there is no forgiveness of sins. There is here (Heb 9:22) an association between the blood of the covenant rite and the effecting of expiation and atonement, but there is nothing in the text of Exodus 24:3-8 to suggest that the blood had any atoning significance or that the people were sprinkled because they were particularly defiled. That the covenantal blood had purificatory and consecratory significance is self-evident (Heb 9:21-23), and there is certainly a correlation between purification or consecration and atonement, but it is categorically inconsistent to deduce atoning value from purificatory significance (cf Heb 9:21-27).

2.2.5 Concluding remarks

The author of Hebrews is not concerned with an accurate representation of the Old Testament cult and liturgical practice. His portrayal of the temple layout as well as the ritual of the Old Testament cult indicates some uncertainty as to the details of the form and content of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Nevertheless, the sacrifice of Christ is understood as the fulfilment of Old Testament liturgical protocol and ritual and therefore must also be understood as the theological fulfilment of all that the Old Testament sacrificial system was intended to be. The meaning and significance of the sacrifice of Christ, as the theological fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial code, must now be given attention.

2.3 The sacrifice of Christ in Hebrews: its meaning and significance

2.3.1 The meaning of the sacrifice of Christ

2.3.1.1 The sacrifice of Christ as ἐφάπαξ/ἅπαξ

The characteristic description of the sacrifice of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is that it is once for all (ἅπαξ, ἐφάπαξ). The once for all nature of Christ's sacrifice is prefigured in the once a year entry of the high priest into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:7). The high priest entered the Holy of Holies (cf Heb 9:2-3,7) with blood not his own (Heb 9:25) since his sacrifice was for himself as well as for the people (Heb 9:7). What sets the action of Christ apart from the annual sacrifice of the high priest is that Christ, as the Son who is the *locus* of God's fulfilled revelation (cf Heb 1:2-3), is able to offer what the former high priests could not offer - his own blood through the sacrifice of himself. It is

the offering of himself through the shedding of his own blood (cf Heb 9:22) that makes a repeated sacrifice, and therefore repeated suffering unnecessary (Heb 9:26; cf 9:12). It is this ἐφάπαξ nature of Christ's sacrifice that makes his action that unique action which alone can finally and ultimately put away sin (Heb 7:27; 9:26). The citation of Psalm 40:6-8 (Heb 10:5-7) expounds the true nature of Christ's sacrifice as ultimate obedience to the divine will. Obedience to the divine will can only be true obedience when it is the culmination of the existential encounter with the divine on the part of the human, and therefore not of the order of compliance with ritual or statutory requirements, as was the case with the Levitical high priests (Heb 9:6-7, 9-10). In Hebrews 10:10 the sacrifice of Christ is referred to as the offering of his body once for all (διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ). Psalm 40:6-8 effectively sets the sacrificial action of Christ within the context of the progression from promise to fulfilment, a fulfilment in which, by Christ's perfect sacrifice, men are once for all sanctified (Heb 10:10) and given right of access to God (Heb 10:22).

2.3.1.2 The purificatory and atoning significance of the sacrifice of Christ

The high priestly ministry of Christ is described as one of making purification (καθαρισμός) for sins (Heb 1:3). The purificatory significance of Christ's sacrifice in Hebrews is founded upon the axiom that under the law almost everything is purified with blood (Heb 10:22). The purification which takes place under the law is the purification of the flesh (Heb 9:13) by the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, which is in essence the removal of ritual pollution. In contrast with this the purification effected by the sacrifice of Christ is the purification of the con-

science from sin (Heb 9:14) which comes about through the sprinkling clean of the heart (Heb 10:22). The purificatory action of sprinkling with blood is grounded in the covenant rite of Exodus 24:6-8, and thus the new covenant of which Christ is surety (Heb 7:22) and mediator (Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) is a covenant of purification in which the issues of ritual pollution and uncleanness associated with the old covenant give way to the writing of the covenant law in the minds and on the hearts of the people (Heb 8:10). The knowledge of the Lord (Heb 8:11), which is the possession of those who are both called and redeemed (Heb 9:15) under the new covenant, replaces the consciousness of sin (Heb 10:2) which characterised those under the old covenant, and hence becomes the hallmark of the purification of the believer. As those who have now been purified, believers are set apart and sanctified to God (ἅγιος, Heb 3:1; 6:10), the goal of their pilgrimage of faith being to share his holiness (ἁγιότης, Heb 12:10; ἁγιασμός, Heb 12:14), without which their pilgrimage cannot reach its goal and conclusion which is their ultimate perfection (Heb 10:14; 12:14).

Although used only once, ἱλάσκεσθαι (Heb 2:17) is a key word in the epistle to the Hebrews. The sacrificial work of Christ, as the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement ritual (Heb 9:7, 25-26), constitutes the foretaste of the fulfilment of the promise that final and ultimate expiation for sins will be effected. The present tense of ἱλάσκεσθαι describes the expiatory work of Christ as continuous in its application to men (Westcott 1903:58; cf Montefiore 1964:68). On the Day of Atonement the worshipper could be forgiven his sins and atonement effected on condition that he repented of his sins, that he was reconciled with his neighbour against whom he had sinned, and that he bring the appropriate sin and guilt offering to the altar (Buchanan 1972:107). In Hebrews the inadequacy of the blood of bulls and goats (cf Heb 9:9b-10, 12-13, 25) is fundamen-

tal for understanding the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice. The action of the high priest could never be that action necessary for the final and ultimate cleansing from sin (Heb 10:2b-4). The absence of any complete or final cleansing lay in the ineffectiveness of both the sacrificial blood and the sinfulness of the high priest. In contrast, the effectiveness of the blood of Christ (Heb 9:12,14) and his sinlessness (Heb 4:15) constitute the appropriate sin and guilt offering offered not in the sanctuary made with hands (Heb 9:2) but in the greater and more perfect sanctuary (Heb 7:27; 9:11; cf Appendix on 9:11). Christ in himself has brought the appropriate sin and guilt offering to the altar (Heb 7:27; 9:12,25-26; 10:12,14), and now it becomes the part of the believer to repent and be reconciled with his neighbour. It is in this sense that the atoning sacrifice of Christ constitutes the foretaste of the fulfilment of the promise that final and ultimate expiation for sins will be effected, expiation which is essentially ἐφάπαξ but yet continuous in its application to men.

As a work of purification and atonement, the sacrifice of Christ secures for man an eternal redemption (αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν, Heb 9:12), the eternal nature of which arises out of the sacrifice of Christ as a sacrifice once for all (ἐφάπαξ). The concept of redemption is deeply rooted in the history of Israel, but usage of λυτρόομαι and λύτρωσις in the Septuagint shows that any idea of a ransom being paid to the power from which the captive is delivered is practically lost in the cultic and sacrificial use of these terms. As Westcott (1903: 298) points out: 'It cannot be said that God paid to the Egyptian oppressor any price for the redemption of His people. On the other hand the idea of the exertion of a mighty force, the idea that the "redemption" costs much, is everywhere present.' Any attempt to determine the price of redemption or the identity of the recipient to whom redemption was paid is to miss the point

entirely (cf Ps 129:7-8 LXX). The 'cost' of the eternal redemption secured by Christ is evident in the epistle (Heb 9:12,14,26; 10:10), a cost which secures for man deliverance from the debt, bondage, and captivity of sin.

2.3.1.3 The sacrifice of Christ as voluntary, vicarious sin-bearing

According to Randall (1969:203), the cross is the place of punishment, and neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament are punishment and sacrifice confused. In the Levitical ritual of the sin offering, the animal offered was thought of neither as being punished nor as bearing the sins of the worshipper (Randall 1969:204). In the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16 the sin-bearer or scapegoat was not sacrificed but driven out of the community. In Hebrews, however, Christ is not only the fulfilment of the Levitical sin offering, but he is also sin-bearer (Heb 9:28). While the context of Hebrews 9:28 is sacrificial (cf ἀναφέρω), the sacrifice of Christ is εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας. Ἀναφέρω is used in Hebrews 7:27 to describe both the sacrifices of the high priests of the Levitical order and the self-offering of Christ, while in Hebrews 13:15 it is used of the sacrifice of praise that is offered by the believer as the fruit of his confession of Christ. The self-offering of Christ εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας is therefore the *continuum* between the promise inherent in the old order and the fulfilment of the believer's sacrifice of praise in the new. The ἀνενεγκεῖν of Hebrews 9:28 is reminiscent of Isaiah 53:12 where the ministry of the suffering servant is described as ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνένεγκεν. As the fulfilment of the ministry of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 the high priestly work of Christ as sin-bearer is not inconsistent with his high priestly sacrifice. Thus while the idea of

vicarious sin bearing is prominent in Hebrews 9:28, there is no suggestion of vicarious punishment. It is therefore doubtful whether, in the christology of Hebrews, the cross can be regarded as the place of punishment. Rather it is the mode, as against the place, of Christ's self-offering, a self-offering which must be understood in sacrificial terms. As the mode of Christ's self-offering the cross is not to be confused with the offering itself (Hicks 1930:240), but '...stands in its place - and that an essential place - in the whole course of the sacrificial action, but is not either its beginning or its end.' Whether the cross can also be regarded as the mode of Christ's vicarious sin-bearing is open to debate, although Hebrews 9:28 would certainly suggest this. That the self-offering of Christ is an act of vicarious sin-bearing does not mean that it is also an act of vicarious punishment. We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19) not because Christ has borne our punishment, but because he has borne our sins. It is as sin-bearer that he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb 9:26). Christ is at the same time the sacrificer and the sacrificed, the sinless and the sin-bearer. Thus the voluntary self-sacrifice of Christ (the passive *προσενεχθείς* of Heb 9:28 in no way detracting from the voluntary nature of Christ's self-offering) is the putting away of sin and therefore the basis of an eternal salvation, and as the fulfilment of the promises of the old order becomes in turn the promise of a salvation to be fulfilled at the time of the *παρουσία* when Christ will appear a second time (Heb 9:28).

2.3.1.4 Concluding remarks

Westcott (1903:263) differentiates four ways in which the sacrifice of Christ is superior to those of animals under the old order: it is voluntary, and not

by constraint; it is rational, as opposed to animal; it is spontaneous, and not in obedience to any specific and direct command; and it is moral, the offering of Christ himself by the highest power in himself and not the mechanical performance of a prescribed rite. Christ's superior sacrifice is characteristically once for all, purifying the conscience of the believer through the bearing of sins and making atonement through the application of Christ's blood. The power of the devil has been destroyed (Heb 2:14) and man has been delivered from bondage to sin (Heb 2:15; 9:12,15). Expiation has been made (Heb 2:17) and sin has been disposed of once for all (Heb 9:26), enabling man to be sanctified (Heb 10:10,29; 13:12) and made perfect (Heb 10:14; 12:23; cf 11:40), this sanctification and perfection being expressed through the purification of the conscience (Heb 9:14; 10:22) and a state of holiness (Heb 12:10,14) which are the mark of those who have endured in their pilgrimage of faith and who will share in the final salvation at the *παρουσία* (Heb 9:26-28). In all this great stress is laid on the significance of blood, without the shedding of which (Heb 9:22) there is no forgiveness of sins and consequently no opportunity for ultimate salvation.

2.3.2 The significance of the blood in the sacrifice of Christ

Central to the significance of the blood in understanding the sacrifice of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is the rabbinic principle, held by the schools of both Hillel and Shammai (Daly 1978:263), that without the shedding of blood (*αἵματεκχυσία*, Heb 9:22) there is no forgiveness of sins. This principle was extended even to the Paschal sacrifice and the daily *עֹלָה קָמִיד*. The principle has its origin in the significance attached to the blood in Leviticus 17:11 where the blood of the sacrificial victim is said to contain

its life and is therefore not for consumption along with the flesh (cf Gn 9:4), but is given by God as a means whereby atonement can be effected. In the case of the burnt offering (Lv 1:3-17), the peace offering (Lv 3), and the expiatory offerings (Lv 4:1-6:7) of the Old Testament the blood was applied to the altar, and on יוֹם כִּפּוּר (Lv 16) it was sprinkled on the curtain of the Holy of Holies and before the mercy seat. The blood belongs to the mysterious powers of the living world and therefore belongs to God (cf Grayston 1981: 641). Thus for both the Old Testament high priest and Christ it was the blood as the energy of present human life made available for others (cf Westcott 1903:296) that gave access to the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:11-12). It is as the Incarnate that Christ through his own blood, and therefore in his humanity, gains access into the eternal sanctuary (Heb 9:12). The force of δικά in Hebrews 9:12 serves to identify the blood as the means whereby the offering of Christ is made and not the content of that offering. 'Jesus did not enter the sanctuary in order to offer his blood, but by his own blood he gained access to the heavenly sanctuary' (Montefiore 1964:153-154). The blood therefore signifies right of access to God (Heb 9:12), not only for Christ himself, but also for the believer (Heb 10:19) whose right of access to God is secured by the covenant relationship established in Christ as ἑγγυος (Heb 7:22). Covenant relationship means covenant people, and therefore the blood of Christ is not only available for the individual but has established for the race (that is, the covenant community) a new relationship with God (Westcott 1903:296; cf Heb 9:15-20; 10:29; 12:24; 13:20). It is as the blood of the eternal sacrifice as well as the blood of the eternal covenant that the blood of Christ achieves its purificatory work (Heb 9:14; 10:22). The potency of the blood of Christ is indicated in Hebrews 12:24. The blood of Abel, even after his death, cried from the ground (Gn 4:10), either for re-

venge or as a witness to his martyrdom. The blood of Christ is not silenced by the completion of his sacrifice but bears witness to the final and ultimate putting away of sin (Heb 9:26) and the participation of the believer in the new covenant of grace.

The blood of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is a symbol of purification and atonement, of the incarnation and the incarnate Christ's right of access to God, and of the believer's and the community's right of access to God under the new covenant. The life of Christ is in his blood, given upon the altar in the eternal sanctuary to make atonement for his people (cf Lv 17:11). It is the blood of Christ that makes atonement by reason of his divinity, his incarnation, his humiliation, his self-offering, and his exaltation.

2.4 Concluding remarks

God's last and most complete act of speaking to man is a word of salvation addressed to man through the ministry of the Son as high priest. The high priestly ministry of Christ is superior to that of the high priests of the Levitical order (Heb 8,9) in that it has as its foundation and culmination a superior high priestly sacrifice (Heb 9:11-10:18), in the light of which the form and progression of the various aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry logically fall into place. The high priestly sacrifice of Christ is, in the theology of Hebrews, the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, and yet, while the epistle to the Hebrews lays particular stress on the sacrificial nature of Christ's high priestly work, the sacrificial theology of Hebrews should not be taken as the basis for a New Testament doctrine of sacrifice. Hebrews has a 'specialist' interest in sacrifice developed in a specific and limited direction, that of Christ as '...the fulfiller and the fulfilment of the OT cult' (Daly 1978:263). The sacrifice of Christ is

in particular but not exclusively the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifice for sin - the expiatory offerings of Leviticus 4:1-6:7. From the basis of Christ's sacrifice as a sacrifice for sin (Heb 9:11-14) the author of Hebrews develops the sacrifice of Christ as the fulfilment of the covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24:3-8 (Heb 9:15-21) and of the sacrificial ritual of *יום קִפּוּר* (Heb 9:23-28; cf 9:6-7). In his sacrificial theology the author of Hebrews presents us with a sacrificial work on the part of Christ which can be understood to fulfil the Levitical sacrificial code in both form and content, and which is therefore the fulfilment of the promises of atonement and salvation contained and anticipated in the Old Testament practice of sacrifice.

CHAPTER 3

3 THE HIGH PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF CHRIST

God's last and most complete act of speaking to man is a word of salvation addressed to man through the ministry of the Son as high priest. The high priestly ministry of Christ is superior to that of the high priests of the Levitical order in that it has as its foundation and culmination a superior high priestly sacrifice, in the light of which the form and progression of the various aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry logically fall into place. As the medium through which this word of salvation is addressed to man the ministry of Christ must be not only a ministry before God, but a ministry among men, which sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation. The present dimension of salvation is man's need for purification from sin (Heb 1:3; cf 2:17); the eschatological dimension is man's ultimate participation in the goal and fulfilment of his pilgrimage of faith (Heb 13:14). Christ is the $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu \ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\nu \ \lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ (Heb 8:2), which could mean either 'minister of the saints' or 'minister of holy things', (cf Montefiore 1964:133), but $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu \ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ in Hebrews 8:2 should be taken as neuter (cf Heb 9:8,12) and therefore as a description of the sanctuary and especially of the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:3). As $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu \ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\nu \ \lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ Christ has entered once for all the heavenly Holy Place (Heb 9:12a; 9:24) and sits at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3b). $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ does not necessarily mean a sacrificial ministry, although the use of the word in the Septuagint, where it is used of the ministrations of the priests and Levites, would include sacrifice. The sacrificial aspect of Christ's ministry was performed and completed once for all in his unique self-offering, an action which

alone can finally and ultimately put away sin (Heb 7:27; 9:26). The superior ministry which Christ has obtained through his superior sacrifice is a ministry which is grounded in a superior covenant (Heb 8:8-9) which contains superior promises - the promise of a new relationship with God (Heb 8:10; cf 10:20), of a new knowledge of God which is essentially that knowledge which comes from faith (Heb 8:11; cf 12:1-2a), and of a final and ultimate putting away of sin (Heb 8:12; cf 9:26b). As a ministry both before God and among men which sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation, the form and progression of Christ's high priestly ministry has as its culmination and goal not only the consummation of the created order (Heb 2:8), but more specifically the progression and consummation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God (Heb 4:1a, 9-10), which is their perfection as sons (cf Heb 10:14).

3.1 The form of the high priestly ministry of Christ

3.1.1 The ministry of Christ as gift

As has been stated above, every high priest chosen from among men is so chosen ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν (Heb 5:1), and it is the offering of δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας on the part of Christ that constitutes his λειτουργία before God and among men as the medium through which the word of salvation is addressed to men. The complete and utter self-offering of Christ constitutes gift in its highest and most perfect form (Heb 7:27; 9:14), and as such is not only an essential aspect of his sacrifice, but also an essential aspect of his λειτουργία as both a ministry before God and a ministry among men and to men as the recipients of the word of salvation. The self-offering of Christ in sacrifice is a part of the *continuum* of the self-giving of Christ in ministry, a self-giving in which the Son con-

descends to be ranked with the many sons and is not ashamed to call them 'brethren' (Heb 2:10-11). As the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation the Son is also the *locus* of a fulfilled sonship for those among whom and to whom his ministry takes place, securing proleptically their status as sons (Heb 2:10; cf 2:13) and thus their participation in the salvation addressed to them in God's new act of speaking to man (Heb 1:1-2).

The new act of God's speaking to man which takes place in and through the Son (Heb 1:2) is, historically speaking, God's last and final act of speaking to man, and thus an act of the inauguration of 'these last days' (Heb 1:2a) which constitute the beginning of the new age of salvation (Heb 2:3a). As a message of salvation addressed to man in and through the Son, God's new act of speaking to man has place of primacy as *the* word among the many and diverse ways in which God's speaking to man takes place and through which the connexion between God and man is established. Montefiore (1964: 53) draws attention to the literal meaning of Hebrews 2:3b: salvation 'received its beginning of being spoken by the Lord.' Thus God's new act of speaking to man in and through the Son constitutes both the origin and the fulfilment of the word of salvation which secures for believers their status as sons and their participation in the present as the time of the fulfilment of the promises of God. The heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11, '...though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised' (Heb 11:39), their faith being a prolepsis of the fulfilment of the promises of God (Heb 11:13) and therefore of the ministry of Christ as gift.

God's plan is for all his elect, whether they belong to the old or the new dispensation. Salvation is social and not individualistic. So long as a single member of the family is not present, the household of faith can never be complete, and thus can never be *made perfect*.

(Montefiore 1964: 212-213)

The ministry of Christ as gift consists in the self-giving of Christ as the word of God's new act of speaking to man, a word which addresses all men through the prolepsis of their sonship and which sets before men the possibility of being made perfect. The response of the believer to the ministry of Christ as gift consists in his drawing near to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16) empty handed and receiving as gift from Christ the believer's participation in both sonship and perfection, quite apart from any decision or initiative on the part of the believer. Only in this way can the believer share in ministry of Christ as gift.

3.1.2 The ministry of Christ as communion

The ministry of Christ, as both a ministry before God and a ministry among men and to men as the recipients of the word of salvation, constitutes the way in which the connexion between God and man is established. The emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ as the fulfilment of the peace offering of Leviticus 3 is on the communion which takes place between the worshipper and God, establishing the connexion between God and man as a union on the psycho-spiritual and existential level. The author of Hebrews therefore lays stress on the fact of the incarnation as the mode of establishing such a connexion. Christ as the Son is the firstborn of many sons (Heb 1:5-6; cf 2:10), establishing a union of brotherhood (Heb 2:17a) in which the believer shares by having a share 'in Christ' (Heb 3:14a). The perfect tense used of the believer's sharing 'in Christ' (μετέχειν, Heb 3:14a) signifies the present continuous participation that the believer enjoys as the result of such participation having been effected by Christ in time past, that time being in particular the time of his incarnation and the *continuum* of his ministry of self-giving in his self-offering on the cross. The

nature of the believer's participation in Christ in Hebrews 3:14a is of a different order to that of the Pauline literature in that the participation of the believer, according to Hebrews, is rather a participation 'with Christ' in 'a kingdom that cannot be shaken' (Heb 12:28a) and thus a participation in a brotherhood of which Christ is the firstborn, a brotherhood which has as its goal participation in perfection (Heb 11:40b; 12:23c).

The ministry of Christ as communion sets before the believer the true nature of communion with God as that of a life of faithfulness and obedience to the divine will, such faithfulness and obedience being characteristic of the sacrifice of praise that the believer is to offer to God as the fruit of his confession of Christ (Heb 13:15-16). Thus ὑπόστασις (Heb 3:14b; 11:1) becomes the hallmark of the believer's communion with God, the absence of which results in loss of participation in the fulfilment of the promises of God (Heb 12:25; cf 3:19; 6:11-12; 10:36-38).

3.1.2.1 The ministry of Christ and the altar of Hebrews 13:10

Θυσιαστήριον is used twice in the epistle to the Hebrews. In Hebrews 7:13 it is used of the altar served by the Levitical priests under the old covenant, but the usage of Θυσιαστήριον in Hebrews 13:10 demands a different interpretation. Synge (1959:39-40) brings to attention two rules which must be observed in order to understand the argument of Hebrews 13:10-13: the argument of Hebrews 13:10-13 is not marred by a *non sequitur*, and Hebrews 13:10 must be interpreted in accordance with the exegetical principles used by the author of Hebrews throughout the epistle.

This means, firstly, that those who are described as τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες must be identified on the grounds of other references in the epistle. In Hebrews

8:5 the Levitical high priests are described as those who 'serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary,' while Hebrews 9:9 and 10:1 further amplify the service of those who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary as a service of the offering of gifts and sacrifices, which, it is stated, cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper or make perfect those who 'draw near' (προσερχομένους [Heb 10:1], a technical usage signifying the act of approaching the altar in an act of sacrifice). Those who are described as τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες are clearly the Levitical priests, and therefore the θυσιαστήριον of Hebrews 13:10 must be some type of altar to which the Levitical priests, as ministers of the old covenant, are unable to gain access.

The method of comparison used by the author of Hebrews is always Biblical and typological (Synge 1959: 40), and therefore the altar which is the typological counterpart of the altar of Hebrews 13:10 must be sought within the literature of the Old Testament, and in particular in Leviticus 16:27, which is alluded to in Hebrews 13:11. It is not surprising that the Old Testament passage alluded to in Hebrews 13:11 should be from the account of the Day of Atonement ritual, as the Day of Atonement ritual is central to the argument of Hebrews and provides the basis for the author's understanding of the sacrifice and work of Christ. Just as the bodies of animals whose blood was used on the Day of Atonement were burned outside the camp, so Jesus suffered outside the gate, the correspondence between the bringing of the blood of animals into the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement and the blood of Jesus shed in his suffering being that both have sanctificatory significance. Like the blood of the sacrificial animals on the Day of Atonement the blood of Jesus too is brought into the sanctuary (Heb 9:12). The kind of altar referred to in Hebrews 13:10 is therefore an altar which was prefigured by the kind of altar used on the

Day of Atonement, that is, an altar for the making of a sin offering.

The point of the passage is this: that Jesus died as a sin-offering, the fulfilment of what was prefigured by the Day of Atonement sin-offering. Because he died as a sin-offering he died outside the camp. Let us therefore go to him outside the camp of Jewry, making the break necessary to members of the New Covenant.

(Synge 1959:42)

The author's concern is to show that the Christian altar is outside the gate of contemporary Judaism (cf Thompson 1978:59), a tenet which does not necessarily call for a complete and final break with Judaism on the part of Jewish Christians but which sets before them, and all believers, the necessity for personal transition from the old order to the new, from the old covenant to the better covenant concluded in the shedding of Christ's blood for the sanctification of his people.

It was at the point of communion that the offering of the Day of Atonement proved to be inadequate. Those for whom it was offered could not partake of the flesh of the sacrificial animal - the flesh of the victim being burned outside the camp because it was too holy to be partaken of as food (Hicks 1930:236). Despite the reference to eating from the altar it is unlikely that the author intended a Eucharistic interpretation of Hebrews 13:10 (cf Filson 1967:49; Synge 1959:41), although an allusion to the Eucharist is possible. Believers have full participation, and therefore communion, in the self-offering of Christ and therefore in sanctification, a fullness of participation and communion which was not possible under the old covenant and ritual (Heb 9:8-10; 10:1-4a).

3.1.3 The expiatory nature of the ministry of Christ

The ministry of Christ, like the sacrifice of Christ, is from the beginning of the epistle to the

Hebrews understood as a ministry of making purification (καθαρισμός) for sins (Heb 1:3) and the sprinkling clean (καθαρός) of the heart from an evil conscience (Heb 10:22).

The ministry of Christ as a ministry of expiation is a ministry before God for and on behalf of men in which is set forth God's action in Christ for the 'covering' or setting aside of sin. As such the ministry of Christ can never be regarded as an act of propitiation in which the Son appeases the Father's wrath. The use of ἱλαστήριον (cf Heb 9:5) in the Septuagint to describe the lid of the Mercy Seat (Ex 25:17-22; Lv 16:14-15) as the place of expiation, especially on the Day of Atonement, prefigures the cross as the action through which, and the heavenly sanctuary as the place in which, expiation is effected, and Christ is represented as performing the act of atonement by which the 'covering' and setting aside of sin takes place. Christ has brought the appropriate sin and guilt offering to the altar (Heb 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:12, 14) and achieved for and on behalf of men their expiation, and now it becomes the part of the believer to accept the expiation effected for him by Christ as continuous in its application to his life. It is the perfection of Christ's atonement which is the ground of his exaltation and of his power to save the many sons among whom he is the Son and firstborn (cf Hewitt 1960:146). While the sacrifice of Christ was once for all, the present infinitive ἱλάσkesthai in Hebrews 2:17 describes the expiatory nature of the ministry of Christ as continuous in its application to the believer, and thus the believer finds himself continuously and existentially involved in the process of salvation. Repentance therefore becomes a continuous expression of the process of salvation, the absence of which is loss of faith (Heb 10:38-39) which is tantamount to apostasy (Heb 6:4-6).

As a ministry for the 'covering' and setting aside of sin (Heb 9:26*b*) the ministry of Christ is also a ministry of vicarious sin-bearing (Heb 9:28), the ἀνε-
 νευκεῖν of Hebrews 9:28 being reminiscent of Isaiah 53:12. In Hebrews there is no thought of the sufferings and death of Christ as punishment, vicarious or otherwise; rather his tasting death 'for every one' (ὕπὲρ πάντων, Heb 2:9*c*) is an act for and on behalf of man through which the devil, 'who has the power of death' (Heb 2:14*b*), is destroyed, and man is liberated from fear of death and bondage (Heb 2:15). Death is the consequence of sin, which is not the same as saying that death is punishment for sin. It is not because Christ has borne our punishment but because he has borne our sins that we are able to enter the presence of God as men sanctified and perfected (Heb 10:10,14).

3.1.4 The ministry of Christ as a ministry of the covenant

Διὰθήκη is used in the Septuagint to translate a number of Hebrew terms, and not only as a translation of בְּרִית. Even when used as the Greek equivalent of בְּרִית, which has a wide range of meanings, διὰθήκη is more of a paraphrase (Quell & Behm 1964:106). In Biblical texts διὰθήκη generally means 'covenant' and refers to the covenants of divine initiation between God and man. The ministry of Christ as covenant in the epistle to the Hebrews lies in the new covenant as the context of Christ's high priestly sacrifice and therefore as the mode of his expiatory and redemptive work (Heb 9:15*b*). It was essential that Christ's sacrificial ministry be given expression within the context of covenant if the promised inheritance was to become the possession of believers (Heb 9:15*a*,16-17).

The covenantal ministry of Christ is seen as the fulfilment of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, a passage which is quoted in full in its Septuagint ver-

sion in Hebrews 8:8-12. The phrases 'I will put my laws into their minds' and 'and write them on their hearts' (Heb 8:10b) are parallel and imply the ultimate and complete implanting of the will of God into the very fabric of the life of his people. The ministry of Christ as the expression of covenant relationship must therefore consist in his complete submission to the will of God (Heb 10:7,9), the will of God in Hebrews being the bringing of many sons to glory (Heb 2:10). The covenant formula 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people' is the traditional way of expressing the covenant relationship between God and his people (cf Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12). In the light of Hebrews 2:10 and the reinterpretation of the covenant relationship in terms of sonship, the message of Hebrews could well be summarised as one of 'I will be their Father, and they shall be my sons.' The better covenant of which Christ is mediator (Heb 9:15; 12:24) is a covenant which has as its foundation not law but sonship, and therefore has as its focal point *the* Son whose sacrificial death brings into effect the new and better covenant as the mode of participation in the unshakable kingdom (Heb 12:28) and glory (Heb 2:10) of God by the believer. There will be no necessity for one person to teach another of the obligations of the people of God under the covenant. 'Know the Lord' (Heb 8:11a) has intimate overtones and implies an intimate relationship with God, a relationship which in the epistle to the Hebrews is one of sonship.

It is as *the* Son who is instrumental in God's act of bringing many sons to glory that Christ is the mediator of the covenant upon which the prolepsis of the believer's sonship is based. In Hellenistic usage the μεσίτης is the 'neutral' whom both sides involved in a dispute can trust (Oepke 1967:599). But for the author of Hebrews there is no question of either a dispute between God and man or neutrality on the part of Christ. As mediator for God Christ is the *locus* of a fulfilled

revelation, God's final and most complete act of speaking to man a word of salvation. As mediator for man Christ is *the* Man who appears in heaven on man's behalf (Heb 9:24c) as testimony of man's status as redeemed (Heb 9:12c, 15b; cf 2:14b-15), reconciled (Heb 10:18), forgiven (Heb 9:26b; cf 2:17c), and participating in the perfection of humanity in Christ (Heb 2:11; 3:14a; 7:25a; 9:13-14; 9:28b; 10:10, 14; 11:40).

The mediatorial role of Christ as the focal point of the new covenant relationship between God and man arises out of his office as ἑγγυος (Heb 7:22, the only use of ἑγγυος in the New Testament). In Hellenistic literature the ἑγγυος was one who accepted legal obligation in a contract or bond, such as the obligation to guarantee payment (Preisner 1964:329). Although Christ is sometimes regarded as being surety to God on behalf of man (cf Hewitt 1960:124), the argument of Hebrews presents Christ rather as surety to man on behalf of God. The office of Christ as ἑγγυος arises out of the oath with which Christ was addressed in his induction as 'a priest for ever' (Heb 7:20-22). As the ἑγγυος of the better covenant Christ stands as surety that the saving work of God, now begun in these last days, will be consummated in the perfecting of his people. While salvation will only ultimately be fulfilled in the future (cf Heb 4:1; 6:11-12; 9:15; 10:36), participation in the eternal kingdom nevertheless becomes the present possession of the believer (Heb 12:28). Christ is therefore God's pledge not only of the validity of the better covenant but also of the consummation of the better covenant in the fulfilment of the promises of God (cf Heb 8:6-7; 9:15), a fulfilment which consists of receiving the promised eternal inheritance which is the perfection of the believer within the eternal kingdom. The ministry of Christ as a ministry of the covenant is therefore the surety of God's commitment to man in terms of the covenant formula 'I will be their God' and an invitation to men and women to be the people of

God, a people unique and set apart to God as sons and daughters.

3.2 The progression of the high priestly ministry of Christ

3.2.1 The ministry of Christ as contemporaneous with his sacrifice

As God's new and final act of speaking to man the Son is the κληρονόμος (Heb 1:2) of the material and spiritual estate of God (Heb 2:5-8; cf Ps 2:8). The subjection of τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν (Heb 2:5) to Christ, while yet anticipated (Heb 2:8b), has proleptically been achieved (Heb 2:8a) and therefore the kingdom inaugurated through the high priestly ministry of Christ is a βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον (Heb 12:28). Thus the final consummation of the Kingdom is both anticipated and achieved in its inauguration, and it is for this reason that the power of 'him who has the power of death' (Heb 2:14b) has already been destroyed. The ministry of Christ effected for men not only their sonship, but also their status as heirs - joint heirs with Christ of the material and spiritual estate of God (Heb 6:17). The men and women of faith of the old covenant could only, like Noah (cf Heb 11:7), be heirs of the righteousness which comes by faith, awaiting the perfection which is the fulfilment of that righteousness (Heb 11:40). The focus of Hebrews on the exaltation of Christ (Heb 1:3b; 4:14; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11-12; 9:24; 10:12; 12:2) sets before believers, as the basis for their participation in the kingdom, the fulfilment of that righteousness which is their receiving of their inheritance as both anticipated, and therefore yet to come (cf Heb 2:8b; 4:1a, 9; 6:9b; 9:28b; 10:25; 13:14), and achieved, and therefore their present possession (cf Heb 4:3a; 10:14; 12:22-24, 28a).

As the inaugurator of the kingdom Christ becomes the ἀρχηγός of the faith on which the believers' participation in the kingdom is based (Heb 12:2) and thus the ἀρχηγός of the believers' salvation (Heb 2:10). The term ἀρχηγός is used in the Septuagint of the political and military leader of the people of a city, while in classical usage the ἀρχηγός was the founding 'hero' of a city (Delling 1964:487). The term is used by Plato (*Tim* 21.E) of an Egyptian goddess as the 'founder' of a city. As ἀρχηγός Christ is not the founder (cf Heb 11:10) but rather the foundation (although the author of Hebrews does not designate Christ as such) of the 'city which is to come' (Heb 13:14), which is the 'city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb 12:22a) to which believers come by way of their pilgrimage of faith. The habitation of this 'city' of God by the believer constitutes the fulfilment and consummation of his salvation (cf Heb 2:10b; 9:28b), a salvation in which the believer participates through the perfecting of his faith by Christ (Heb 12:2a). As the ἀρχηγός of salvation Christ is the One who blazed the trail of salvation, the new and living way (Heb 10:20), along which the 'many sons' are led to their glorification (Bruce 1964:43). A motif similar to the 'new and living way' of Hebrews 10:20 is found in Philo's 'kingly way' (*OpMund* 69; *MutNom* 179ff). Since Hebrews is not directly dependent on Philo a common source has been assumed for this concept, which is also found in Gnostic writings such as the Mandaean literature, Hermetica, the Acts of Thomas, and the Odes of Solomon (cf Dinkler 1962:573).

The sending of the Son in God's last and most definitive act of speaking to man calls forth from men their confession of Christ as ἀρχηγός because, and precisely because, as the ἀρχηγός of salvation and faith he fulfils his high priestly ministry as a ministry to and among men who are κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι (Heb 3:1). As high priest Christ fulfils his ministry as a

ministry before God for and on behalf of men. In fulfilling this ministry before God for and on behalf of men Christ becomes not only the ἀρχηγός of salvation but also the *locus* of the call to salvation that confronts men in God's new act of speaking to men, and it is this confrontation of men with the call to salvation that is the content of the sending of the Son as ἀπόστολος (Heb 3:1). (Heb 3:1 is the only occurrence of the term ἀπόστολος as a designation of Christ in the New Testament [cf Justin *Apol* 1.12], although the New Testament, and the Johannine literature in particular [cf the ἀπόστολος of Jn 13:16], contain numerous references to the 'sending' of the Son by the Father.) In the sending of the Son there has taken place the definitive revelation of God by God himself (Rengstorf 1964: 423).

As ἀρχηγός of the faith on which the believers' participation in the kingdom is based (Heb 12:2) and thus the ἀρχηγός of the believers' salvation (Heb 2:10), Christ is also the αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου (Heb 5:9; cf Is 45:17). The phrase αἴτιος σωτηρίας is not unique in Hellenistic literature (cf Philo *Agric* 96; *Virt* 202), the uniqueness of the expression in Hebrews deriving from the addition of αἰωνίου, denoting that which belongs to 'the world to come' (Montefiore 1964: 100). Christ is αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου because he has been made perfect (Heb 5:9) and thus his ministry as αἴτιος consists in securing for men their perfection (Heb 10:14).

3.2.2 The ministry of Christ as subsequent to his sacrifice

The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Majesty on high does not mark the cessation of the ministry of Christ as a ministry to man and for and on behalf of man before God. His ministry continues through time (Heb 7:25; 9:28), and it is in this continuity of

the ministry of Christ both in heaven and on earth that the pilgrimage of the believer takes shape and from this ministry that the pilgrimage of the believer receives its impetus. God's new act of speaking to man which takes place in and through the Son (Heb 1:2) therefore does not cease with the end of the earthly life of Jesus and his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3c) but continues throughout the time of Christ's exaltation, the termination of God's new act of speaking to man being when Christ appears 'a second time...to save those who are eagerly waiting for him' (Heb 9:28b). Therefore the Son continues to be, even in and especially in his exaltation, the bearer of divine glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης) and the imprint (χαρακτήρ) of the very nature and essence of God, and continues to communicate himself to men as such in that he continues to uphold τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (Heb 1:3a). It is for this reason that all things are to be in subjection to Christ, not only at the time of the παρουσία, but proleptically in the present (Heb 2:8).

The continuity of Christ's ministry to men becomes possible through the continuity of his priesthood as a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. Christ's priesthood is characteristically εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24) and as such is ἀπαράβατος (Heb 7:24). The ministry of the exalted Christ as a ministry before God for and on behalf of men consists in his pleading their cause (ἐντυγχάνω, Heb 7:25b) in the eternal sanctuary (cf Is 53:12). The content of Christ's intercession on behalf of men is not explicitly stated, but the goal of his intercessory ministry is clearly the ultimate salvation of those whom he represents. Christ, the high priest, makes expiation for their sins (Heb 2:17), knows the weakness of men (Heb 4:15), and represents them as the 'many sons' (Heb 2:10) who are proleptically perfected in him (Heb 10:14), and thus establishes their right of access to the

heavenly sanctuary and their participation in the kingdom. Consequently, believers, as those who 'have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come' (Heb 6:5), have 'a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul' (Heb 6:19a), a hope which has its basis in the eternal sanctuary and the coming kingdom (Heb 6:19b; 12:28) and which therefore *must* be fulfilled by the people of God attaining the perfection which is the goal of their pilgrimage of faith. The believer is proleptically perfected (Heb 10:14) because the Son is already made perfect (Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:28b), and as the perfect One he has opened for all believers the 'new and living way' (Heb 10:20a) through the curtain and into the eternal sanctuary and presence of the Majesty on high. As the One who has himself walked this 'way' of pilgrimage and attained to perfection (Heb 2:9-11; 4:14-15; 5:7-10) Christ becomes the πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (Heb 6:20, the only occurrence of πρόδρομος in the New Testament), that is, Jesus ran as believers now run, and it is only by his running that the running of believers in the present is made possible (Bauernfeind 1972:235; cf Heb 12:1-2).

The present in Hebrews is throughout an eschatological present. The future is not only anticipated but is already being brought to consummation in the present, giving the message of Hebrews and the believer's response to and participation in the ministry of Christ a note of urgency. God's act of speaking to man in and through the Son takes place in 'these last days' (Heb 1:1); the subjection of all things to Christ which is already being effected is the subjection of the 'world to come' (Heb 2:5-8); the believers have already tasted of 'the powers of the age to come' (Heb 6:5). The urgency of the eschatological present calls forth from the believer ὑπομονή by which the believer does God's will (Heb 10:36). He thereby secures for himself his inheritance which is proleptically secured for him in Christ as κληρονόμος, and by which the believer runs

the race (Heb 12:1) which Christ, as ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής of the faith of the believer (Heb 12:2a), has already run to its conclusion and goal. The eschatology of Hebrews points both to the future action of God in the coming of Christ at the time of the παρουσία (Heb 9:28b) and to the present as the time of definite transition from the old aeon to the new and final aeon in the history of salvation (Heb 10:25b). So while the believers wait for the 'city which is to come' (Heb 13:14) they nevertheless must, even more so than the faithful of the old aeon (Heb 11:13), dissociate themselves from the world, for they are essentially ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι upon earth. The eschatological tension in Hebrews is the tension between Christ who '...will appear a second time...to save those who are eagerly waiting for him' (Heb 9:28b) and Christ who '...has appeared once for all at the end of the age' (Heb 9:26b). Thus the believer lives in this tension between what has already happened and what is yet to come, and these two are essentially one and the same. Believers have the good news of salvation both as possession and as promise. As possession the good news is for the believer a sure and steadfast hope (Heb 6:19; cf 7:25; 10:10, 14, 21-23; 12:28); but yet as promise the good news holds for the believer the danger of apostasy (Heb 2:1; 3:12-14; 4:1-2; 6:4-6; 10:26, 35-39; 12:25; 13:9a).

For the believer, then, the way of faith, the new and living way, is participation in a pilgrimage from weakness and apostasy to perseverance in the faith and the attainment of perfection (Heb 10:19-12:2), a pilgrimage from the eschatological present to the 'day' (Heb 10:25c) when Christ appears '...a second time...to save those who are eagerly waiting for him' (Heb 9:28b). In this way the believer shares in the ministry of Christ as a ministry which is continuous through time (Heb 7:25; 9:28), a ministry in the continuity of which the believer's pilgrimage takes shape and from which the believer's pilgrimage receives its impetus.

3.3 The ministry of Christ as the foundation of faith

The ministry of Christ as a ministry to and among men takes place in and through the Son as the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation, and the ministry of the Son thereby becomes the fulfilment of the promise of God which was declared to the faithful among his people Israel (Heb 11:39-40). The men and women of faith in Hebrews 11, although they did not receive what was promised, nevertheless received divine approval on the basis of their faith (Heb 11:2), approval which contained the promise of salvation and perfection. Their faith consisted in ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων (Heb 11:1), that is, their anticipation of what was yet to come and their participation in that which was yet unseen, belonging to the spiritual or metaphysical sphere. (The substitution of πραγμάτων ἀπόστασις for ὑπόστασις πραγμάτων in P¹³ is to be disregarded on the grounds of scant textual support.) The faith of God's people of old in Hebrews 11 was a faith in which, as those who drew near to God, they believed that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Heb 11:6b), the reward for those who seek him being God's approval and the anticipation on the part of the faithful of the fulfilment of God's promise to bring those who believe to perfection (Heb 11:40). On the one hand Sarah received what was promised, having considered God faithful to fulfil his promise (Heb 11:11). On the other hand the faithful of old did not receive what was promised, having had to wait for the perfection of the new people of God in Christ for the fulfilment of the promises made by God in time past (Heb 11:39). The content of the promise fulfilled to Sarah and the promise not yet fulfilled to the faithful of Israel may not be the same, but the fulfilment of the second is only an extension of the fulfilment of the first, in which God has already demonstrated his faithfulness - God rewards those who seek him. Now, in

these last days, the faithfulness of God in the fulfilment of his promise is not without witness (cf Heb 2:3b-4). God still rewards those who seek him (Heb 6:10), and therefore God can be taken at his word, a word confirmed by an oath (Heb 6:13-17; 7:20-21, 28), that those who endure will obtain not only the promise, as Abraham obtained the promise (Heb 6:15), but the fulfilment of the promise as a present and living hope (Heb 3:6b; 6:11, 18-19; 10:23), a better hope through which we draw near to God (Heb 7:19b). God is πιστός in the fulfilment of his promises (Heb 10:23; 11:11b), and the believer becomes faithful only as he responds to this faithfulness on God's part. As a ministry to and among men as well as a ministry before God for and on behalf of men the ministry of Christ is both the demonstration of God's faithfulness to his promise and the foundation of man's faithfulness to God. As the demonstration of God's faithfulness to his promise, Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, '...had to be made like his brethren in every respect' (Heb 2:17a), and thus as man embodies the fulfilment of God's faithfulness to man. The exaltation of Christ as πρόδρομος on our behalf (Heb 6:20) and his entry into the eternal sanctuary (Heb 9:24) is therefore the fulfilment proleptically of the exaltation of believers (cf Heb 2:10), who are Christ's brethren and joint heirs of the material and spiritual estate of God. As the foundation of man's faithfulness to God, Christ was faithful to God who appointed him apostle and high priest (Heb 3:1-2), faithful in particular as a son (Heb 3:6a), and thus as the Son. Believers become μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Heb 3:14a) in their response to Christ (Heb 3:6b; 10:19-22) as the example of faith (Heb 2:13a, 17b; 3:2, 6a; 12:2a), patience, obedience (Heb 5:8), and endurance (Heb 2:10b; 5:7; 12:2b, 3). The believers' imitation of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God (Heb 6:12; 13:7) is therefore first and foremost the imita-

tion of Christ. As imitators of Christ the pilgrim people of God press on, their pilgrimage being the continuation and fulfilment of that of Israel (Heb 4:1-11), and hence the significance of the roll call of the faithful of Israel in Hebrews 11; but the leader of the pilgrim people of God is now no longer Moses (cf Heb 3:16) but the exalted Jesus as pioneer and perfecter of the faith (Heb 12:1-2) on which their pilgrimage is based and through which their pilgrimage reaches its goal in the fulfilment of the promise of God - the promise of salvation (Heb 9:28) and perfection (Heb 11:40; cf 10:14).

3.4 The ministry of Christ as the foundation of perfection

According to Aristotle (*Met* 5.16) a thing is τέλειος when it '...lacks nothing in respect of goodness or excellence' and '...cannot be surpassed in its kind.' In terms of this definition perfection is an ideal condition never actually realised in this world and this life (and hence all life becomes teleological by nature; cf *EthNic* 1.1). According to the author of Hebrews the gifts and sacrifices offered under the law could not perfect the conscience of the worshipper (Heb 9:9) or the worshipper himself in his drawing near to God (Heb 10:1; cf 7:19a), and thus perfection could never be achieved. In the epistle to the Hebrews the need for τελειοῦν is based, not on a cultic defect as was the case with the old covenant under the law, but on the sinfulness of man before God. Christ, however, as the One who is made perfect by God (Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:28), '...by a single offering...has perfected for all time those who are sanctified' (Heb 10:14). This does not mean that believers lack nothing in respect of goodness or excellence and cannot surpass their present position and state of pilgrimage. Rather than being made morally and spiritually perfect the perfection of

believers consists in their consecration being made complete and final, Hebrews 12:23c giving the impression that it is only after death that the believer can attain the perfection that is proleptically his (cf Heb 11:40). Only God is *ens perfectissimum*, but as the Son who is the *locus* of God's fulfilled revelation, Christ, as the perfected One who is ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής of our faith, is the One in whom the host of Hebrews 11, together with the believers of the last days, may be seen in prototype (ἀρχηγός) and who brings believing to completion and gives it a perfect basis (cf Delling 1972:86). Jesus, by his obedience, has achieved the τέλος of his life and is thus the τελειωτής in whom believers also achieve their τέλος. Christ is therefore the ἄνθρωπος τέλειος, and believers are, through his ministry as a ministry to and among men, made complete (τελειότης) in the present, and as such can be called ἁγιαζόμενοι (Jeremias 1964:933). Christ has gone into heaven itself to appear before God on our behalf. He is there as the representative of his people and thus reinstates humanity, as perfected humanity, in God's presence.

3.5 Concluding remarks

God's last and most complete act of speaking to man is a word of salvation addressed to man through the ministry of the Son as high priest, in the light of whose superior high priestly sacrifice the form and progression of the various aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry logically fall into place. As the medium through which this word of salvation is addressed to man the ministry of Christ is not only a ministry before God, but a ministry among men, which sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation, and as such has as its culmination and goal both the consummation of the created order (Heb 2:8) and the progression and consum-

mation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God (Heb 4:12, 9-10), which is their perfection as sons (cf Heb 10:14).

CHAPTER 4

4 THE HIGH PRIESTLY PERFECTION OF CHRIST

God's last and most complete act of speaking to man is a word of salvation addressed to man through the ministry of the Son as high priest who has been made perfect for ever (Heb 7:28). As a ministry which is both a ministry before God and a ministry among men, the ministry of Christ sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation, the present dimension of salvation being man's need for purification from sin (Heb 1:3; cf 2:17), and the eschatological dimension of salvation being man's ultimate participation in the goal and fulfilment of his pilgrimage of faith (Heb 13:14). The high priestly ministry of Christ, before God and among men, sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation. It has as its culmination and goal the consummation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God (Heb 4:1a, 9-10), which is their perfection as sons (cf Heb 10:14). We now consider the theme of perfection in the epistle to the Hebrews.

4.1 The language of perfection in Hebrews

The language of perfection in the epistle to the Hebrews focuses on Christ as the One who is made perfect by God (Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:28), and who in turn, as pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2), makes perfect the believer (Heb 10:14) through his self-offering in the greater and more perfect tent (Heb 9:11), achieving for and making available to the believer a state of completion or maturity (Heb 5:14; 6:1; 12:23) which the old covenant and the old ritual could not bring into effect (Heb 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1; cf 10:22). The process of perfection in Hebrews is ex-

pressed primarily through the use of the verb τελειοῦν. Τελειοῦν describes the perfecting of Christ by God (Heb 2:10; 7:28 [cf 5:9]), the perfecting of the believer by Christ (Heb 10:14; 12:23; cf 11:40), and the inadequacy of the old covenant and cult to achieve perfection for the worshipper (Heb 7:19; 9:9; 10:1). The use of the aorist τελειωθείς (5:9) shows that the perfection of Christ was attained through the cross. The concept of perfection is expressed through the use of the noun τελείωσις (Heb 7:11), which, when achieved for and on behalf of the believer by Christ, secures for the believer the existential possibility of the state of τελειότης (Heb 6:1), by virtue of which the believer may now be described as τέλειος (Heb 5:14). As the One who secures for the believer the existential possibility of the state of τελειότης Christ is the τελειωτής (Heb 12:2) of the faith from which such existential possibility springs forth. Nothing can be perfect in any sense of the word τέλειος until its purpose is fulfilled by being in subjection to Christ (Heb 2:8) as the τελειωτής of our faith (Heb 12:2). The people of God, being essentially a pilgrim people (Heb 4:9-11; 10:23-25; 13:14), are a people of transition involved in a progression from weakness and apostasy to perseverance in the faith and the attainment of perfection (Heb 10:19-12:2). Thus the language of perfection in the epistle to the Hebrews is the language of a progression from promise to fulfilment, from the temporal to the eternal, from the earthly to the heavenly. Because he himself is made perfect, Christ our high priest brings humanity to perfection, but in bringing humanity to perfection he necessarily had to experience the human situation through the living of a real human life. Thus '...although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him' (Heb 5:8-9).

4.2 The perfection of Christ and his appointment as high priest

The appointment of Christ as high priest is the appointment of One who is nevertheless 'holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners' (Heb 7:26), despite his participation in the human situation through the living of a real human life (Heb 2:9, 11, 18; 4:15; 5:8). Christ is at once one with sinners (Heb 2:9-11, 14, 17-18; 4:15ab) and set apart from sinners (Heb 4:15c; 7:26). As the Son who is εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον (Heb 7:28) Christ was not first perfected and then appointed high priest; rather his exaltation and perfection are inherent in and anticipated in his humiliation. 'Our High-Priest is not only a Son, but a Son who having become man has been raised above all the limitations of humanity' (Westcott 1903:200), thus attaining perfection through the experience of living a real human life (Heb 5:7-9). The appointment of the Son who is εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον stands in contrast to the appointment of men 'in their weakness' (Heb 7:28), but at the same time arises out of the Son's own experience of human weakness through his humiliation. In the epistle to the Hebrews, as in Philippians 2:6-11, the ultimate expression of Christ's humiliation is his obedience unto death, which in turn becomes the ground of his exaltation (cf Peterson 1982:56). Christ as man is made τέλειος when he reaches his celestial τέλος and is glorified in heaven (Peterson 1982:68). The perfecting of Christ is therefore integral to his humiliation and suffering, his self-offering, his exaltation, and his high priestly ministry as exercised both on earth and in heaven. The relationship between the perfecting of Christ and his person and work as high priest will now be considered.

4.2.1 The perfecting of Christ and his 'becoming' high priest

The title 'high priest' is first applied to Christ in Hebrews 2:17, where the author of Hebrews describes Christ as having to be made like his brethren in every respect. By describing Christ in this way the high priestly office and ministry of Christ are from the beginning of the epistle set within the context of the pre-eminence of the Son and his incarnation. Christ is 'made like his brethren' so that '...he may be merciful and a faithful high priest in the service of God' [Furness' translation] (ἵνα ἐλεήμων γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν). As the One who is 'made like his brethren' Christ 'enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain' (Heb 6:19) as 'forerunner on our behalf' (Heb 6:20). This action of entering into the inner shrine as forerunner has its foundation in Christ 'having become a high priest for ever' (ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). The problem which arises here is the problem of the point in time at which Christ became high priest. The question of when Christ became high priest has implications not only for our understanding of Christ as high priest and his high priestly work, but also for our understanding of the meaning of Christ's perfection and exaltation. Further, this question has implications for our understanding of Christ's sacrificial action and death, raising the issue of the relationship between the blood of Christ shed in his sacrificial death upon the cross and his high priestly ministry before God in the heavenly sanctuary. What are the implications of this act of 'becoming' (γίνεσθαι) high priest for our understanding of the high priesthood of Christ? Does Hebrews see only the exalted Christ as high priest, or does this title belong also or exclusively to the earthly Christ, and in particular to Christ in his act of self-sacrifice upon the cross?

For the author of Hebrews Christ is Son already during the period of his earthly ministry (Heb 1:2; 5:8), notwithstanding his exaltation and enthronement to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus in understanding the perfecting of Christ as a perfecting through suffering and the learning of obedience, some distinction is necessary between the Son as divine and as human and incarnate. Just as his exaltation and perfection are inherent in and anticipated in his humiliation, so his high priesthood also is inherent in and anticipated in his earthly life, and in particular in his sacrifice upon the cross. The characteristic description of the sacrifice of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is that it is once for all (ἐφ' ἅπαρος), prefigured in the once a year entry of the high priest into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:7). What sets the action of Christ apart from the annual sacrifice of the high priest is that Christ is able to offer what the former high priests could not offer - his own blood through the sacrifice of himself. On the one hand the author of Hebrews seems to set the high priestly work of Christ within the context of his sacrificial and expiatory death (Heb 2:17; 7:27; 9:14, 26; 10:10), his exaltation to the right hand of God and entry into the heavenly places taking place only after his expiatory work had been completed (Heb 1:3; 10:12). On the other hand the author of Hebrews sees the place of Christ's high priestly action as the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 7:25-26; 8:1-6; 9:11-12), and states that '...if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all' (Heb 8:4). Hebrews 6:20 (cf Heb 7:28; 8:1-2) seems to give the impression that the title of high priest was only bestowed upon the ascended Christ. Thus the ascension is closely related to the theme of Christ's high priesthood (Heb 6:19-20; 8:1-2; 9:11-12), being fundamental to the establishment of Christ's high priestly ministry as being a ministry exercised 'by the power of an indestructible life' (Heb 7:16).

On the one hand, Jesus' high priestly office is an express function of the heavenly Christ, just as the proclamation concerning the high priest occurs in the divine throne assembly. On the other hand, Jesus' entry upon his office already occurs before that proclamation in his *earthly* sacrificial death. The contradiction is to be resolved by distinguishing Jesus' entry upon his office and the proclamation as separate acts. We may draw this distinction because the proclamation describes only the juridical acknowledgement of Jesus as high priest and his public confirmation in the presence of the angels.

(Käsemann 1984:230)

At the same time it must be kept in mind that on כָּפַר יוֹם (Lv 16) the killing of the sacrificial victim and the taking of the blood into the Holy of Holies by the high priest constituted one single sacrificial action. Similarly Christ's sacrificial death on the cross and the offering of his blood in the heavenly sanctuary together constitute his once for all high priestly sacrifice and are both equally aspects of his high priestly work. The sacrificial death of Christ, as the entry of the ἀρχηγός (Heb 2:10; 12:2) into the heavenly sphere, is the initiating of his ascension. Thus Christ's sacrificial death is already a component of his heavenly high priesthood, and the interrelation between the incarnation and Christ's becoming high priest pivots around his atoning work, the description of the high priest as ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (Heb 5:1) focusing attention on the centrality of the expiatory and atoning nature of the work of the high priest. It is as God that the Son becomes incarnate and shares with man the common origin of all mankind (cf Heb 2:11), and therefore he is able to be the true high priest who can mediate between God and man. Only Jesus can be the true high priest and mediator between God and man because only Jesus is both God and man. He 'had to be made like his brethren in every respect' so that 'he might become...high priest in the service of God' (Heb

2:17), the purpose of his becoming high priest being to make expiation for the sins of the people. Only the high priest enters the holy place of the inner sanctuary with the blood of the sacrificial victim, so Jesus' entry upon his high priestly office begins with his sacrificial death (Käsemann 1984:228). If Christ was not high priest before his exaltation and entry into the heavenly sanctuary, he would not have had right of access to the sanctuary.

In conferring the title of Son upon Christ that of high priest is implied (cf Käsemann 1984:218). The juxtaposition of Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4 in Hebrews 5:5-6 shows that, in the christology of Hebrews, sonship and high priesthood belong together as one concept. The author of Hebrews does not consider Christ as Son apart from his being high priest, and does not consider Christ as high priest apart from his being Son. Christ becomes high priest by being faithful to him who appointed Christ in his incarnation (Heb 3:2), by his life of *εὐλάβεια* (Heb 5:7), by learning obedience through suffering (Heb 5:8), and by being made perfect through obedience (Heb 5:9). Christ has proved himself through obedience, and therefore is exalted as *υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον* (Heb 7:28). Christ becomes high priest by proving and accrediting himself as Son. Thus in the christology of Hebrews the exaltation of Christ as high priest arises out of his humiliation, which is essentially his humiliation as Son, and Christ is now high priest in heaven only because he has fulfilled his ministry as high priest on earth. In becoming like his brethren (Heb 2:17) Christ is qualified to perform his high priestly work in making expiation for the sins of the people. This act of becoming like his brethren must of necessity involve an incarnation to the fullest extent in that '...unless he was fully human, he could not be the representative of men; and it was in this representative capacity that he became a merciful and faithful high priest in relation to God'

(Montefiore 1964:67). The incarnation therefore becomes a soteriological necessity for the fulfilling of Christ's high priestly ministry both on the human and on the God-ward side.

Buchanan (1972:9) sees Christ being made Son, heir, apostle, and high priest at the same point in time, but does not indicate at what point in time this takes place. For Daly (1978:267) Christ was not high priest during his earthly life but became high priest only at the moment of his glorification. Westcott (1903:166), while not excluding the self-offering of Christ on the cross as a priestly act, regards the eternal high priesthood of Christ as subsequent to his exaltation to the right hand of God. Such views are representative of a wide range of scholarship which regards Christ's becoming high priest as co-temporal with his exaltation and therefore as essentially belonging to his ministry in heaven. But as Peterson (1982:194) points out, such an understanding of Christ's high priesthood obscures '...the centrality of *making expiation for the sins of the people* in our writer's presentation of the high-priesthood of Christ.' While the author of Hebrews neither states nor gives any suggestion as to when Christ became high priest, Christ's death on the cross must be included in any assessment of Christ's high priestly office and work. Christ becomes high priest (Heb 2:17; 6:20) because he is the Son who not only has been made perfect for ever (Heb 7:28), but who also is 'made like his brethren in every respect' (Heb 2:17). In being 'made like his brethren in every respect' Christ becomes the high priest chosen from among men (Heb 5:1) and the true representative of men, merciful and faithful in the service of God. As such he becomes high priest (Heb 2:17; 6:20) and is made perfect (Heb 7:28) for ever. Christ's high priesthood is integral to his person and work, including his person as the incarnate Son and his work on earth as a man among men.

4.2.2 The perfecting of Christ: his humiliation and earthly work as high priest

In Hebrews 5:1-10 and 7:1-28 the author of Hebrews argues his case for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ as being after the order of Melchizedek. In preparation for his argument he has already attributed the title of high priest to Christ in three different contexts, namely, his humiliation (Heb 2:17-18), his faithfulness in living a real human life as Son (Heb 3:1), and his exaltation (Heb 4:14). According to Hebrews 2:17 the incarnation was an essential prerequisite for the high priestly work of Christ, who of necessity '...had to be made like his brethren in every respect.' Roman Catholic scholars see the perfection of Christ's priesthood in the union of the divine and human natures in his person (cf Peterson 1982:82), and therefore Christ's high priestly consecration takes place at the moment of his incarnation. The interrelation between the incarnation and Christ's becoming high priest pivots around his atoning work (Heb 2:17), the content of which is the offering of gifts and sacrifices ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν. In Hebrews 5:1-10 the author of Hebrews is concerned to show that, like the Jewish high priests, Christ too can be described as ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Because of his perfect sacrifice, and because he is χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (Heb 1:3), Christ is the perfect high priest who perfectly fulfils his mediatorial ministry between God and man.

As high priest who is 'chosen from among men' and 'appointed to act on behalf of men' Christ is able to sympathise with those weaknesses which are inherent in being human (Heb 4:15; cf 5:2), having himself endured the suffering and temptations which are the existential realities of the human situation (Heb 2:17; 4:15). As Peterson (1982:83) points out, '...the sympathy that Christ now exercises towards his people (4:15f; 2:17f)'

is '...a sympathy "learned" through his earthly experience (5:7f).' Although Christ was without sin (Heb 4:15) his incarnation was of necessity an experience of human weakness, the result of which is an appreciation of the human situation as one beset with weakness and the threat of sin.

4.2.3 The perfecting of Christ: his exaltation and heavenly work as high priest

Just as the earthly high priestly work of Christ revolves around his humiliation, so the heavenly aspect of Christ's high priesthood revolves around his exaltation. As the Son, Christ our high priest, having fulfilled his ministry of expiation, has '...sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb 1:3). The session of the Son to the right hand of God consists in his '...having become as much superior to the angels' and the obtaining of the name which is 'more excellent than theirs' (Heb 1:4). The name that Christ has obtained is essentially his even before his incarnation, and not simply the result of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, even though Hebrews 1:4 may at first suggest this. The obtaining of the name and the exaltation that is associated with the name are indications of the personal superiority of Christ and therefore also of the superior office he holds as high priest, in accordance with which he performs his superior high priestly work (Heb 4:14-15). As the superior high priest Christ's seeming inferiority to the angels (Heb 2:6-9) was only temporary and was an essential part of his redeeming activity (Heb 2:10-11, 17-18). In taking his place at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Christ has been 'crowned with glory and honour' (Heb 2:9), glory and honour which arise out of his experience of suffering in tasting death for every one. Thus in the christology of Hebrews the exaltation of Christ arises out of his humiliation, and Christ is now high

priest in heaven only because he has fulfilled his ministry as high priest on earth.

Having fulfilled his ministry as high priest on earth, Christ becomes our '...great high priest who has passed through the heavens' (Heb 4:14). The use of the plural οὐρανοί (cf 2 Cor 12:2) is in keeping with Old Testament and Hebrew usage where the plural, or rather dual form שָׁמַיִם is regularly used for 'heaven', and it is unlikely that the Jewish idea of an ascending series of heavens is meant (Guthrie 1983:120). Rather the concern of the author of Hebrews is to contrast the access gained by Christ to the heavenly places without hindrance or obstruction with the limited access to God allowed to the high priests of the old order. By virtue of the unlimited and complete access gained by Christ to the heavenly places (Heb 4:14) the believer can have confidence to enter the heavenly sanctuary (εἰς τὴν εἰσοδὸν τῶν ἁγίων, Heb 10:19) which is the very presence of God.

Despite parallels which may be drawn between the Levitical high priesthood and the high priesthood of Christ, and the concern of the author of Hebrews to portray Christ as the fulfilment of the Levitical high priestly office, the high priesthood of Christ is essentially of a different order than that of the Old Testament cult. The citation of Psalm 2:7 (Heb 5:5b) and Psalm 110:4 (Heb 5:6) establish the connexion between Christ as Son and Christ as high priest in the christology of Hebrews. The citation of Psalm 2:7 in Hebrews 5 recalls the exposition of sonship in Hebrews 1:1-13 where the salvation provided by the Son is grounded in the absolute supremacy of the Son as *locus* of a fulfilled revelation. Psalm 110, a psalm which has its *Sitz im Leben* in the enthronement ceremony of the king, ascribes to the king the unique office of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4). In the christology of Hebrews then, sonship, exaltation, kingship, and enthronement are all integral parts

of the concept of the high priesthood of Christ. For the author of Hebrews Christ is Son already during the period of his earthly ministry (Heb 1:2; 5:8), notwithstanding his exaltation and enthronement to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Psalm 2:7 serves not only to establish the divine sonship of Christ, but also to establish his right to kingship by virtue of which he becomes a priest εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Heb 5:6; cf Ps 110:4). The exaltation of Christ as Son and high priest is the manifestation of the true nature of Christ's high priestly ministry, and '...marks the consummation of his work as Messiah...the consummation of his work viewed from a sacerdotal point of view....' (Peterson 1982:85). Christ's exaltation to the right hand of the throne of God is his manifestation as Son, and at the same time the manifestation of the heavenly aspect of his high priesthood to all for all time.

4.2.4 The process of the perfecting of Christ

The perfecting of Christ in Hebrews is a perfecting through suffering and the learning of obedience (Heb 2:10; 5:8-9). In order to lead humanity to perfection Christ as high priest must necessarily realise his own perfection through the living of a real human life. In understanding the perfection of Christ as a perfecting through suffering and the learning of obedience some distinction is necessary between the Son as eternally divine and the Son as fully and completely incarnate, and with reference to the perfecting of the Son through suffering and the learning of obedience, Montefiore (1964:99) points out that the author is speaking of the Son, not as eternally divine, but as fully and completely incarnate. Westcott (1903:67) concurs:

In studying this τελεῖωσις of Christ, account must be taken both (1) of His life as man...so far as He fulfilled in a true human life the destiny of man personally; and (2) of His life

as the Son of man, so far as He fulfilled in His life, as Head of the race, the destiny of humanity by redemption and consummation. The two lives indeed are only separable in thought, but the effort to give clearness to them reveals a little more of the meaning of the Gospel.

Christ '...learned obedience through what he suffered' (Heb 5:8) not in the sense that the lesson of obedience was forced upon him by the necessity of what he suffered. Westcott (1903:130) draws attention to the fact that Hebrews 5:8 does not say that Christ learned to obey in the sense that Christ's learning of obedience implies the conquest of disobedience as actual, but that Christ was making perfectly his own that self-surrender which was required of him for the fulfilment of his priesthood.

The Lord's manhood was (negatively) sinless and (positively) perfect, that is perfect relatively at every stage; and therefore He truly advanced by 'learning'...while the powers of His human Nature grew step by step in a perfect union with the divine in His one Person

(Westcott 1903:130)

Thus to say that Christ '...learned obedience through what he suffered' is not the same as saying that Christ learned to obey through suffering: the latter would imply that the Son had to learn obedience as one who had not known its meaning before. The purpose of the suffering endured by Christ is his perfecting (Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:28), and his learning of obedience through what he suffered is the process through which perfection is achieved. The living of a real human life, with the experience of suffering, served to teach Christ what it was like to be subject to God in the human situation and to prepare him for his final great act of submission (Peterson 1982:176), but there is no suggestion that he needed to learn submission to God because of disobedience. In his learning of obedience through what he suffered the Son takes his obedience up to the point beyond which it could not be taken any

further. 'Perfection of human character is not a static quality of excellence: it consists in a perfect (or absolutely appropriate) response to each of life's changing circumstances' (Montefiore 1964:100). That Christ is referred to as having been made perfect (Heb 5:9) does not mean that there was a time when he was not perfect, but that Christ was subject in his living of a real human life to that same process of human development in response to life's changing circumstances that every human being experiences (cf Lk 1:80; 2:40,52). Jesus' obedience should therefore be considered an attribute of his earthly nature and not as the enduring of a moral test. Rather it is a recognition of the plan of salvation and the mark of his humiliation, setting him on a level with the earthly community (Käsemann 1984:139).

'Although he was a Son' (Heb 5:8) may imply that his learning obedience through what he suffered was something unexpected, that is, unexpected not by Christ himself but by humanity as witnesses of the incarnation and the Christ event. In Hebrews 5:8-9 Christ's learning of obedience through suffering was necessary not so much for his own sake but for our sake, so that he might become both the source of eternal salvation and a perfectly sympathetic high priest. As the One who is perfected through the learning of obedience Christ becomes not only the source of eternal salvation but also the source of perfect obedience for those who would follow him as God's pilgrim people (Heb 5:9; 12:2-3). The obedience of the believer to Christ is an imitation of the obedience of the Son to the Father.

4.2.5 The purpose of the perfecting of Christ

As already stated above, Christ's learning of obedience through suffering was necessary not so much for his own sake but for our sake, so that he might become the pioneer and source of eternal salvation.

Christ is made perfect specifically as the Son who is the ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας (Heb 2:10) and the αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου (Heb 5:9). While ἀγαγόντα (Heb 2:10b) and τελειῶσαι (Heb 2:10c) have different objects the two acts which they describe are synchronous and must be regarded as absolute without reference to any succession of time (Westcott 1903:49). The act of 'bringing many sons to glory' is included in and is inseparable from the perfecting of Christ, and the work of God and the work of Christ are set side by side. It is God who leads (ἀγαγεῖν) the many sons to glory and Christ who is their leader (ἀρχηγός) in this pilgrimage from the despair of sin to hope and the glory of faith. As the ἀρχηγός Christ himself first participates in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God and in so doing establishes the content and goal of that pilgrimage (Heb 12:2; 9:28). Christ is the ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας in that, as the πρόδρομος (Heb 6:19-20), he has himself, in living a real human life, gone ahead as pathfinder in the way in which the sons must follow to come to God.

While ἀγαγόντα (Heb 2:10b) and τελειῶσαι (Heb 2:10c) may have different objects the subject in both cases is God. It is God himself who acts in the bringing of many sons to glory and in the perfecting of the ἀρχηγός. This initiative on the part of God is appropriate to his activity as Creator (Montefiore 1964:60) and the perfecting of the Son in this regard is appropriate to the Son's role as the agent through whom the created order of this present age (Heb 1:2; cf 11:3) came into being and as the sustainer of the universe (Heb 1:3). The pilgrim people of God (cf Heb 4:9-11; 10:23-25; 13:14) cannot be perfected apart from being in subjection to Christ or apart from their obedience to Christ (Heb 5:9) as the pioneer and perfecter of their faith (Heb 12:2) and the pioneer and source of their salvation (Heb 2:10; 5:9). As the bearer of divine glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης) within the created or-

der and the imprint (χαράκτῆρ) of the very nature and essence of God himself (Heb 1:3) the Son becomes incarnate and as the incarnate One shares with man the common origin of all humanity (Heb 2:11). He who has likewise (παράπλησίως, Heb 2:14) shared in the common flesh and blood of humanity becomes the initiator of a brotherhood (Heb 2:11; 3:1) which, as οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι, comes to share in the exaltation of the Son as the glorified One (Heb 2:9). God's purpose for 'the sons' is to lead them 'to glory' (εἰς δόξαν, Heb 2:10), and this he does by the perfecting of *the* Son, Jesus (cf Peterson 1982:56).

4.3 The perfection of Christ and the perfecting of believers

Christ's learning of obedience through suffering was necessary not so much for his own sake but for our sake, that through his perfecting the 'many sons' who are being led to glory might achieve their eschatological τέλος through their participation in the 'heavenly call' (Heb 3:1) which is God's new act of speaking to man in and through the Son as the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation (cf Heb 1:1-4). The Son, as the ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, becomes the first of the 'many sons' and therefore, in his perfecting, the archetype of the sonship experienced by the believer. Just as the pilgrim people of God cannot be perfected apart from being in subjection to Christ or apart from their obedience to Christ, they cannot be perfected apart from their status as sons and the consequences of sonship (Heb 12:5-7). God's purpose for *the sons* is to lead them 'to glory' (εἰς δόξαν, Heb 2:10), and this he does by means of the same discipline of obedience (Heb 5:9; 12:1-8) by which *the* Son is made perfect. 'Now if perfection had been attainable...' (Heb 7:11; cf 7:19) makes it clear that perfection was and still is God's desired purpose for his people, a purpose which is now

fulfilled in the Son as ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής (Heb 12:2) of the faith of the people of God. As God's desired purpose for his people perfection becomes the content of the fulfilment of God's promise to the faithful of the old covenant as well as the new (Heb 11:11b, 39-40).

4.3.1 Pioneer and perfecter of our faith

Jesus, the ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής (Heb 12:2) of the faith of the people of God, endured the cross as the mode of his self-offering '...for the joy (χαρά) that was set before him.' On the God-ward side of the cross and of the self-offering of Christ there is a χαρά which is in essence the celebration of sonship. The One who endured (ὑπομένειν) the cross takes his place 'at the right hand of the throne of God' (Heb 12:2c), which is the place accorded the Son as the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation who makes purification for sins (Heb 1:3) and who, on the grounds of his humiliation, is crowned with glory and honour. The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God (Heb 1:3; 2:9; 12:2) is God's recognition of the ὑπομονή of Christ as ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής. The ὑπομονή of believers thus becomes an integral part of their response to the heavenly call (Heb 3:1) addressed to man through Jesus the ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής. The outcome of the ὑπομονή of believers is the χαρά of sharing in the exaltation of the Son as sons, which is but another way of stating that God's purpose for the 'many sons' is to lead them 'to glory' (Heb 2:10). The enduring of discipline as sons (Heb 12:7) on the part of believers is already the beginning of their celebration of sonship and exaltation in that they follow in the way which Christ has travelled and can anticipate in their present ὑπομονή the future κατάρπαισις of the pilgrim people of God (Heb 4:9-10).

4.3.2 The superior ministry of Christ and the perfecting of believers: the better priesthood, the greater and more perfect tent, the better covenant

The numerous references to Psalm 110:4 in chapters five to seven of the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 15, 17, 21, 28) serve to emphasise the inadequacy of the Levitical order which arose out of a commandment which necessarily had to be '...set aside because of its weakness and uselessness' (Heb 7:18). The inadequacy of the Levitical order is specifically its failure to secure perfection for the worshipper (Heb 7:11, 19). The failure of the worshipper to attain perfection is therefore partly the failure of both the law itself and the priesthood which has its basis in the commandment of the law. The inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood is reflected in the mortality of the Levitical high priests (Heb 7:23), in contrast to Christ who holds his priesthood by the power of an indestructible life (Heb 7:16). The Levitical high priests, unlike Christ, had to offer repeated sacrifices for their own sins as well as the sins of the people (Heb 7:27), which they do in 'a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary' (Heb 8:5) while Christ serves in 'the greater and more perfect tent' (Heb 9:11; cf 8:2). Thus the superior priesthood of Christ is established through his exaltation and immortality, his sinlessness, and the adequacy of his sacrifice as once for all.

The inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood is demonstrated by the fact that the Levitical priests serve 'a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary' (Heb 8:5). Moses was apparently shown a 'pattern' (τύπος) or model (cf Ex 25:40) of which the earthly tent was but a copy or shadowy outline (ὁμοδείματι καὶ σκιᾷ). There has been much debate about the influence of Platonism on Hebrews, especially on this point of the earthly sanctuary being a copy of a heavenly archetype. It is,

however, unlikely that the author of Hebrews used overtly Platonic ideas for the presentation of his message. The 'Platonic' elements in Hebrews are rather typological, or eschatological, and generally devoid of Platonic philosophy, although linguistic parallels do exist between the language of Hebrews, particularly at Hebrews 8:5, and the language of Philonic Platonism (Peterson 1982:131). Despite the language of Hebrews 8:5, the emphasis on the earthly sanctuary as 'a copy and shadow' of the heavenly one, and the heavenly sanctuary as οὐ χειροποιήτου (Heb 9:11,24; 8:2), the distinction between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries is one of temporality. The earthly sanctuary, like the priesthood which served it, is essentially a temporal one, while the heavenly sanctuary is οὐ τούτης τῆς κτίσεως (Heb 9:11) and therefore eternal.

Under the system associated with the old sanctuary the worshipper could only approach God through his representative, the priest (cf Heb 9:6). The high point of the old system, the Day of Atonement, allowed only the high priest to enter into the Holy of Holies (symbolising the actual presence of God) with the sacrificial blood, and then only on this one day of the year. In this way the old system bore witness to its own inadequacy (Heb 9:8-9a), the outer sanctuary being symbolic of the present age (that is, the age co-temporal with the existence of the old sanctuary) as the age of limited access to God and therefore as an age during which perfection can only be anticipated (Heb 11:39-40). As a system with a two sanctuary tabernacle the old order prevented the worshipper from seeing the inner sanctuary and from entering into the ultimate presence of God which the inner sanctuary symbolised. In contrast to the limited access available under the old system, the new order of Christ's high priesthood enables the believer to enter into the very sanctuary to which Christ has gained access in the offering of his blood (Heb 9:11-12; 10:19-20).

The 'greater and more perfect tent' (Heb 9:11) has been understood as a reference to 'the body assumed by the Son of God in the incarnation' (cf Peterson 1982: 141) on the basis of references to the Jewish temple as the body of Christ in the Gospels (cf Jn 1:14; Jn 2:19-22; Mk 14:58) and the use of the tent imagery in teaching about the body elsewhere in the New Testament (cf 2 Cor 5:1-3; 2 Pt 1:13-14). The description of the greater and more perfect tent in Hebrews as οὐ νεοπολιῆτος and οὐ ταύτης τῆς κρίσεως (Heb 9:11) makes it unlikely that the author of Hebrews meant the greater and more perfect tent to be understood as the body of the Son in the incarnation. The New Testament passages referred to above are, in their respective contexts, concerned with the resurrected body of Christ and the Church. Neither is it likely that the greater and more perfect tent refers to the resurrected body of Christ, as the use of σκηνή in Hebrews, with the exception of Hebrews 8:2, refers to the earthly tabernacle of Judaism (Heb 8:5; 9:2-3, 6-8; 13:10). The resurrection of Christ is explicitly referred to only at Hebrews 13:20, and while one may argue that the resurrection is everywhere presupposed, the emphasis in Hebrews is on the exaltation of Christ as the consequence of his sacrificial self-offering. The centrality of the expiatory nature of Christ's sacrificial self-offering in the theology of Hebrews and its association with the role of the high priest on the Day of Atonement indicate that the greater and more perfect tent is to be identified with the heavenly equivalent of the Holy of Holies, that is, the place where the believer is in the immediate presence of God. The body of Christ is rather the καταπέτασμα (Heb 10:20) through which the believer gains access to the heavenly sanctuary (the greater and more perfect tent) and to the presence of God. As the greater and more perfect tent the heavenly sanctuary is not a part of the created and transitory heavens (Heb 1:10-12; 12:26) or of the intermediary

heavens through which Jesus passed (Heb 4:14; 9:11-12), but of highest heaven as the dwelling place of God (Heb 9:24).

Soteriological significance is not given to the intermediary heavens *per se*, but to Christ's passage through these, that is to his *ascension*.... Our high priest passed through all the supernatural spheres separating man and God, to enter the actual 'dwelling place' or presence of God, and not by means of animal sacrifices, but by virtue of his own sacrificial death....

(Peterson 1982:143)

The λειτουργία of Christ is described as κρείττονος in comparison to the ministry of the high priests of the earthly order (Heb 8:6). This superior ministry of Christ's has as its foundation a superior covenant enacted on better promises. As a covenant arising out of a law which could not bring about the desired perfection (Heb 7:11,19; 10:1) the covenant too was subject to the same inadequacy as the priesthood to which that same law gave legitimation. Thus the old covenant inaugurated with the blood of calves and goats must of necessity give way to the new covenant inaugurated with the blood of the rational and voluntary self-offering of Christ (Heb 8:13). The essence of the new covenant is that God will write his laws into the minds and on the hearts of his people (Heb 8:10; 10:16; cf Jr 31:31-34). The old covenant did not necessarily exclude the possibility of the law becoming such an integral part of the life of the believer (cf Dt 6:4-9) and hence the 'newness' of the new covenant lies not in the possibility of the internalisation of the law but in the superiority of the promises upon which such internalisation is enacted (Heb 8:6). The old covenant has become obsolete (Heb 8:13) because it has failed to secure for believers 'the promised eternal inheritance' (Heb 9:15) which is in essence their inheritance as sons secured by the Son as κληρονόμος (Heb 1:2) of the spiritual estate of God.

4.3.3 The goal of the perfecting of the believer

The essence of the message of Hebrews is that there is a better hope through which we draw near to God (Heb 7:19), a hope which is due to the better covenant of which Jesus is surety (Heb 7:22) and mediator (Heb 8:6; 12:24), which is enacted on better promises (Heb 8:6) and of eternal duration (Heb 13:20). This better hope speaks of the eschatological dimension of the perfecting of believers and is related to the eternal nature of Christ's priesthood. Jesus is surety of a better covenant by virtue of the divine oath appointing him a priest for ever (Heb 7:22), and is able to save for all time those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25). His perfect obedience, which culminates in his perfect self-offering (Heb 7:26-27), is the foundation of his exaltation, thus qualifying him to bring his people to perfection as sons of God. The goal of this process of bringing many sons to perfection is to share Christ's glory (Heb 2:10), to enter God's rest (Heb 4:11), to see the Lord (Heb 12:14) and to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22; 13:14). At one level believers have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22) and entered the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 6:19-20), since Jesus has gone ahead as their forerunner and hope. The better hope by which Christians draw near to God relates to past, present, and future in that it relates to the high priestly ministry of Jesus in his death and exaltation through which believers draw near to God with *παρρησία* (Heb 4:16) in the present.

The sufferings which Christ endured in securing this hope are considered in their redemptive role, that is, Christ secured for others the salvation they could not attain for themselves (Heb 1:3; 2:9, 14-15, 17; 5:9; 9:12, 14-15, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14, 19-20; 12:24; 13:12). The perfecting of Christ refers primarily to his call-

ing and ministry as the Son (cf Peterson 1982:175) and the need for him to experience temptation as an integral part of his suffering, so that he might become merciful and a faithful high priest to the pilgrim people of God in their pilgrimage of faith (Heb 2:18; 4:15-16).

As the perfected One (Heb 2:10; 5:9) he effects for those who have faith in him their cleansing and sanctification before God (Heb 10:22). While Hebrews 9:14 (cf Heb 9:9) speaks about the cleansing of the conscience and Hebrews 10:22 the cleansing of the heart from an evil conscience, Hebrews 7:11-19 sets the cleansing of believers and thus also their perfecting in the wider context of the whole of their relationship with God. Hebrews 9:9 focuses on man in his role as worshipper, Hebrews 9:14 sets the cleansing of the conscience in a liturgical context, and Hebrews 10:22 sets the cleansing of the heart from an evil conscience in the context of man in his drawing near (*προσφέρειν*) to God, *προσφέρειν* being a technical term for drawing near to God in worship and specifically in the act of offering sacrifice (Heb 5:1,3; 7:27; 8:3-4; 9:7,9,25,28; 10:1-2,8,11-12). While perfection is not synonymous with cleansing it involves cleansing as one of its most significant elements.

The perfecting of believers is the ultimate confirmation of their calling and their status as sons, and especially as sons who draw near to God in worship in the offering (*ἀναφέρειν*) of their sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15) which is the celebration of their sonship. While the perfecting of Christ was a process, and necessarily one of learning obedience through what he suffered, a simple parallel cannot be drawn between the perfecting of Christ and the perfecting of believers. The believer is perfected by the very actions and accomplishments through which Christ was perfected, and not by any actions or accomplishments of his own. The perfecting of believers '...consists solely of

their connection with the ἁγιάζων' (Käsemann 1984:143; cf Heb 2:11), and as οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι they are both *already* made perfect (cf Heb 10:10,29) and *being* made perfect (cf Heb 2:11) in the present as the time of the anticipation of their sonship and hence their exaltation in the Son. The Son, as our perfected high priest, secures perfection for the many sons who follow him as the pilgrim people of God, and it is on this basis alone that believers can be called τέλειοι: 'Their perfection depends altogether...for the moment upon their relationship with the ἁγιάζων' (Hughes 1979: 34).

4.4 Concluding remarks

Christ is the One who is made perfect by God, and who, as pioneer and perfecter of our faith, makes perfect the believer through his self-offering in the greater and more perfect tent. He thereby achieves for and makes available to the believer a state of completion or maturity which the old covenant and the old ritual could not bring into effect. Because he himself is made perfect, Christ our high priest brings humanity to perfection, but in bringing humanity to perfection he necessarily had to experience the human situation through the living of a real human life: 'Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him' (Heb 5:8-9). Christ is Son already during the period of his earthly ministry (Heb 1:2; 5:8), notwithstanding his exaltation and enthronement to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and just as his exaltation and perfection are inherent in and anticipated in his humiliation, so his high priesthood also is inherent in and anticipated in his earthly life. Having proved himself through obedience Christ is exalted as '...Son who has been made perfect for ever' (Heb 7:28b). In the christology of

Hebrews the exaltation of Christ arises out of his humiliation, and Christ is now high priest in heaven only because he has fulfilled his ministry as high priest on earth. Christ is made perfect specifically as the Son who is the pioneer and source of salvation. God's purpose for his people as sons is to lead them 'to glory', and this he does by the perfecting of the Son as pioneer and source of salvation and as pioneer and perfecter of faith. The many sons, as the pilgrim people of God, cannot be perfected apart from being in subjection to Christ or apart from their obedience to Christ, or apart from their status as sons and the consequences of sonship (Heb 12:5-7; cf 12:8). Through their ὑπομονή, which is an integral part of their response to the heavenly call (Heb 3:1) of God's new act of speaking to man through the Son, believers share in the exaltation of the Son as sons, and their enduring of discipline as sons is already the beginning of their celebration of sonship and exaltation. Thus their pilgrimage is one based on hope, a better hope through which they draw near to God and which is due to the better covenant of which Jesus is surety and mediator.

The perfecting of believers is the ultimate confirmation of their calling and their status as sons, and especially as sons who draw near to God in worship in the offering of their sacrifice of praise which is the celebration of their sonship.

CHAPTER 5

5 THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, THE BELIEVER, AND THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

In these last days God has spoken to us through a Son, Jesus Christ, whose high priestly ministry sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation and has as its culmination and goal both the consummation of the created order and the progression and consummation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God. The goal of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God is their perfection as sons, a perfection which can be achieved only through Christ as the Son who is made perfect by God through suffering and the learning of obedience. As the Son who is made perfect by God, Christ becomes the pioneer and perfecter of the faith of the people of God and the pioneer and source of their eternal salvation. He thus achieves for believers both their perfection and their participation in the eschatological kingdom. This means that the office, sacrifice, ministry, and perfection of Christ as high priest must have significance for the believer and the community of faith not only of the first century, but of every century. It is to a consideration of the significance of the office, sacrifice, ministry, and perfection of Christ as high priest for the believer and the community of faith that we now turn.

5.1 The high priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of all believers

5.1.1 The problem of the priesthood of all believers in the epistle to the Hebrews

Unlike the authors of 1 Peter (cf 1 Pt 2:5, 9) and the Revelation (cf Rv 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), the author of Hebrews does not explicitly refer to the believer as a priest or the believers as constituting a priesthood. This may well be due to the identity of the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews (cf Floor 1971:72), but, whatever the reason may be for the author of Hebrews' omission of any explicit consideration of the priesthood of all believers, the priestly function of all believers is by implication an integral part of his theology.

With the use of προσερχώμεθα (Heb 4:16; 10:22) the author of Hebrews brings the life of the believer into the orbit of the high priesthood of Christ, and the believer is called to apply the high priestly function of Christ to his own life. This application of the high priestly function of Christ takes place both on an individual level in the life of the believer and on a corporate level in the life of the community. It is because of the application of the high priestly function of Christ to the life of the believer and the community that the service which the believer and community are called to offer to Christ is described in priestly terminology. The way of both access and service to God is διὰ τοῦ καταπεράσματος (Heb 10:20). Thus both the old and the new covenants have a veil through which access and service to God takes place for those who fulfil their priestly function. Hebrews 10:22 describes those who have access to God through the veil of Christ's flesh as ῥεπραντισμένοι and λελουμένοι, and thereby indicates their purification to be essentially the same as that of the priests under the old covenant.

(cf Ex 29:21; Lv 8:30). Through the use of the perfect participles ῥεραντισμένοι and λελουσμένοι the author focuses on the work of Christ applied to the believer at some decisive moment in the past and calls for ongoing expression of the believer's existing relationship with God. If the way of access and service to God and the purification of those who have such access and perform such service are in the epistle to the Hebrews described in terms reminiscent of the Old Testament priesthood, then those who have such access and perform such service must (Heb 10:19-22; 13:15) in some way be on a par with the Old Testament priests.

The believer's response to the high priesthood of Christ is his participation in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God, in which he seeks 'the city which is to come' (Heb 13:14; cf 11:10; 12:22). As an essential part of this pilgrimage the believer is to offer continually through Christ 'a sacrifice of praise to God' (Heb 13:15; cf 1 Pt 2:5), such sacrifice being the fruit of the believer's confession of Christ as high priest. Thus what was considered to be the exclusive function of the Levitical priesthood under the old covenant is now, in a new form, the function of every believer under the new covenant. The idea of a priesthood of all believers does not represent a radical departure from the idea of priesthood under the old covenant: Israel was to be a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6), and in the time of the restoration after the exile not only would every Israelite be a priest (Is 61:6), but Gentiles too would perform priestly functions and be counted as members of the priesthood (Is 66:18,21). The new covenant of Hebrews is the fulfilment of that which was a part of, but never fulfilled in, the old, that is, the priesthood of all believers. It follows, then, that there is an interrelationship between the believer's sacrifice of praise and his participation in the priesthood of all believers.

If then *all* believers have, in this particular way, to make sacrifices through Christ, this means that *all* believers have a priestly function, of a completely new kind, through Christ the one high priest and mediator. The abolition of a special priestly caste and its replacement by the priesthood of the *one* new and eternal high priest, has as its strange and yet logical consequence the fact that *all* believers share in a universal priesthood.

(Küng 1968:370)

5.1.2 The high priesthood of Christ as the foundation of the priesthood of all believers

There is a two-way progression of thought in the theology of Hebrews. The author begins with Christ's sharing in the nature of humanity (Heb 2:16-18; 4:15; 5:7) and ends with humanity's sharing in the priesthood of Christ (Heb 10:19-22; 13:15). Christ as high priest experiences what is essentially a human experience, the experience of death (Heb 2:9). This act of being human and experiencing the finite nature of humanity as that of being limited by death is a soteriological prerequisite for the fulfilment of Christ's high priestly office and work.

The author of Hebrews, after an exhortation to believers to recognise the faithfulness of Christ (Heb 3:1-6) and on the basis of this faithfulness to strive to enter the Sabbath rest of God (Heb 3:7-4:13; cf 4:11), invokes from the believer a response of faithfulness which is an imitation of the faithfulness of Christ as high priest. 'Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession' (Heb 4:14). The exaltation of Christ as high priest (cf Heb 4:14) is the confirmation of his faithfulness, from which the faithfulness of the believer receives its form and content, that is, the believer's confession of Christ as high priest who has made expiation for sins (Heb 4:14; cf 2:17c), and the believer's confidence to enter the

heavenly sanctuary (Heb 10:19) and offer his sacrifice of praise to God through Christ as high priest (Heb 13:15; cf 13:16b). Because Christ our high priest has participated in humanity, believers, through Christ, participate in priesthood, and thus the high priesthood of Christ becomes the foundation of the priesthood of all believers.

5.1.3 The significance of the high priestly office of Christ for the believer and the community of faith

The 'heavenly call' in which the believer shares is a call to participate in a priesthood which has as its basis the confession (ὁμολογία) of Christ (Heb 3:1). This confession of Christ by the believer arises out of the exaltation of Christ as high priest (Heb 4:14) and is the foundation of the believer's hope in the faithfulness of God (Heb 10:23). The acknowledging of the name of Christ (Heb 13:15; ὁμολογέω) by the believer is therefore his confession of faith in Christ as exalted high priest and as the foundation of Christian hope. The name of Christ, in whatever form that name may take in Christian conversation, worship, or liturgical ritual, calls to mind the exalted Christ as high priest, the priesthood of the believer, and the hope of the Christian faith, that is, perfection as the culmination and goal of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God. For this reason the confession of Christ in some form or other is an indispensable element of the rites of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, amongst others, of the majority of Christian churches. The primitive Christian creed 'Jesus is Lord' (cf Phlp 2:11) remains the basis for all Christian creeds and must be the primary element of all Christian confession. Such confession of Christ must take place, for it is the reiteration of the heavenly call in which believers share as well as the believer's and indeed the church's response to and participation

in the call to priesthood. As such it is the celebration of the priesthood of all believers.

The concrete expression of the believer's heavenly call is to offer a continual sacrifice of praise to God (Heb 13:15). The once for all nature of Christ's sacrifice (Heb 7:27; 9:26) means that the sacrifice of the believer cannot be a sacrifice for sins, but is rather the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ in the lifestyle of the believer. The believer's sacrifice of praise is also an act of gratitude to God 'for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken' (Heb 12:28a), an act of reverence and awe which constitutes the acceptable worship which the believer is to offer to God. Worship as an act of gratitude and thanksgiving finds expression in the prayer of thanksgiving that has, since the beginnings of Christian worship, become the characteristic feature of preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist, the term 'Eucharist' being derived from the Greek εὐχαριστέω meaning 'to give thanks'. The concluding words of the eucharistic liturgy according to the rites of many Christian churches are words of commission, charging the believer to serve God in the world and give practical expression to κοινωνία as the day by day extension of his sacrifice of praise and his acceptable worship.

5.1.4 The people of God under the old and the new covenants

The covenant formula 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12; Jr 31:33b; cf Jr 32:38) is descriptive of Israel as a people set apart to be God's unique possession. The individual Israelite found his identity only in being a member of this people whom God had bound to himself in a unique relationship. It is not to the individual Israelite but to the people as a whole that the option between obedience and blessings or disobedience and curses is

given (cf Dt 30:15-20), and the individual shares in the covenant blessings only by being in community with the covenant people. In the theology of Hebrews there is a contrast between the old covenant as a covenant of option between blessings or curses for the group as a whole and the new covenant as a covenant of unconditional blessings for the group as a whole (Heb 3:7-4:11; cf Swetnam 1965:382). There is a contrast between the generation which sinned and perished in the desert through unbelief and the new people of God as those who believe in Christ and stand to inherit the promises made to Israel, thus receiving their κληρος in the inheritance of the κληρονομος (Heb 1:2). The blessing originally offered to the old people of God was left unclaimed and is now, in these last days, promised to the new people of God through Christ (Heb 4:2-3, 6, 9).

The importance of the corporate identity of the people of God is therefore given great emphasis in the theology of Hebrews. Israel in Egypt is the λαός of God (cf Heb 11:25), a people bound to God in a covenant relationship governed by the communal law declared by Moses (cf Heb 7:11; 9:19). It is the people in their corporate identity as covenant people who will face the judgement of God for their disobedience to the law and for breaking the covenant relationship (Heb 10:30; cf Dt 32:35-36). While those who were faithful under the old covenant will ultimately share in the perfection of the new people of God (Heb 11:39-40), they did not receive what was promised apart from the new people of God because they also, for a time, shared in the unbelief and failure of Israel. The unbelief of Israel and her failure to enter into God's sabbath rest means that the faithful of Israel, too, are denied the promised rest and so must wait for the new people of God, for whom there still remains a sabbath rest (Heb 4:9). The sanctification necessary to enable the believer to enter this sabbath rest must have both a personal and a

corporate validity (cf Heb 2:17; 13:12), for the relationship between God and his people remains one of covenant (Heb 8:10), binding all believers to God not as a collection of individuals but as one unique and holy people (but cf Rv 20:6; 22:11).

...no individual Christian is ever called a saint.... The saints of the New Testament exist only in plurality. Sanctity belongs to them, but only in their common life, not as individuals.... The truth is that the holiness of the community, as of its individual constituents, is to be sought in that which happens to these men in common....

(Barth 1958:513)

It is not individuals who receive the blessings of the new covenant, but the covenant people as such (cf Heb 3:6); and so while it is true that the new covenant gives to the individual a dignity he did not have before (cf Heb 8:11; 10:19-23), this dignity is based on the fact that it is the individual who determines his role in salvation history according to whether or not he remains faithful to the people of God (Swetnam 1965:381-382). The individual's assurance of future participation in the fulfilment of God's promises is only possible because of the assurance given to the people as a whole (cf Heb 4:9; 8:8,10). For the author of Hebrews, it is not the failure of the new people of God as such that is of concern, but the failure of individual believers to be members of that people because of unbelief and apostasy (cf Heb 3:12-13; 4:1,11).

5.1.5 The believer and the people of God

The heavenly call in which the believer shares (Heb 3:1) is a call common to all believers, believers who are united by their common confession of Christ. There is no multiplicity of calls or multiplicity of Christian confessions. The believer either participates in the one common call which is addressed to all believers and makes with other believers the common

confession of Christ or he does not participate at all. Just as there is only one common call, so there is only one covenant in terms of which believers are bound to God, not as a multiplicity of individuals, but as a people. Covenant means corporate identity, and the believer is only identifiable as such because of what he has in common with other believers as the covenant people of God. God calls and prepares for himself a people who constitute the sons of God, and it is only because there are many sons that the individual believer is identifiable as a son who, with his brethren, will be brought to glory (Heb 2:10).

Just as the heavenly call in which the believer shares is a call common to all believers, so the sabbath rest which remains for the people of God (Heb 4:9) as the goal of their pilgrimage of faith is the common rest of the community of God within the 'kingdom that cannot be shaken' (Heb 12:28). The goal of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God is the same for each individual believer because it is a common goal, and for this reason the faithful of the old covenant (cf Heb 11) could not be made perfect apart from the people of God of the new covenant (Heb 11:39-40). As the pilgrim people of God who strive to enter God's sabbath rest, believers must give expression to their common *κοινωνία* (Heb 13:16) and their common journey through mutual service to each other and to God as his covenant people (cf Heb 12:14-15; 13:16-17).

Thus there is only one call in which believers share, and only one common confession of Christ. There is only one common pilgrimage of the one people of God who have with God a common relationship as sons through the one covenant. There is a common perfection which is the only goal of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God. There is a common sabbath rest which remains for the people of God within the one unshakable kingdom. As the anticipation of and the expression of all these, there is the common *κοινωνία* which consti-

tutes the pleasing sacrifices offered to God by the priesthood in which all believers have a part. Thus the letter to the Hebrews, like the rest of the New Testament, says nothing about a purely personal Christianity. The believer must be in community with other believers, a community which is characterised by its corporate faith, worship, service, and hope.

5.2 The response of the believer to the sacrifice of Christ

5.2.1 Παρηγοία

The heavenly call which is addressed to believers through Jesus as the high priest of Christian confession (Heb 3:1) is also a call to recognise that through the faithfulness of Christ the believer takes his place as a member of the household (οἶκος) of God (Heb 3:6). Because Christ is faithful over the house of God the believer has the assurance of receiving the benefit of Christ's high priestly sacrifice and ministry, that is, free access to God through the high priestly sacrifice of Christ. As a member of the house of God the believer is to hold fast the παρηγοία or confidence which now characterises those who enjoy sonship and who belong to a holy brotherhood (cf Heb 3:1). The confidence that believers have as members of the household of God (Heb 3:6) refers to their conviction or assurance of free access to God through Christ (cf Vorster 1971:57), and it is upon their holding fast to this confidence that their continued membership of the household of God and their sharing in Christ is dependent (Heb 3:6b, 14; 10:35). It is with this same confidence therefore that the believer draws near to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16a), assured of direct and unimpeded access to the throne of grace in time of need. Believers '...have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus' (Heb 10:19), and thus

their *παρρησία* is the direct result of Christ's high priestly sacrifice. Contrary to the believer in the Old Testament, the believer in the new who confesses Christ is free to appear before God without the continuous necessity of a priestly intermediary (cf Vorster 1971:57-58). The benefits of the high priestly sacrifice of Christ applied in the life of the believer call forth from the believer a confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God which carries a reward (Heb 10:35b) and upon which the believer's continued membership of the household of faith and participation in Christ is dependent, and therefore this confidence has as its corollary *ὑπομονή*.

5.2.2 Ὑπομονή

In order to achieve the reward of their *παρρησία* (Heb 10:35), believers have need of *ὑπομονή* (Heb 10:36a). The confession of Christ and faithfulness to that confession have not come easy for the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 10:32). They have had to endure 'a hard struggle with sufferings' in which they were sometimes 'publicly exposed to abuse and affliction' and sometimes 'partners with those so treated' (Heb 10:32b-33). They have also had to accept with joy the plundering of their property (Heb 10:34). The recipients of the epistle are now no longer living as they did in 'the former days' (Heb 10:32a) and are in danger of losing the reward of their *παρρησία*. Therefore they have need of *ὑπομονή*, of endurance which will enable them to do the will of God and thus receive the promised reward (Heb 10:36). The example of the men and women of faith of the Old Testament evokes from believers endurance in the running of the race of Christian pilgrimage (Heb 12:1), endurance which is an imitation of the endurance of both Christ (Heb 12:3) and other Christians (Heb 6:12).

5.2.2.1 The danger of apostasy

The need for endurance on the part of believers arises out of Hebrews' concern that the believers are in danger of falling away from the Christian faith because they are insufficiently anchored in the instruction that has been communicated to them in the past (Thompson 1978:56; cf Heb 13:7; 2:1-4). Believers are in danger of drifting away from what they have heard (Heb 2:1) and neglecting salvation (Heb 2:3a). Therefore they need to take care that they do not have unbelieving hearts which will cause them to fall away from the living God (Heb 3:12) and as a result fail to attain the promised rest (Heb 4:1; cf 4:3, 9-11). Thus believers are urged not to throw away their confidence (Heb 10:35), an act which would be tantamount to apostasy. Despite the reference to 'diverse and strange teachings' leading believers away from the true faith (Heb 13:9), it appears that the problem of apostasy in the epistle to the Hebrews is not so much one of false teaching as one of lapsing back into Judaism (Heb 2:1; 4:1-2; 10:32, 36-38) or of simply stagnating at an early or elementary form of Christian teaching which had been handed down to the recipients of the epistle (Heb 6:1-2, 4-6, 12a; 12:12).

It [Hebrews] never faces the possibility that if, as seems to have happened (12.12-13), these Christians had become lax and discouraged, they might turn to Plato, Stoicism, Epicureanism, emperor worship, a mystery cult, or any other of the many world views and cults which flourished in the first-century Roman world.... Every possible rival to Christ the author chooses from the Jewish background: the angels known from Scripture and active in giving the Law (2.2), Moses (3.2), Joshua (4.8), the high priest (4.14 and often), and the Day of Atonement sacrifices (9.1-10.18).

(Filson 1967:64)

The danger which faced the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews was that of shrinking back (cf Heb 10:38-39) from Christianity into Judaism or the failure

to grow towards Christian maturity. The author of Hebrews understands sin as the weakening of faith rather than as wilful disobedience or actual deeds (Dinkler 1962:575). The disobedience and rebellion of Israel consisted of their unbelief (Heb 3:16-19; 4:6), the result of which was their failure to enter the promised sabbath rest of God (Heb 3:18; 4:6) and so achieve the goal of their pilgrimage of faith. The New Testament believer too can fail to enter this sabbath rest and fail to achieve the goal of his pilgrimage of faith through unbelief, which is in essence no different from disobedience (Heb 3:12; 4:11). Such unbelief is not so much the denial of Christ but the failure to continue to move ahead towards perfection in one's pilgrimage of faith.

Rebellion need not necessarily involve a deliberate turning away from God in favour of other gods, but can be merely the failure on the part of the people of God to run with confidence and endurance the race that is set before them (Heb 12:1b). Thus the warning originally addressed to Israel is addressed even more so to the believer: 'Today, [note the emphatic position of "today"] when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion' (Heb 3:7b-8a; 3:15; 4:7b). The hardening of the heart is quite simply shrinking back from the faith and the failure to realise the goal of Christian pilgrimage (Lewis 1976:92).

In Hebrews 5:12 there is a distinction made between the words of God for those who are perfect, words for beginners, and also therefore words for those who are making progress (cf Luther 1968:179). The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews need to hear the appropriate word which would enable them to make progress in their pilgrimage of faith, and thus the only answer to apostasy is to leave behind 'the elementary doctrine of Christ' and grow towards Christian maturity (Heb 6:1). The recipients of the epistle had become 'dull of hearing' (Heb 5:11b) and in need of someone to teach

them again 'the first principles of God's word' (Heb 5:12b). They ought, by this time, to have been teachers of this word (Heb 5:12a), but were still themselves in need of instruction. Not yet ready for the 'solid food' of the mature they were still in need of 'milk' as the food of those who are as yet 'unskilled in the word of righteousness' (Heb 5:13-14). The 'milk' needed by the recipients of the epistle is a word which does not have as its subject 'the elementary doctrine of Christ' (Heb 6:1a) but rather encouragement in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God as the way to Christian maturity (Heb 10:25b; cf 3:13a).

If apostasy consists of stagnation in one's pilgrimage of faith and lapsing back into Judaism, the answer to apostasy consists of making progress in one's pilgrimage of faith through paying 'closer attention' (Heb 2:1) to the 'first principles of God's word' (Heb 5:12b) and 'the elementary doctrine of Christ' (Heb 6:1a) as the means through which one is enlightened (Heb 10:32a). Thus believers do, in one sense, need to go back to the basics of Christianity, not as a regressive movement within one's pilgrimage of faith, but as the means of providing the necessary impetus for one's progression towards Christian maturity and perfection.

5.2.3 The call to Christian maturity

5.2.3.1 Obedience

The impetus provided for the believer's pilgrimage of faith by his former enlightenment (Heb 10:32a) implies an obedience to the word which exhorts the believer to endure in that pilgrimage. The means by which this word of exhortation is spoken to the believer is the 'sprinkled blood' (Heb 12:24b) of the high priestly sacrifice of Christ and of his ministry as mediator of a new covenant (Heb 12:24a; cf 9:15-22).

The One who now speaks this word of exhortation and who is not to be refused (Heb 12:25) is now not so much the Son as *locus* of a fulfilled revelation through whom God addresses his last word to man (Heb 1:2a), but rather Jesus as exalted high priest who speaks from the eternal sanctuary (cf Montefiore 1964:234). The thrice repeated warning 'Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts' (Heb 3:7b-8a; 3:15; 4:7b) refers in particular to this word of exhortation spoken by the exalted Jesus as high priest and mediator of a new covenant (Heb 12:24) and is therefore a warning against the failure of believers to be the covenant people of God. An understanding of the sacrifice of Christ implies that sacrifice should be the true expression of a life of obedience to the divine will, and it is the complete and utter self-offering as gift in its highest and most perfect form that gives expression to the absolute obedience of Christ (Heb 5:8; 10:7,9). As sacrifices which receive their meaning from the sacrifice of Christ the believer's sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15) and his sacrifices of doing good and *κοινωνία* (Heb 13:16) must arise out of a life of true obedience. Just as Christ was faithful over God's house as Son (Heb 3:2,6a), so believers, in imitation of Christ, are to be faithful within God's house as sons. If the author of Hebrews understands sin as the weakening of faith rather than as wilful disobedience or actual deeds and the disobedience and rebellion of Israel is equated with their unbelief (Heb 3:16-19; 4:6), then it follows that obedience and faithfulness to the word of salvation are synonymous. If the Christian believer falls away from the teaching he has received, he is, like Israel, guilty of disobedience (Heb 3:12; 4:11). Thus unbelief and disobedience are essentially the same - the failure of the believer to continue to move ahead towards perfection in his pilgrimage of faith and to run with confidence and endurance the race that is set before him (Heb 12:1b).

In the West today, while conversions to other religions are on the increase, the danger which confronts believers is primarily that of disobedience through the weakening of faith and the failure of believers to make progress in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God, that is, apostasy. Western man has, like the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews, simply failed to make progress in the Christian life, and in so failing identifies himself with the rebellion of Israel in the wilderness (Heb 3:16-19). The task of the church, especially in the West, is one of setting before men an invitation to obedience. Such obedience must be proclaimed as a response to, rather than as a condition of, God's love, and proclaimed with a sense of urgency since the Day is drawing near (Heb 10:25b) when Christ '...will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him' (Heb 9:28b). Christian preaching must therefore be eschatological, setting before man the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God and the obedience as the result of which man takes his place as a member of this people.

To many in the modern world the statement that unbelief is sin seems to be a hard saying, but it is the consistent biblical point of view. Men...resist the Christian gospel because it makes a demand upon them; atheism is often the rationalization of the refusal to face the challenge of obedience. 'It is so hard to believe,' said Kierkegaard, 'because it is so hard to obey.'

(Richardson 1958:31)

5.2.3.2 Discipline

The word of exhortation spoken by the exalted Jesus as high priest and mediator of a new covenant is not only a call to obedience, but also a word of warning against the failure of believers to endure the discipline that is theirs as sons. Discipline and sonship cannot be separated (Heb 12:5-6; cf Pr 3:11-12), and

therefore the call to endure addressed to believers as sons is also of necessity the call to discipline (Heb 12:7). The identity of believers as sons depends precisely upon their being subject to discipline (Heb 12:8), and thus the failure of the believer to endure discipline has as its consequence the abrogation of his status as a son. Without this discipline progress in the believer's pilgrimage of faith becomes impossible (cf Heb 12:10), and the believer becomes apostate as one who failed to endure and bring forth 'the peaceful fruit of righteousness' (Heb 12:11b) which is sharing in the holiness of God (Heb 12:10b).

5.2.3.3 Τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῶν ἀγῶνα [Heb 12:1]

The call to Christian maturity which is not to be refused (Heb 12:25) is the call to run with ὑπομονή the ἀγών set before us (Heb 12:1b). 'Αγών means 'a contest for a prize at the games' (Bream 1969:150) and was the regular word used to describe an athletic contest. The great 'cloud of witnesses' (Heb 12:1a) are the great men and women of faith of the old covenant (cf Heb 11) who, having run the race themselves, are not mere spectators of the running of believers in the present, but bear witness to participation in the promises of God (cf Heb 11:39-40) as both the goal and prize of the race now run by believers. As those who have themselves run the race they take their place with the believers '...who through faith and patience inherit the promises' (Heb. 6:12) and who serve as examples of endurance worthy of imitation. The sin which must be laid aside by those who participate in this ἀγών is not the sin of apostasy, which would disqualify the believer from participating at all (Heb 10:26), but sin as that which was put away by Christ (Heb 9:26b) and which impedes man in his pilgrimage (cf Montefiore 1964:214). This running of the race set before us is therefore our participation in salvation (Heb 9:28b), perfection (Heb

10:14), and holiness (Heb 12:14), without which we cannot take our place among the saints (Heb 3:1) in the immovable kingdom (Heb 12:28) and the city which is to come (Heb 13:14).

5.3 The goal of the Christian life

5.3.1 The glory of the sons of God

In the previous chapter (cf sec 3.3 The goal of the perfecting of the believer) perfection as the goal of the believers' pilgrimage of faith has already been discussed. God's purpose for his sons is to lead them 'to glory' (Heb 2:10), their glorification being the attainment of the goal of their pilgrimage of faith, which is their ultimate perfection. With this focus on the glorification of the sons Hebrews stresses the coming of the end: 'in these last days' God has spoken to us by a Son (Heb 1:1) to whom God has 'subjected the world to come' (Heb 2:5; cf 2:8), and those who believe in the Son have already tasted 'the powers of the age to come' (Heb 6:5). The sons already share the glory of the Son, who '...will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him' (Heb 9:28b), those who wait for him being the faithful of the old covenant (Heb 11:39-40) as well as the faithful of the new who have already received 'a kingdom that cannot be shaken' (Heb 12:28a) and who 'seek the city which is to come' (Heb 13:14) as the true home of the pilgrim people of God. The eschatology of Hebrews sets before believers the 'today' (cf Heb 3:7, 15; 4:7) of decision as the time of definite transition from the old aeon to the new. In this 'today' of decision believers are confronted with the future action of God in the appearance of Christ a second time to consummate his work of salvation, a consummation in which believers proleptically share. This certainty of the fulfilment of God's promises means that Christians

should dissociate themselves from the world and live as strangers upon the earth (cf Heb 11:13) because Christ has already 'appeared once for all at the end of the age' (Heb 9:26). Thus faith and hope are the obverse and reverse of the same coin (cf Heb 6:11; 10:22), and both have as their subject the promises of God and are therefore conditioned by the future. Christian preaching must therefore be eschatological. Christian eschatology is not speculative, but rather sets before believers their glory as sons.

The call for Christians to dissociate themselves from the world and live as strangers upon the earth (cf Heb 11:13) should not be interpreted as a call to radical asceticism. The dissociation from the world to which the Christian is called must be seen in the light of Christ's participation in the human situation - it is precisely in becoming like his brethren (Heb 2:17) that Christ is qualified to perform his high priestly work. Not only is his ministry dependent upon his own sufferings and temptations (Heb 4:15; 5:7), but '...unless he was fully human, he could not be the representative of men; and it was in this representative capacity that he became a merciful and faithful high priest in relation to God' (Montefiore 1964:67). The dissociation from the world to which the Christian is called involves the recognition that this world is not the true home or final destiny of the faithful. It involves the recognition that the life of the Christian cannot be conditioned by the standards and values of this world, but rather that the life of the Christian is 'with God' in the eternal sanctuary (Heb 10:19) and that the Christian life is therefore conditioned by the standards and values of the Kingdom. Rather than a withdrawal from life, the dissociation from the world that is required from the Christian involves a participation in life to the fullest, but a participation in life which is conditioned by the Kingdom and which involves the rejection of the standards and values of

this world as a world which rejects both the presence and salvation of the incarnate Christ. The Christian life is therefore a life which must be lived eschatologically - a life in which the promises of the Kingdom and the consummation are actualised in the life of the believer.

The perfection of believers and their sanctification are very closely related. It is not the resurrection but the exaltation of Christ that is stressed in the theology of Hebrews, and it is in the exaltation of Christ that believers participate as those who are sanctified. The use of the aorist indicative passive ἡγιάσθη (Heb 10:29) makes it clear that this sanctification is a divine work and therefore a work in which the believer plays no active part. The glory of the sons is that they are both ἡγιασμένοι (Heb 10:10) and ἁγιαζόμενοι (Heb 2:11), and that they share in the glorification of the Son. God is glorified because his people endure in their pilgrimage of faith and inherit the promises (cf Heb 6:12) of participation in the glorious kingdom. The life of the believer and of the community of faith must therefore give expression to this glory which is their inheritance as sons and which sets them apart as strangers and exiles in this present age, bearing witness to their true home in the eternal kingdom.

5.3.2 The κατάπαυσις (σαββατισμός) of the people of God

The goal of the Christian life which is set before believers in the exaltation of Christ is that they enter the 'sabbath rest' (Heb 4:9) of God (cf Heb 3:11; 3:18-4:11). The consummation of faith and of the Christian life is the believers' participation in that rest which God himself has enjoyed ever since he completed his works of creation and rested on the seventh day (cf Gn 2:2). In Psalm 95:11 (Heb 3:7-11) 'my rest'

is simply the land of Canaan, but the author of Hebrews interprets the 'rest' of Psalm 95:11 in the light of Genesis 2:2 (where κατέπαυσεν is used in LXX) as God's own rest, in which it was his purpose that his people should share. In spite of the failure of those to whom the promise was first made, who because of their unbelief (cf Heb 3:19) were not able to enter God's rest, the promise of entering that rest still remains (Heb 4:6; cf 4:1-3). While εἰσερχόμεθα (Heb 4:3) was previously understood as a futuristic present (cf the Vulgate *ingrediemur*) it should rather be seen as a true present, giving the sense 'we are on the way into' (cf the New Vulgate *ingredimur*), hence its emphatic position and contrast in the same verse with εἰσελεύσονται. When the pilgrim people of God do attain the promised rest of God (Heb 4:1, 6, 9, 11), their exertion is at an end, for it is a σαββατισμός or 'sabbath rest' (σαββατισμός being found only here in the Greek scriptures and possibly a word coined by the author of Hebrews). Thus '...whoever enters God's rest also ceases (κατέπαυσεν) from his labours (ἔργων) as God did from his' (Heb 4:9-10). Nothing more is said about the nature of this rest, but it is certainly not a state of complete inactivity. The labours from which the pilgrim people of God are to cease when they enter God's rest are the labours associated with pilgrimage, that is, their work of endurance and growth towards Christian maturity. The sabbath rest of God means for the pilgrim people of God that they share in that satisfaction and repose which God himself enjoyed at the completion of his creative work. Humanity will again enjoy that perfect communion with God that was in the beginning. The people of God will no longer be concerned with pilgrimage, and will thus be free of encumbrances which, for the time being, prevent them from offering to God perfection of worship which is his due.

5.4 Concluding remarks

The priestly function of all believers is by implication a part of the theology of Hebrews, and the confession of the Christ of Hebrews calls to mind not only the exalted Christ as high priest but also the priesthood of believers and the hope of the Christian faith, which is the perfection of the saints as the culmination and goal of their pilgrimage. The individual believer finds his identity only in being a member of the covenant people whom God has bound to himself in a unique relationship. The sanctification of the believer as a member of the covenant people enables the believer to enter the sabbath rest of God, and the believer determines his role in salvation history according to whether or not he remains faithful as a member of the people of God. The heavenly call in which the believer shares is a call common to all believers, just as the sabbath rest which remains for the people of God as the goal of their pilgrimage of faith is the common rest of the community of God within the 'kingdom that cannot be shaken'. As a member of the house of God the believer is to hold fast the confidence which now characterises those who enjoy sonship and who belong to a holy brotherhood, a confidence which has as its corollary perseverance. The pilgrimage of the people of God presents the believer with the danger of apostasy, which is not so much the denial of Christ but the failure to continue to move ahead towards perfection in one's pilgrimage of faith, the failure on the part of the believer to run with confidence and endurance the race that is set before him. The call to endure is a call to grow towards maturity in the Christian faith through the obedience of sonship as well as a word of warning against the failure of believers to endure the discipline that is theirs as sons, for discipline and sonship cannot be separated. The goal of the Christian life, which can only be realised through endurance and

discipline, is the glorification of the sons of God,
apart from which they cannot enter the sabbath rest of
God which is their promised inheritance.

CHAPTER 6

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The various aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry and their significance for the believer and the community of faith have been considered in depth. It remains for us to summarise the foregoing and draw our conclusions.

6.1 The high priestly office of Christ

Christ is personally qualified to hold a unique high priestly office because of the inherent superiority of his person and being. He performs a unique function within the revelatory scheme of God as the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation, superior to both the angels and Moses. This unique function and superiority are the foundation of his sonship, and it is specifically as Son that Christ is the mode of God's new and ultimate act of speaking to man, and therefore his sonship and his office as high priest are contiguous upon each other. God's new and ultimate act of speaking to man takes place through the Son as the agent through whom the created order of this present age came into being and as the bearer of divine glory within the created order, and is indicative of a progression from promise to fulfilment, from the imperfect and temporal to the perfect and eternal. Because nothing can be perfect until its purpose is fulfilled by being in subjection to Christ, the people of God is a pilgrim people involved in a pilgrimage from weakness and apostasy to perseverance in the faith and the attainment of perfection in Christ. This attainment of perfection on the part of the people of God consists in part in receiving a share of the material and spiritual estate of God through Christ as heir of all things, 'all things'

embracing not only the created order of this present age but also the world to come.

As heir to the material and spiritual estate of God, Christ is superior to the angels and Moses, not only as heir of all things, but also and especially as the Son through whom the created order came into being. Thus the Son is not, like the angels, a servant of the cause of salvation, but the ἀρχηγός of salvation, and it is as such that he takes his place at the right hand of God because he is the unique Son of God who shared and shares in our human nature. In becoming like his brethren, Christ, the Son and pioneer of salvation, must of necessity be incarnate in order to fulfil his high priestly ministry both on the human and on the God-ward side. This fulfilment of Christ's high priestly ministry is dependent upon his sufferings and temptations during the time of his incarnation which is the foundation of the believer's participation in the pilgrimage of the people of God from weakness and apostasy to perseverance and perfection. Christ is faithful in fulfilling his high priestly office, and his exaltation to the right hand of God is God's recognition of the faithfulness of Christ in his twofold office of apostleship and priesthood. Not only does Christ fulfil in his humanity the formal qualification for the Levitical high priesthood, that is, divine appointment, but he also fulfils the requirements for a priesthood superior to that of the Levitical order - a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek which is according to a divine oath which has never been revoked and which has as its basis the power of an indestructible life. This superior high priestly office has as its foundation and culmination a superior high priestly sacrifice.

6.2 The high priestly sacrifice of Christ

The superior high priestly sacrifice of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is the sacrifice of One who

is the fulfiller and fulfilment of the Old Testament cult, whose sacrifice fulfils the essential forms of Old Testament sacrifice - sacrifice as gift; sacrifice as communion; and sacrifice as atoning for guilt. As such the sacrifice of Christ fulfils both the form and content of the sacrificial code of Leviticus 1-7 and the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16.

Christ, like every high priest chosen from among men, is chosen in order that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sin, and therefore the sacrifice of Christ must be understood as gift to God. The self-offering of Christ constitutes gift in its highest and most perfect form, gift in which the gift and the giver are one. This self-offering on the part of Christ embodies the true nature of gift as obedience, obedience in which the divine will is discovered experientially within the warp and woof of human existence. The sacrifice of Christ is not only a gift to God but also communion with God, and though the author of Hebrews does not specifically interpret the sacrifice of Christ as a communion sacrifice in the Levitical sense, elements of Christ's sacrifice do give expression to the essential nature of the communion sacrifice of Leviticus. Christ reveals the true nature of communion with God as that of a life of faithfulness and obedience to the divine will, faithfulness and obedience which are characteristic of the sacrifice of praise that the believer is to offer to God. The sacrifice of Christ is, further, a sacrifice for purification for sins and the purifying of the believer. As an expiatory sacrifice the sacrifice of Christ is, unlike sacrifices atoning for guilt under the old order, essentially once for all, but nevertheless continuous in its application to men. The sacrifice of Christ as gift to God, as communion with God, and especially as atoning for guilt, constitutes the fulfilment of not only the sacrificial code of Leviticus, but also of the covenant rite of Exodus 24. Therefore the blood of Christ shed in sac-

rifice has not only atoning value, but covenantal consecratory significance. Thus the sacrifice of Christ becomes, in addition to the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial code, a covenant inaugurating event.

Christ not only fulfils the sacrificial code of the Old Testament but is able to offer what the former high priests could not offer - his own blood through the sacrifice of himself - and it is this that makes a repeated sacrifice unnecessary, making the sacrifice of Christ once for all. Consequently Christ's sacrifice becomes that unique action which alone can finally and ultimately put away sin, and therefore which alone can purify the conscience from sin and effect the sprinkling clean of the heart, enabling the believer to share in the holiness of Christ and in an eternal redemption. Further, Christ is not only the sacrifice and the sacrificer, but also sin-bearer, thus fulfilling in his high priestly ministry and sacrifice the ministry of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. In all this the author of Hebrews lays great stress on the significance of blood, without the shedding of which there is no forgiveness of sins, and the witness borne by the blood of Christ to the final and ultimate putting away of sin and the participation of the believer in the new covenant of grace. While Hebrews lays great stress on the blood of Christ (Heb 9:11-14; 10:19, 29; 12:24; 13:12), the incarnation (cf Heb 2:11, 14, 16-17) is of fundamental importance for understanding Christ's self-offering upon the cross. The sacrifice of Christ, as the means of establishing communion with God (cf Heb 10:14), must be understood within the context of the whole of his incarnate life, and therefore as the culmination of Christ's incarnation and high priestly ministry on earth.

In the light of his superior high priestly sacrifice the form and progression of Christ's high priestly ministry logically fall into place.

6.3 The high priestly ministry of Christ

The ministry of Christ is both a ministry before God and a ministry among men, which sets before men both the present and the eschatological dimension of their salvation. Christ is the $\tau\omega\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\nu\ \lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{o}\varsigma$ who has entered once for all the heavenly Holy Place and who sits at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. As a ministry both before God and among men the superior ministry of Christ is a ministry of the superior covenant and has as its goal the progression and consummation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God.

The complete and utter self-offering of Christ which constitutes gift in its highest and most perfect form is a part of the *continuum* of the self-giving of Christ in ministry which secures proleptically for believers their status as sons. The ministry of Christ has place of primacy as *the* word among the many ways in which God's speaking to man takes place, the content of which is the message of salvation - the good news of God's gift to man and the invitation to man to draw near to the throne of grace and receive as gift from Christ participation in both sonship and perfection. The believer's participation in sonship is effected through Christ who, as the Son, is the firstborn of many sons. He establishes a union of brotherhood in which the believer shares with Christ in a kingdom that cannot be shaken. This participation in sonship on the part of the believer is the realisation of the connection between God and man established through the ministry of Christ as a ministry of communion, and thus believers have full participation, and therefore communion, in the self-offering of Christ and in sanctification. It follows, then, that the ministry of Christ, like his sacrifice, is expiatory in nature - a ministry to the believer of the covering and setting aside of sin. The ministry of Christ as the covering and set-

ting aside of sin is a ministry of the new covenant, inaugurated by Christ, as the context of Christ's high priestly sacrifice and as the mode of his expiatory and redemptive work. Hence the ministry of Christ is the fulfilment of the new covenant foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, but a new covenant which has as its foundation not law but sonship. Christ is both mediator and surety of this new covenant. He is mediator for God as the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation, and mediator for man as *the* Man who appears in heaven on man's behalf. He is surety to man on behalf of God that the saving work of God will be consummated in the perfecting of his people, and therefore God's pledge of the fulfilment of his promises. The covenant formula 'I will be their God' becomes, through the ministry of Christ, an invitation to men and women to be the covenant people of God.

The ministry of Christ is the inauguration of the eternal kingdom, the final consummation of which is both anticipated and achieved, thus effecting for believers their sonship and status as joint heirs with Christ of the material and spiritual estate of God. Christ, as pioneer of salvation, has blazed the trail of salvation along which believers are led to their glorification. Believers, through the ministry of Christ, share a heavenly call, the call to be made perfect through Christ as the source of eternal salvation who secures for believers their perfection. The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Majesty on high does not mark the cessation of the ministry of Christ, rather his ministry continues through time, continually shaping and giving impetus to the pilgrimage of faith of the believer. Christ continues to communicate himself to man and to make intercession on behalf of man, the goal of which is the ultimate salvation of those whom he represents. The believer is proleptically perfected because Christ, the forerunner for us, is already made perfect. Thus the future perfec-

tion of believers is not only anticipated but is already being brought to consummation in the present, giving the believers' participation in the ministry of Christ a note of urgency.

The eschatology of Hebrews points both to the future action of God in the coming of Christ at the time of the παρουσία and to the present as the time of definite transition from the old aeon to the new and final aeon in the history of salvation. Believers must dissociate themselves from the world for they are essentially strangers and exiles upon earth. As such believers share in the ministry of Christ as a ministry which is continuous through time, a ministry which is the fulfilment of the promise of God to his people Israel. But the faithful of old did not receive what was promised, having to wait for the perfection of the new people of God in Christ for the fulfilment of the promises of God in time past. God is faithful in the fulfilment of his promises, and believers become faithful only as they respond to this faithfulness on God's part. The believers' imitation of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God is first and foremost the imitation of Christ. Through the ministry of Christ as a ministry to and among men, believers are being made perfect in the present, and as such can be called ὁγιαζόμενοι.

6.4 The high priestly perfection of Christ

The high priestly ministry of Christ has as its culmination and goal the consummation of the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God, which is their perfection as sons. Nothing can be perfect in any sense of the word τέλειος until its purpose is fulfilled by being in subjection to Christ as the τελειωτής of the faith of the people of God. Because he himself is made perfect, Christ becomes the source of salvation to all who obey him and brings humanity to perfection.

The appointment of Christ as high priest is the appointment of One who is holy, blameless, unstained, and separated from sinners despite his participation in the human situation. Christ as man is made τέλειος when he reaches his celestial τέλος and is glorified in heaven; therefore the perfecting of Christ is integral to his humiliation and suffering, his exaltation, and his high priestly ministry as a ministry exercised both on earth and in heaven. Christ is Son already during the period of his incarnation, his exaltation and perfection being inherent in and anticipated in his humiliation. Likewise Christ's high priesthood is also inherent in his earthly life: his entry upon his heavenly high priestly office begins with his sacrificial death, and thus his sacrificial death is already a component of his heavenly high priesthood. Christ becomes high priest by proving and accrediting himself as Son, and his exaltation as high priest arises out of his humiliation, which is essentially his humiliation as Son, and thus the incarnation becomes a soteriological necessity for the fulfilling of Christ's high priestly ministry. Christ is made like his brethren in every respect so that the sympathy he exercises in his high priestly ministry, and which qualifies him to be high priest, may be a sympathy 'learned' through his earthly experience. Because Christ has fulfilled his ministry as high priest on earth, he is now exalted high priest in heaven.

The perfecting of Christ is a perfecting through suffering and the learning of obedience: Christ must as high priest realise his own perfection through the living of a real human life in order to lead humanity to perfection. By learning obedience through suffering, the Son takes his obedience to the point beyond which it cannot be taken any further. As the One who is perfected through learning obedience, Christ becomes not only the source of eternal salvation but also the source of perfect obedience for those who follow him as

the pilgrim people of God. As the pioneer of salvation, Christ himself first participates in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God and in so doing establishes the content and goal of that pilgrimage. God's purpose for the many sons is to lead them to glory, and this he does by the perfecting of the Son, Jesus. As pioneer and perfecter of the faith of the people of God, Christ exercises a better priesthood than that of the old order, through which he serves in the greater and more perfect tent, mediating a better covenant. Through this superior ministry, which culminates in his perfect self-offering, Christ brings believers to perfection as sons of God. The perfection of believers is the ultimate confirmation of their calling and their status as sons, and as such they are perfected by the very actions and accomplishments through which Christ was perfected, and not by any actions or accomplishments of their own. The Son, as perfected high priest, secures perfection for the many sons who follow him as the pilgrim people of God, and it is on this basis alone that believers can be called τέλειοι, whose perfection depends solely upon their relationship with the ἀγιῶν.

6.5 The high priesthood of Christ, the believer, and the community of faith

The author of Hebrews does not explicitly refer to the believer as a priest or the believers as constituting a priesthood, but the priestly function of all believers is by implication an integral part of his theology. The response of believers to the high priesthood of Christ is their participation in the pilgrimage of faith of the people of God, in which they offer their continual sacrifice of praise to God. Christ shares in the nature of humanity and as such is the *locus* of a heavenly call which is a call to share in the common priesthood of all believers. Consequently believers

share in the priesthood of Christ, and the high priesthood of Christ becomes the foundation of the priesthood of all believers. The believers' participation in this priesthood is contingent upon their confession of Christ as high priest, which, as the foundation of Christian hope, sets before believers perfection as the culmination and goal of their pilgrimage of faith. Believers participate in this pilgrimage not as individuals, but only as the people of the covenant. The heavenly call in which the believer shares is a call common to all believers, and the individual receives his identity from that which characterises all believers in common, that is, their participation in the covenant as the covenant people of God. The goal of the believers' pilgrimage of faith is therefore the same for each individual believer, that is, perfection and the sabbath rest of the people of God in the immovable kingdom.

Because of the faithfulness of Christ, as high priest, believers have the assurance of receiving the benefits of his high priestly sacrifice and ministry, and therefore are to hold fast the *παρρησία* with which they draw near to the throne of grace and upon which their continued membership of the household of faith and their participation in Christ is dependent. The corollary of this *παρρησία* is *ὑπομονή*, not only in the face of hardships which result from believers' fidelity to the faith, but also in the face of apostasy which consists of drifting away from the message they have heard and neglecting salvation. The disobedience and rebellion of believers, like the disobedience and rebellion of Israel, can quite simply consist of the failure to grow towards Christian maturity and to run with endurance the race that is set before them. The call to Christian maturity and to run with endurance the race that is set before them evokes from believers obedience, which in Hebrews is synonymous with faithfulness. Such obedience implies discipline which is

the confirmation of the sonship of believers because it is the discipline which God imposes upon his sons in order that they may be corrected and better equipped for their pilgrimage of faith. Because they are obedient and disciplined, believers can run the race set before them, a race which is their participation in salvation, perfection, and holiness, and through which they take their place among the saints in the eschatological kingdom.

God's purpose for his sons is to lead them to glory in the eternal kingdom through the glorification of the Son. The eternal kingdom is characterised by the sabbath rest of God in which believers cease from the labours of pilgrimage and endurance and share in the repose of God at the completion of his creative work which, ultimately, is the subjection of all things to Christ and the perfection of those who take their place in the city which is to come.

6.6 Conclusion: the high priesthood of Christ and the witness of the church in South Africa today

In these last days, God has spoken not only to first century man but also to South African Christianity in and through the Son. This act of speaking in and through the Son represents the divine initiative in the church's task of addressing the socio-political situation in which the church finds itself in South Africa today. Many actions within the church are reactions to society outside the church, and to some extent this is acceptable, but there is a danger of the church becoming reactionary, and especially so when the church is reactionary to the extent where it loses its initiative and can only speak and act in response to social attitudes and pressures. The centrality of the Son in God's act of speaking to the church in South Africa means that the church cannot allow itself to be moulded structurally or ethically by prevailing social condi-

tions and mood. For this reason the church in South Africa cannot be content to be separated racially, ethnically, culturally, economically, or along any other lines. Membership of the church means that we turn our backs on earthly categories of race, nationality, sex, and social status and receive a new identity as members of a holy nation whose homeland is in heaven and who seek to make present in our common life on earth our convictions about our common life in the city which is to come.

If the speaking of the church to the socio-political situation is to be an authentic expression of God's speaking to man in and through the Son, that speaking must bear witness to the divine initiative in the interaction between church and society. This means that the church addresses the issue of, for example, *apartheid* not in response to government policy, but on the grounds of the divine initiative in which the unity of believers in Christ as high priest is established. Racial prejudice, or in fact any kind of prejudice, is an issue which must be addressed by the church because it sets before men a false sense of security and social well-being. Personal security and social well-being are, for the racially and ethnically prejudiced, only to be found in one's racial and national identity, rather than in the sonship which results from the high priestly sacrifice and ministry of the Son. The issue which must be faced by the church is that prejudice is not only a problem of white attitudes toward blacks, or of black attitudes toward whites, but that it is also a problem of attitudes between white ethnic groups and, likewise, between black ethnic groups. The political philosophy of the Conservative Party, the *Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging*, the *Afrikaner Volkswag*, and others, is one of Afrikaner unity in an exclusively Afrikaner state, a philosophy which excludes even the participation of whites who do not wish to share the cultural and political identity of the Afrikaner. The political

history of Africa over the past decades shows that black nationalism is really no different to white or Afrikaner nationalism, and that nationalism is concerned essentially with the accumulation of power. The violence in the black residential areas over the past few years has been for the most part violence perpetrated by blacks against blacks in a power struggle for the control of black political life.

The task of the church is to proclaim that personal security and social well-being are to be found only in the sonship made available through the Son, Jesus Christ. *Apartheid*, and in fact any expression of prejudice, whether formalised on the statute books or not, must therefore be addressed by the church. In essence, the problem with segregation is that it denies the believer complete freedom of association with other believers. Authentic freedom of association and therefore authentic unity between the sons of God cannot take place in any social system where that freedom excludes the freedom of worshipping together, of living together, of engaging in economic enterprise together, or of open debate together on the socio-political witness of the church. The issues of the Group Areas Act and the Group Areas Amendment Bill, currently a problem in Parliament, must therefore be on the church's agenda, as must the question of partition and the self-governing national states that have been created under the present political system, the desegregation of residential areas, business districts, education, and other public facilities. What is at stake here for believers is that questions of colour and national and ethnic identity become more important than that of their common sonship in Christ for determining patterns of social interaction.

As the *locus* of a fulfilled revelation the Son is the appointed heir of all things to whom has been ceded the material and spiritual estate of God. Because the material and spiritual estate of God embraces both the

created order and the world to come, the socio-political witness of the church must be a witness to the fact that the earth is the Lord's, and therefore a witness which offers a critique of both the social and political environment within which the church finds itself. The danger that the church faces in the current situation in South Africa is that, because of the polarisation that has taken place in South African society, the church too can become polarised and thereby become a political entity over against other political movements or become the servant of a particular political movement or philosophy. This is precisely the problem which the Dutch Reformed Church has had to face in recent years. Having aligned itself with the political identity and aspirations of the Afrikaner, particularly during the turbulent decades at the beginning of this century when the Afrikaner was striving for political and economic expression, the Dutch Reformed Church is now in the crucible of expressing its independence from Afrikaner political ideologies. It has in recent times had to re-examine its attitudes towards *apartheid*, admission of people of other races to worship and church membership, and the ethical problem of chaplains serving with the South African Defence Force in Angola. The English speaking churches and African Independent Churches need to take note, for the danger of becoming aligned to political movements in their opposition to *apartheid*, the state of emergency, unjust legislation in the interests of state security, and the denial of meaningful political rights to blacks may well result in churches becoming unwitting servants of a particular political ideology or nationalism. Just as the Dutch Reformed Church found itself unable to offer a critique of the policies of the National Party, other churches may find themselves unable to offer a critique of the policies of the African National Congress, AZAPO, the United Democratic Front, liberation theology, or black nationalism.

That the material and spiritual estate of God embraces both the created order and the world to come means that there cannot be a radical separation between the world to come and the socio-political situation in the South Africa of today. What the church believes about the world to come it must bear witness to within the present socio-political order, for the world to come is proleptically present in the here and now of the church's life and ministry. For this reason the church must be opposed to forced removals, detention without trial, the silencing of the press and opponents of government policy, the banning of people and organisations, all of which take place without a basic recognition of human rights and recourse to a court of law. The church must witness to society in the same way that the church witnesses to the individual, that is, the church witnesses to society because of its potential and what society can be in Christ, and therefore must in its witness, life and ministry set before and within society the Kingdom of God, which is the material and spiritual estate of God given to man through the heir Jesus Christ. But the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are not one and the same, and therefore the Kingdom of God cannot merely be conceived of in terms of a new socio-political order. While the church cannot engage in the proclamation of the *kerygma* without its programmes for social upliftment, it equally cannot offer programmes of social upliftment without the direct and explicit proclamation of the *kerygma*. Between these two poles the socio-political witness of the church must take place. The proclamation of the Kingdom and the church's work for the Kingdom must set before society the 'world to come', and yet at the same time must be expressed in a concrete way within the present socio-political and economic order.

The high priesthood of Christ involves the church, as the pilgrim people of God, in witness to the cause

and goal of their pilgrimage. The perfection of the people of God as sons must be demonstrated in their common life together, a life which sets before this transient world the unshakable Kingdom, and therefore the witness of the church cannot avoid the socio-political issues faced in South Africa. It is in these very issues that society and the Kingdom are seen to be at odds with each other, and thus it is in these same issues that believers experience their conflict with the world. It is here that believers must dissociate themselves from the world, not by means of withdrawal or escapism, but by their rejection of the standards and values of this world, by their refusal to have their beliefs and actions conditioned by this world, and by their witness to the city which is to come as the true source of Christian social interaction.

APPENDIX

COMMENTS ON TEXTUAL VARIANTS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The following brief comments on textual variants in the epistle to the Hebrews are presented in order to support the adoption of one reading against another for the purpose of exegesis and theological comment in the body of the thesis. The following variant readings reflect only those instances where the writer of the thesis feels that the adoption of one or another of the alternatives could be of significance for exegetical and theological comment.

1 HEBREWS 1:3

The more significant manuscript evidence for the variant readings can be tabulated as follows:

τῆς δυνάμεως is followed by -

1 αὐτοῦ in * A B 33 81 and various other witnesses.

2 δι' ἑαυτοῦ (or αὐ- or αὐ-) in P⁴⁶ 1739 *Byz Lect*, amongst others.

3 αὐτοῦ δι' ἑαυτοῦ (or αὐ-) in D^{gr}* K L and most minuscules.

The reading in 3 above is almost certainly a conflation of the other two readings and is therefore to be disregarded. The reading in 2 above, although having significant manuscript support in P⁴⁶ 1739 and *Byz Lect*, probably arose as a means of enhancing the middle ποιησάμενος. The reading in 1 above, represented by the Alexandrian text and some Western witnesses, would then be preferred on the grounds of both being the shorter reading and being the reading which would be most difficult to account for as an emendation of either of the other two.

2 HEBREWS 2:9

In place of *κἀριτι θεοῦ* (P⁴⁶ * A B C D K 33 81 *Byz Lect*) a number of texts (0121b 1739* among others) and Eastern and Western Fathers read *χωρίς θεοῦ*. The variant reading *χωρίς* could have arisen (1) as a scribal lapse - a misreading of *κἀριτι*; (2) as a marginal gloss explaining *πάντα* in Hebrews 2:8 as not including God, the marginal gloss being taken as a correction by later copyists and introduced into the text of verse 9. Although *χωρίς* is the more difficult reading, *κἀριτι* is to be preferred on the grounds of strong support from both the Alexandrian and Western texts. It must be noted, however, that Origen (*In Ioh* 1:255) writes: 'χωρίς γὰρ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς ἐγεύσατο θανάτου' ὅπερ ἔντισι κεῖται τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἀντιγράφοις 'κἀριτι θεοῦ'. He seems to imply that he considers *χωρίς θεοῦ* to be the correct reading.

3 HEBREWS 3:6

The shorter reading with the omission of *μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν* is to be preferred, although only attested by P¹³ P⁴⁶ and B against * A C D K 0121b 33 81 1739 and other witnesses. The phrase *μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν* is most probably an interpolation from Hebrews 3:14, especially since *βέβαιον* would be the correct gender to use in the context of Hebrews 3:6.

4 HEBREWS 9:11

Although both *γενομένων* ((P⁴⁶ *γεναμένων*) B D* 1739) and *μελλόντων* (* A D^c K 33 81 *Byz Lect*) have strong textual support, the phrase *τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν* in Hebrews 10:1 seems to have influenced the text here at Hebrews 9:11. The manuscript evidence for *γενομένων* (P⁴⁶ *γεναμένων*) should be preferred on the grounds of age and variety of text type. The problem

with γενομένων is one of meaning, and, although it has strong manuscript support, it is intrinsically improbable and probably arose through corruption of the text by dittography from παραγεγόμενος (cf Montefiore 1964: 151).

5 HEBREWS 10:11

The shorter reading ἱερεύς (P¹³ P⁴⁶ ✕ D K 33 81 1739 and other witnesses) is to be preferred to the longer ἀρχιερεύς (A C 88) which is probably a correction made by copyists influenced by Hebrews 5:1 or 8:3. The early and diverse support for ἱερεύς makes this reading the more likely.

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