

Superior

Hebrews 1:1-4

Dr. Pierre Cannings, Ph.D.

Background:. The writer was aware of certain perils that threatened the group he addressed. His intention was to provide a word of encouragement and exhortation appropriate to their situation (13:22). The presentation of Jesus as the one who sustains everything by his powerful word demonstrated that he was able to sustain the people of God in periods marked by stress, when the court of an imperial magistrate or the arena could become an occasion for Christian confession.

The center of the first unit is the assertion that “at the end of these days, he has spoken to us in the Son” (v 2a). This proposition is preceded by the solemn and stately beginning of the period, with its focus on the revelation through the prophets (v 1), and is followed by two relative clauses that succinctly qualify the status and character of the Son (v 2b–c). At the center of vv 3–4 stands the proposition, “having made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the divine majesty on high” (v 3c). This declaration summarizes the redemptive accomplishment of the Son and his subsequent exaltation at its completion.

Body:

I. Distinct

- a. To Fathers
 - a. To Fathers - *forefather, ancestor, progenitor, forebear*: of Abraham
- b. In the Prophets
 - a. Prophets - **the writings of prophets**
 - b. Portions - prophetic writing, *in various parts*
 - c. Ways - **to a variety of modes of expressing something in many ways**
 - 1. Though **God** has variously (*polymerōs kai polytropōs*, lit., “by various means and **in various ways**”) However highly the readership regarded that former revelation, the writer implied they must now listen most closely to the Son
 - 2. The fragmentary and varied character of God’s self-disclosure under the old covenant awakened within the fathers an expectation that he would continue to speak to his people. Those who are the sons of the fathers understand that the word spoken through the Son constituted an extension of a specific history marked by divine

revelation. The ministry of the prophets marked the preparatory phase of that history

c. In His Son

a. Spoken to us

1. What God said through the Son clarified the intention of the word spoken to the fathers. From this perspective, the recent revelation in the Son is viewed as fulfillment (although the distinctive vocabulary of fulfillment, πληρόω/πλήρωμα, never occurs in the address).

b. In these Last Days

1. The eternal, essential quality of Jesus' sonship qualified him to be the one through whom God uttered his final word. The antithesis in the two phases of revelation lies in the distinction between the prophets who were men and the Son who enjoys a unique relationship to God. In 7:28 a similar distinction is made between high priests who were men and the one who is the Son.
2. The characterization of the present time as "this final age" is qualitative and indicative of the dominant eschatological orientation of the writer's thought. He is persuaded that certain decisive events have already taken place marking the fulfillment of the promise and foreshadowing of the OT Scriptures, and that certain other decisive and final events will yet occur. Apocalyptic eschatology provided him the categories with which to interpret the entire history of God's redemptive action
3. *These days* correspond to the *present age* (ὁ νῦν αἰών); *the age* (or *world*) *to come* (ὁ μέλλων αἰών, 6:5) is to dawn at the second coming of Christ (9:28; 10:37). Meantime, the revelation of God ἐν νίῳ has been made to the Christian church as God's People (ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν); the ἡμεῖς does not mean simply the hearers of Jesus on earth, for this would exclude the writer and his readers (2:3), and ἐλάλησεν covers more than the earthly mission of Jesus. There is no special reference in ἐλάλησεν to the teaching of Jesus; the writer is thinking of the revelation of God's redeeming purpose in Christ as manifested (vv. 3, 4) by the (resurrection and) intercession in heaven which completed the sacrifice on the cross. This is the final revelation, now experienced by Christians

In a series of subordinate constructions which are part of a single sentence in the Greek, the author set forth the Son's greatness. The confession in v 3 surveys Christ's person and worth in his pre-existence, incarnation, and exaltation.

II. Incomparable

a. Heir –

a. Appointed Heir - of Christ ὃν ἔθηκεν κ. πάντων *whom God has appointed heir of all things* **Hb 1:2** did not subsequently make him [the Savior] an heir, but revealed him as one who was such).

1. Here, the meaning of ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων is the same: he was “appointed” heir, he was heir by God’s appointment. It is the fact of this position, not the time, that the writer has in mind, and we cannot be sure that this “appointment” corresponds to the elevation of v. 3 (ἐκάθισεν). Probably, in our modern phrase, it describes a pre-temporal act, or rather a relationship which belongs to the eternal order. The force of the aorist ἔθηκεν is best rendered by the English perfect, “has appointed”; no definite time is necessarily intended.
2. All Things - In Hebrews the Son is invested as the universal heir of all creation (not merely of all the nations, as in Gen 17:5 and Ps 2:8). The formal similarity between these passages suggests that the writer, or the liturgical tradition upon which he drew, made use of the OT motif of the investiture of the heir in order to connect the beginning of redemptive history with its accomplishment in the Son.
3. To begin with (v. 2b), the Son is the designated **Heir of all things**. This is obviously as it should be since He is also their Maker—the **One through whom He made the universe** (*tous aiōnas*, lit., “the ages,” also rendered “the universe” in 11:3). The reference to the Son’s heirship anticipates the thought of His future reign, of which the writer will say much.

4.

b. Made the World

1. the functions attributed to him are those of the Wisdom of God: he is the mediator of revelation, the agent and sustainer of creation, and the reconciler of others to God.

2. The conviction that Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God encouraged the identification of him as the one through whom God created the world. Conversely, since Jesus was the one through whom God created the world, he must be the pre-existent Son of God
 3. Moreover **His Word** is so **powerful** that all He has made is sustained by that Word.
 - 4.
- b. Glory
- a. Radiance - concept has been widened to denote the *glory, majesty, sublimity*
 1. “although sustaining the universe by his powerful word.” The description of the Son in his pre-existence is followed logically by a clause descriptive of his relationship to the creation. The new clause ascribes to the Son the providential government of all created existence, which is the function of God himself. As the pre-creational Wisdom of God, the Son not only embodies God’s glory but also reveals this to the universe as he sustains all things and bears them to their appointed end by his omnipotent word
 - 2.
- c. Nature
- a. Representation Nature and representation - of the Son of God as *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ* *a(n) exact representation of (God’s) real being* (i.e. as one who is in charge of the universe) **Hb 1:3**.
 1. This means that God’s nature is such that nothing, and presumably no one, can be said to be *an exact representation of his nature* (*χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*). Yet this is precisely what the writer to the Hebrews declares concerning the Son.
 2. In v 3a he used the word *χαρακτήρ* to convey as emphatically as he could his conviction that in Jesus Christ there had been provided a perfect, visible expression of the reality of God.
 - 3.
- d. Power
- a. Upholds Power of the Son of God- *φέρων τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ* *who bears up the universe by his mighty word* **Hb 1:3**

III. Elevated

- a. Purification
 - a. Purification of Sins

1. This understanding has its roots in the LXX where καθαρίζειν and its cognates relate to the removal of the defilement of sin, either in association with the altar (cf. Exod 29:37; 30:10; Lev 16:19) or the people (Lev 16:30). The uncleanness of the people of Israel was acknowledged before the Lord at the altar, and it was from this defilement that they had to be cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial animal. The blood covered and obliterated the sins upon the altar (cf. Exod 30:10: καθαρισμός). The purification of the people was similarly achieved by blood in an act of expiation (cf. Lev 16:30). **That the writer to the Hebrews draws upon this conceptual framework for interpreting the death of Christ is confirmed by chaps. 9 and 10, where the categories of defilement and purgation are foundational to the argumentation**
 2. Perhaps with this formulation in mind, the writer states succinctly καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος, “having made cleansing for sins.” The aorist participle designates the purification as a definite act performed once for all. The middle voice indicates that the Son made purification for sins *in himself*, clearly relating the act of purification to his sacrifice. By that one action, the defilement of sins was removed forever. The genitive τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος must accordingly be construed as objective, implying that the sins were purged away by the death of the Son
- b. Sat Down at Right Hand of God
1. This is particularly significant in the case of the preceding clause, for it establishes that the acts of purifying and sitting were temporally sequential (“after he had made purification for sins he sat down”). These two clauses announce the major themes of the writer’s christology, i.e., sacrifice and exaltation. **The declaration that the Son has been exalted to a position at God’s right hand bears an unmistakable allusion to Ps 110:1**
 2. The concept of enthronement at God’s right hand would convey to contemporaries an impression of the Son’s royal power and unparalleled glory. In antiquity generally the right side symbolized supreme authority and highest honor (e.g., 1 Kgs 2:19,
- c. Majesty
1. The choice of μεγαλωσύνη, “majesty,” as a circumlocution for God here sharpens the impression of the Son’s incomparable glory. Concurrently it affirms the eternal majesty of God. Enthronement at “the right hand of the divine Majesty” asserted

the supreme exaltation of the Son without compromising the rank and rule of God the Father

2.

b. Better than Angels

a. Inherited a More excellent name Inherited-

1. The concluding clause flows naturally from the central affirmation of the exaltation of the Son and states its significance. The transcendent dignity of the Son is confirmed by the proclamation of his enthronement name and the announcement of his superiority to the angels. The motif of the acquisition of a new name and exaltation above the angels is found elsewhere in confessional material (cf. Phil 2:9; Eph 1:20; 1 Pet 3:22) and appears to be a common element in early tradition (cf. Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus*, 138). In v 4 the superior name is almost certainly the acclamation “my son
2. Better - Hebrews shows a marked preference for the term κρείττων, “better,” “superior,” for the expression of value judgments (nineteen times in the NT, thirteen times in Hebrews). This descriptive term is complemented by the rare comparative διαφορώτερος, “more excellent,” which is used again in 8:6 to describe the superiority of Christ’s ministry in contrast to the Levitical priesthood
3. The comparison between Christ and the angels is not prompted by the problem of an angelomorphic christology (i.e., confusion over the nature of Jesus and that of the angels), or by the erroneous practice of venerating angels (see above, *Form/Structure/Setting*). It provides a parallel to vv 1–2a, where revelation through the prophets is contrasted with the ultimate word spoken through the Son. The angels in v 4 are the counterpart to the prophets in v 1. In the OT angels were ascribed a broad role in revelation and redemption (e.g., Exod 3:2; Isa 63:9). It was commonly understood that the law had been mediated to Moses, the greatest of the prophets, through angels
4. The opening paragraph is thus framed by a twofold reference to the superiority of the Son as the bearer of the supreme revelation of God both to the prophets and to angels. The shift from *the prophets* to *the angels* is deliberate, for it is the writer’s intention to announce as the subject of his first major section (1:5–2:18) the superiority of the Son to the angels.

5. Finally the Son's greatness makes preoccupation with angelic dignities entirely unnecessary. Though the Prologue contains no warning—the writer reserved those for later—it carries with it an implicit admonition: This is God's supremely great Son; hear Him! (cf. 12:25–27)

Background:

Subject:

It introduces the theme of the superiority of God's Son to all other previous modes of revelation. This theme receives emphatic expression in the first and last verses, where the revelation delivered by the Son is contrasted with that delivered through men and angels.

His ultimate word, however, was spoken through one who is distinguished from others by reason of the unique relationship he sustains to God. The core of the paragraph, which consists of seven predicates, explores the character of the divine Son in terms of expectations prompted by reflection upon Ps 2 and Ps 110 as well as by contemporary currents of Jewish wisdom theology. The Son unites in his person the attributes and privileges of the royal Son, the Wisdom of God, and the royal Priest. Consequently, he is uniquely qualified to be the one through whom God spoke his final word. By virtue of its pregnant expression, however, the second unit assumes the dominant position and tends to reduce the initial lines to the role of a preamble

Within this conceptual framework the writer celebrates the character and worth of the divine Son in a tightly organized confessional statement framed by references to the enthronement of the royal Son (of Ps 2) and the royal Priest (of Ps 110). Sandwiched between these more traditional declarations is the presentation of the Son in the categories of the Wisdom of God. The source of a widespread theological tendency to refer to divine Wisdom when speaking of creation, providence, revelation, and redemption was the development of the wisdom tradition in the hellenistic synagogues of diaspora Judaism.

In 1:1–4 the writer gave christological precision to a cluster of ideas derived from hellenistic Judaism. He boldly applied the categories of Wisdom to a historical figure, Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews was a creative theologian who brought together wisdom motifs and priestly motifs in a tightly formulated statement concerning the dignity and achievement of the Son of God. The opening paragraph establishes a firm christological foundation for all that the writer has to say concerning the character and demands of the revelation mediated by the Son. The joining together of wisdom and priestly notes in the carefully orchestrated presentation of the Son provides the readers with the assurance of Jesus' sustained concern for them and his ability to strengthen and vindicate the people of God when they become objects of contempt in a hostile world

Word Studies

Spoke - **to utter words, *talk, speak***, of

To Fathers **one from whom one is descended and generally at least several generations removed, *forefather, ancestor, progenitor, forebear***: of Abraham¹

Prophets - by metonymy, **the writings of prophets**²

Portions- prophetic writing, ***in various parts***³

Ways - **to a variety of modes of expressing something *in many ways***⁴

Appointed - **to cause to undergo a change in experience/condition, *make, consign***⁵

Heir of Christ ὃν ἔθηκεν κ. πάντων *whom God has appointed heir of all things* **Hb 1:2** did not subsequently make him [the Savior] an heir, but revealed him as one who was such).⁶

Glory concept has been widened to denote the *glory, majesty, sublimity*⁷

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 786.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 891.

³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 847.

⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 850.

⁵ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1004.

⁶ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 548.

⁷ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 257.

Radiance- **radiance, effulgence**, in the sense of brightness from a source;⁸

Nature and representation - of the Son of God as χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ *a(n) exact representation of (God's) real being* (i.e. as one who is in charge of the universe) ¹⁰¹¹

Power of the Son of God φέρων τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ *who bears up the universe by his mighty word* **Hb 1:3**¹²

Upholds

Inherited- **acquire, obtain, come into possession**¹³

⁸ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 99.

i.e. i.e. = id est (that is)

I.-E. Indo-European

¹¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1040.

¹² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1052.

¹³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 547.

Commentary Study

Comment

The initial paragraph functions as an exordium to the written address that follows. It introduces the theme of the superiority of God's Son to all other previous modes of revelation. This theme receives emphatic expression in the first and last verses, where the revelation delivered by the Son is contrasted with that delivered through men and angels. The writer's perspective is distinctly theocentric; he confronts his readers immediately with the God who intervened in human history with his sovereign word addressed to humankind. His ultimate word, however, was spoken through one who is distinguished from others by reason of the unique relationship he sustains to God. The core of the paragraph, which consists of seven predicates, explores the character of the divine Son in terms of expectations prompted by reflection upon Ps 2 and Ps 110 as well as by contemporary currents of Jewish wisdom theology. The Son unites in his person the attributes and privileges of the royal Son, the Wisdom of God, and the royal Priest. Consequently, he is uniquely qualified to be the one through whom God spoke his final word.

Vanhoye (*La structure*, 65–68) has shown that the effect of the change of subject from *God* to *Son* in the middle of the sentence is to arrange the several clauses of the period into two units, vv 1–2 and vv 3–4. Grammatically, the second unit depends upon the first because it begins with a relative clause. By virtue of its pregnant expression, however, the second unit assumes the dominant position and tends to reduce the initial lines to the role of a preamble. Both units are composed around a central statement, to which the remaining clauses are attached. The center of the first unit is the assertion that “at the end of these days, he has spoken to us in the Son” (v 2a). This proposition is preceded by the solemn and stately beginning of the period, with its focus on the revelation through the prophets (v 1), and is followed by two relative clauses that succinctly qualify the status and character of the Son (v 2b–c). At the center of vv 3–4 stands the proposition, “having made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the divine majesty on high” (v 3c). This declaration summarizes the redemptive accomplishment of the Son and his subsequent exaltation at its completion. It is harmoniously balanced by two coordinating phrases introduced by present participles (ὢν ... φέρων τε) that effectively suggest the transcendent dignity of the Son on one side and by two correlative members of a comparison which assert his excellence on the other side. The two units of the period have been artistically unified so that the first concludes with the word υἱῷ, “Son,” which in turn prepares for the second unit, which concludes with the corresponding noun ὄνομα, “name.”

1α πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως, “at various times and in many ways.” Although the use of alliterative combinations of πολυ- words in rhetorical openings was a common practice in this

period (Moffat14t, 2), the initial adverbial phrase in Hebrews is more than a literary convention. These πολυ- compounds express in an emphatic way the writer's conviction concerning the extent of the OT revelation. He surveys the revelation granted through the prophets in its variety and fullness but implies that until the coming of the Son the revelation of God remained incomplete.

Both compounds occur only here in the NT, and it has been asserted that they betray an indebtedness to Philo (e.g., Spicq, 1:46). Although Philo does have a fondness for πολυ- compounds and for alliteration involving πολυ- words, the particular combination found in 1:1 never occurs in his writings. There is, in fact, nothing in the Philonic corpus corresponding to this sonorous description of the OT revelation as manifold and varied. No evidence exists that the writer to the Hebrews was influenced in his choice of expression or its application by anything he found in Philo (Williamson, *Philo*, 70–74, 133–34).

1b–2a The contrast implied by the temporal references to past time (πάλαι) and to the present marked by the utterance of God's decisive and climactic word (ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων, "this final age") expresses the classic Jewish and primitive Christian conception of the succession of two ages in the course of redemptive history. The characterization of the present time as "this final age" is qualitative and indicative of the dominant eschatological orientation of the writer's thought. He is persuaded that certain decisive events have already taken place marking the fulfillment of the promise and foreshadowing of the OT Scriptures, and that certain other decisive and final events will yet occur. Apocalyptic eschatology provided him the categories with which to interpret the entire history of God's redemptive action (Klappert, *Eschatologie*, 11–61; on the fundamental difference between Philo and Hebrews on the subjects of time and history, see Williamson, *Philo*, 142–59). The distinctly Christian perspective reflected in the opening lines of Hebrews is thrown into bold relief when the writer's statement is compared with the temporal contrast developed by a contemporary, who viewed the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 from a Jewish apocalyptic point of view: "In former times, even in the generations of old, our fathers had helpers, righteous men and holy prophets.... But now the righteous have been gathered, and the prophets have fallen asleep. We also have gone forth from the land, and Zion has been taken from us, and we have nothing now except the Mighty One and his law" (2 *Apoc. Bar*15. 81:1, 3).

ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν is a Septuagintal expression that translates a Semitic temporal idiom for the future as distinct from the past (Num 24:14; Jer 23:20; 25:19; 49:39; Dan 10:14). The meaning of ἔσχατος in hellenistic-Jewish literature, however, especially in eschatological contexts, so colored the expression that it came to possess technical significance (G. W. Buchanan, "Eschatology and the 'End of Days,'" *JNES* 20 [1961] 188–93). The interpretation of the expression in Hebrews is determined by the reference to God's utterance through the

Moffatt J. Moffatt, *A New Translation of the Bible* (NT 1913; Reprint London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926)

2 *Apoc. Bar.* Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*

JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies

prophets in v 1. During the hellenistic-Roman period the conviction became widespread that the prophetic message to Israel was concerned with eschatology. This conception can now be attested for the pre-Christian period in a collection of biblical texts from Qumran (4QFlor 1:15, “as it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet concerning the latter days,” followed by a citation of Isa 8:11; cf. Sir 48:24–25). The force of the expression in Hebrews is to characterize the Son as the one through whom God spoke his final and decisive word.

The temporal idioms qualify the central affirmation that God has spoken. The conviction that God cares for people and relates himself to them through his spoken word is developed as a major motif by the writer. In the opening lines he concentrates his hearers’ attention on the authority of the God who speaks. The locus of God’s spoken word for him was the Scriptures. He customarily introduces passages from the OT as God’s direct speech (e.g., 1:5–13; 5:5–6; 7:17, 21). The persuasion that God’s word is living and active in human experience (4:12) undergirds the appeal to the authority of the Scriptures throughout Hebrews and prepares the hearers for the solemn exhortation not to refuse the God who is speaking (12:25) at the conclusion of the sermon. Although the instrumental dative ἐν υἱῷ (“God spoke ... by his Son”) would encourage the interpretation of the phrase ἐν τοῖς προφήταις in an instrumental sense (“through the prophets”), it is possible that the phrase may actually refer to the OT Scriptures (as in Luke 24:25; John 6:45; so BAG17D, 723).

God’s continuing disclosure of himself found its ultimate expression in the revelation through the Son. The complementary phrases “God spoke” ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ... ἐν υἱῷ, “through the prophets ... by the Son,” establish that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ can be understood only within the context of God’s revelation to Israel. The OT witness actually foreshadowed the utterance of God’s decisive and climactic word. The fragmentary and varied character of God’s self-disclosure under the old covenant awakened within the fathers an expectation that he would continue to speak to his people. Those who are the sons of the fathers understand that the word spoken through the Son constituted an extension of a specific history marked by divine revelation. The ministry of the prophets marked the preparatory phase of that history.

The form of the statement in vv 1b–2a implies both continuity and discontinuity in the divine self-disclosure. The element of continuity is asserted in the clauses expressing the event of God’s speaking (ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ... ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν, “God having spoken to the fathers ... he spoke to us”); discontinuity is expressed in the contrast between revelation *through the prophets* and revelation *through the Son*. The anarthrous ἐν υἱῷ is qualitative. The eternal, essential quality of Jesus’ sonship qualified him to be the one through whom God uttered his final word. The antithesis in the two phases of revelation lies in the distinction between the prophets who were men and the Son who enjoys a unique relationship to God. In 7:28 a similar distinction is made between high priests who were men and the one who is the Son.

What God said through the Son clarified the intention of the word spoken to the fathers. From this perspective, the recent revelation in the Son is viewed as fulfillment (although the distinctive vocabulary of fulfillment, πληρῶν/πλήρωμα, never occurs in the address).

BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ET, ed. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich; 2d ed. rev. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (University of Chicago, 1979)

2b The reference to the Son introduces the core of the paragraph, which extends to the end of v 3. At this point the writer may have introduced a fragment of an early liturgical tradition. If this actually is the case, the tradition celebrating Christ's dignity as mediator and heir has been thoroughly integrated into the structure of the paragraph as a whole. Within a frame established by allusions to the royal Son of Ps 2 (v 2b) and to the royal Priest of Ps 110 (v 3c), the Son's role in creation, revelation, and redemption is recited in creedal fashion.

ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, "whom he appointed heir of everything." The Son has been installed as heir. The clause contains a clear allusion to Ps 2:8, where the royal Son is assured that in response to his petition the sovereign Lord will give him the nations (ἔθνη) as his inheritance (τὴν κληρονομίαν). H. Langkammer (" 'Den er zum Erben von allem *eingesetzt* hat' [Hebr 1, 2]," *B18Z* 10 [1966] 273–80) observed the literary similarity between the statement in Hebrews and Gen 17:5, where the investiture of Abraham as heir marks the beginning of redemptive history. On that occasion Abram received a new name (cf. Heb 1:4) and the solemn assurance "I have appointed [τέθεικα] you the father of many nations [ἔθνῶν]." In Hebrews the Son is invested as the universal heir of all creation (not merely of all the nations, as in Gen 17:5 and Ps 2:8). The formal similarity between these passages suggests that the writer, or the liturgical tradition upon which he drew, made use of the OT motif of the investiture of the heir in order to connect the beginning of redemptive history with its accomplishment in the Son.

δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας, "who yet is the one through whom he created the world." The force of the καὶ is to link this second relative clause to the first, possibly in an adversative sense: the Son was appointed heir, and yet he was the one through whom God created the world. This clause and those which immediately follow belong to a class of statements descriptive of divine Wisdom in the theology of Alexandrian Judaism (cf. Mack, *Logos*, 1973). As a hellenistic Jew, the writer was thoroughly familiar with the teaching concerning the Wisdom of God now preserved in the OT and in such later documents as the Wisdom of Solomon. The antecedents of his christology are recoverable in the wisdom writings of Judaism. Reflection on the Wisdom of God in Alexandrian theology provided him with categories and vocabulary with which to interpret the person and work of Christ. Although Jesus is introduced as the divine Son (v 2a), the functions attributed to him are those of the Wisdom of God: he is the mediator of revelation, the agent and sustainer of creation, and the reconciler of others to God. Each of these christological affirmations echoes declarations concerning the role of divine Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon (cf. Wis 7:21–27). Once the categories of divine Wisdom were applied to Jesus, his association with the creative activity of God was strengthened (cf. Prov 8:22–31; Wis 7:22; 9:2, 9). The conviction that Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God encouraged the identification of him as the one through whom God created the world. Conversely, since Jesus was the one through whom God created the world, he must be the pre-existent Son of God.

The second unit of the period (vv 3–4) develops the three predications introduced at the end of the first unit, i.e., revelation through the Son (v 2a), his status as heir (v 2b), and his role in the creation (v 2c). The order in which these elements are taken up is the logical one of Son (v 3a), creation (v 3b), and inheritance (v 4).

3α ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα ... καὶ χαρακτήρ, “the one who is the radiance ... and the exact representation.” The subject of the statements that follow in vv 3–4 is “the Son.” This is indicated by the relative pronoun in the nominative case. In the first declaration the arrangement of the two members of the first clause in synonymous parallelism is intentional. They are meant to say the same thing. Wilckens has observed that “as δόξα and ὑπόστασις are synonymous to the degree that God’s glory is his nature, so the same function of the Son is expressed by ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτήρ” (TDN19T 9:421). The concentration of rare and distinctive vocabulary to describe the relationship of the Son to God has been one factor that has encouraged many interpreters to find in v 3 a hymn-fragment. ἀπαύγασμαX, in the context of celebrating the praise of divine Wisdom: Wisdom is “the radiance [20X, in the context of celebrating the praise of divine Wisdom: Wisdom is “the radiance [ἀπαύγασμα] from everlasting light ... and the image [εἰκὼνX to describe the relationship between Wisdom and the eternal, divine light. He used it in v 3 because it seemed an appropriate term to express the relationship he believed existed between God and the Son. The Son is “the radiance of God’s glory.” The writer appears to have borrowed a word employed in the LX21X to describe the relationship between Wisdom and the eternal, divine light. He used it in v 3 because it seemed an appropriate term to express the relationship he believed existed between God and the Son. The Son is “the radiance of God’s glory.”

The term χαρακτήρ occurs only here in the NT. It is found three times in the LX22X, but in a nontechnical sense (Lev 13:28; 2 Macc 4:10; 4 Macc 15:4; cf. .23. 5:5). Philo shows a strong preference for this term, which occurs fifty-one times in his works with a variety of associated meanings. He applies it frequently to man, whose soul bears the imprint (χαρακτήρ) of God (*Allegorical Interpretation* 3.95; *On the Virtues* 52; *The Worse Attacks the Better* 83). But if the soul may be compared to the image of the invisible God bearing the engraving of the divine seal,

TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

T. Sim. Testament of Simeon

the stamp of that seal is the eternal Logos (ἥς ὁ χαρακτήρ ἐστὶν ὁ αἰδιος λόγος; *On Noah's Work as a Planter* 18). It is imperative, however, not to exaggerate the importance of such alleged "parallels" to the expression in v 3. In his work *On the Unchangeableness of God* (55), Philo states that God's being is "simple" (ψιλήν τὴν ὑπαρξιν), "without other definite characteristic" (ἄνευ χαρακτῆρος). This means that God's nature is such that nothing, and presumably no one, can be said to be *an exact representation of his nature* (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ). Yet this is precisely what the writer to the Hebrews declares concerning the Son.

The writer may have become familiar with the terms like ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτήρ from an Alexandrian education, but he has brought this distinctive vocabulary into the service of Christian confession. In v 3a he used the word χαρακτήρ to convey as emphatically as he could his conviction that in Jesus Christ there had been provided a perfect, visible expression of the reality of God. If the formulation of v 3a owes something to the vocabulary and concepts of Alexandrian Judaism, it has been thoroughly assimilated and refashioned by a distinctly Christian thinker (cf. Williamson, *Philo*, 74–80).

The description of Jesus as ἀπαύγασμα is repeated in *1 Clement* in a paragraph that looks like a patchwork of phrases culled from Heb 1. The remarkable fact is that the entire statement has been made subservient to Jesus' divine priesthood:

This is the way, beloved, in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the high priest [ἀρχιερεύς] of our offerings, the defender and helper of our weaknesses ... who being the radiance of his majesty [ὅς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ] is so much greater than the angels as he has inherited a more excellent name. For it is written ... [Ps 104:4]. But of his Son the Master said ... [Ps 2:7]. And again he says to him ... [Ps 110:1] (*1 Cle*24*m* 36.1–6).

On the basis of this passage Theissen (*Untersuchung*, 33–38) has argued that Heb 1:1–14 and *1 Cle*25*m* 36.1–6 reflect independent drawings upon a common liturgical tradition that already designated Jesus as high priest. He sought to prove that the primitive form of the liturgy is reproduced more faithfully in *1 Clement*, which retains the ἀρχιερεύς, "high priest," title in 36.1.

Cockerill (*JB26L* 97 [1978] 437–40) has shown, however, that this thesis cannot be sustained. When Clement quotes Ps 110:1 as a direct address of God to the Son (as in Heb 1:13), he betrays his dependence upon Hebrews for his formula of introduction. This manner of introducing OT quotations is typical of Hebrews (1:5–13; 5:5–6; 7:17, 21) but occurs only here in *1 Clement*. Moreover, the designation "Son," not "high priest," is more appropriate to the chain of OT citations found in *m*27*m* 36.3–5 and in Heb 1:5–13. Finally, the sustained concern of the writer

1 Clem 1 Clement

1 Clem 1 Clement

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

1 Clem 1 Clement

to the Hebrews to demonstrate that the divine Son is also high priest is difficult to understand if this connection had already been established in the tradition. It seems far more logical to assume that the tradition referred to Jesus as the pre-existent Son, and that on the basis of the presentation of the Son as high priest in Hebrews the author of *1 Clement* was able to associate his paraphrase of Heb 1 with the ἀρχιερεύς title (cf. M. Mees, “Die Hohepriester-Theologie des Hebräerbriefes im Vergleich mit dem ersten Clemensbrief” *ZB28Z* 22 [1978] 115–24). Clement’s description of Jesus as “the radiance of the divine majesty” (36.2) simply compresses into a pregnant statement the substance of Heb 1:3 (ὁς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα ... ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης, “[he], although the radiance, ... sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty”).

3b φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, “although sustaining the universe by his powerful word.” The description of the Son in his pre-existence is followed logically by a clause descriptive of his relationship to the creation. The new clause ascribes to the Son the providential government of all created existence, which is the function of God himself. As the pre-creational Wisdom of God, the Son not only embodies God’s glory but also reveals this to the universe as he sustains all things and bears them to their appointed end by his omnipotent word . The ascription of cosmic dimensions to the work of the Son was prompted by the total estimate which the writer had formed of his transcendent dignity. One who revealed God as fully and ultimately as did the Son must share in the divine government of the world (cf. Williamson, *Philo*, 95–103). Like the previous phrase, the formulation in v 3b may be derived from Wis 7, where v 27 states that although Wisdom “is but one, she has power to do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things.” Wis 8:1 adds: “She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well.” The transcendent dignity of the Son is confessed in Heb 1:3 in language similar to that used in the praise of divine Wisdom in Alexandrian theology.

3c καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος, “yet made purification for sins.” The confession in v 3 surveys Christ’s person and worth in his pre-existence, incarnation, and exaltation. Although his pre-existence has been described in categories borrowed from the wisdom tradition, that tradition is sharply modified by the introduction of this participial clause. The reconciling activity of divine Wisdom was fundamentally educative (Wis 7:27; 9:9). There is no association of divine Wisdom with sacrifice in order to procure cleansing from sins (cf. Bovon, *RT29P* 18 [1968] 143). The source of this solitary reference to the accomplishment of Jesus’ earthly life in the exordium is thus not the wisdom tradition but reflection on the incarnation and the cross.

It is significant that the Son’s ministry is described from the first in distinctly cultic categories. This brief, unadorned reference to Jesus’ achievement is slanted in the direction of the later discussion of his priesthood and sacrifice. The effect of Christ’s death is cleansing (καθαρισμόν) from sins. Here sin is viewed as defilement which must be purged. This understanding has its

roots in the LX30X, where καθαρίζειν and its cognates relate to the removal of the defilement of sin, either in association with the altar (cf. Exod 29:37; 30:10; Lev 16:19) or the people (Lev 16:30). The uncleanness of the people of Israel was acknowledged before the Lord at the altar, and it was from this defilement that they had to be cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial animal. The blood covered and obliterated the sins upon the altar (cf. Exod 30:10: καθαρισμός). The purification of the people was similarly achieved by blood in an act of expiation (cf. Lev 16:30). Purity is the essential condition for participation in the cultic life. The defilement of sin erects a barrier to the approach to God which must be removed (cf. Meeter, *Heavenly High Priesthood*, 155–57). **That the writer to the Hebrews draws upon this conceptual framework for interpreting the death of Christ is confirmed by chaps. 9 and 10, where the categories of defilement and purgation are foundational to the argumentation.** It is significant that the other six occurrences of καθαρίζειν and its cognates appear in these chapters (9:13, 14, 22, 23; 10:2, 22).

In the Old Greek version of Job 7:21, the patriarch objects, “Why do you not forget my offense and make cleansing for my sin?” (ἐποιήσω ... καθαρισμὸν τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου). Perhaps with this formulation in mind, the writer states succinctly καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος, “having made cleansing for sins.” The aorist participle designates the purification as a definite act performed once for all. The middle voice indicates that the Son made purification for sins *in himself*, clearly relating the act of purification to his sacrifice. By that one action, the defilement of sins was removed forever. The genitive τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος must accordingly be construed as objective, implying that the sins were purged away by the death of the Son. Heb 1:3 does not designate Jesus as “priest.” But in this pregnant clause the writer strongly implies that God’s unique Son is also a priest.

ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλowsύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, “he sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty on high.” Syntactically, each of the participial clauses of v 3 is dependent upon the finite ἐκάθισεν, which grammatically provides the main assertion of vv 3–4. This is particularly significant in the case of the preceding clause, for it establishes that the acts of purifying and sitting were temporally sequential (“after he had made purification for sins he sat down”). These two clauses announce the major themes of the writer’s christology, i.e., sacrifice and exaltation. None of the other declarations in the opening paragraph will receive comparable elucidation in the body of the discourse.

The declaration that the Son has been exalted to a position at God’s right hand bears an unmistakable allusion to Ps 110:1, for this is the only biblical text that speaks of someone enthroned beside God. In later Jewish literature the psalm was interpreted as addressed to an individual who enjoyed extraordinary favor with God (cf. Hay, *Glory*, 21–33, 54–56). The one clear allusion to Ps 110:1 in a pre-Christian literary source occurs in a hellenistic-Jewish document from the first century, the *Testament of Job* (33:3). When Elihu asks the humiliated patriarch eleven times, “Where now is the glory of your throne?” Job responds, “My throne is in the heavenly world and its glory and splendor are at God’s right hand” (ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ). Elsewhere, divine Wisdom is depicted as sitting beside God’s throne (Wis 9:4), and the Logos, who attacks Egypt in the night of the final plague, leaps down “from heaven, from the royal throne” (Wis 18:15).

The concept of enthronement at God's right hand would convey to contemporaries an impression of the Son's royal power and unparalleled glory. In antiquity generally the right side symbolized supreme authority and highest honor (e.g., 1 Kgs 2:19, "So Bathsheba went to King Solomon.... And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right"; cf. Hay, *Glory*, 52–58; Gornatowski, *Rechts und Links*; O. Nussbaum, "Die Bewertung von Rechts und Links in der römische Liturgie," *JAC* 5 [1962] 158–71.) Christians were familiar with the notion of the Son's session at God's right hand from creedal confessions and hymns. They would recognize immediately that the reference was to Christ's exaltation after his resurrection. This may explain why there is so little direct appeal to the fact of Jesus' resurrection in Hebrews (cf. 13:20). In v 3, and elsewhere, an allusion to the position at God's right hand apparently served as an inclusive reference to Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and continuing exaltation (Hay, 43–45, 90).

The choice of μεγαλωσύνη, "majesty," as a circumlocution for God here (and in 8:1; cf. *T. Levi* 3:9) sharpens the impression of the Son's incomparable glory. Concurrently it affirms the eternal majesty of God. Enthronement at "the right hand of the divine Majesty" asserted the supreme exaltation of the Son without compromising the rank and rule of God the Father (cf. Hay, 91, 159). The addition of ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, "on high" (cf. Ps 92[93]:4; 112[113]:5), emphasizes the heavenly sphere of Christ's exaltation and intensifies the spatial aspect of the image (cf. ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, "in heaven," in 8:1).

Although the Son can be described as the radiance of the divine glory from eternity (v 3a), there is a profound sense in which it can be maintained that he entered into a perfect state of glory only after his humiliation and sacrificial death (cf. 2:9, "crowned with glory and honor"). The Son's exaltation is thus described as a heavenly enthronement (v 3), validated by the proclamation of his name (v 4) and rank (v 5), the call for angelic recognition of his supreme dignity (v 6), and the fresh enunciation of his exaltation (vv 8–13). This same pattern is recognizable in other confessional passages in the NT (e.g., Phil 2:9–11; 1 Tim 3:16; Rev 5:6–14; cf. Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, 58–71). That the Son has been exalted to God's right hand means that he lives and rules with the authority and power of God himself.

4 The concluding clause flows naturally from the central affirmation of the exaltation of the Son and states its significance. The transcendent dignity of the Son is confirmed by the proclamation of his enthronement name and the announcement of his superiority to the angels. The motif of the acquisition of a new name and exaltation above the angels is found elsewhere in confessional material (cf. Phil 2:9; Eph 1:20; 1 Pet 3:22) and appears to be a common element in early tradition (cf. Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus*, 138). In v 4 the superior name is almost certainly the acclamation "my son" of Ps 2:7 quoted in v 5 (so also Michel, 105; Hay, *Glory*, 109–10; et al.).

Hebrews shows a marked preference for the term κρείττων, "better," "superior," for the expression of value judgments (nineteen times in the NT, thirteen times in Hebrews). This descriptive term is complemented by the rare comparative διαφορώτερος, "more excellent,"

which is used again in 8:6 to describe the superiority of Christ's ministry in contrast to the Levitical priesthood (cf. Weiss, *TDN33T* 9:64). These terms express a qualitative judgment; they declare that the status and name the Son has acquired in the heavenly world are superior to and more exalted than those enjoyed by the angels.

The expression τοσοῦτω ... ὅσω, "as far above ... as," is excellent Greek but is used elsewhere in the NT in this precise form only in Heb 10:25. It is a very common formula in classical authors and can be found in writers plying a good literary Greek in the hellenistic period as well (*Ep. Arist* 34. 13, 182, 290; *Sir* 3:18; *4 Macc* 15:5; Philo, discussed by Williamson, *Philo*, 93–95).

The comparison between Christ and the angels is not prompted by the problem of an angelomorphic christology (i.e., confusion over the nature of Jesus and that of the angels), or by the erroneous practice of venerating angels (see above, *Form/Structure/Setting*). It provides a parallel to vv 1–2a, where revelation through the prophets is contrasted with the ultimate word spoken through the Son. The angels in v 4 are the counterpart to the prophets in v 1. In the OT angels were ascribed a broad role in revelation and redemption (e.g., *Exod* 3:2; *Isa* 63:9). It was commonly understood that the law had been mediated to Moses, the greatest of the prophets, through angels (cf. *Jub* 35. 1:29; *Acts* 7:38–39, 53; *Gal* 3:19; *Jos.*, .36. on 15.5.3; *Mek* 37. on e

TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

Ep. Arist. Epistle of Aristeas

Jub. Jubilees

Ant. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

Mek. Mekilta

20:18; *Sipr*38. 102 on Num 12:5; *Pesiq. R*39. 21). This conception was shared by the writer and his readers (2:2). The description of the Jewish law as “the message declared by angels” in 2:2 is determinative for the interpretation of the reference to the angels in v 4. The assertion of Christ’s exaltation over the angels prepares for the demonstration of that superiority (1:5–14). That demonstration is foundational to the thought that Christ’s revelation is far superior to that mediated by the angels (2:1–4) (cf. Spicq, 2:52–55).

The opening paragraph is thus framed by a twofold reference to the superiority of the Son as the bearer of the supreme revelation of God both to the prophets and to angels. V 4 terminates the exordium by returning to the theme announced in the initial lines. The shift from *the prophets* to *the angels* is deliberate, for it is the writer’s intention to announce as the subject of his first major section (1:5–2:18) the superiority of the Son to the angels.

Explanation

The majestic opening statement is programmatic for the entire discourse. It focuses upon the event of revelation as a means of exhibiting the transcendent dignity of the Son of God. The many and various episodes of revelation mentioned in the opening verse were crowned by the supreme revelation entrusted to him. [Within this conceptual framework the writer celebrates the character and worth of the divine Son in a tightly organized confessional statement framed by references to the enthronement of the royal Son \(of Ps 2\) and the royal Priest \(of Ps 110\). Sandwiched between these more traditional declarations is the presentation of the Son in the categories of the Wisdom of God. The source of a widespread theological tendency to refer to divine Wisdom when speaking of creation, providence, revelation, and redemption was the development of the wisdom tradition in the hellenistic synagogues of diaspora Judaism. The mediatorial role assigned to Wisdom in that tradition is in Hebrews ascribed to the divine Son.](#)

The presentation of the Son in the categories of divine Wisdom in the opening lines of Hebrews is initially surprising. It is clear that the writer’s primary intention is to develop the tenet that Jesus is the high priest like Melchizedek, the heir to the promise in Ps 110:4. He defers the full treatment of this theme to the body of the homily, although it is anticipated in the affirmation that the Son sat down at the right hand of God “after he had made purification for sins” (v 3). On reflection, however, reasons may be proposed for the distinctive presentation of Jesus in the exordium.

The writer’s decision to present Jesus as God’s Son who performs the functions assigned to Wisdom may have been motivated by a pastoral concern to achieve a hearing for what he had to say. The categories of divine Wisdom were apparently current and meaningful for his readers. The concentration of unusual and distinctive vocabulary in v 3 suggests a congregation for whom the tradition preserved in Wis 7:24–27 was normative. This Christian assembly has been

Sipre Sipre

Pesiq. R. Pesiqta Rabbati

significantly influenced by the hellenistic synagogue in terms of theological conception and vocabulary.

A second concern may have dictated the choice of language in the exordium. The writer was aware of certain perils that threatened the group he addressed. His intention was to provide a word of encouragement and exhortation appropriate to their situation (13:22). The presentation of Jesus as the one who sustains everything by his powerful word demonstrated that he was able to sustain the people of God in periods marked by stress, when the court of an imperial magistrate or the arena could become an occasion for Christian confession.

One further suggestion may be ventured concerning the presentation of Jesus in the garb of Wisdom. It may have been the writer's deliberate intention to take up wisdom motifs familiar to his readers from synagogue and church liturgy and to relate them to the priestly motifs he was concerned to develop. Support for this proposal is provided by *1 Clem* 36.1–4, where Clement cites a portion of Heb 1:3 but interprets the declaration in terms of the high priestly christology of Heb 2:17–3:1. An understanding that the mediatorial functions of divine Wisdom were priestly in character may have been widespread in the hellenistic church. If such a theological conception had been popularized through the hellenistic synagogues, the raw materials for a divine Wisdom christology subservient to a high priestly christology were already at hand when the writer to the Hebrews made use of liturgical tradition to introduce his statement concerning the dignity of Jesus as royal Son and Priest. Divine Wisdom christology is one aspect of high priestly christology.

In 1:1–4 the writer gave christological precision to a cluster of ideas derived from hellenistic Judaism. He boldly applied the categories of Wisdom to a historical figure, Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews was a creative theologian who brought together wisdom motifs and priestly motifs in a tightly formulated statement concerning the dignity and achievement of the Son of God. The opening paragraph establishes a firm christological foundation for all that the writer has to say concerning the character and demands of the revelation mediated by the Son. The joining together of wisdom and priestly notes in the carefully orchestrated presentation of the Son provides the readers with the assurance of Jesus' sustained concern for them and his ability to strengthen and vindicate the people of God when they become objects of contempt in a hostile world.⁴¹

1:1–2a. The central assertion of the Prologue is made here. Though **God** has variously (*polymerōs kai polytropōs*, lit., “by various means and **in various ways**”) revealed Himself **in the past**, Old Testament prophetic revelation has now received its end-times climax through God's

1 Clem 1 Clement

⁴¹ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, vol. 47A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 9–19.

Son. However highly the readership regarded that former revelation, the writer implied they must now listen most closely to the Son.

1:2b–4. In a series of subordinate constructions which are part of a single sentence in the Greek, the author set forth the Son's greatness. The unified structure of the writer's sentence is hidden by the NI42V which breaks it down into several sentences. To begin with (v. 2b), the Son is the designated **Heir of all things**. This is obviously as it should be since He is also their Maker—the One **through whom He made the universe** (*tous aiōnas*, lit., “the ages,” also rendered “the universe” in 11:3). The reference to the Son's heirship anticipates the thought of His future reign, of which the writer will say much.

But the One who is both Creator and Heir is also a perfect reflection of the God who has spoken in Him. Moreover **His Word** is so **powerful** that all He has made is sustained by that Word. And it is this Person who has **provided purification for sins** and taken His seat **at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven** (cf. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). In doing so it is obvious He has attained an eminence far beyond anything **the angels** can claim.

As might easily be expected in the Prologue, the writer struck notes which will be crucial to the unfolding of his argument in the body of the epistle. He implied that God's revelation in the Son has a definitive quality which previous revelation lacked. Moreover the sacrifice for sins which such a One makes must necessarily be greater than other kinds of sacrifices. Finally the Son's greatness makes preoccupation with angelic dignities entirely unnecessary. Though the Prologue contains no warning—the writer reserved those for later—it carries with it an implicit admonition: This is God's supremely great Son; hear Him! (cf. 12:25–27)⁴³

Greek prefaces and introductions of a rhetorical type were fond of opening with πολὺς in some form or other (*e.g.* Sirach prol. πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων κτλ.; Dion. Halic. *de oratoribus antiquis*, πολλὴν χάριν κτλ., an early instance being the third Philippic of Demosthenes, πολλῶν, ᾧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, λόγων γιγνομένων κτλ.). Here πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως is a sonorous hendiadys

NIV New International Version

⁴³ Zane C. Hodges, [“Hebrews,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 780–781.

for “variously,” as Chrysostom was the first to point out (τὸ γὰρ πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως τούτέστι διαφόρως). A similar turn of expression occurs in 2:2 παραβάσις καὶ παρακοή. The writer does not mean to exclude variety from the Christian revelation; he expressly mentions how rich and many-sided it was, in 2:4. Nor does he suggest that the revelation ἐν προφήταις was inferior because it was piecemeal and varied. There is a slight suggestion of the unity and finality of the revelation ἐν υἱῷ, as compared with the prolonged revelations made through the prophets, the Son being far more than a prophet; but there is a deeper suggestion of the unity and continuity of revelation then and now. Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως really “signalises the variety and fulness of the Old Testament word of God” (A. B. Davidson). On the other hand, Christ is God’s last word to the world; revelation in him is complete, final and homogeneous.

Compare the comment of Eustathius on *Odyssey*, 1:1: πολυτρόπως ἀνεγνωρίσθη πᾶσιν οἷς ἦλθεν εἰς γνῶσιν, μηδενὸς ἀναγνωρισμοῦ συμπεσόντος ἐτέρῳ ἀναγνωρισμῷ τὸ σύνολον· ἄλλως γὰρ τῷ Τελεμάχῳ, ἐτέρως δὲ Εὐρυκλείᾳ, ἐτέρως τοῖς δούλοις, ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον τῷ Λαέρτῃ, καὶ ὅλως ἀνομοίως ἅπασιν. Πολυμερῶς, according to Hesychius (= πολυσχέδως), differs from πολυτρόπως (διαφόρως, ποικίλως), and, strictly speaking, is the adverb of πολυμερής=manifold (Wis 7:23, where Wisdom is called πνεῦμα μονογενές, πολυμερές). But no such distinction is intended here.

In πάλαι (as opposed to ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων) θεὸς λαλήσας, λαλεῖν, here as throughout the epistle, is practically an equivalent for λέγειν (see Anz’s *Subsidia*, pp. 309–310), with a special reference to inspired and oracular utterances of God or of divinely gifted men. This sense is as old as Menander (ὁ νοῦς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ λαλήσων θεός, Kock’s *Comic. Attic. Fragm.* 70). Οἱ πατέρες in contrast to ἡμεῖς means OT believers in general (cp. Jn 6:58; 7:22), whereas the more usual NT sense of the term is “the patriarchs” (cp. *Diat*44.e), 45e), i.e. Abraham, etc., though the term (3:9; 8:9) covers the ancients down to Samuel or later (Mt 23:30). *Our fathers* or ancestors (Wis 18:6) means the Hebrew worthies of the far past to whom Christians as God’s People, whether they had been born Jews or not (1 Co 10:1 οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν), look back, as the earlier Sirach did in his πατέρων ὕμνος (Sir 44:1–50:29), or the prophet in Zec 1:5 (οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ... καὶ οἱ προφῆται). For οἱ πατέρες = our fathers, cp. Prayer of Manasseh¹ (θεὸς τῶν πατέρων) and Wessely’s *Studien zur Paläographie und Papyruskunde*, i. 64, where boys are

Diat. E. A. Abbott, *Diatessarica*.

reckoned in a list σὺν τοῖς πατράσι. The insertion of ἡμῶν (p6 999. 183466 bo47h sa48h Clem. Alex., Chrys. Priscillian) is a correct but superfluous gloss. As for ἐν τοῖς (προφήταις, προφῆται is used here in a broader sense than in 11:32; it denotes the entire succession of those who spoke for God to the People of old, both before and after Moses (Ac 3:22; 7:37), who is the supreme prophet, according to Phil49o (*de o*, . 21, *de decalogo* 33). Joshua is a prophet (Sir 46:1), so is David (Phil50o, *de agric.* 12). In Ps 105:15 the patriarchs, to whom revelations are made, are both God's προφῆται and χριστοί. Later on, the term was extended, as in Lk 13:28 (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, καὶ πάντας τοὺς προφήτας, cp. He 11:32), and still more in Mt 5:12 (τοὺς προφήτας τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν). The reason why there is no contrast between the Son and the prophets is probably because the writer felt there was no danger of rivalry; prophecy had ceased by the time that the Son came; the "prophet" belonged to a bygone order of things, so that there was no need to argue against any misconception of their function in relation to that of the Son (Bar 85:1–3 "in former times our fathers had helpers, righteous men and holy prophets ... but now the righteous have been gathered and the prophets have fallen asleep").

As no further use is made of the contrast between Jesus and the prophets (who are only again mentioned incidentally in 11:32), it was natural that ἀγγέλοις should be conjectured (S. Crellius, *Initium Ioannis Evangelii restitutum*, p. 238, independently by Spitta in *Stud. u. Kritiken*, 1913, pp. 106–109) to have been the original reading, instead of προφήταις. But "the word spoken by angels" (2:2) does not refer to divine communications made to the patriarchs; nor can οἱ πατέρες be identified with the patriarchs, as Spitta contends (cf. U. Holzmeister in *Zeitschrift für kathol. Theologie*, 1913, pp. 805–830), and, even if it could, προφήταις would be quite apposite (cp.

1836 saec. x. [α 65]

boh *The Coptic Version of the NT in the Northern Dialect* (Oxford, 1905), vol. iii. pp. 472–555.

sah *The Coptic Version of the NT in the Southern Dialect* (Oxford, 1920), vol. v. pp. 1–131.

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

Phil51o, *de Abrah.* 22). Why the writer selects προφήταις is not clear. But ἄνθρωποις would have been an imperfect antithesis, since the Sono (52o (*de Monarch.* 9: ἐρμηνεῖς γάρ εἰσιν οἱ προφηταὶ θεοῦ καταχρωμένου τοῖς ἐκείνων ὀργάνοις πρὸς δήλωσιν ὧν ἂν ἐθέλῃσιν) views the prophets as interpreters of God in a sense that might correspond to the strict meaning of ἐν, and even (*Quaest. in Exod.* 23:22 τοῦ γὰρ λέγοντος ὁ προφήτης ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐστίν) applies ἄγγελος to the prophet. But ἐν here is a synonym for διὰ (Chrys. ὁρᾷς ὅτι καὶ τὸ ἐν διὰ ἐστίν), as in 1 S 28:6 (ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ κύριος ἐν τοῖς ἐνυπνίοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς δήλοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

In Test. Dan 1:1 [acc. to the tenth cent. Paris MS 938] 53¹X of Nu 24:14; Jer 23:20 [54X of Nu 24:14; Jer 23:20 [55A Q*], 25:19 (49:39) [B: , 56A Q], 37 (30) 24 [57B: ἐσχάτωνB], 58A Q], 37 (30) 24 [59A Q: ἐσχάτων, 60B], Ezk 38:8 (ἐπ' ἐσχάτου ἐτῶν), Dn 10:14 [ἐσχάτω? ἐσχάτων], Hos 3:5 [Q], ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν appears, instead of the more common ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, as a rendering of the phrase בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים. A similar variety of reading occurs here; Origen, *e.g.*, reads ἐσχάτων without τούτων (on La 4:20) and ἐσχάτου (fragm. on John 3:31), while ἐσχάτων is read by 044, a few minor cursives, d and the Syriac version. The same idea is expressed in 1 P 1:20 by ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων, but the τοῦτων here is unique. The messianic mission of Jesus falls at the close of *these days*, or, as the writer says later (9:26), ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων. *These days* correspond to the *present age* (ὁ νῦν αἰών); *the age* (or *world*) *to come* (ὁ μέλλων αἰών, 6:5) is to dawn at the second coming of Christ (9:28; 10:37). Meantime, the revelation of God ἐν υἱῷ

¹ The Armenian reading τούτων after ἡμερῶν, instead of αὐτοῦ, is incorrect, and may even be a reminiscence of Heb 1:1.

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18: for remainder cp. cursive 293.

A saec. v. [02: δ 4].

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18: for remainder cp. cursive 293.

A saec. v. [02: δ 4].

A saec. v. [02: δ 4].

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18: for remainder cp. cursive 293.

has been made to the Christian church as God's People (ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν); the ἡμεῖς does not mean simply the hearers of Jesus on earth, for this would exclude the writer and his readers (2:3), and ἐλάλησεν covers more than the earthly mission of Jesus. There is no special reference in ἐλάλησεν to the teaching of Jesus; the writer is thinking of the revelation of God's redeeming purpose in Christ as manifested (vv. 3, 4) by the (resurrection and) intercession in heaven which completed the sacrifice on the cross. This is the final revelation, now experienced by Christians.

The saying of Jesus quoted by Epiphanius (*Haer.* xxiii. 5, xli. 3, lxvi. 42), ὁ λαλῶν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, ἰδοὺ πάρεμι, was an anti-gnostic logion based partly on this passage and partly on Is 52:6 ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν, πάρεμι. The author of Hebrews is not conscious of any polemic against the OT revelation as inferior to and unworthy of the Christian God. He assumes that it was the same God who spoke in both Testaments: "Sed in hac diversitate unum tamen Deus nobis proponit: nequis putet Legem cum Evangelio pugnare, vel alium esse huius quam illius authorem" (Calvin).

In ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων there is a parallel, perhaps even an allusion, to the Synoptic parable: *finally he sent his son* (Mt 21:27), or, as Mark (12:6) and Luke (20:13) explicitly declare, his *beloved son*, though our author does not work out the sombre thought of the parable. There, the son is the heir (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κληρονόμος), though not of the universe. Here, the meaning of ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων is the same: he was "appointed" heir, he was heir by God's appointment. It is the fact of this position, not the time, that the writer has in mind, and we cannot be sure that this "appointment" corresponds to the elevation of v. 3 (ἐκάθισεν). Probably, in our modern phrase, it describes a pre-temporal act, or rather a relationship which belongs to the eternal order. The force of the aorist ἔθηκεν is best rendered by the English perfect, "has appointed"; no definite time is necessarily intended.

"Nam ideo ille haeres, ut nos suis opibus ditet. Quin hoc elogio nunc eum ornat Apostolus ut sciamus nos sine ipso bonorum omnium esse inopes" (Calvin). The reflection of Sedulius Scotus (alii post patrem haeredes sunt, hic autem vivente Patre haeres est) is pious but irrelevant, for κληρονομεῖν in Hellenistic Greek had come to mean, like its equivalent "inherit" in Elizabethan English, no more than "possess" or "obtain"; a κληρονόμος was a "possessor," with the double *nuance* of certainty and anticipation. "Haeres" in Latin acquired the same sense; "pro haerede gerere est pro domino gerere, veteres enim 'haeredes' pro 'dominis' appellabant" (Justinian, *Instit.* ii.19. 7).

In δι' οὗ (Griesbach conj. διότι) καὶ ἐποίησε τοὺς αἰῶνας the καί especially⁶¹ suggests a correspondence between this and the preceding statement; what the Son was to possess was what he had been instrumental in making. Τοὺς αἰῶνας here, though never in Paul, is equivalent (*i62i* 1147) to τὰ πάντα in v. 3 (implied in πάντων above), *i.e.* the universe or world (11:3). The

¹ An emphasis blurred by the τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν of D^b K L P harkl Chrys. Theod. (Blass, von Sod.).

functions assigned by Jewish speculation to media like the Logos at creation are here claimed as the prerogative of the Son. This passing allusion to the function of Christ in relation to the universe probably originated, as in the case of Paul, in the religious conception of redemption. From the redeeming function of Christ which extended to all men, it was natural to infer His agency in relation to creation as part of his pre-existence. The notion is that “the whole course of nature and grace must find its explanation in God, not merely in an abstract divine *arbitrium*, but in that which befits the divine nature” (W. Robertson Smith), *i.e.* the thought behind 2:9 f. is connected with the thought behind 1:1–3. This may be due to a theological reflection, but the tendency to emphasize the moral rather than the metaphysical aspect, which is noticeable in Πρὸς Ἑβραίους as in the Fourth Gospel, and even in Paul, is consonant with Philo’s tendency to show the function of the Logos and the other intermediate powers as religious rather than cosmical (cp. Bréhier’s *Les Idées Philos. et Religieuses de Philon d’Alexandrie*, pp. 65 f., 111 f., 152, “il ne s’agit plus chez Philon d’un explication du monde mais du culte divin”; 174 f., “la thèse de Philon, qui explique et produit la doctrine des intermédiaires, n’est pas l’impossibilité pour Dieu de produire le monde mais l’impossibilité d’être had repeatedly claimed for his Logos, that it was the organ of creation (”). Yet Phil63o had repeatedly claimed for his Logos, that it was the organ of creation (*e.g.* *de sacerdot.* 5, λόγος δ’ ἐστὶν εἰκὼν θεοῦ, δι’ οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐ), and this is what is here, as by Paul, claimed for Christ. Only, it is a religious, not a cosmological, instinct that prompts the thought. The early Christian, who believed in the lordship of Christ over the world, felt, as a modern would put it, that the end must be implicit in the beginning, that the aim and principle of the world must be essentially Christian. This is not elaborated in “Hebrews” any more than in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 1:3); the author elsewhere prefers the simple monotheistic expression (2:10; 11:3). But the idea is consonant with his conception of the Son. “If pre-existence is a legitimate way of expressing the absolute significance of Jesus, then the mediation of creation through Christ is a legitimate way of putting the conviction that in the last resort, and in spite of appearances, the world in which we live is a Christian world, our ally, not our adversary” (Denney in *ER64E* viii. 516 f.).

³ *He (ὁς ὢν) reflecting God’s bright glory and stamped with God’s own character, sustains the universe with his word of power; when he had secured our purification from sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; ⁴ and thus he is superior to (κρείττων) the angels, as he has inherited a Name superior (διαφορώτερον, 8:6) to theirs.*

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

The unique relation of Christ to God is one of the unborrowed truths of Christianity, but it is stated here in borrowed terms. The writer is using metaphors which had been already applied in Alexandrian theology to Wisdom and the Logos. Thus Wisdom is an unalloyed emanation τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης, ἀπαύγασμα ... φωτὸς αἰδίου (Wis 7:25, 26), and ἀπαύγασμα in the same sense of “reflection” occurs in Phil65o, who describes the universe as οἶον ἁγίων ἀπαύγασμα, μίμημα ἀρχετύπου (*de plant.* 12), the human spirit as τύπον τινὰ καὶ χαρακτῆρα θείας δυνάμεως (*quod deter. pot. ins. sol.* 83), and similarly the Logos. χαρακτήρ is “the exact reproduction,” as a statue of a person (S66S 363:60 χαρακτῆρα μορφῆς ἐμῆς); literally, the stamp or clear-cut impression made by a seal, the very facsimile of the original. The two terms ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτήρ are therefore intended to bring out the same idea.

ὑπόστασις= the being or essence of God, which corresponds to his δόξα (= character or nature); it is a philosophical rather than a religious term, in this connexion, but enters the religious world in Wis 16:21 (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὑπόστασις σου κτλ.). Its physical sense emerges in the contemporary *de Mundo*, 4, τῶν ἐν ἀέρι φαντασμάτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ κατ’ ἔμφασιν τὰ δὲ καθ’ ὑπόστασιν. The use of it as a term for the essence or substance of a human being is not uncommon in the LX67X (e.g. Ps 39:5; 139:15); cp. Schlatter’s *Der Glaube im NT*³ (1905), pp. 615 f., where the linguistic data are arranged.

χαρακτήρ had already acquired a meaning corresponding to the modern “character” (e.g. in Menander’s proverb, ἀνδρὸς χαρακτήρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται, *Heauton Timoroumenos*, 11). The idea of χαρακτήρ as replica is further illustrated by the Bereschith rabba, 52. 3 (on Gn 21:2): “hence we learn that he (Isaac) was the splendour of his (father’s) face, as like as possible to him.”

An early explanation of this conception is given by Lactantius (*divin. instit.* iv.), viz. that “the Father is as it were an overflowing fountain, the Son like a stream flowing from it; the Father like the sun, the Son as it were a ray extended from the sun (radius ex sole porrectus). Since he is faithful (cp. He 3:2) and dear to the most High Father, he is not separated from him, any more than the stream is from the fountain the ray from the sun; for the water of the fountain is in the stream, and the sun’s light in the ray.” But our author is content to throw out his figurative expressions. How the Son could express the character of God, is a problem which he does not discuss; it is felt by the author of the Fourth Gospel, who suggests the moral and spiritual affinities that lie behind such a function of Jesus Christ, by hinting that the Son on earth taught what he had heard from the Father and lived out the life he had himself experienced and witnessed with the unseen Father. This latter thought is present to the mind of Seneca in *Epp.* 6:5, 6, where he observes that “Cleanthes could never have exactly reproduced Zeno, if he had simply listened to him; he shared the life of Zeno, he saw into his secret purposes” (vitae eius interfuit, secreta perspexit). The author of Hebrews, like Paul in Col 1:15–17, contents himself with asserting the vital community of nature between the Son and God, in virtue of which (φέρων τε) the Son holds his position in the universe.

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

OGIS Dittenberger’s *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (1903–1905).

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

In the next clause, **φέρων**⁶⁸¹ **τε τὰ πάντα** is not used in the sense in which Sappho (fragm. 95, πάντα φέρων) speaks of the evening star “bringing all things home,” the sheep to their fold and children to their mother. The phrase means “upholding the universe as it moves,” bearing it and bearing it on. “Thou bearest things on high and things below,” Cain tells God in Bereschith rabba, 23. 2, “but thou dost not bear my sins.” “Deus ille maximus potentissimusque ipse vehit omnia” (Seneca, *Epist.* to the Logos (e.g. 69o to the Logos (e.g. *de migrat. Abrah.* 6, ὁ λόγος ... ὁ τῶν ὅλων κυβερνήτης πηδαλιουχεῖ τὰ σύμπαντα: *de spec. legibus* i., 81, λόγος δ’ ἐστὶν εἰκὼν θεοῦ, δι’ οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο: *de plant.* 32, λόγος δὲ ὁ ἄϊδιος θεοῦ τοῦ αἰωνίου τὸ ὀχυρώτατον καὶ βεβαιότατον ἔρεισμα τῶν ὅλων ἐστί). So Chrysostom takes it: φέρων ... τουτέστι, κυβερνῶν, τὰ διαπίπτοντα συγκρατῶν. It would certainly carry on the thought of δι’ οὗ ... αἰῶνας, however, if φέρειν here could be taken in its regular Philonic sense of “bring into existence” (e.g. *quis rer. div. haer.* 7, ὁ τὰ μὴ ὄντα φέρων καὶ τὰ πάντα γεννῶν: *de mutat. nom.* 44, πάντα φέρων σπουδαῖα ὁ θεός); this was the interpretation of Gregory of Nyssa (*MPG.* xlii. 265), and it would give a better sense to “word of power” as the fiat of creative authority. But the ordinary interpretation is not untenable

In **τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ**, the αὐτοῦ (αὐτοῦ?) refers to the Son, not as in the preceding clause and in 11:3 to God. Hence perhaps its omission by 704** 173714** 173729 Origen.

With **καθαρισμὸν ... ὑψηλοῖς** the writer at last touches what is for him the central truth about the Son; it is not the teaching of Jesus that interests him, but what Jesus did for sin by his sacrifice and exaltation. From this conception the main argument of the epistle flows. Καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν is a Septuagint expression (e.g. Job 7:21 ποιήσω ... καθαρισμὸν (רָצַח) τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου), though this application of κ. to sins is much more rare than that either to persons (Lv 15:13) or places (1 Ch 23:26; 2 Mac 10:5). In 2 P 1:9 (τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν) it is

¹ φανερῶν is, like ἀπολεῖται in 4:9, an error of B*.

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

M saec. ix. [0121: α 1031] cont. 1:1–4:3; 12:20–13:25.

424 saec. xi. [O ¹²] Hort’s 67

1739 saec. x. [α 78]

filled out with the possessive pronoun, which is supplied here by some (*e.g.* ἡμῶν 73D^cK 74K 75L h n Chrys., 76h^x78 v^ωμύ „syrhC n77^κ). Grammatically it = (a) purgation of sins, as καθαρίζω may be used of the “removal” of a disease (Mt 8:3, 4), or = (b) our cleansing from sins (9:14

D saec. (vi.) [06: α 1026] cont. 1:1–13:20. Codex Claromontanus is a Graeco-Latin MS, whose Greek text is poorly* reproduced in the later (saec. ix.–x.) E = codex Sangermanensis. The Greek text of the latter (1:1–12:8) is therefore of no independent value (cp. Hort in WH, §§ 335–337); for its Latin text, as well as for that of F=codex Augiensis (saec. ix.), whose Greek text of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους has not been preserved, see below, p. lxix.

K saec. ix. [018:1:1].

L saec. ix. [020: α 5] cont. 1:1–13:10.

sah *The Coptic Version of the NT in the Southern Dialect* (Oxford, 1920), vol. v. pp. 1–131.

Athan Athanasius

Ⲭ saec. iv. (v.) [01: ⲟ 2].

καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων). Before καθαρισμόνD H K L M 256 d) are inserted by 79D 80H 81h82n Aug. etc. 83M 25846 d harkl sa85h bo86h eth Orig. Atha87n Aug. etc. Δι' ἑαυτοῦ = ipse, as ἑαυτῷ = sua sponte. Ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ is a reminiscence of a favourite

D saec. (vi.) [06: α 1026] cont. 1:1–13:20. Codex Claromontanus is a Graeco-Latin MS, whose Greek text is poorly* reproduced in the later (saec. ix.–x.) E = codex Sangermanensis. The Greek text of the latter (1:1–12:8) is therefore of no independent value (cp. Hort in WH, §§ 335–337); for its Latin text, as well as for that of F=codex Augiensis (saec. ix.), whose Greek text of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους has not been preserved, see below, p. lxix.

H saec. vi. [015: α 1022] cont. 1:3–8; 2:11–16; 3:13–18; 4:12–15; 10:1–7, 32–38; 12:10–15; 13:24–25: mutilated fragments, at Moscow and Paris, of codex Coislinianus.

K saec. ix. [018:1:1].

L saec. ix. [020: α 5] cont. 1:1–13:10.

psalm (110:1) of the writer, though he avoids its ἐκ δεξιῶν. It denotes entrance into a position of divine authority. “Sedere ad Patris dexteram nihil aliud est quam gubernare vice Patris” (Calvin). Ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, a phrase used by no other NT writer, is a reminiscence of the Greek psalter and equivalent to ἐν ὑψίστοις; grammatically it goes with ἐκάθισεν. (The divine attribute of μεγαλωσύνη is for the first time employed as a periphrasis for the divine *Majesty*. B and Clem. Rom.) Ὄνομα is emphatic by its position at the close of the sentence; it carries the general Oriental sense of “rank” or “dignity.” The precise nature of this dignity is described as that of sonship (v. 5), but the conception widens in the following passage (vv. 6f.), and it is needless to identify ὄνομα outright with υἱός, though υἱός brings out its primary meaning. In **τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος** (going closely with ἐκάθισεν) **τῶν** (accidentally omitted by 88B and Clem. Rom.) **ἀγγέλων** (emphatic by position) **παρ’ αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα**⁹⁰ ὅσος in NT Greek is confined to Mk 7:36, but τοσοῦτος ... ὅσος is a common Philonic expression. Κρείττων (for which Clement of Rome in 36:2 substitutes the synonymous μείζων) is an indefinite term = “superior.” Unlike Paul, the writer here and elsewhere is fond of using παρὰ after a comparative.⁹⁰

M saec. ix. [0121: α 1031] cont. 1:1–4:3; 12:20–13:25.

256 saec. xii. [α 216]

sah *The Coptic Version of the NT in the Southern Dialect* (Oxford, 1920), vol. v. pp. 1–131.

boh *The Coptic Version of the NT in the Northern Dialect* (Oxford, 1905), vol. iii. pp. 472–555.

Athan Athanasius

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18: for remainder cp. cursive 293.

⁹⁰ James Moffatt, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*](#), International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1924), 2–9.