half of the movement (12:18–29) with rich theophanic imagery continues the sense of urgency from the initial warning but mixes it with a more positive message of encouragement. The second half of the final movement (13:1–19) consists primarily of particular admonitions, but embedded within them (13:7–16) is a summons to Christian life that is based upon the exegetical strategies evident in the central movement.

This understanding of the overall structure of Hebrews can be expressed schematically as follows:

a. 1:1–4 Exordium
b. 1:5–2:18 Christ exalted and humiliated, a suitable High Priest
  A. 1:5–14 Christ exalted above the angels
  B. 2:1–4 Paraelitic interlude: hold fast
  C. 2:5–18 Christ the Savior, a faithful and merciful High Priest
  
II. 3:1—5:10 Christ faithful and merciful
  A. 3:1—4:13 A homily on faith
    i. 3:1–6 Introduction: the faithful Christ and Moses
    ii. 3:7–11 Citation of scripture: the faithless generation
    iii. 4:12—4:11 Exposition
      a. 3:12–19 The failure of faithlessness
      b. 4:1–5 The nature of the promised "rest"
      c. 4:6–11 Faithfully enter the rest "today"
    iv. 4:12–13 Concluding flourish: God’s powerful Word
  B. 4:14—5:10 Christ the merciful High Priest
    i. 4:14–16 Paraelitic prelude: hold fast and approach
    ii. 5:1–5 The characteristics of high priests
    iii. 5:6–10 Christ as High Priest "According to the Order of Melchizedek"

III. 5:11—10:25 The difficult discourse
  A. 5:11—6:20 Paraelitic prelude
    i. 5:11—6:3 Progress to "maturity"
    ii. 6:4–12 Warning and consolation
      a. 6:4–8 The danger of failure
      b. 6:9–12 Hopeful assurance
    iii. 6:13–20 God’s oath: a sure ground of hope
  B. 7:1–28 Christ and Melchizedek
    i. 7:1–3 Introduction and scriptural citation
    ii. 7:4–25 Exposition
      a. 7:4–10 Melchizedek superior to the Levites
      b. 7:11–19 The new priest and the new order
      c. 7:20–25 The priesthood confirmed with an oath
    iii. 7:26–28 Concluding flourish on the eternal High Priest
  C. 8:1—10:18 An exegetical homily on Christ’s sacrificial act
    i. 8:1–6 Introduction: earthly and heavenly sanctuaries
    ii. 8:7–13 Citation of scripture: a new, interior covenant
    iii. 9:1—10:10 Thematic exposition
      a. 9:1–10 The old, earthly sacrifice
      b. 9:11–14 The new, heavenly sacrifice
      c. 9:15–22 The new covenant and its sacrifice
      d. 9:23–28 The new, heavenly, unique sacrifice
      e. 10:1–10 The new, earthly-heavenly sacrifice
    iv. 10:11–18 Concluding flourish on Christ’s sacrifice
    D. 10:19–25 Paraelitic application: have faith, hope, and charity

IV. 10:26—12:13 Exhortation to faithful endurance
  A. 10:26–38 Paraelitic prelude
    i. 10:26–31 A new warning against failure
    ii. 10:32–38 Recollection of faithful endurance
  B. 11:1–40 An encomium on faith
    i. 11:1–2 Introductory definition
    ii. 11:2–7 Faith from creation to Noah
    iii. 11:8–22 The faith of the patriarchs
      a. 11:8–12 The faith of Abraham and Sarah
      b. 11:13–16 Faith’s goal: a heavenly home
      c. 11:17–22 The faith of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
    iv. 11:23–30 The faith of Moses and followers
    v. 11:31–38 The faith of prophets and martyrs
    vi. 11:39–40 Summary: faith perfected in Christians
  C. 12:1–13 A homily on faithful endurance
    i. 12:1–3 Jesus, the inaugurator and perfecter of faith’s race
    ii. 12:4–6 Citation of scripture
    iii. 12:7–11 Suffering as discipline
    iv. 12:12–13 Brace for the race

V. 12:14—13:21 Concluding exhortations
  A. 12:14–17 Paraelitic prelude: a final warning against failure
  B. 12:18–29 The serious, but encouraging situation
    i. 12:18–24 Not Sinai, but a Heavenly Zion
    ii. 12:25–30 An unshakeable kingdom
  C. 13:1–21 The life of the covenant
    i. 13:1–6 Mutual responsibilities
    ii. 13:7–19 The implications of Christ’s sacrifice
    b. 13:20–25 Concluding benediction and greetings

This articulation into five distinguishable movements follows many of the leads suggested by Vanhoye. Nonetheless, the rationale for the various tripartite schemes cannot be ignored. There is close relationship between movements I and II on the one hand and IV and V on the other. The first two develop, in a somewhat circuitous fashion, the major features of the text’s christological position and, at least in a preliminary way, introduce a key paraeletic theme. The final two movements are both primarily paraeletic and are involved with applications of and inferences from the preceding doctrinal exposition.

If one thing characterizes the structure of Hebrews it is the variety of structural principles within subsections. While there certainly are recurrent structural patterns, they never become repetitious. Instead, various kinds of paraperson and exposition are gracefully alternated in a harmonious unity. A similar harmonious variation is