

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

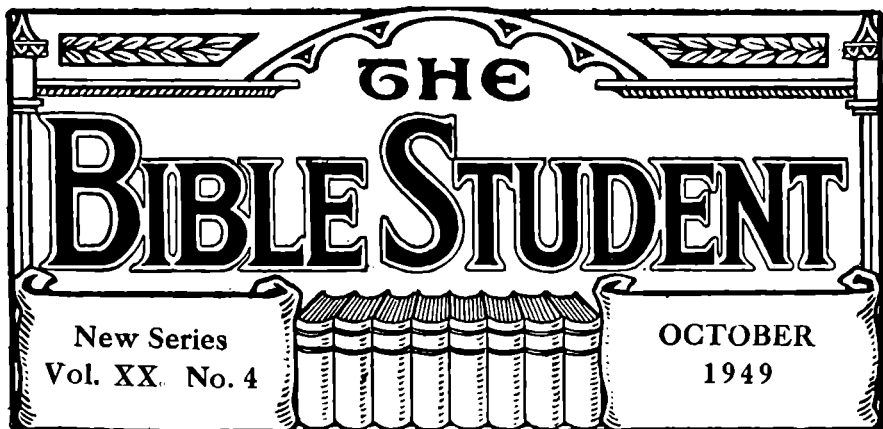
<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php



"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE DUAL TITLES OF JESUS CHRIST	145
CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS	152
THE SECOND ADVENT	157
THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN THE LORD'S PRAYER	163
NOTES ON HEBREWS	170
THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE	178
THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE OLD TESTAMENT	186

Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

Thus the Lord brings to completion the full purpose of that for which He prays; His people *with* Him, His love *in* them, His glory shared *by* them,—an eternal fellowship of reciprocated love, of undimmed harmony, of complete fulness.

NOTES ON HEBREWS

BY W. E. VINE, M.A. (Lond.)

Chap. 5: 1-10 (Cont.)

NOTES

Verse 8.—*though He was a Son*,—or rather “Son though He was,” not “a Son,” as if He was one of many, nor “the Son,” for the absence of the article lays stress upon the quality of the relationship and not on the special Personality. As Son (unique indeed in this relationship), He was possessed of infinite dignity and glory (see 1:1-3 and John 1:14). His Sonship was unoriginated, but He became man, and His humanity is what is being now dwelt upon. The writer is not speaking of the mere fact of His relationship, he is still referring—as in every place in this Epistle where the Sonship of Christ is mentioned—to the sublime, unique, eternal dignity of His relationship as the uncreated, only-begotten Son of God. There is a connexion with the quotation in verse 5.

yet learned obedience—He passed through the experience of obedience, not that He grew in the experience as if He was at any time less obedient than subsequently. He did not *learn* to obey. His experience was that of undeviating fulfilment of the Father’s will. The article before the noun, not to be expressed, suggests the idea of completeness. *Hupakoē*, obedience, is properly submissive hearing (*hupo*, under, *akoē*, hearing). The teaching is parallel to that of Phil. 2:6, R.V., though there are points of distinction. Here in Heb. 5 the teaching is that, notwithstanding all that He continued to be in virtue of His Sonship in Godhead, He learned obedience.

by the things which He suffered;—He voluntarily passed through all the sufferings which His obedience involved. He learned obedience in the sense that this experience in the days of His flesh was new to him. He had come to do the Father’s will, and this was His delight, albeit that it meant all that was conveyed in the title “Man of sorrows” and all the sufferings and agony of the Cross.

Verse 9.—and having been made perfect,—See note at 2:10. *Teleioō* here means to consummate, to qualify perfectly. Christ became qualified for the office undertaken, by means of that which has just been mentioned. Nothing was lacking for the great design purposed by God.

He became unto all that obey Him—This description has the position of emphasis (as in the R.V. order), and follows in close connexion with the obedience of Christ just mentioned. He learned obedience; they learn to obey, and the salvation is limited to those who show the genuineness of their faith by the habit of obedience, instead of choosing to continue in their sins (Rom. 6:10; 1 Pet. 1:2, 22). Obedience involves the revelation of the will of the one to be obeyed.

the Author of eternal salvation:—*Aitios*, author, denotes that which causes something. But Christ is not the merely formal cause of our salvation, He is the concrete and active cause of it. He has not merely effected it, He is, as His Name, "Jesus", implies, our salvation itself (Luke 2:20; 3:6). Exalted and glorified as our High Priest, on the ground of His finished work on earth, He has become the Personal mediating Cause of eternal salvation. For "salvation" see note on 2:3.

Verse 10.—named of God—*Prosagoreuō* primarily denotes to address, to salute; then, to call by name. Here, in this significance, it expresses the formal ascription of the title "High Priest" to Him to whom it belongs uniquely. The A.V. "called" is inadequate to express the meaning. The suggested rendering "addressed" is doubtful. The reference is to Ps. 110:4, a prophecy confirmed at the Ascension. The aorist tense here expresses the one solemn acknowledgment, by the Father, of this great capacity as fulfilled in the Son.

a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.—Thus there is a double acknowledgment, (1) as the Son perfected for ever, (2) as the antitype of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was not a priest under the Mosaic régime, he acted under an economy in which Gentiles were the objects of the ministry as well as God's chosen people.

A REVIEW OF THE SUBJECT THUS FAR

Before entering upon the succeeding series of admonitions (5:11 to 6:12), it will be well briefly to review the Epistle thus far. The presentation of the glories of the Person of Christ in the two opening chapters is preliminary to the subject of the perfection

and power of His Priesthood. We are shewn first His Deity as the Son of God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the effulgence of the Father's glory, "the very image of His substance," seated at His right hand in virtue of His finished work on earth, the Object of angelic worship, the Heir of all things, a throne and sceptre and a universal kingdom appointed for Him, the unoriginated, unchanging, unfailing Son of the everlasting Father.

We next are shewn His true and perfect humanity; we learn how He partook of human nature apart from sin, in order that He might taste death for every man, how He has become the Author of our salvation and how He the Sanctifier, and we the sanctified, the children whom God gave Him and whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, are all of one Father.

All this serves to shew both the unique glory of His High Priesthood and its entire suitability to meet our needs. "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest . . . the Apostle and High Priest of our confession," merciful in succouring the tempted, and faithful as a Son over God's house.

After the interlude in the third and fourth chapters the Apostle indicates two special features which characterize the Priesthood of Christ, (a) His sympathy (4:15, 16), and (b) His Divine appointment (5:1-6). Here the Melchizedek character of His Priesthood is introduced, and this is in order to shew that it is of a far higher order than that of Aaron. The writer has dwelt more fully now upon the experiences and sufferings of Christ in the days of His flesh, and this in order to show how He has become "the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him." In the second chapter the main point is His identification with us as the children, who are partakers of flesh and blood. Here in the fifth chapter the fact of His humanity serves to show the suitability of His Priesthood.

Analysis of Chapters 5: 11 to 6: 20

The Fourth series of Exhortations

A. <i>The Spiritual state of readers</i>	...	...	ch. 5:11-14
<i>i. The Protest</i>	...	...	11, 12
(1) their dulness	...	...	11
(2) their declension	...	...	12

ii. The Lesson	...	...	...	...	13, 14
(1) the diet of the inexperienced	...	...	...	...	13
(2) the diet of the fullgrown	...	...	...	...	14
B. <i>Their Danger</i>	...	...	...	...	ch. 6:1-8
i. An exhortation	...	...	...	...	1, 2
(1) Positive—to press on	...	...	...	...	1a
(2) Negative—not to remain elementary	...	...	...	...	1b, 2
ii. An Assurance	...	...	...	...	3
iii. The Lesson	...	...	...	...	4-8
(1) privileges	...	...	...	...	4, 5
(2) apostasy	...	...	...	...	6a
(3) impossibility of renewal	...	...	...	...	6b
(4) the reason	...	...	...	...	6c
C. <i>Their Prospect</i>	...	...	...	...	ch. 6:9-12
i. A Persuasion	...	...	...	...	9
ii. The Reason	...	...	...	...	10
iii. A Desire—for their diligence	...	...	...	...	11, 12
(1) continued	...	...	...	...	11a
(2) hopeful	...	...	...	...	11b
(3) constant	...	...	...	...	11c
(4) active	...	...	...	...	12a
(5) initative	...	...	...	...	12b
D. <i>The Encouragement</i>	...	...	...	...	ch. 6:13-20
i. <i>God's Promise and Oath to Abraham</i>	...	...	...	...	ch. 6:13-18
(1) the basis	...	...	...	...	13
(2) the blessing	...	...	...	...	14
(3) the response	...	...	...	...	15
(4) the principle	...	...	...	...	16
(5) the design	...	...	...	...	17
(6) the character	...	...	...	...	18a
(7) the purpose	...	...	...	...	18b
ii. <i>The Hope</i>	...	...	...	...	19, 20
(1) its character	...	...	...	...	19a
(2) its direction	...	...	...	...	19b
(3) its substance	...	...	...	...	20

INTRODUCTORY

At verse 11 the writer again breaks into the subject in order to deal with the hearts and consciences of his readers. What he has to say concerning the Melchizedek character of the priesthood of Christ, is so comprehensive that in order rightly to apprehend it they must be roused from spiritual lethargy, and become imitators of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promise."

Four contrasts are drawn in the section from 5:11 to 7:28, (a) between babyhood and maturity (5:11-14), (b) between apostasy and faithfulness (6:6), (c) between the Law and the Promise and oath of God (7:18-21), (d) between the Old Covenant and the New (7:22).

The whole section consists of a contrast between the spiritual power of Christianity and the Judaistic system. The writer is not discussing the subject as to whether his readers have spiritual life or not. That of which he is treating is the vital power which exists in the Christian faith and practice.

Brought up under the Law and instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures they had received light upon the oracles of God from the truth and doctrine of the Christian faith, but instead of making progress therein and so becoming teachers able to instruct others as to the true meaning and power of Christianity, they had gone back to a condition of childhood and were needing instruction over again as to what were the foundation principles underlying the Old Testament Scriptures. The new light which had been given through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and which illuminated the sacred page of the Old Testament had been lost upon them, and, thus adhering to Judaism, they were practically under the condition referred to in Galatians 4:1-3 and saw in the Old Testament Scriptures only that which they had received from the religion of Judaism. They therefore needed the simplest possible instruction, the very rudiments contained in the oracles of God concerning the Christian faith, and were not in a spiritual condition fit to receive the solid food which the apostle now had to place before them concerning Christ. They had failed to grasp the teaching even though the Gospel had been brought to them, and so were in immaturity.

The instruction in what God had said to the Fathers by Moses and the Prophets, had been a diet of infancy. It was something better than Judaism as it did enlighten the conscience and stimulate

the hope but there was need to go on from initial principles to full growth and this could only result from an apprehension of what Christ Himself was to the Father on behalf of the believer.

The six doctrines enumerated, (as in the case of the animal sacrifices) were all contained in the Old Testament; viz., repentance, faith, washings, the laying on of hands, resurrection and eternal judgment, and they all had to do with the teaching concerning Christ, whether by way of actual doctrine or of typical teaching, as in the case of the laying on of hands. Ezekiel and Daniel again, for instance, had written about the resurrection. All six doctrines then consisted of the elementary principles of Christianity. It is clear that the writer is differentiating between (1) Hebrews who had received light upon the Old Testament Scriptures, leading them to an understanding of the truth relating to Christ and who, in spite of all this, were being influenced to go back to Judaism, and (2) those who amidst difficulties and temptations were remaining true to the Christian faith, and whom he immediately addresses, as for instance in verse 9, that he was persuaded better things and things that accompanied salvation.

The former (in ch. 5:11-14) were those whose minds had been very considerably exercised about Christianity, but had made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. These latter (in ch. 6:1-8) he describes as being "once enlightened", that is to say, as having become acquainted with the principles of Christ, the tenets of the Christian faith. They had attached themselves to Christianity and thus far left the exclusive ground of Judaism, but without actually experiencing "the things that accompany salvation."

Concerning such the apostle says that after they fell away, that is to say, after they went back to Judaism, taking purely Jewish ground, it is impossible "to renew them again unto repentance (that is to say, to cause them again to change their attitude toward Christ) seeing they "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, putting Him to an open shame." They identified themselves with their nation in rejecting the Son of God and treating Him as a criminal. Their action in thus falling away is like the people of Israel who, though only one day's journey off the promised land failed to enter and in heart turned back to Egypt. To return to Judaism after admitting that Christ, the sinless sacrifice, had been raised from the dead, was to declare that Christ had died for His sins and was still dead. Obviously

converts could not be guilty of such a crime for they had neither said "His blood be on us and on our children," neither had they cried out "away with Him, crucify Him." The repentance necessary was such as was urged upon the Jews in Acts 2:30 and 3:19.

There is a very plain intimation here that the writer had no idea of being content to minister the deep truths concerning Christ and His High Priesthood as so much instruction to be given to them. The true knowledge of Christ must find its counterpart in a diligent labour of love toward others, a practical assistance to those who are in any need. By such service carried on with alacrity, and with the power of the hope set before them working within the heart, they could through faith and patience inherit the promises as others had done before them. Their hope had been set on purely *national* blessing. Now their hope, in all its fulness is centred in Christ. The exercise of their faith in this practical way would inevitably bring them into difficulties, but here was scope for the accompanying exercise of patience with the fulfilment of God's promise in view.

Abraham was an outstanding example of such; "having patiently endured, he obtained the promise." The case of Abraham and God's dealings with Him provides the Apostle with the means of renewing his theme of the Priesthood of Christ in its Melchizedek aspect.

NOTES

Verse 11.—*Of whom we have many things to say,*—literally, 'concerning whom our word (or discourse) is much (*i.e.*, abundant).' There are three ways in which the "whom" is interpreted: (1) that it refers to Melchizedek; this is most improbable; (2) that the phrase is 'concerning which,' that is, the subject of the Melchizedek priesthood; this is grammatically possible, as the pronoun in the Greek is either masculine or neuter; (3) that the "whom" is Christ Himself as a High Priest after the Melchizedek order. This seems most likely. The succeeding passages, after the intervening exhortations, are occupied with Him in the respect mentioned, and Christ Himself is the great subject of the Epistle.

and hard of interpretation,—Not that there was anything difficult to interpret or explain in the subject itself, the fault lay with the hearers, whose lack of intelligence made it difficult to unfold the subject adequately.

seeing ye are become dull of hearing.—*Nōthros* denotes sluggish, both dull and indolent; it is used again at 6:12, and nowhere else in the N.T. "Hearing" is plural in the original, and the rendering might be "in your ears." The whole phrase describes a state of mind in which the instruction given produces no real or adequate impression. The fact that they had "become dull" indicates, not an initial condition, but a process, a gradual decline spiritually. (In contrast see 10:32-34). There is a danger of becoming so familiar with truth that the heart ceases to pay the necessary attention to it. Some become Gospel hardened; others indolently assent to truth and have lost earnest interest in it. Traditional religion is the great hindrance to spiritual intelligence.

Verse 12.—For when by reason of the time—There seems to be no sufficient reason for translating the *kai* here by "even." The time (*chronos*, not *kairos*, season) signifies the whole period, the length of time, in which teaching had been given them.

ye ought to be teachers,—That is the purpose of God's training in the Scriptures of truth, that such progress should be made that it produces the ability to impart truth to others.

ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments—The R.V. margin gives a possible rendering, but the text is perhaps to be preferred, as it sets more cogently the contrast to the preceding statement. The *stoicheia* (lit., rows; especially of letters), the rudiments, are here the elementary principles (the 'A B C') of the Old Testament as a revelation from God (contrast Gal. 4:3 and 9, and Col. 2:8, 20, where the word means the elementary principles of religion), with its external ritual and observances, valuable only as pointing on to Christ.

of the first principles of the oracles of God;—lit., the beginning (*archē*), i.e. the fundamentals of the Divine revelation, and here of the *logia*, the very substance of Christian doctrine.

and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.—That is, in a condition of earliest childhood. The "milk" is explained in 6:1 as "the first principles of Christ." The solid food is the ministry relating to the High-Priesthood of Christ and its character and power, leading to spiritual worship and access into the Holiest. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:1, 2 and 1 Pet. 2:1, 2.

(To be continued)