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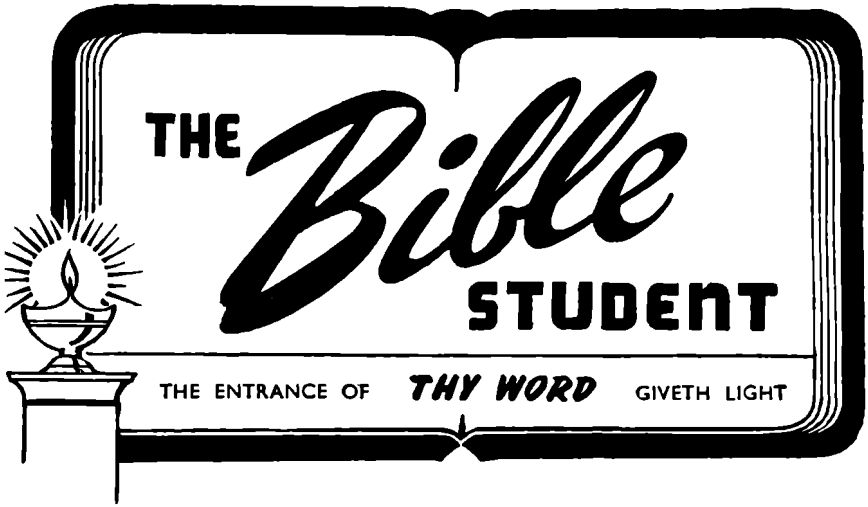
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NOTES ON HEBREWS

W. E. VINE, M.A. (London)

Chapter 13 (*continued*)

Verse 8. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea, for ever—This, which is to be taken as a statement, is connected both with what precedes and with what follows, and stands out in contrast in each respect: 'yesterday', for it was He who empowered the departed guides to live as they did, and He has an eternal past; 'today', for He is the 'merciful and faithful High Priest, the Mediator of the New Covenant, able to save to the uttermost; 'for ever', and therefore He is the unchanging One. Emphasis is given to the eternity of His future by the order in the original, 'yesterday and today the same, and for ever', and this is brought out by the added 'yea' of the R.V.

For the order of the Names 'Jesus Christ' see 10:10.

Verse 9. Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings—The verb *parapherō*, to carry away, is found in the most authoritative texts, though *peripherō*, to carry about, is well supported (it is used in Eph. 4:14). Each idea is applicable to the false teachings here mentioned. There is no doubt a special reference to the errors of Judaism. Any doctrine that is not in strict adherence to the Word of God is strange or alien. Such conduces to uncertainty and to practices which counteract the fundamental truths of the faith.

for it is good that the heart be stablished by grace—Grace is the favour of God as shown in Christ (2:9), taught in the gospel, and manifested in the truths of the Christian faith. All this is the means of establishing the heart, that is to say, making it firm and steadfast. Strange teachings may appeal to the intellect; God's grace ever appeals to the heart.

not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited—For 'meats' see 9:10. It stands here for all the ceremonial ordinances under the Law, as being conspicuously those which formed a subject of Judaistic observance. *Peripateō*, to walk, is here used of that to which a person is given, forming a special part of that in which he occupies himself. The aorist tense in the verb rendered 'were not profited' marks the whole Judaistic system as a thing completely exploded and done away with.

Verse 10. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle—The altar is not the Cross. No animal was slain on an altar in connection with the tabernacle offerings. The animal was slain before it or any part of it was put on the altar; Christ was slain on the Cross. The earthly altar has been superseded. What the material altar was to the Israelites Christ Himself is to believers. For them Christ now is Priest, Altar and Sacrifice. All who serve the earthly, the material tabernacle can have no part in Christ. It is upon Him, the living Person, on the ground of His sacrifice, that believers feed. There could be no hope of salvation, no partaking of Christ for any who turned back to Judaism (see ch. 10:26-29).

Verse 11. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned without the camp. The priest did not partake of the two sin-offerings. There was no eating. All was consumed by fire. See Lev. 4:21 and 6:30. For the burning without the camp see Lev. 16:11, 14-16, 27. This confirms the fact that meats could not establish the heart before God.

Verse 12. Wherefore (i.e., to fulfil the type) Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate—Stress is laid upon the value and efficacy of the blood of Christ. His sacrificial death, in the giving up of His life in the shedding of His blood, not only cleanses from defilement but separates believers entirely to God. The city Jerusalem is shown to answer to the camp in the wilderness. Outside the camp was the place of the sin-offering, Lev. 16:27. Thus the death of Christ was this antypically. In the death that He died He became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Jesus as the Sin-Offering set apart 'the people' through suffering 'without the gate', the place of judgment and curse, suffering as a malefactor and accursed. All hindrances have been removed to our going forth to Him, 'bearing His reproach'. The Hebrews must therefore understand that Christ's death put an end to all temple sacrifices as a means of acceptance with God.

The eighth verse of this chapter, stating the immutability of

Christ, recalls the teaching of the first chapter. These eleventh and twelfth verses recall the teaching of the second chapter. Both chapters speak of His suffering of death (see 2:9, 14); both use the single Name Jesus (2:9); both speak of Him as the Sanctifier (2:11).

Verse 13. Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach—This was entirely contrary to Jewish ideas. All that was outside the camp was ceremonially unclean. Yet the Jews had delivered Christ into the hands of unclean Gentiles. To obtain salvation was therefore impossible inside the camp of Judaism. The works of the Jewish economy of ritual and ceremonial ordinances must be abandoned. It was necessary to go outside the gate to the place where alone the needs of the soul had been met by God. Hope lay not in national privilege or any exclusive Jewish position. The reproach of Christ, an indignity in the eyes of a Jew and a degradation in the eyes of a Gentile, was the only possible means of acceptance with God. The covenant of grace must not be mingled with the covenant of Law. Separation to Christ always brings enmity and opposition.

Verse 14. For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come—To be expatriated on account of following Christ should cause nothing but satisfaction. The city that is to be is not only a future reality but a present governing power in the life. For *epizēteō*, to seek earnestly, see 11:14, and for the city see 11:10, 16.

Verse 15. Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His Name—This is one of the sacrifices the believer can offer; the only others are mentioned in the next verse. This new worship has no relation to an earthly temple, earthly priests and an earthly altar, which are all inconsistent with it. The phrase 'sacrifice of praise' is found in Lev. 7:12. The fruit of the lips is what the lips utter. See Hos. 14:2. and Isa. 57:19. *Homologeō*, to make confession, involves a whole-hearted acknowledgment. His Name stands for all that He is in Person, character and work.

Verse 16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased—Praise alone is not sufficient, there is need of doing good and of fellowship. The original has the nouns *eupoia*, beneficence and *koinōnia*, fellowship, sharing with others. The present continuous tense 'forget (not)' enjoins the same constant practice as offering praise. God is well pleased with these sacrifices, which are set in contrast to the religious practices of Judaism and ecclesiasticism.

Verse 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them—The same word, 'guides', as in verse 7, where see note. These are the living ones, gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit in the assemblies. The obedience and submission enjoined are not blind subjection to authority. True guides teach the Word of God, to which believers are to bring everything to the test.

for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account—A description of genuine overseers. *Agrupneō* signifies to be wakeful, suggestive of the watchful care of shepherds. The overseer must ever carry on his work in view of the Judgment-seat of Christ, where he will give account of his service, its motives and methods. See Rom. 14:12 and 1 Peter 4:5.

that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you—That is, that they may hereafter render their account with joy, and not lamenting (present participle of *stenazō*), joy because of obedience to their admonitions and the spiritual progress of those whom they have guided. To render an account with grief because of the lack of obedient response to their ministry would mean eternal loss for those who had thus failed to submit to them and follow them. That is the meaning of 'unprofitable for you'.

Verse 18. Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience—For the request cp. Rom. 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Col. 4:3; Eph. 6:18, 19; 2 Thess. 3:1. The writer was evidently well known to the readers. Requests for prayer can only rightly be made where the conscience of the requester is clear before God. The writer had no doubt of this in his own case.

desiring to live honestly in all things—*Kalos* rendered 'honestly', signifies honourable, uprightly (i.e., in God's sight). *Anastrephomai*, means to conduct one's life, to live in a certain manner. See the corresponding noun in verse 7.

Verse 19. And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner—This demonstrates faith in the power of prayer to hasten matters where, humanly speaking, the circumstances may seem to prevent the possibility. In this particular request there was evidently a spiritual interest in the readers. He does not speak of a desire to return to them, but to be 'restored' to them, indicating a close spiritual relationship with them as well as interest in them. The word is used, e.g., in the LXX of Mal. 4:6 and in the healing of a hand, Mark 3:5.

Verse 20. Now the God of peace—For this description see Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23. In each case the title has a bearing upon the particular subject spoken of. Here, the inclination of many of the Hebrew Christians to draw back to Judaism tended not only to prevent their submitting to their spiritual guides but to disintegrate their fellowship with one another. How could they thus enjoy peace? The opening words of this prayer are then a reminder that God is the Author and Dispenser of peace (see 12:14).

Who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant—There is apparently a reference, by way of contrast, to the shepherd work of Moses in bringing Israel out of Egypt and to the blood of the covenant which God made with them (see Isa. 63:11-13). Thus the superiority of Christ to Moses is again demonstrated, as in 3:2-5. That the Lord Jesus had been brought up from the dead made Him infinitely superior to Moses. For, as 'the good Shepherd', He died as the Expiator. Because of the blood of the eternal covenant God raised Him from the dead (*anagō* here means to bring up, not to bring back or again), that He might be 'the great Shepherd.' The phrase 'with the blood of the eternal covenant' is probably to be taken with both the clauses that precede it.

even our Lord Jesus—Emphasis is laid upon the title and Name 'our Lord Jesus' by the position at the end of other verse, rightly noted in the R.V. The addition of the title 'Lord' to His Name, so often mentioned alone in the Epistle, is appropriate to all that is said concerning Him in the context.

Verse 21. make you perfect in every good thing to do His will—This desire, which gathers up the preceding exhortations throughout the chapter, could be fulfilled only by the power of God in Christ. The wish stands in contrast to the unfulfilled pledges of Israel who had said 'all that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient'. Under the New Covenant the power is bestowed with the will. Sinless perfection is not intended; *katartizō* means to fit, to prepare.

working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.—'In us', is the reading of the Sinaitic MS., and its greater difficulty after the 'you' makes it the more likely. For the phrase 'through Jesus Christ' see verse 8.

to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen—This doxology, coming immediately after 'Jesus Christ', seems to be best taken as ascribed to Him, as in Rom. 16:27 and 1 Pet. 4:11. In 2 Pet. 3:18 and Rev. 5:12; Christ is expressly the object. In 2 Tim. 4:18 the doxology is to Christ as the Lord. In Rev. 5:13 the ascription is to God and to Christ, and in this connection we need to remember John 10:30. Amen is a Hebrew word. When said by God it means 'it is and shall be so'; when said by men it means 'so let it be'. The Lord Jesus often used it (translated 'verily') to introduce new revelations of the mind of God. In John's Gospel it is always repeated, but not elsewhere. One in the N.T. it is a title of Christ, Rev. 3:14, because through Him the purposes of God are established.

Verse 22. But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation—What follows suggests that this refers to the Epistle as a whole. The request indicates the realization that much of the teaching of the Epistle was contrary to Jewish ideas and prejudices, and yet necessitated a faithful unfolding of its foundation doctrines as opposed to Judaism.

for I have written unto you in few words—The *kai*, which accompanies the *gar*, for, and has been omitted in translation, has the meaning 'indeed', 'for indeed I have written. . .'. Though the Epistle is itself comparatively long, it is short considering the supreme importance of the subject. The writer has indicated, for instance, in 5:11 that he had more to say on the subject he was handling.

Verse 23. Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you—The reference to Timothy is not sufficient to confirm the idea that the Epistle was written by the Apostle Paul. The fact of Timothy's release affords no decisive evidence in this respect.

Verse 24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints—The same description of their overseeing brethren as in verses 7 and 17. For the word *hagioi*, 'saints', see 3:1.

They of Italy salute you—That is, the Christians with whom the writer was in contact while he was in Italy.

Verse 25. Grace be with you all. Amen—Grace here is the Divine favour manifested in blessing at all times and in all experiences. For Amen see Note on verse 21.

This ends the series of the late Mr. Vine's commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which began in the January issue of the Magazine in 1948. We little thought he would be called home to glory ere the series finished. Most fortunately we had access to all his original MSS before he passed away which has enabled us to complete the series. Mr Vine was a contributor to the 'B.S.' since 1925, and during the years following he put through the whole of *Romans and 1st John*; also the first two volumes of his *Greek Word Studies*, which are now complete in four volumes and published by Oliphants Ltd., London.—EDITOR.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phil. 1: 21.)

There is nothing unpractical or disappointing about seeking to live victoriously and happily in Christ providing you don't **try** so hard, but just trustfully let Him live in you. When we consecrate ourselves to God, we think we are making a great sacrifice, when really we are only letting go some little trinkets we have been grabbing. When our hands are empty, **He fills them with His treasures.**

—BETTY STAM