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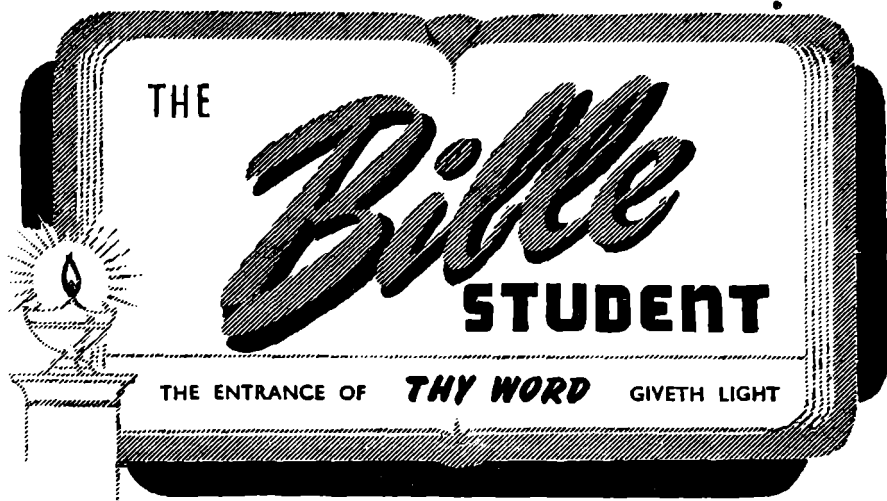
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NOTES ON HEBREWS

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

Chapter 9: 11-28

The Contrasting Excellency of Christ's High Priesthood

(Section concluded from last issue)*

Verses 16, 17. 'For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been a death: for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?' The question whether the writer is digressing from the subject of a covenant to that of a testament or will, or whether a covenant is in view throughout, is very difficult to determine. Opinions differ considerably concerning it. Among the Greeks the word *diathēkē* could mean either a covenant or a will. If the writer is now speaking of a testament, he means that the terms of a will, or testamentary disposition, cannot be carried out until the death of the testator, and that accordingly only through the death of Christ could the purposes of the Divine testament regarding the eternal inheritance be fulfilled. Although in no other place in Scripture does the word denote a will, yet it is actually possible, that, having just spoken of an inheritance, the writer was led to digress to the idea of a will as being akin to the subject. If so, verses 16 and 17 are parenthetic. It may be objected that he was writing to Hebrews, and therefore would not introduce the subject of a will, the legal conditions relating to which were drawn from Roman or Greek, rather than from Jewish law. But then it must be remembered that he was writing to those who were acquainted with Greek testamentary matters, and who in any case would understand the principle of their interpretation.

On the other hand, if the word 'covenant' is read throughout, the writer is referring to such covenants as those to which he had been referring, namely, that the death of a victim is necessary to the ratification of a covenant. That this is the meaning is quite possible. To understand it we must render the verses somewhat literally. The translation would be as follows: 'For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be brought about

* The full analysis of this whole section will be found in last (October '51) issue.

the death of the covenant victim. For a covenant is of force over dead ones: for doth it ever avail while the victim liveth?' The word rendered 'confirmer' may be taken to refer, firstly, to the victim whose death made the covenant valid, but a form of the word has been chosen which has in view the fact that in the new covenant not only was Christ Himself the voluntary Victim whose death was essential to the fulfilment, but God takes all the responsibility of fulfilling it upon Himself and carries it out through His Son, who is thus virtually the covenanting Person.

In this kind of covenant there must be the death of that which gives it force, and since the death in view is the death of Christ, His own Personal work in confirming the covenant is likewise intimated. The difficulty regarding the necessity for the death of Him who makes the covenant, applies also to some extent to the statement about the death of the Testator. For in that view God the Father who bequeaths the inheritance is the Testator whose death is necessary, whereas the death is that of Christ. If we can apply the death of the Testator in that way, we can also apply the death of the covenanting Person. There is this in favour of the covenant view that, if we regard the arrangement as that of a testament, we must omit all reference in these two verses to Christ as a Surety and as a Mediator. For a will requires no surety or mediator, and yet these are prominent features in the treatment of the subject.

Whichever view is taken, whether covenant or testament, the main features are the same. God could bestow His blessings on those who have transgressed His law, only in a manner consistent with His holiness and justice. While He is 'the Lord God, merciful and gracious,' He at the same time 'will by no means clear the guilty.' In the death of Christ His Son, both His love and His justice met. In that vicarious sacrifice He provided a means, consistent with His holiness and justice, of pardoning transgressions, of purging the conscience, and enabling the believer to serve Him in the enjoyment of communion with Himself.

Verse 18. Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. Accordingly, under the new covenant, the blood of Christ consecrates all things and renders them acceptable to God. *Enkainizō* means to make new, but is used to signify to inaugurate, dedicate, and that is the meaning here.

Verses 19, 20, 21. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself, and all the people, saying, *This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward.* Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. The writer has thus shown that the terms of the new covenant could be fulfilled only on the ground of the death of Christ, and that with this in view in the anticipatory offerings under the law, the shedding of blood was essential.

Verse 22. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. The 'almost' points to the fact that, under the law, not every transgression could be atoned for (see, e.g., Numb. 15:30, 31). Again, even temporal forgiveness could not be obtained apart from the shedding of blood. The last statement of the verse leads on immediately to what follows.

Verse 23. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these: but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. That the plural 'better sacrifices' should be used in reference to the death of Christ when emphasis has been laid on His one sacrifice as being offered once for all, may occasion surprise. As, however, the writer has been speaking somewhat fully about the sacrifices under the law, he probably has in mind that the offering of Christ was the fulfilment of various sacrifices, the peace offering, the burnt offering and the trespass offering.

As to the question why the heavenly things should require to be cleansed, the subject before us is not only the remission of our sins, but our access into the presence of God as His worshippers, through the eternal redemption obtained for us. The sanctuary of the presence of God required the savour of redemptive sacrifice. Just as the high priests of old entered into the Holy of holies with the blood of sacrifices, on behalf of the people as worshippers of God, so only by the cleansing blood of Christ on the Cross could the very presence of God become the meeting-place between Him and the believer.

Verse 24. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: Christ is not said to have entered with, but by means of, His own blood (ch. 9:12); He did not take the actual blood of His sacrifice into heaven. His sacrifice on the Cross was completed on earth and once for all, when He said 'It is finished.' In no sense could there be any prolongation of that sacrifice. The 'now' signifies from the point of time when Christ entered Heaven as our High Priest, and from thence onward indefinitely.

Emphanizō, to appear, is here used in the sense of the Middle Voice, to present Himself. The 'face of God' signifies 'the presence of God.' The high priest of old appeared before the mercy-seat on the day of atonement, the place of the very presence of God.

Verse 25. nor yet that he should offer himself often; as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; Two points of difference are intimated between the Jewish offerings and that of Christ: (1) they were often repeated, Christ's was made once for all, (2) Christ entered in virtue of the efficacy of His own blood; that offered by the high priest was not his own.

Verse 26. else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: The constantly repeated self-offering would have been impossible without a constantly repeated death.

Here we are carried beyond the distinction between the earthly sanctuary and heavenly; the contrast now is to be between Adam and Christ. Sin and death were universal. God's provision of a sacrifice embraced the sin of mankind, and was foreordained or ever sin entered into the world. Christ was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 12:8). So if there had to be a repetition of His sacrifice at all it would have been from that time onward and not from any institution under the Law.

but now—This is not to be taken in a temporal sense but argumentatively. It serves to introduce a contrast between the repeated sacrifices of old and the one offering of Christ.

once at the end (or consummation) *of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* Taking the order of the words in the original, the clause 'at the end of

the ages' is to be connected with 'to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.' Christ was manifested in His Incarnation for the purpose of putting away sin. It was at the consummation of the ages that He offered Himself in sacrifice at Calvary. All ages prior to that event looked on to it; all succeeding ages will look back to it. The Cross was ever in view in the eternal counsels of God in the past; it ever is before Him, and always will be, in the ages to come. The dispensational and providential dealings of God with men in the past ages were preparatory to this great act of redeeming grace and mercy, and from it has come, and will come, every blessing that God has for any of His creatures. The work of the Cross thus forms the pivot of all God's counsels and acts in regard to man and to creation at large.

Verse 27, 28. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation. Our thoughts have been occupied with the Sacrifice and the Sanctuary. We are now to consider the Salvation which is to be brought to us at the appearing of Christ. This forms a climax to the subject of the chapter. The writer has taken us back beyond the Israelitic sacrifices, to the entrance of sin into the world, for which God made provision in the sacrifice of His Son. When Christ appears for His people He will come apart from sin (i.e., a sin-offering). Sin brought in death, and death is to be followed by judgment. But the sacrifice of Christ has brought about a change for all who come under its efficacy. Had there been no provision made by God, death and judgment must have been the lot of all. Christ by His offering has, for those who accept Him, broken in upon this sequence of events.

That Christ was once offered is set against the fact that it is appointed unto men once to die. Man's body becomes subject to death but once, retributively on account of sin, and judgment follows. So Christ, having taken upon Himself human nature, without sin, offered Himself voluntarily in sacrifice, once, and once only, and now all who believe are delivered from judgment. He will instead bring salvation to them at His appearing. Accordingly, the appearing of Christ for the salvation of His people is set in contrast to the judgment of the unregenerate. That He

will appear a second time is the main statement of the last verse; His having been once offered to bear the sins of many is here stated somewhat parenthetically. Instead of the judgment, from which there could be no deliverance apart from the sacrifice of Christ, nothing now remains for the believer but to wait for Him.

As the high priest of old, having gone into the Holy of holies to do His service on behalf of the nation of Israel, reappeared to the people, so will Christ appear again on behalf of His saints. Those who wait for Him are not spoken of as a select number who will be waiting, in contrast to those who are not in that attitude; the phrase is descriptive of believers as a class of people whose characteristic attitude is that of waiting for Christ. The participial phrase in the original is equivalent to an appellation descriptive of believers as a whole company.

Moreover He is coming for them unto salvation. Now salvation is never the reward of works; it is always a matter of Divine grace. Just as the salvation of our souls from doom is based upon the finished work of Christ on the Cross, so is the salvation of our bodies when we are caught up to meet Him. His appearing is mentioned here as the counterpart of His offering on the Cross. As His offering has been vicarious for all who believe on Him, so will He appear for all.

This closing portion of the chapter contains what are sometimes known as Christ's three appearings. There are, however, three different words used in the original. In verse 24 that word is *emphanizō*, and there the idea is that of the presentation of Christ before the face of God in all the virtue and acceptance of His Person and finished work. The second, in verse 26, is *phaneroō*, which is to bring into view that which before was hidden. Christ, who had been eternally sharing the glory of the Father, was now by His Incarnation brought into view in the world, in order that He might put away sin by His sacrifice at the height of the ages. The third, in verse 18, is a form of the verb *horaō*, which here suggests that when He comes He will be actually seen, as He was before at His first Advent, when He came to deal with the question of sin.

Chapter 10

Christ's Perfect Offering

Introduction

The tenth chapter continues the presentation of the contrast between the imperfections relating to the Law, under which the former sacrifices were offered, and the perfections of Christ and His offering. This contrast is at once brought out by linking the fourteenth verse with the first. The Law could never 'with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make them that draw nigh.' 'By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' At the close of the ninth chapter the three events relating to the redemptive work of Christ were stated, though not in chronological order; firstly, His present appearing before the face of God for us, secondly, His manifestation in the flesh in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, thirdly, His future appearing the second time, apart from sin, for His people. The tenth chapter treats of these three events again, enlarging upon the first two and setting all three in order of occurrence: (1) His Incarnation, verses 5-10; (2) His present session at the right hand of God, verses 11-22; (3) His return for His people, verses 36, 37. The opening verses are introductory to the first of the three.

Hebrews 10: 1-18

The Sacrifices and the Sacrifice

Analysis

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4. no more offering for sin	18

Verse 1. For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things. The word *skia*, 'shadow,' signifies here a representation or resemblance. The *eikōn*, 'image,' is the substance, i.e., the filling out in all the details of that which had been given in type.

they can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. In order to bring out the glory of Christ and the perfection of His offering, the writer continues to present his theme by way of contrast. The Law and all that was enacted under it could not render those who drew nigh fit for the presence of God. The reasons in these two verses are (1) that which came within the scope of the Law was only a shadow; (2) the sacrifices were the same kind; (3) they were offered every year; (4) they were in continuous series.

Verse 2. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins? The 'worshippers' were those who brought the offerings or sacrifices. *Latreuō* denotes to serve, to render religious homage or service in whatever way, as distinct from *proskuneō*, which lays stress on the showing of reverence. 'Once' signifies 'once for all.' If the offerings could have perfected those who presented them, there would have been no need

for further offerings. The cleansing having taken place once for all, the consciousness of guilt would have been removed (not the recollection of having been guilty). That is to say, the pardon would have removed the apprehension of penalty.

WORD STUDIES IN THE N.T.

By W. WILCOX

'Natural' (or Sensual—*Psuchikos*)

Trench says, 'the word occurs six times in the New Testament, three of which it cannot be said to be ethically employed, but the meanness of the "*natural* body" which the faithful now bear about is contrasted with the glory of the "*spiritual* body" which they shall bear' (1 Cor. 15:44, 46). On the other occasions a moral emphasis rests on the word and in every instance is most deprecatory.

1. Paul declares the *psuchikos* receiveth and cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God as having no organ for their reception, (1 Cor. 2:14).

2. James characterizes the wisdom which is sensual as also 'earthly' and 'devilish' (Jas. 3:15).

3. Jude explains the 'natural' as 'those *not* having the Spirit' (v. 19). The 'natural man' of Scripture is one for whom the flesh is the highest motive power of life and action in whom the spirit, as the organ of the divine Spirit is suppressed, dormant, for the time as good as extinct; whom the operations of the divine Spirit have never lifted into the region of spiritual things.

Psuchikos—'soulish.' Wyclif rendered it 'beastly', 'animal', having the nature and characteristics of the flesh, i.e., of the principle of animal life; the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion. Soutter defines the word as 'the principle of life and the basis of its emotional aspect, animating the present body of flesh, in contrast to the higher life; emotional or sensuous'.

Godet comments as follows, 'The term *psychical* man, which we render by *natural* man, does not therefore exclude the presence of spirit in such a man, it only implies the latent and inactive state of this element, so long as the divine Spirit has not awakened it to enter into union with Himself, and to become through it master