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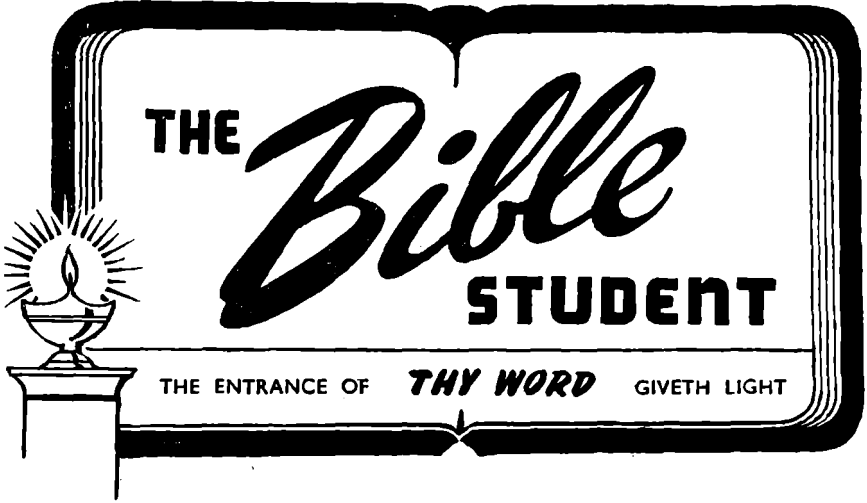
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New Series
Vol. XXIII. No. 3

JULY
1952

CONTENTS

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE	93
THE WISDOM LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE	99
THE THEOPHANIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	...	...	...	103
NOTES ON HEBREWS	...	...	...	109
JESUS IS THE CHRIST	...	...	...	114
SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS	...	...	...	118
WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	125
THE GOSPELS	129
THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS	136

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NOTES ON HEBREWS

By W. E. VINE, M.A.

Chapter 10 : 19-25

Exhortations based on the Priesthood of Christ

Introduction

Having shown that Christ, as the Son of God, holds a position far above angels, mediators of the Mosaic law, above Moses, above the high priest, and having shown also that the Mosaic institutions, whether Temple or priests or sacrifices, are nothing more than the shadows of which Christ, and all that He has accomplished in His sacrifice, all that He is doing at the right hand of God, are the substance, the writer proceeds again to that which he had begun in chapter 4 (closing it at verse 16), namely, the hortatory and admonitory part of his Epistle, for which he has been preparing. This is designed to stir his readers to constancy and steadfastness in their Christian profession. In doing so he will warn them against the solemn consequences of apostasy.

Analysis

	VERSES
A. THE BASIS :	19-21
I. <i>Liberty of entrance</i> :	19, 20
1. by the blood of Jesus	19
2. by the divinely appointed way	
(a) its appointment	
(b) its character	
(c) its means of entrance	
II. <i>A Great Priest</i>	21
B. THE EXHORTATIONS :	22-25
I. <i>Draw near</i> :	
1. the mode	
(a) with a true heart	
(b) in fulness of faith	
2. the condition	
(a) conscience sprinkled	
(b) body washed	
II. <i>Hold fast the confession of hope</i>	23
1. because of the promise of God	
2. because of the faithfulness of God	
III. <i>Consider one another</i> :	24-25
1. the purpose—provoke to love and good works	24
2. the means	
(a) assembling together	
(b) exhorting one another	25
3. the prospect—the Day	25

Notes

Verse 19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus—The 'therefore' gathers up all that has preceded (as summarised in the introduction just given). For *parrhēsia*, boldness, see at 3:6 and 4:16. Literally the phrase is 'boldness into the entrance (*eisodon*) of the holy place'. This is our first privilege. Instead of being limited to one earthly priest, the believer has an unfettered right to enter into the presence of God at all times. Some would interpret the entrance as the entrance of Christ Himself, but this is not to be accepted.

It has been rightly pointed out that the significance of the plural 'the holy places', while referring to the presence of God, the one holy place, is that it gathers up all that belonged to both parts of the tabernacle in their typical import, the lampstand, the table of shewbread, the incense altar, in the outer part, as well as the inmost part. For the significance of the blood of Jesus see on 9:12.

Verse 20. by the way which He dedicated for us; a new and living way—Literally, 'which He dedicated for us, a way new and living'; the relative pronoun 'which' is connected with the preceding noun *eisodon*, entrance (see verse 19). For the verb *enkaïnizō*, to make new, in the special sense of inaugurating, or dedicating, see on 9:18. The word *prosphatēs*, while originally signifying freshly slain, acquired the general sense of new, and that is the meaning here (cp. the corresponding adverb in Acts 18:2, 'lately'). It refers to the way newly opened by the new covenant, the terms of the gospel, but it is new liberty of access to His Mercy-Seat and there to obtain mercy on the ground of a sacrifice different from those offered by Jewish priests.

It is a 'living' way, firstly, in contrast to that of old, which was void of life and of power; but it is living because Christ Himself is the Way: 'No man', He said, 'cometh unto the Father but by Me'. He has gone into His presence before us as our High Priest and is Himself the means of our access. He who gave up His life is in His own Person the Life and the Life-Giver.

through the veil, that is to say, His flesh—Christ became incarnate that He might go to the Cross for us. The body prepared for Him was assumed by Him that He might thereby offer His sacrifice for our sins. That is the significance of the

rending of the veil. 'His flesh'. When that took place the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. The veil is not removed. The wrong idea that it has been removed arises from confusing this veil with that mentioned in 2 Cor. 3:13, the veil on Moses' face, a veil removed indeed for believers, for there is no veil over the face of Christ. This passage in Hebrews teaches that we go through the veil because it has been rent for us at the Cross.

Verse 21. and having a great Priest over the house of God—This is mentioned as an additional ground for the exhortations which follow. That Christ is here called 'a great Priest' (not a high Priest, as in the A.V.) recalls the fact that He is both King and Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. He is enthroned as Priest above all heavens. The house of God is that company of believers mentioned in 3:6, which the writer seems obviously recalling.

Verse 22. Let us draw near—The word is the same as in 4:16; 7:25; rendered 'cometh to' in 11:6.

with a true heart in fulness of faith—The true heart is set in contrast to one characterized by mere profession. The Septuagint in Is. 38:3 has the same word, rendered 'perfect'. The true heart desires only God's will and way. For *plērōphoria*, 'fulness', see at 6:11; lit. It means 'complete carrying'. Here it is used of the faith that excludes apprehension of the judgment of God and diffidence as to right of approach and certainty of acceptance. It is necessarily rendered 'much assurance' in 1 Thess. 1:5, where it describes the spontaneity and liberty of spirit experienced by the missionaries at Thessalonica, an evidence that the Holy Spirit was working through them.

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water—The two figures of sprinkling and washing, taken from the circumstances of the consecration of the Levitical priests (Lev. 8, verses 23 and 6; and Ex. 29:4). The first speaks of the appropriation by faith of the blood of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The second answers to the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5). The former is a matter that recurs in Christian experience whenever the need arises for deliverance from an evil conscience. The latter took place when we were born again and was one experience at the beginning of the believer's life. This difference seems to account for the fact that 'hearts' is in the plural,

whereas 'body' is in the singular, the body referring to the whole person and the one event.

Both verbs are in the perfect participle forms of the Passive Voice in the original, and the whole clause might better be rendered 'having been sprinkled as to our hearts from an evil conscience, and, having been washed as to our body with pure water'. This might be regarded, not an exhortation to acquire the two qualifications, but to the exercise of our priestly ministry for which we possess the qualifications.

The exhortation is to make full use of the approach to God continually, seeing that we have a great Priest there and perfect freedom of entrance.

For *rhantizō*, to sprinkle, see 9:13 and further on 12:24.

Verse 23. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not—The word 'hope' is supported by ms. authority (the word for 'faith', A.V., is not found in the earlier Versions). Cp. 16:18. The hope, like the faith, is full of joyous confidence and assurance, and inevitably finds an expression in testimony of life and lip. Such confession is a recognition of the Person of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. For *katechō*, to hold fast, see 3:6,14; 4:14.

The adjective *aklinēs*, lit., 'not bending', is used here only in the N.T. It signifies that steadfastness which keeps us from being allured from the hope, or being terrified from it, but characterizes it by appreciation of its dignity and power and fulfilment.

for He is faithful that promised—God neither lies in making His promises nor repents of them when made, Num. 23:19; cp. Deut. 7:9; Rom. 11:19. He is called the 'God of Amen' (Is. 65:17, marg.). See chap. 11:11

Verse 24. and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works—For *katanoēō*, to consider, see 3:1. The tense is the present continuous, indicating a practice. This exhortation is likewise based on verses 19–21. Instead of being selfishly indifferent to the real welfare of one another, we are to consult for the highest interests of each other. The word rendered 'provoking', *paroxysmos* (Eng. paroxysm), denotes a stimulation; it is used here only in the N.T. It suggests that a mutual spirit of concern for one another is to be cherished so as to stimulate to love and good works.

Verse 25. not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is—This has a direct connection with the preceding exhortation, for it is just as we assemble ourselves together as companies of the Lord's people that we can stir one another to fulfil His will mutually. *Enkātaleipō*, to forsake, is used again in 13:5, where see note. *Episunagōgē*, a gathering together, here used with reference to gatherings of believers on earth, is used in 2 Thess. 2:1 of their Rapture into the air to meet, and be for ever with, the Lord. The one is preparatory to the other.

but exhorting one another—*Parakaleō*, in its meaning to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct, always has reference to the future (in contrast to the significance to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trial experienced). See again at 13, 19, 22.

and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh—The word *hēmera*, a day, a period of natural light, is used figuratively in several ways, and frequently, as here, of a period of undefined length marked by certain characteristics. The day here mentioned is to be distinguished from the time of the Rapture, which introduces the period of the Parousia of Christ with His saints, 'the day of Christ', Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16, and similar phrases (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14), a period described in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. Never are any circumstances on earth mentioned as indicating the approach of that day. Believers were taught by the Apostles to expect the Coming of Christ to receive His saints to Himself at any time, apart from world-affairs (see 1 Thess. 1:9, 10). In the present passage believers are to assemble themselves together 'the more they see the day approaching'. The day therefore will refer to 'the day of the Lord,' a day in which the judgments of the wrath of God will be executed upon the nations, after which the Lord will come to deliver Israel and set up His Kingdom on earth. The fact of the approach of that day would have a special appeal to those to whom this Epistle was addressed.

This section of the chapter, verses 19 to 25, has given exhortations especially centring in faith, hope and love (vv. 22, 23, 24); we are to draw near in faith, hold fast the hope, provoke to love. The responsibilities enjoyed have been first individual, then collective (v. 25). This leads to a special warning to the readers, followed by renewed exhortations and a further reminder of the coming of the Lord.