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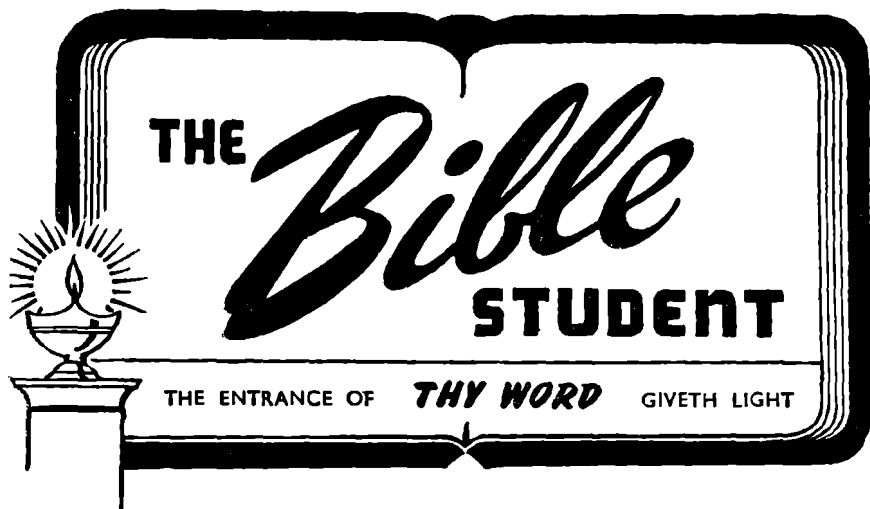
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NOTES ON HEBREWS

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

Chapter 10: 1-18

The Sacrifices and the Sacrifice (*contd.*)

Verse 3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year.—The sacrifices offered yearly on the day of atonement were designed to remind the Hebrews of the penalty which the sins incurred. The word *anamnēsis*, 'remembrance,' signifies not simply an external bringing to remembrance, but an awakening of mind. The A.V. has 'a remembrance again', but the prefix *ana*—does not here mean 'again'. Here it betokens more than the memory of having done wrong, it implies the consciousness of guilt in the sight of God, and the consequent realization, in seeking to draw near to God, of a hindrance to the enjoyment of His presence.

Verse 4. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.—That is to say, in the sense of removing the penalty or consequences of sins, whether in regard to the conscience and other effects in this life, or the ultimate effects in the eternal state. The blood of these sacrifices was indeed a Divinely appointed means of making atonement, but it was inadequate for the full accomplishment of this. They did, however, fulfill the great purpose of pointing to the One great sacrifice to come.

Verse 5. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith,—The writer now appeals to the Old Testament Scriptures, which would help to counteract any mere prejudice that he was merely belittling the Levitical sacrifices. Moreover what he quotes from Psalm 40 is shown to be the language of Christ Himself. Accordingly the thoughts of the Offerer of His own Sacrifice are now given.

Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for Me;—The quotation is from the Septuagint version of Psalm 40. The Hebrew version is, 'ears hast Thou digged for Me'; the Septuagint has, 'a body didst Thou prepare for me'. The latter is another way of conveying the same thought. If there is a body, it contains ears wherein to receive instruction; and, vice versa, that there are ears to hear implies the existence of a body by means of which the instruction received is

carried out. What is set forth in the Hebrew version of Psalm 40 is quite distinct from the subject of Exodus 21:6, where the master is instructed to bore the ear of his willing servant through with an awl. The thought suggested in Psalm 40, and so in the present passage in Hebrews, is that of preparation for obedience. In the Exodus passage the idea is that of binding under a permanent obligation to render service. 'Ears hast thou digged' suggest the impartation of the physical faculty by which the capacity of fulfilling the will of another would be exercised. The body prepared by the Father for the Son was the instrument of His self-surrender and His entire and devoted submission to the Father's will. The Son Himself, in partaking of flesh and blood, put Himself into the position for rendering perfect obedience to Him.

The significance of the statement, 'ears hath Thou digged for Me', is explained in the Messianic passage in Isa. 50:4-6, 'He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as them that are taught. The Lord hath opened Mine ear and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backwards'. That the reference is to Christ is clear from what follows: 'I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting'.

Verse 6. In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure.—This refers to those offerings which were entirely consumed upon the altar. Both these and all other sacrifices could not satisfy the justice of God so as to lay any foundation for the righteous exercise of His mercy.

Verse 7. Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.—Not only did the Lord declare that He had come to do the Father's will. He also showed how inseparable were His own Person and work from the testimony of Old Testament Scripture. He had come to fulfill both the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17). He was the one great Subject of their testimony (John 3:39). What He taught His disciples before His death He repeated after His resurrection, 'that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me' (Luke 24:44). So when He says, 'Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God', He declares in the same breath, 'In the roll of the Book it is written of me'.

Verses 8 and 9. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.—The quotation from Psalm 40, is now repeated in a way which illustrates further a principle of God's dealings which we previously considered in the Epistle. We saw how, in the dispositions of the ways of God with mankind, a Divine mode of procedure in any given age, while fulfilling its immediate purpose, was only preparatory to the consummation in view. Each item in the plan, each mode of dealing, though perfect in itself, did not accomplish the whole of the design. When, therefore, the special purpose of one part of the plan was fulfilled, it was done away with and replaced by a new mode of procedure. In the seventh chapter, for example, we were shown how 'there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope' (7:18, 19, R.V.). So now a precise correspondence to that arrangement is seen in the reiterated words of Psalm 40. Just as the law was disannulled and a better hope brought in, so the sacrifices under the law were taken away when Christ offered His one sacrifice. The removal of the former was necessary that the latter might have place. The figure and that which it foreshadowed could not exist together. 'First that which is natural, then that which is spiritual,' is a principle in Divine arrangements.

His 'Lo, I am come to do Thy will' was not simply an undertaking to carry out the will of God, nor did it merely betoken His entire submission to the Father, though it certainly expressed that; it was a sublime and majestic utterance, carrying with it the certainty of the accomplishment of His will. The end was assured from the beginning. Such a certainty was possible to no merely human being. Only He who was Himself one in the Godhead could speak in this matter. What an infinite gulf separated this declaration from Israel's unrealizable pledge, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do!' He had come in the consciousness of an absolute competence to fulfil the Divine counsels. His very submission, dependence and humiliation were the acts of omnipotence. The self-surrender implied in His utterance was conceivable by Himself alone.

Verse 10. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all. The writer thus applies to believers the effects of the accomplishment of the will of God by Christ in the culminating act of His atoning sacrifice. In our sanctification we have been entirely set apart to God for His glory, primarily in His eternal counsels of grace, and instrumentally through the work of the Cross. The will of God toward us is essentially a gracious, redeeming will, recovering us from our fallen condition and effecting our complete sanctification. That which the law with all its sacrifices was unable to produce, has been accomplished by the offering of the body of Christ once for all. 'Once for all' represents one word in the original and signifies once only; it sets forth the completeness of the sacrifice in contrast to the repetition of the sacrifices under the law. With hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, we have free access into the presence of God and can fulfill His will in devoted service in the enjoyment of communion with Him.

The reason why mention is made of the body of Christ in respect of the offering, is that His body has been prominently before us in the preceding context. His body had been prepared (verse 5) as the instrument of His fulfilment of the Divine will in His offering. The offering of His body is but another way of speaking of the sacrifice of Himself. It represents His entire Being. He gave Himself up for us. That was the only possible means of the realization of the will of God in our sanctification. 'For our sakes He sanctified Himself that we ourselves might be sanctified' (John 17:19). He devoted Himself to do all that the Father willed, becoming obedient even unto death, in order that we might be His entirely and for ever, and that in the power of this relationship we on our part might walk as He walked.

What had been done in the determinate counsels of God regarding our sanctification is to be realized by us in our daily experience. Our bodies are ours that we may present them to God a living sacrifice, and so prove His good and acceptable and perfect will. 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine'. These are the claims of infinite love, the claims of the gospel which declares that love. It addresses itself to the heart, rebukes the clamorous pretensions of our self-sufficiency and demands free and undisputed ingress to the seat of our will. The faculties which have been dragged down by the fall have been renewed by

sovereign grace, and we are called to place them at the entire disposal of our Redeemer. If we would learn the lessons which this passage in Hebrews 10:5-10 teaches us, our souls must be dispossessed of all their self-willed prepossessions, that Christ may occupy the throne within. We cannot do His work apart from the consecration of ourselves, which is the counterpart of His devotion to the Father. It is only as through the power of the Spirit of God we mortify the deeds of the body that we can truly say, 'I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Verses 11, 12. And, every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but He, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;— Just as at the beginning of the chapter, in reference to Christ's Incarnation, a contrast was presented between the sacrifices under the law and the sacrifice which He came to offer through the body which had been prepared for Him, so in reference to His present ministry the writer differentiates between the Mosaic priesthood and its service, and Christ's present work. Four distinctions are here drawn:

1. The Levitical sacrifices were numerous, Christ's was 'one offering', all sufficient.
2. The earthly priests stood (Deut. 10:8); Christ 'sat down'.
3. They ministered before God; Christ 'sat down on the right hand of God'.
4. In their case there was continuity of succession—a temporary and changing ministry; with Christ there is continuity of position. He 'for ever sat down'.

Opinions have been divided as to whether the words 'for ever' are to be connected with 'one sacrifice for sins' or with 'sat down'. The grammatical structure of the sentence, and the whole context, are in favour of the latter. Further, the phrase *eis to diēnēkes*, 'for ever', which occurs only in Hebrews, is first used of the permanency of the priesthood of Christ; see 7:3, where it is rendered 'continually'; its significance is 'in unbroken continuity'. See also 10:3, 14.

These distinctions suggest several things relative to the glories of our great High Priest:

Firstly, that He is seated recalls the similar contrast in the chapter, between the Son of God, 'who sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high', and the angels who are His attendant ministers.

Secondly, His position is that of the highest dignity and authority. That He is seated at the right hand of God reminds us of what the Epistle has already frequently brought before us, namely, the royal character of His priesthood; it is 'after the order of Melchizedek'. He is not merely a ministering Priest, He is an administrative Priest.

Thirdly, in addition to the idea of dignity and authority, there seems to be in His sitting down a suggestion of rest, consistent with the completion of the atoning work of His 'one sacrifice', a striking contrast to the ceaseless labour involved in the sacrifices offered by the earthly priests, whose work was never done. His presence in glory is proof of the accomplishment of His sacrificial work and of the Father's satisfaction therewith and the fact of His being at the right hand of the Throne is proof that there can be no more offering for sin.

Fourthly, in contrast to the continuously standing position of the Levitical priests, Christ sat down in perpetuity. His position of authority at the right hand of the Father will never be changed. That He was seen by the martyr Stephen 'standing on the right hand of God' affords no exception to the permanent character of His session as a royal High Priest. Nor does the fact of his being seen in His judicial character, walking in the midst of the golden lampstands, in the vision given to the Apostle John. The dignity of His position does not interfere with His freedom of movement. A king is still said to occupy the throne, though he may not actually be seated there. The first part of this chapter drew attention to the completeness of the offering of Christ, and that is expressed by the phrase, 'once for all'.

Verse 13. From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet.—Not that He will then cease to be in the same position of authority, or relinquish His High Priestly service; He is a High Priest for ever. But then He will exercise His royal function as a King-Priest. It does not say that He 'sat down till His enemies be made His footstool'; rather in this time of waiting He is showing His long-suffering and mercy in seeking to convert His enemies into His friends by the gracious power

of the gospel, that they may not be involved in the inevitable judgment which must precede the advent of His Kingdom on earth.

Into this saving work He calls us who have been redeemed into fellowship with Himself, and in His position of highest authority He ministers constantly to our needs, empowering us for service and maintaining us in it. How needful that we realize our entire dependence upon Him, both for His High Priestly ministry on our behalf in all our feebleness and insufficiency and in all our dangers and difficulties, and for His power to work in us so that our service may be efficient for the great purpose for which He has called us to render it!

Verse 14. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—This is an enlargement of what was stated in the 10th verse; it takes up the phrase in verse 12 'for ever'. There is no suggestion of any such thing as an increase in the sanctification. What is emphasized is the realization by the sanctified of the effectual and permanent character of what has been accomplished for them by that offering. Christ has thereby provided for them all that they need. They can add nothing to it. This fullness in Christ makes it futile and unseemly to go back to Jewish rites.

Verse 15-17. And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us: for after He said, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws in their heart, and upon their mind also will I write them; then saith He, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.—This is taken from the words already quoted at 8.8 to 12 from the prophecies of Jeremiah (31, 33 *a* and 34 *d*). Instead of 'with the house of Israel', he now says 'with them', broadening out from the special national limitations to a more general and universal condition. Here the order is changed from mind and heart to heart and mind. There is a third change, from iniquities and sins to sins and iniquities. In this respect it is significant that, while the writer states that this is the utterance of the Holy Spirit, he deals freely with the actual words which he is quoting; for this very freedom of change of word is itself the work of the Holy Spirit, who is a law to Himself in the wording of the original prophecy through Jeremiah and in the wording of the

quotation by the writer of the Epistle. The point of the repetition of the passage is the emphasis laid upon the 'new covenant', which is shown to be the end of all the sacrifices enjoined under the Old Covenant. This he proceeds to declare.

Verse 18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.—That is to say, where there is absolute forgiveness of sins, there is neither need nor room for any further sin-offering or atonement, and therefore no need of a continuation of those sacrifices appointed under the law, which could not meet the need of the sinner.

Here the writer draws his argument to a conclusion, and begins to translate into the language of actual experience the figures and symbols of the ancient tabernacle and its sacrifices, by which he had set forth all that Christ is to the believer in virtue of His Person and work. This great work of redeeming grace finds its source in the will of God, its accomplishment in the death of Christ His Son (verse 10), its ratification in His session at God's right hand (verse 12), and its assurance to us in the witness of the Holy Spirit (verse 14).

THE HEBREW PSALTER

By E. W. ROGERS

The N.T. usage of the Psalms (*contd.*)

Psalm 32

This is the first *Maschil* Psalm, dealing with that matter which is of prime importance to any, namely the forgiveness of sins. This must be known before all else. As we have observed earlier, chronologically it comes before Psalm 51 but for reasons there stated it comes before it in the Psalter.

Its divisions are indicated by the word *Selah* and, when the phrase to which this word is appended is considered, its force will be understood.

After verses 1 and 2, describing the superlative 'happiness' of the forgiven sinner (and the student should examine the various words used to describe sin), vv. 3 and 4 describe the bitterness involved by keeping silence and refraining from confession.