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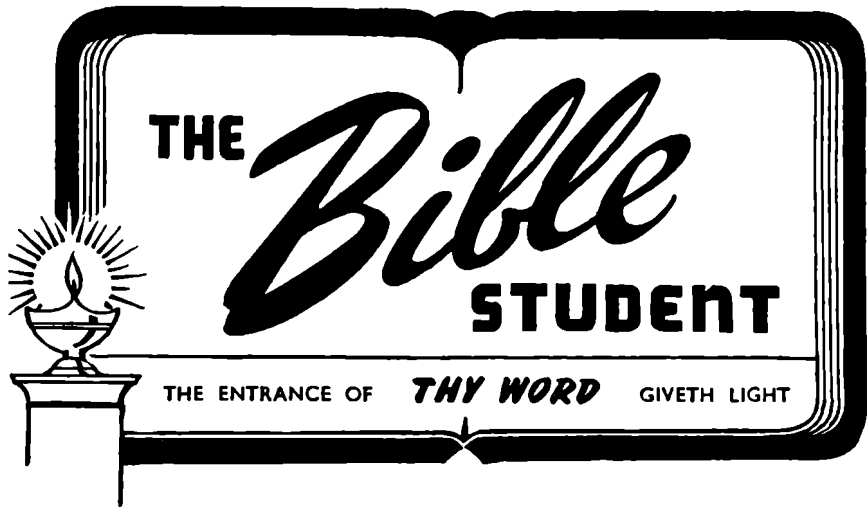
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NOTES ON HEBREWS

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Chapter 12

This chapter brings before us a continued, but again a fresh, view of the superior glories of the Lord Jesus. His superiority is now seen in the matter of faith, of which He is the Pattern and Perfecter (vv. 1-3). This is made the basis of exhortations. The subject of chastening is presented as to its necessity and its purposes. That has to do with the relationship of the individual child of God (vv. 4:13).

Then comes an exhortation as to relations with fellow-men and especially fellow-believers (vv. 14-17). There follows a contrast between the terrors of Sinai and the blessings of Zion and associated privileges, of which seven are enumerated, the seventh and supreme being Jesus 'the Mediator of the new covenant' and the efficacy of His blood (vv. 18-24). This leads to exhortations, first in view of a greater shaking than that of Sinai, to heed the voice of Him who will shake earth and heaven, and then with prospect of an immovable Kingdom, to offer due service to Him who is 'a consuming fire' (vv. 25-29).

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(a) to what we have not come		18-21
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Notes

Verse 1. Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,—In the eleventh chapter they were spoken of as those who had witness borne to them (vv. 2-5, 39); here they are themselves witnesses. Not that those who are now with Christ are the spectators of those still on earth, but that, as to the persons mentioned in chap. 11, their lives of faith are so recorded in the O.T. narratives that they seem to be living spectators urging us on to run as they did. The inspired record is like an amphitheatre, and, as with the cloud of onlookers of old, so these heroes of faith utter their voices in the sacred page of Scripture. As we read of their trials and triumphs, they, so to speak, 'compass us about.' The writer of the Epistle is here testifying to the permanence and vividness of the records of Scripture.

lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,—Every encumbrance must be removed; everything that would entangle our feet must be got rid of. Cumbering cares and sinful desires arise from unbelief, and from these we must free ourselves if we are to run the race successfully. This is necessary for our spiritual athletic training. *Euperistatos*, here only in the N.T., means 'easily standing around': hence 'besetting.'

and let us run with patience the race that is set before us—The word *prokeimai* means to lie before, i.e., to lie in full view. The patience to which we are exhorted is not that of enduring trials, but that of perseverance in our efforts. For 'patience' see ch. 10:36.

Verse 2. looking unto Jesus—The verb *aphoraō* is found here only in Scripture. It signifies, lit., 'to look away', and may suggest looking away from all else, though it probably conveys the thought of looking earnestly. The eyes gaze at that which engrosses the heart. If carnal desires are harboured in the heart, they obscure the moral vision. The single Name, Jesus, combines both grandeur and tenderness. He is so called because He 'saves His people from their sins.'

the Author and Perfecter of our faith,—For *archēgos*, author, see on ch. 2:10. The word denotes a leader, and as such He is the perfect Exemplar of faith. 'He trusted in God.' The word *teleiotes* signifies one who completes, who brings to the destiny

determined. The corresponding verb has been used of Christ in 2:10; 7:28. The thought seems, then, to be 'One who has arrived at the goal of faith'. His faith has had its issue in His exaltation at the right hand of God. Accordingly as the Leader He is our Pattern, as the Perfecter He is our encouragement, being Himself the incentive to our faith. The two words point us first to His life on earth, and then to His position and ministry in the Sanctuary. He has trodden the pathway of faith from beginning to end.

Who for the joy that was set before Him—The preposition *anti* rendered 'for', does not here mean 'instead of'; it has its other significance of the *value* set upon a thing. For example see verse 16, of Esau, who 'for (*anti*) one mess of meat sold his own birth-right'. The joy set before the Lord was the anticipation of His glory with the Father and all that was to be the outcome of His finished work on the cross, both in the present age and the ages to come. Because of the value He set upon all this He endured the cross.

endured the cross, despising the shame,—For 'endured' see ch. 10:32. The article is absent in the original before 'cross' the 'shame', and this serves to emphasise the nature of what He endured. He underwent even such an agonizing and ignominious death as that of a cross. The aorist tenses in both verbs rendered 'endured' and 'despising' mark each act as single and decisive.

and hath sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God.—In this His faith has had its perfecting and He Himself has had His reward. The perfect tense, 'hath sat down', indicates the permanent effects thereof. Thus He is set before us as the great incentive to us in our life of faith. As we endure to the end so shall we be rewarded. Looking unto Him, we shall be enabled to resist the evil tendencies within and the foes without. See Rev. 2:10.

Verse 3. For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves,—The word *analogizomai*, rendered 'consider', is found here only in the N.T.; it means to reckon up, and here signifies to reflect upon Him, to take His example into careful consideration. We are exhorted to meditate upon Him, taking into account all that is recorded of Him as consummated in what is here stated concerning Him.

The most ancient texts are divided between the plural 'themselves', and the singular 'Himself.' There is perhaps an indication in the similar phrase used in Num. 16:38. Cp. Jude 11.

that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.—The verb *kamnō*, to be weary is used elsewhere in the N.T. only in Jas. 5:15, where it differs from that in verse 14, and signifies weariness of soul, as here. The clause 'fainting in your souls' describes the nature of the weariness. The word (Gk. *ekluomai*) denotes to be disheartened. Occupation with Christ, His sufferings and His reward, is the great preventative of such laggardness.

Verse 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin,—That the subject is that of striving against sin shows that the resisting unto blood is not here a matter of enduring martyrdom at the hands of persecution. The metaphor is a striking expression as to the utmost degree of striving against sin, the negative statement putting their failure in contrast to what Christ endured. It may be that the sin to which the Hebrew Christians were being tempted was that of unbelief, tempting them to apostatise from Christ. The warning, however, is against slackness in resisting temptation to any form of sin.

Verse 5. and ye have forgotten the exhortation, which reasoneth with you as with sons,—The Scripture is vividly spoken of in the verb *dialegomai*, to reason, as dealing with us by way of argument and persuasion. Cp. the use of the word in Acts 24:25. It is rendered 'disputed' in Jude 9. For a similar personification of Scripture see ch. 4:12. The word *huioi*, sons, is wrongly rendered 'children' in the A.V. Sons are such as can enter intelligently into what is being dealt with by a father.

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,—The quotation is from the LXX of Prov. 3:11, 12, with the insertion of 'My'. The word *oligōreō* (here only in the Greek Bible) means to make little of, and so to treat with carelessness. *Paideia*, which sometimes means instruction or discipline, here has the meaning of chastening either by rebuke or by corrective dealing. One of the ways in which unbelief produces lethargy of soul is failure to apprehend the Divine meaning and motive in our chastisement.

nor faint when thou art reproved of Him:—*Ekluomai*, as in v. 3, here speaks of desponding. Such a spirit fails to realise both the

need of the reproof and the loving wisdom that administers it. It leads to that resentment which makes us unfit for the discharge of filial service.

Verse 6. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.—The verb *agapaō* signifies love, not merely by way of affection, but in a practical way by approbation, and this is indicated here in the chastening and its motive and object. The word *paradechomai*, to receive, here has the meaning of accepting by way of recognizing, and refers to God's recognition of a person as His son. The chastening is an indication of love; the scourging is an act with the object of our highest good.

Verse 7. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?—To endure suffering in the spirit of patience is to realize that God has the best motive in chastening; and therefore to recognise that He is dealing with us as sons, and not in any other way. God's dealings confirm the existence of such a relationship. While we need constant correction, all is ministered in the love of God.

Verse 8. But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons,—Whereas chastisement is a token of sonship, absence of such dealing gives evidence of the lack of that relationship. The positive and negative statements at the close give emphasis to the solemn fact.

Verse 9. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? As such He has at heart our highest spiritual welfare. 'By these things men live, and wholly therein is the life of our spirit' (Isa. 38:16, R.V., with Deut. 8:3). The word rendered 'to chasten' is really a noun, 'chastisers'. The verb rendered 'be in subjection' is in the passive voice, 'be subjected', that is, 'suffer yourselves to be subjected'. The tense is the Aorist, describing it as a decisive act. With the title 'the Father of spirits', cp. Numb. 16:22; 27:16.