

A Word-Study of Hebrews 13

CLARENCE RUSSELL WILLIAMS

YALE UNIVERSITY

IT has recently been argued that Hebrews 1-12 is an exhortation or homily rather than an epistle. But Hebrews 13 is certainly epistolary in form. Can we divorce this chapter from those preceding, and argue that it was added by another hand, perhaps by the person who sent this homily to Rome? Did the person who added this chapter write in imitation of the closing exhortations and messages of Paul's epistles to imply the Pauline authorship of the whole?

A word-study of the chapter offers certain interesting suggestions bearing on these questions. The study is not intended to cover every word contained in the chapter, but only those which are significant. The material is drawn mainly from Thayer's Lexicon.

I. *N.T. words found only in Hebrews.*

Of the 169 words peculiar to the writer of Hebrews, 7 are found in chap. 13.

Of these 5 are found only in Hebrews 13: *συνδέω*, *αἰνεσις*, *εἰσποῖτα*, *ὑπέκω*, and *άλυσιτελής*. One, *αἰνεσις*, is taken from the Septuagint.

Two of the 7 occur in Hebrews 1-12: *κακουχέω*, found in Heb. 11 37, a good parallel (cf. *συγκακουχέω*, Heb. 11 28), and *εἰσαρεστέω*, found in Heb. 11 5, 6, in a quotation from the Septuagint. In 2 Tim. 2 2, we have *κακούργος*, which is a fair parallel to the former word.

II. *Meanings and usages peculiar to Hebrews.*

The words of Hebrews 13 show a surprising number of meanings and usages not found elsewhere in the N.T. In

many cases Paul uses other words or constructions to express the same or similar ideas.

1. *λαμβάνω*. Here found, according to a well-known classical usage, "joined in a finite form to a participle."
2. *γάμος*. Here means "marriage," elsewhere in the N.T. a wedding or a wedding banquet. Found in no other epistle, though common in the Gospels. Paul employs *γαμέω* and *γαμίζω*.
3. *τρόπος*. Only here of "manner of life," "character"; cf. Did. 11 s. Paul and Luke use the word of "manner," etc.
4. *ἡγέομαι*. The participle with the genitive of the persons over whom they rule is used three times in this chapter of the overseers or leaders of the church. The nearest N.T. usage is Acts 15 22. Paul, Peter, and Hebrews 1-12 use the word in the sense "to consider."

Paul in 1 Thess. 5 12 uses *προϊστάμενοι* in a similar sense.

5. *ἐκβασίς*. Elsewhere only in 1 Cor. 10 13, "a way out"; cf. *ἐξοδος* in 2 Pet. 1 15.
6. *ἀναστροφή*. "Life in so far as it is comprised in conduct" (Thayer). Paul, Peter, and James use the word in the sense of behavior or conduct.
7. *παραφέρω*. Only here in the N.T. of being led aside from the truth; but compare Jude 12.

In both these cases the Rec. has *περιφέρω*, which Paul uses in 2 Cor. 4 10, Eph. 4 14. Did the wish to conform Hebrews to Paul's style have any influence here?

8. *θουσιαστήριον*. This metaphorical use is not found in Paul's writings, though the word is used thrice. The word is found in Heb. 7 13.
9. *σκηνή*. If it here signifies the temple, this is its only N.T. use in this sense. Never used by Paul, though common in Hebrews 1-12, and five times in Luke-Acts.
10. *συνειδησις*. A common word, but only here used with

καλή. The Pastorals use ἀγαθή and καθάρá. Peter uses ἀγαθή.

11. ἀποκαθίστημι. Only here "of a man at a distance from his friends, and to be restored to them" (Thayer). In the Gospels and Acts of restoration to a former state.

Paul in Philemon 22 expresses a similar thought, using χαρίζομαι.

12. διὰ βραχείων. "In a few (words)," *i.e.* briefly. So Plato, Demosthenes, and Josephus. 1 Pet. 5 12 says δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα. Paul does not use βραχύς, though it is found in Heb. 2 7. 9.

13. ἐπιστέλλω. "To write a letter" as in Plato (who adds the cognate acc.), Clement of Rome, and often in Greek authors, but nowhere else in the N.T.

Paul uses γράφω, found in Hebrews only 10 7, and there in a quotation. Peter, John, and Jude also use γράφω.

The number of usages and meanings peculiar to Hebrews 13, and the fact that Paul and other writers express the same ideas in different words, would imply that the writer was not consciously or unconsciously imitating any other author of the N.T. His thoughts are common to the writers of other letters, but his presentation of them is peculiarly his own.

III. *Words common to Hebrews 13 and Paul, but also found in Hebrews 1-12.*

This list indicates that these words contained in Hebrews 13 may be explained as due to the influence of Hebrews 1-12—that is, to the writer of that section or one who imitated him—rather than to an imitation of Paul's style. The fact that many of these words are used in a manner unlike Paul adds weight to this argument.

1. ἐπιλανθάνομαι. In Heb. 6 10 this word is used with the genitive as in Heb. 13 2 and 13 16, while in Phil. 3 13, its only appearance in Paul's writings, it is used with the accusative.
2. μνησκόω. Heb. 2 6 8 12 10 17, always in O.T. quotations. In 1 Cor. 11 2 Paul uses it of remembering

- himself. In 2 Tim. 1 4 it is used of remembering Timothy's tears. Paul prefers *μνημονεύω*; see below (5).
3. *δέσμος*. Heb. 10 34 is parallel.
In Ephesians, Philemon, and 2 Timothy, it is used of Paul as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ."
 4. *πόρνος*. Found in Heb. 12 18, but the closest parallel is 1 Cor. 6 9, where as here it is coupled with *μοιχός*.
 5. *μνημονεύω*. Heb. 11. 15. 22.
Paul prefers this verb to *μμνήσκω*; see above (2).
 6. *σήμερον*. Seven times in Hebrews 1-12, three times by Paul, once in a quotation.
 7. *ποικίλος*. Heb. 2 4. Also 2 Tim. 3 6, Tit. 3 3, James 1 2, 1 Pet. 1 6 4 10.
 8. *ξένος*. Heb. 11 13. Also Rom. 16 23, Eph. 2 12. 19, 1 Pet. 4 12.
 9. *διδαχή*. Heb. 6 2. Also Rom. 6 17, 16 17, 1 Cor. 14 6. 26, but here used of *true* teaching. In Eph. 4 14, Col. 2 22, *διδασκαλία* is used of *false* doctrine, or doctrines of men. This latter word is frequently found in Timothy and Titus.
 10. *βεβαίω*. Heb. 2 3. Also Rom. 15 8, 1 Cor. 1 6. 8, 2 Cor. 1 21, Col. 2 7.
 11. *βρώμα*. Heb. 9 10. Also Rom. 14 15. 20, 1 Cor. 3 2, etc.
 12. *ώφελέω*. Heb. 4 2. Also Rom. 2 25, 1 Cor. 14 6, etc.
 13. *ἀγιάζω*. Five times in Hebrews 1-12, several times by Paul.
 14. *πάσχω*. Three times in Hebrews 1-12, common in Paul and Peter.
 15. *ἐξέρχομαι*. Four times in Hebrews 1-12, used by Paul, James, John, not Peter.
 16. *ὀνειδισμός*. Evidently parallel to Heb. 11 26; cf. also 10 33. Paul uses it in Rom. 15 3 in a quotation from the O.T. Found also in 1 Tim. 3 7.
 17. *οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν*. Evidently a reference to Heb. 11 16; cf. 10 34 12 27.
 18. *ἐπιζητέω*. Evidently following Heb. 11 14, though the word is found in Rom. 11 7, Phil. 4 17.
 19. *ὁμολογέω*. Heb. 11 13. Found in Rom. 10 9. 10, 1 Tim.

- 6 12, Tit. 1 16; but Paul prefers ἐξομολογέω for this meaning.
20. *πείθω*. Heb. 2 13 6 9. Common in Paul, but not in the sense of obeying church officers.
 21. *ψυχή*. Hebrews 1-12 five times. Peter, James, and John use the word in the same sense as Hebrews 13, but not Paul, see Thayer's N.T. Lexicon.
 22. *ἀποδίδωμι*. Heb. 12 11. 16 with λόγον in 1 Pet. 4 5, Lk. 16 2, Acts 19 40, and according to Lchm. and Treg. in Rom. 14 2, but the best editors do not find it in Paul.
 23. *περισσοτέρως*. Heb. 2 1. Common in Paul.
 24. *παρακαλέω*. Heb. 3 13 10 28. Paul and others use it commonly, but 1 Pet. 5 12 is the closest parallel.
 25. *καταρτίζω*. Heb. 10 5 11 3, but in a different sense. Best parallel 1 Pet. 5 10.
 26. *θέλημα*. Heb. 10 7. 9. 10. 36. Common in Paul and Peter.
 27. *εὐάρεστος*. Frequent in Paul, but the closest parallel is Heb. 12 28, where the adverb εὐαρέστως is used.
 28. *ἐνώπιον*. Heb. 4 18. Common in the epistles.
 29. *ἀσπάζομαι*. Heb. 11 13. Common in Paul, Peter, and John.

This list seems to imply that the writer of Hebrews 1-12 wrote also Hebrews 13, or that it was written in conscious imitation of the writer of the first section.

IV. *Words common to Hebrews 13 and Paul, but not found in Hebrews 1-12.*

This list bears on the question whether this chapter was written in imitation of Paul or not.

1. *φιλαδελφία*. Rom. 12 10, 1 Thes. 4 9, but this word is found also in 1 Pet. 1 23 and 2 Pet. 1 7, and the grace is enjoined by all the apostles and by most early Christian writers.
2. *φιλοξενία*. Only in Rom. 12 13, but φιλόξενος is a qualification of a bishop, see 1 Tim. 3 2 = Tit. 1 8, and compare 1 Pet. 4 9. Another common grace of early Christianity.

3. *τίμιος*. 1 Cor. 3 12 of costly stones. In 1 Pet. 1 19 is found a usage similar to that found here.
4. *κοίτη*. Rom. 9 10 13 13.
- 5 and 6. *πόρνος* and *μοιχός*, parallel to 1 Cor. 6 9, where both words are found, but probably a not infrequent association.
7. *τρόπος*. Used in a different sense by Paul.
8. *ἀρκέω*. Similar use in 1 Tim. 6 8; see also 2 Cor. 12 9, 3 John 10.
9. *θαρρέω*. Parallel usage in 2 Cor. 5 6. 8. Paul and Hebrews agree in using *θαρρέω*. Matthew, Mark, John, and Acts use *θαρσέω*.
10. *ἐκβασίς*. 1 Cor. 10 13 uses this word in another sense. A true parallel is found in Wis. 2 17.
This, and the following words found in lists II and III, are here inserted for the sake of completeness.
11. *ἀναστροφή*. Paul uses the word in a different sense; see above II. 6.
12. *μνημόσκω*. 2 Tim. 1 4, but Paul prefers *μνημονεύω*; see above, III. 5.
13. *τοίνυν*. Paul uses once, but after the first word of the sentence.
14. *κοινωνία*. Paul uses frequently, but this was a common word.
15. *στενάζω*. Rom. 8 23, 2 Cor. 5 2. 4; also James 5 9 and Mk. 7 34.
16. *προσεύχομαι*. Common in Paul and N.T.; cf. 1 Thess. 5 23.
17. *καλῶς*. Compare Gal. 4 17, James 2 8.
18. *θεός τῆς εἰρήνης*. Common in Paul's epistles, but by this time a liturgical form probably.
19. *ἀνάγω*. Parallel in Rom. 10 7.
20. *ποιμήν*. Eph. 4 11, but not of Christ, but of pastors. Never used of Christ by Paul. Close parallel 1 Pet. 2 25.
21. *πρόβατον*. Rom. 8 36 in a quotation, but a close parallel is 1 Pet. 2 25.
22. *εὐάρεστος*. Paul uses this word seven times, but its parallel can be found in Heb. 12 23, *εὐαρέστως*.

23. ἀνέχομαι. Found in Acts 18 14, and 2 Tim. 4 3, in the sense "to listen," but not elsewhere.
24. τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν Τιμόθεον. Parallel to 1 Thes. 3 2, but more commonly Paul calls Timothy ὁ ἀδελφός.
25. ἡ χάρις, etc. Parallel to Col. 4 18, but a common benediction.

This list indicates that the parallels between Hebrews 13 and Paul are not as many as is commonly supposed, and that most of them are very easily explained as commonplaces of Christian letters in the apostolic and post-apostolic age. There is not in any of Paul's epistles a doxology in which we find phrases woven from the Septuagint, as in the doxology of Heb. 13 20. 21.

V. *The following twenty-one words are common to Hebrews 13, Paul, and Peter, but not always with the same meaning:*

φιλαδελφία, μένω, τίμος, ἀναστροφή, ξένος, ἀγιάζω, πάσχω, λαός, θυσία, χεῖλος, ψυχή, ἀποδίδωμι, συνειδησις, ἀναστρέφω, παρακαλέω, ποιμήν, πρόβατον, καταρτίζω, θέλημα, ἐνώπιον, ἀσπάζομαι.

I do not claim completeness for this list, but it shows how many of the words of this chapter are common property to writers of epistles.

VI. *The following nine words find closer parallels in 1 Peter than in Paul's writings:*

παρακαλέω, τίμος, ἀμίαντος, ξένος, ἀναφέρω, ἀποδίδωμι, ποιμήν, πρόβατον, καταρτίζω.

Again, completeness is not claimed, but the list seems to indicate, not literary dependence, which no one claims, but that the two epistles came from similar conditions, and, as I believe, from about the same period.

The above study then tends to show:

1. That Hebrews 13 offers so many differences from Paul's writings in vocabulary, usages, and constructions that it is improbable that it was written by one who designed by affixing it to a homily to indicate the whole as a work of Paul.

2. That Hebrews 13 has a sufficient number of characteristic and peculiar expressions to make it improbable that it was written merely in imitation of Hebrews 1-12.

3. That Hebrews 13 has so many connections with Hebrews 1-12 that it is very difficult to divorce it from the preceding chapters.

4. That while Hebrews 1-12 may be an exhortation or homily rather than an epistle, Hebrews 13 *as a whole* is by the same writer, and was written to accompany the earlier chapters.