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*“The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light”*

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*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

we discipline ourselves into godliness, and make high and holy things almost instinctive.

Lastly, you will have climbed the highest altitude and breathed the purest air in all the New Testament.

## NOTES ON HEBREWS

BY W. E. VINE, (M.A.) (Lond)\*

Notes on ch. 5: 13, 14

*Verse 13.*—For everyone that partaketh of milk is without experience—Their state indicates they are still babes, and therefore cannot partake of the full diet he would desire to give them. *Apeiros* occurs only here in the N.T., and is explained by the opposite idea in verse 14. Their habitual use of "milk" hindered their growth in experience, they were suffering from "arrested growth" spiritually.

*of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.*—The absence of the article in the Greek before "word" lays stress on the quality of the word—it is a *teaching* (see R.V. marg. of ch. 6: 1) about righteousness, that is, not the full exposition of the Christian Faith (2 Cor. 3: 9), but "teaching such as belongs to it . . . teaching which deals at once with the source of righteousness in Christ, and the means by which man is enabled to be made partaker of it" (Westcott). It connects back to verse 12, "the first principles of the oracles of God" (see above).

*Verse 14.*—But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.—By way of contrast the Apostle goes on to show the kind of persons for whom "solid food" is suitable, viz. "fullgrown men". *Teleiōn* = mature, the opposite of *nēpios*; cf. Eph. 4: 13, 14; 1 Cor. 13: 11. Paul exhorts in 1 Cor. 14: 20 that we shall be "babes in malice" only; but "men (*teleiōi*) in mind"; and not even "children" (*paidia*) = i.e. a child who cannot speak.

\* On the eve of going to press we hear of the passing of our esteemed friend and brother in Christ, Mr. W. E. Vine. The news comes with a profound sense of loss, which doubtless will be shared by a large circle of friends, and no less by those readers who have been helped and edified by his numerous writings and in his long ministry of the spoken word. He has been a valued contributor to our pages from the very inception of the magazine more than twenty years. Fortunately, we have sufficient MS in hand to last till the end of this year, so we expect to continue with them, but plans had already been made to publish the complete work in book form, and this will no doubt appear later on, due notice of which will be given in the "B.S."—EDITOR.

Such are characterised as having their spiritual faculties "exercised" and experienced in the things of God. The verb *gumnazō* (from which we get gymnastics, etc.) implies a methodical disciplining, with no allowance for "slacking off" (see ch. 12: 11; 1 Tim. 4: 7; and in 2 Pet. 2: 14 as a warning). The three pairs of contrasts should be noted in these two verses; "solid food" and "milk"; "full-grown" and "babes"; "senses exercised" and "without experience".

#### Chapter VI

*Verse 1.*—*Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ*,—lit., "wherefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ." Not that there is any suggestion of abandoning or forgetting the elementary or initial doctrines relating to Christ. The thought is that of taking these for granted and rising to higher things. The writer associates himself with his readers, not as sharing in any condition of babyhood, but as suggesting that for all alike there is possibility of advancement; further, that he is ready to lead them, and would encourage them to follow his teaching.

An alternative view is that the plural is the plural of authorship. *and press on to perfection*:—The word rendered "press on" is, lit., "let us be borne on", indicating not merely energy but an earnest movement with a motive power impelling the being. The perfection, which is to be the aim, is maturity, full growth, as in ch. 5: 14. This noun, *teleiōtēs* is used elsewhere only in Col. 3: 14.

*not laying again a foundation*.—The verb *kataballō*, to lay, is here used in the middle voice, suggesting a certain interest in the act; and in the present continuous tense, suggesting a repeated and constant act, keeping on with the elements and going no further. These elementary truths are the foundation. One who learns the alphabet to begin his language study leaves the learning of the letters in order to use them in language.

*of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God*,—This introduces three pairs of elementary doctrines, all describing the "foundation." Repentance and faith go together; they are the initial acts in passing from death to life. *Metanoia*, repentance, a change of mind, denotes in the N.T., chiefly, a turning to God from sin, and the factor which completes the change is *faith*, e.g., John 3: 3; 9: 38; Acts 20: 21; 1 John 1: 9. This change, a turning from "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5: 11),

affects the whole course of life, causing such devotion to Christ as will not admit a return to ways of evil. The preposition rendered "toward" is *epi*. Where *eis* is used with the object of faith, the idea is that of union; where *pros* is used, it is that of direction and relation; where *en* is used it is that of rest; and where *epi* is used it is that of direction.

*Verse 2.—of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands.*—This forms the second pair in the six doctrines of the first principles of Christ. The word for *baptisms*, *baptismoi*, is to be distinguished from *baptisma*; the latter is the regular word for baptism, that of John the Baptist or the ordinance of the Christian faith. With that ordinance the *baptismoi* is not to be identified. This masculine form, always used in the plural, is found here and in ch. 9: 10 and Mark 7: 4, 8, where it is used of Jewish washings of vessels and tables. The "teaching of baptisms" has to do with the typical washings under the ceremonial law. The teaching of types was a suitable part of the elementary instruction given to Hebrew Christians. For ceremonial washings see, e.g., Ex. 30: 19-21; Lev. 16: 4, 24. These were for the removal of defilement and for the holiness of those who drew near to God. The laying on of hands, as here mentioned, had nothing to do with the impartation of blessing, or with healings, or with what is practised according to ecclesiastical tradition. Like the washings it was part of the ceremonial law, and had to do with the acts of the high priests as on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16). The laying of the hands, on the part of an offerer, upon a victim about to be sacrificed, was a token of his personal identification with the sacrifice as a substitute for himself.

*and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*—These doctrines were fundamental as revealed in the Divine oracles. They were confirmed by Apostolic teaching. This last pair of truths was as elemental as the preceding. All consists of the foundation.

*Verse 3.—And this will we do, if God permit.*—That is, "we will rise to a higher attainment," becoming skilful in "the word of righteousness," and developing to full maturity, but all in dependence upon God's permissive will, and therefore upon His assistance. The alternative interpretation, that the writer was promising them his guidance and teaching in this advancement, seems scarcely so appropriate.

as does the other soil, but the effect is different. That had been the case with the Jews. They had not prepared their heart and conscience to receive by faith the Creator's gift, and consequently they had spiritually produced thorns and briars. So with individuals, those who resisted the strivings of the Spirit of God became like the barren soil. But spiritual barrenness produces actual sins. Herein lay the danger of those of whom the writer was now speaking.

*it is rejected*—*adokimos*, disapproved after trial, as being productive only of that which is not only useless but noxious.

*and nigh unto a curse*.—That is, is in great danger of suffering a curse. To persist in a state of soul which, despite the special privileges granted as had been granted to these Hebrews, remained entirely unproductive, could have only one destiny. The barren fig tree must be cut down.

*whose end is to be burned*.—This actually had been the case with Sodom. Cp. Deut. 29:22, 23. Just as continued barrenness of a land leads the farmer to burn what it produces, so the refusal to respond to the convicting and quickening work of the Spirit of God, and the decision to apostatise from Him, would produce a condition impossible of recovery, and would issue in eternal doom.

## WORD STUDIES IN THE FIRST PSALM

Prof. J. LEO GREEN (U.S.A)

The first Psalm is anonymous. It is apparently impossible to ascertain with any great degree of accuracy who wrote it or when it was written. The fact that date and authorship are unknown lends weight to the Psalm. It is timeless in its message.

In a few well-chosen, meaningful words the Psalmist sketches two sharply contrasting pictures. The first is the picture of the happy and successful man; the second, the picture of the man whose life ends in abject failure. Let us examine these pictures rather closely.

I. *The Picture of the Happy and Successful Man* (vv. 1-3).

"O the happiness of the man . . . all that he does he carries through to effective conclusion!" 'Ashre ("O the happiness!") is a plural noun in the construct state. It is an abstract plural,