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ch. 4:9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1, etc.). Here the whole emphasis is on the *fellowship* involved in the action. And if we couple with this his similar appeals in the Corinthian passages we shall see something of his own standard of purpose and ambition: "Be ye imitators of me, *even as I am of Christ*." Therefore what he is actually challenging us to do is to imitate in daily living the Christ of God Himself, within the *companionship* of like-minded saints—who also partake of "the mind of Christ"! Imbued with that Ideal, "seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, . . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the File-leader and Perfecter of faith . . . that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls" (Heb. 12:1-3). That is FELLOWSHIP!—A.Mc.D.R.

NOTES ON HEBREWS

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

Chap. 7: 11-28

The Superiority of His Priesthood to that of Aaron (*continued*)

Verses 25-28

Versè 25.—Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. A more literal rendering is, 'He has power to save.' His priesthood combines intercession and power to save. His intercession carries with it its own answer in His saving power. While all power is given to Him in Heaven and on earth, yet He pleads with the Father, and every plea is fulfilled by the Father through the Son. That He saves "to the uttermost" combines the two ideas of time and degree (the marginal rendering "completely" is good). Wherever any single child of God is in any measure of need, Christ is mighty to supply it, not merely because He intercedes, but because He ever lives to do so. His power to save is due to His unchangeable priesthood. This calls for our constant gratitude and adoration. The more we ponder this passage the more we have revealed to us what we owe to this High-Priestly ministry of the Lord.

Versè 26.—For such a high priest became us,—This introduces a summary of the perfections of the High Priesthood of Christ as already set forth in the preceding part of the Epistle. We may compare for instance, chapter 2:10. That expressed what it suited

God to accomplish for us through His Son; this now expresses how the One through whom He has accomplished it is suited to us.

How this High Priest became us is set forth in four respects in verses 26, 27 and 28:—1stly., as to His character, (v. 26 a); 2ndly., as to His glory, (v. 26 b); 3rdly., as to His sacrifice, (v. 27); 4thly., as to His relationship, (v. 28).

“*holy, guileless, undefiled.*—This relates to His character. He is “holy” in His relationship to God,” “guileless” in His relationship to man, “undefiled” in His own essential nature.

He is “holy.” There are two words rendered “holy,” *hagios* and *hosios*. The former, *hagios*, which is more commonly used, denotes that which is sacred, or set apart to God, a condition involving freedom from all that is inconsistent with His character. *Hosios*, which is the word used in this passage (it occurs here only in Hebrews); signifies one who fulfils all the Divine obligations both in his character and work. That there is something more than freedom from defilement in the meaning of this word is clear from the fact that in addition to being holy the Lord is here described as undefiled. The word is associated with the Hebrew word *chasid*, which varies in meaning between “holy” and “gracious.” Thus “The Lord is holy in all His works” (Psa. 125:17, A.V.) is translated in the R.V., “the Lord is gracious in all His works.” One who is holy will inevitably be a gracious person. This is illustrated in Paul’s exhortation that in prayer men are to lift up “holy (*hosios*) hands, without wrath and disputing” (1 Tim. 2:8), that is to say, with a holiness involving graciousness. Inasmuch as the passage in Heb. 7 is describing the character of Christ as our High Priest, the word “holy” suitably carries with it the thought of graciousness.

He is “guileless.” This expresses what He is in relation to man. The word in the original signifies the character of one whose motives and ways are entirely free from unkindness, and so it came to mean benignant; the thought suggested is that of faithfulness; coupled with considerateness.

He is “undefiled.” While the first two words signify His relation toward God and man, this denotes His inherent freedom from all taint. In order that a high priest might be fit to enter into the holy of holies within the veil in the Tabernacle, it was necessary for him to bathe himself in water (Lev. 14:4). Our great High Priest needed not such cleansing. His was essential

and unblemished purity, impossible of contracting defilement. The white linen garments with which the high priest of old was attired before he offered the sacrifice betokened that personal moral purity which intrinsically belongs to Christ. What Christ became officially, as represented by the garments of beauty and glory in the sanctuary, had as its basis His personal spotless purity.

separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens:—

What is here mentioned describes action rather than a condition. It is true that in the days of His flesh He was separate from sinners, not of course that He did not mingle with them, for this He did, but that in respect of sin He was ever distinct from them, for in Him was no sin; He remained undefiled through all the defilement with which He came into contact. But the thought here suggested is that in His resurrection and ascension He was separated from sinful men; never again would He be assailed by them, never again subject to their maltreatment and indignity. In His resurrection life He was withdrawn for ever from all that He experienced at the hands of wicked men. Never again will He cry to the Father, "Dogs have compassed Me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me" (Psa. 22:16). More than this, His resurrection and ascension were God's vindication of His sinlessness. Hence "separated from sinners" follows "undefiled."

He has been "made higher than the heavens." This expresses the degree of His exaltation. As stated in chapter 4:14, when He ascended He "passed through the heavens." The heavens are the works of His own hands (1:10). When the Father exalted Him He placed Him in a position higher than creation. The one place worthy of Him was "the right hand of the Majesty on high." All creation is beneath His feet.

Verse 27.—Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this He did when He offered up Himself.—This, thirdly, relates to His sacrifice. Christ had no sins of His own to atone for, and though he offered up sacrifice, as they did, for the sins of others, yet, unlike them, He accomplished this in His own Person, and in offering up Himself he offered one sacrifice for sins for ever.

This they never could do. What has been mentioned in the preceding verse as to His character shows that His sacrifice was offered in accordance with the perfection and permanency of the

priesthood upon which He was officially to enter. This verse suggests that the sacrifice of Christ was a priestly act, as may be gathered also from the statement earlier in the Epistle, that "it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (2:17).

His act of making propitiation for sins was accomplished in His death and was accomplished once for all. The testimony of the Epistle is very specific upon that point. In no sense does Christ make propitiation for sins as High Priest now in glory. In a unique way the work of the Cross was high priestly in its sacrificial character. Though Christ had not yet taken His official position as High Priest, yet His sacrifice was inseparable from His work in this capacity. Christ did not enter into Heaven *with*, but *through*, His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Verse 28.—For the law appointeth men high priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a son, perfected for evermore.—This is the fourth point in showing how His Priesthood is suited to us, namely, His Divine relationship. His is the appointment of One who is a Son, and who is perfected for evermore (not "consecrated" as in the A.V.). They were appointed under the Law and without an oath. He was appointed "after the law" and "by the word of the oath." Thus Christ is contrasted with them, not as He was in the days of His flesh, but as He is in the glory. He has been made perfect by reason of all the experiences of obedience, suffering, and sorrow through which He passed in consequence of His Incarnation and in His Death and by reason of His Resurrection and Exaltation. It is because He has been perfected by means of all this that, as our High Priest, He is entirely suited to us. Inviolability is the essential feature of the Priesthood of Christ. Therefore Christ was made a High Priest with an oath, "by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psa. 110:4).

Whereas, then, the Levitical priesthood was purely official, Christ's has a greatness and glory that are personal. He became a High Priest, not by force of law, but in virtue of His inherent dignity and power and grace. Herein lies the secret of His

attractiveness. The attractiveness by which men are drawn to Him, in a way distinct from the drawing power of others, does not lie in His moral teaching, but in the character and power of His person as manifested in His life on earth, and in the love which expressed itself in His vicarious death. By reason of these He is what He is as our High Priest. It is His person that constitutes "the better hope by which we draw nigh unto God." Accordingly the foregoing commandment has been disannulled and replaced by this better hope.

The statement that He has been appointed as "a Son, perfected for evermore," gathers up a great deal of the preceding teaching of the Epistle concerning Him. It is an outstanding feature of this Epistle that the writer constantly presents Christ in His Divine relationship as the Son of God. We may here therefore recall the passages which have spoken of Him thus.

Firstly, He was introduced at the outset in this Divine relationship as the One, through whom God has spoken to us, in contrast to the prophets in former times (1:1, 2).

Secondly, He was, as the Son of God, set in contrast with the angels, to whom God never said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and again, "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son." As the Son of God He has a Throne and a Sceptre, and Him the angels worship (1:5-8, 13).

Thirdly, He is set in contrast with Moses. Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, but Christ is a Son over God's house (3:5, 6).

Fourthly, these three contrasting presentations lead the writer to emphasize the fact that it is as the Son of God that He is our High Priest: "Having, then, a great High Priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (4:14).

Fifthly, it is as the Son of God that He is set forth in His Melchizedek character. His High Priesthood is contrasted with the order of Aaron, and here we are shown how He was made perfect through suffering. "Son though He was, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation" (5:5-9).

Sixthly, it is suggestive of His dignity as the Son of God, in contrast to the shame of His crucifixion, that we are warned that

those who fall away crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame (6:6).

Seventhly, the details of the ancient priest Melchizedek are so recorded in Genesis that he might be "made like unto the Son of God" and thus show forth the glories of His permanent Priesthood in this relationship (7:3).

Eightly, and now as a climax to the whole of this teaching, the One whom God has appointed by His oath as our great High Priest is His own Son "perfected for evermore."

Analysis of chap. 8: 1-6a

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|--|---|-----|
| i. <i>His nature:</i> | | |
| 1. As just described | . | 1a, |
| 2. The chief point in the argument | . | 1a. |
| ii. <i>His position:</i> | | |
| 1. The right hand of the Throne | . | 1b, |
| 2. In the heavens | . | 1b. |
| iii. <i>His place of ministry:</i> | | |
| 1. The Sanctuary, the true Tabernacle | . | 2a, |
| 2. Pitched by the Lord | . | 2b. |
| iv. <i>His offering:</i> | | |
| 1. His appointment for it | . | 2a, |
| 2. Its necessity | . | 3b. |
| v. <i>His ministry itself:</i> | | |
| 1. Not as a Priest on earth | . | 4, |
| 2. The heavenly reality in contrast to the earthly copy and shadow | . | 5, |
| 3. More excellent because of the better covenant | . | 6a. |

THE MIRACLES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

Introduction

Of the Lord's thirty-five miracles, John records at least seven, or according to some students, eight, if we reckon the walking on the water in chapter 6. Of these eight, six are peculiar to this Gospel. The apostle gives us, therefore, an obvious selection. No doubt he knew of all the miracles worked by the Lord, but his selection is in keeping with the general purpose and plan governing his record, helping him to unfold the inner significance of the Lord's ministry. This is evidenced by the statement with which he ends the record of the first miracle: "This beginning of His *signs* did Jesus . . . and manifested His glory"; with the result "His disciples believed on Him," (ch. 2:11).