

TH  
W 641

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS FOR  
ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

By

ETHEL M. WILBURN

A.B., New York State College for Teachers  
M.A., Teachers College, Columbia University  
B.R.E., The Biblical Seminary in New York

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
in  
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.  
April 1937

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY LIBRARY  
HATFIELD, PA.

14482

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
A. The Subject of the Study. . . . .	2
1. Statement of the Subject . . . . .	2
2. The Limits of the Subject. . . . .	2
B. Justification of the Study. . . . .	3
C. The Method of Procedure . . . . .	5
1. Approach to the Study. . . . .	5
2. Plan of the Study. . . . .	5
II. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE READERS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS . . . . .	6
A. Introduction. . . . .	7
B. The Identity of the Readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews . . . . .	8
1. Historical Critical Evidence . . . . .	8
2. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation. . . . .	10
C. The Economic and Social Situation of the Readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews . . . . .	11
1. Their Ministration to the Saints and to Strangers. . . . .	11
a. Ministrations Conducted in the Past and Present . . . . .	11
b. Ministrations Urged for the Future. . . . .	13
2. Their Former Sufferings. . . . .	15
3. Their Moral Situation. . . . .	18
4. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation. . . . .	19
D. The Religious Situation of the Readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . .	20
1. They Were Professing Christians. . . . .	20
2. They Were in Need of Spiritual Growth. . . . .	21
a. They Were in Danger of Drifting . . . . .	21
b. They Were in Danger of Unbelief and Disobedience. . . . .	22
c. They Were in Danger of Retarded Growth. . . . .	22
d. They Were in Danger of Falling Away. . . . .	23

May 31, 1937 21248 Gift of Ethel M. Wilburn

Chapter	Page
e. They Were in Danger of Wilful Sin . . . . .	25
f. They Were in Danger of Forsaking the Assembling of Themselves Together. . . . .	25
g. They Were in Need of Increased Faith . . . . .	26
h. They Were in Need of Sanctification . . . . .	27
3. They Were under the Rule of Church Leaders. . . . .	28
a. They Were Exhorted to Remember the Church Leaders. . . . .	28
b. They Were Exhorted to Obey the Church Leaders. . . . .	29
c. They Were Exhorted to Salute the Church Leaders. . . . .	29
4. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation. . . . .	30
E. Summary . . . . .	31

III. THE AIM OF THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. . . . .	34
A. Introduction. . . . .	35
B. An Analysis of the Epistle to the Hebrews for the Author's Aim. . . . .	35
C. Summary: Classification of the Aims of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . .	46

IV. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. . . . .	50
A. Introduction. . . . .	51
B. Principles of Education Applied by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . .	51
1. Comprehension of Purpose . . . . .	51
2. The Use of Tact. . . . .	52
3. Emphasis upon the Positive . . . . .	53
4. The Use of Variety of Form . . . . .	54
5. The Use of the Concrete. . . . .	55
C. Educational Methods Used by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . .	56
1. The Use of Illustrations . . . . .	56
2. The Use of Contrasts . . . . .	56
3. The Use of Questions . . . . .	59
4. The Use of Familiar Sources. . . . .	60
5. The Use of Motivated Obedience . . . . .	61

Chapter	Page
D. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews as a Pastor-Teacher. . . . .	62
1. The Definition of a Pastor-Teacher. . .	63
2. The Author's Fulfillment of the Definition of a Pastor-Teacher. . . . .	63
E. Summary. . . . .	67
 V. GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. . . . .	 69
 BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	 75

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

# A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS FOR ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Subject of the Study

##### 1. Statement of the Subject

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been studied from various viewpoints, such as the exegetical, theological, and practical. These fields have been well covered. Yet there is one area where the lack of study has been notable. That is the field of pedagogy. In these days when the education of adults has begun to come into its own, we may well turn our attention to a study of the pedagogy of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

What are the aims of the author? What are his methods? What are the educational principles applied by him? Is he an effective teacher? This thesis is an attempt to answer these questions. The subject under consideration is a study of the Epistle to the Hebrews for its pedagogical implications.

##### 2. The Limits of the Subject

This thesis is limited to a study of the

Epistle to the Hebrews itself. It is not proposed to enter the field of higher criticism with regard to the question of authorship or of the readers of the Epistle. Neither is it planned to enter upon textual criticism. The study is largely confined to the edition of the Bible put forth by the American Revision Committee, although the Greek text will be used for reference. The subject is limited to the pedagogical implications of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

#### B. Justification of the Study

Comparatively little attention has been paid to the pedagogical implications of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For example, Robinson speaks of the "teaching" of the writer of the Epistle and adds:

" . . the didactic and homiletic purpose of the Epistle is never allowed to lie hidden for very long. Again and again the writer interrupts the thread of his reasoning to emphasize the practical application of what he has said . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Westcott alludes to "the universal teaching of the Epistle"<sup>2</sup> and to "the characteristic teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the High-priesthood of Christ."<sup>3</sup> In another place he speaks of the writer as a teacher.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Robinson, Theodore H.: The Epistle to the Hebrews. 1933. Introduction, pp. xviii-xix.
2. Westcott, Brooke Foss: The Epistle to the Hebrews. Third Edition, Introduction, p. lvi.
3. Ibid., Introduction, p. lx.
4. Cf., Introduction, p. liii.

Again he remarks that the writer "recognises a due relation between the scholar and his lesson . . ." <sup>1</sup> Morgan, in his study manual on the Apostolic Church, devotes Part VII to "The Church Instructed by the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Synoptic Gospels, and Acts." <sup>2</sup> F. B. Meyer in *The Way into the Holiest*, an exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has a chapter entitled <sup>3</sup> "Teaching by Contrast". Furthermore, Scott suggests an interesting picture of a teaching situation when he says that we may "think of the writer as addressing not so much an ordinary congregation as an inner circle of men who aspired to be teachers, and were aiming at deeper insight into their Christian faith . . ." <sup>4</sup> In addition to these references there is a treatment of the pedagogy of Hebrews 5:11-6:20 by Bruce in his chapters on "The Teacher's Complaint" and "The Teacher's Charity." <sup>5</sup> Such brief mention of reference to the pedagogy of the Epistle to the Hebrews--even in cases where a chapter or two may have been devoted to the subject--shows that the

. . . . .

1. Ibid., Introduction, p. lxxxii.
2. Morgan, Charles Herbert: *Studies in the Apostolic Church.* pp. 191-202.
3. Meyer, F. B.: *The Way into the Holiest: Expositions of the Epistle to the Hebrews.* pp. 161-168.
4. Scott, E. F.: *Epistle to the Hebrews.* p. 14.
5. Bruce, Alexander Balmain: *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The First Apology for Christianity, An Exegetical Study.* pp. 196-239.



field as a whole has not been covered.

### C. The Method of Procedure

#### 1. Approach to the Study

It is planned to approach the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews from the educational viewpoint. The book will be examined to determine whether the readers of the Epistle were considered pupils; to determine the aims of the author; to determine what educational principles he applied; whether his methods were those of a teacher; and finally, to ask if the author is entitled to be considered a teacher.

#### 2. Plan of the Study

The first point to be considered is that of the pedagogical implications resulting from a consideration of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Under this comes a study of the economic, social, and religious situations of the readers and of their role as pupils. The next chapter is devoted to a discussion of the aims of the author from an educational viewpoint. This leads naturally to the pedagogical implications resulting from a consideration of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This includes the educational principles and methods of the author, as well as a discussion of his function as a pastor-teacher. Finally, the problem is restated, the study summarized, and the values noted.

CHAPTER II

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF  
THE READERS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

## CHAPTER II

### PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE READERS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

#### A. Introduction

In any teaching situation the most prominent elements are the teacher and the pupils. Probably the first figure that comes into one's mind when one thinks of a teaching situation is the teacher. Yet it is not primarily for the teacher's benefit that such an arrangement exists. The pupils are the center of any real teaching situation. As George Herbert Palmer remarked, ". . a teacher does not live for himself, but for his pupil and for the truth which he imparts."<sup>1</sup>

The first matter to be considered is the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. May they be regarded as pupils in a teaching situation? The evidence as to their identity and as to their economic, social, and religious situations will be considered in the Epistle itself, and further examined with the aid of historical and exegetical sources. This procedure will be followed in order to determine the pedagogical implications resulting from a con-

. . . . .

1. Palmer, George Herbert, and Alice Freeman Palmer: The Teacher: Essays and Addresses on Education, p. 26.

sideration of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This, then, will be the burden of the present chapter.

B. The Identity of the Readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews

1. Historical Critical Evidence

The question of the identity of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews involves research in historical and higher criticism which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is pertinent to consider briefly whether or not they were Hebrews because of the bearing the answer has upon the pedagogical implications resulting from a study of the readers.

When Davidson speaks of the inscription "To the Hebrews", he adds that although it is not original,

"Any one reading the Epistle now would stamp it with the same title, apart from all tradition respecting its origin or destination. ... ..all the information which we gather from the inscription to the Epistle is, that it was addressed to Christian believers of the race of Israel. ."<sup>1</sup>

Bruce points out that recently, "especially among German scholars," the tendency has been to set aside the traditional view that the readers were Hebrews "and to hold that the first readers must have been Gentiles .."<sup>2</sup> He concludes, however, that the case has not been proved even

. . . . .

1. Davidson, A. B.: The Epistle to the Hebrews, pp. 9, 10.
2. Bruce. Op. cit., p. 2.

approximately, and expresses his sympathy with Westcott's verdict that the theory, no matter how ably it may be supported, is "an ingenious paradox."<sup>1</sup> Bruce adds:

"If the readers were indeed Gentiles, they were Gentiles so completely disguised in Jewish dress, and wearing a mask with so pronounced Jewish features, that the true nationality has been successfully hidden for nineteen centuries."<sup>2</sup>

On this point, Robinson remarks:

"It does not even follow that tradition is right in making the recipients Jews, for, though much of the argument is based on the validity of the Old Testament, this position was early assumed in the Gentile Church, as our oldest 'Apologies' show."<sup>3</sup>

Scott is so much in favor of the view that the Epistle to the Hebrews "was meant for readers to whom Jewish worship was a matter of remote and impersonal interest"<sup>4</sup> that he says:

"So long as the old theory was unchallenged, the Epistle was a document of secondary value. At most it could only testify to the survival of a remnant of Jewish Christians who were impervious to the forces that were operating in the church at large. . . . It belongs not to some obscure side-current, but to the main stream of Christian progress."<sup>5</sup>

Thus it is seen that the problem of the nationality of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews is by no means settled. But at all events the readers must have been familiar with the Old Testament and acknowledged its author-

. . . . .

1. Ibid., pp. 3, 4.
2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Robinson, Op. cit., Introduction, p. xvii.
4. Scott. Op. cit., p. 18.
5. Ibid., p. 20.

ity. The early Apologists used the Old Testament freely.<sup>1</sup>  
Why should not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews,  
at an even earlier date than the Apologists?

Under a section to follow on the religious situa-  
tion of the readers<sup>2</sup> the question whether or not they were  
Christians will be discussed.

## 2. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation

If the readers were Hebrew Christians, it is clear  
that the author of the Epistle made use of material famil-  
iar to them. The opening verse tells of God's speaking "in  
the prophets" to the fathers. At once a familiar note is  
struck. The many quotations from the Old Testament; the  
references to lives of faith lived by the outstanding char-  
acters of the Old Testament; the story of the sin of Israel  
in the wilderness; the discussion of the Aaronic priesthood  
and the sacrificial system; and the brief description of  
the tabernacle, would present sacred ideas and pictures to  
the minds of the readers if they were Jews. Good teaching  
proceeds from the known to the unknown. That is what these  
illustrations and references must have helped the writer to  
do for his readers if they were Hebrews.

On the other hand if the readers of the Epistle  
were Gentile Christians, the question arises whether or not  
these illustrations would have been of much help. It is

. . . . .

1. Cf., Robinson. Op. cit., Introduction, p. xvii. Scott.  
Op. cit., p. 16.
2. See present study, p. 20.

evident, however, that the readers must have been familiar with the Old Testament and acknowledged its authority or else the author would not have made such wide use of it. It is hardly conceivable that the author would have employed the Old Testament so frequently if he knew that it had little meaning for his readers. We have seen in the foregoing section that the Gentiles early used the Old Testament in the same way that the Hebrew Christians did. In this case the same pedagogical principles hold as for the Hebrew readers.

C. The Economic and Social Situation  
of the Readers of the Epistle to  
the Hebrews

1. Their Ministration to the Saints and to Strangers

a. Ministrations Conducted in the Past and Present

It is evident that the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews were a generous group of people. The writer speaks very highly of what they had done for the saints in the past and for that matter were still doing. He reminds them that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister."<sup>1</sup>

They were the kind of people who not only did what they considered to be their duty but did it in such a way that it showed their love for the Lord. There was no grudging

. . . . .

1. The Holy Bible. Hebrews 6:10.

spirit about their giving. What is more they were still doing these commendable things.

The kindness and compassion of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews is perhaps best shown in their sympathy for those who were imprisoned.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the author of the Epistle has reference to some service rendered to those who were in bonds. Sympathy without any action would hardly have called forth his commendation. Rendering aid to prisoners in time of persecution calls forth all the courage an individual possesses since he may be the next to be involved. The readers of the Epistle set Christian service above personal injury, harm, or social ostracism.

But what light do these considerations throw upon the economic situation of the readers of the Epistle? We cannot tell whether or not there were members of wealth in the church. But it is recorded that their possessions had been despoiled.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that this implies that they had at least a certain amount of the goods of this world. If they were not rich, their poverty is not mentioned or implied except as it may be inferred as the result of persecution. But since it is noted that the readers were still ministering to the saints, it is prob-

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 10:34.
2. Cf., Hebrews 10:34.



able that they had some means left or had acquired money or goods after the former persecution ceased. Westcott points out that "...they were in a position to be generous, and for this trait they were and had been distinguished (vi. 10)."<sup>1</sup>

b. Ministrations Urged for the Future

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges his readers to continue their good works. Not only is this a general exhortation, but it is his desire for each one of them. As he says: "...we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>2</sup> He has a purpose in this exhortation beyond that of meeting the needs of those who are in want--worthy as that may be. It is that of keeping his readers active in service for others in order that they may grow themselves. They are to be spurred on by the example of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>3</sup>

In a later passage we find this exhortation in a somewhat different form. We read: "...let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. ."<sup>4</sup> Not only

. . . . .

1. Westcott. Op. cit., Introduction, p. xxxvi.
2. Hebrews 6:11,12.
3. Hebrews 6:11,12.
4. Hebrews 10:24.

is each exhorted to engage in good works, but he is to exhort others to take part in the same enterprise. It is interesting to notice that "love and good works" are joined together by the author of the Epistle.

There is another verse which does not mention either good works or ministration but which seems to indicate that such are understood. This reference reads: "Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."<sup>1</sup> Evidently the love for strangers is to be shown in such a practical way as hospitality. This ministration to strangers is urged immediately after the exhortation "Let love of the brethren continue."<sup>2</sup> It may be that the readers of the Epistle, while still remembering their brethren in love, were careless about their treatment of strangers.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews evidently considered that the service of sympathy for those who were suffering was worthy of continued practice since he included it among his final exhortations. He says: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body."<sup>3</sup>

There are three exhortations in a group. The first is to continue to "love . . . the brethren . . ." The

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 13:2.
2. Hebrews 13:1.
3. Hebrews 13:3.

second is to "Forget not to show love unto strangers. ."  
The third is to "Remember them that are in bonds . ." --  
the most difficult and testing of the three since it may  
bring personal danger.<sup>1</sup>

The author's final exhortation with regard to good works and the ministration to others is this: "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."<sup>2</sup> Here we find ministration raised to the level of sacrifices well-pleasing to God.

All these instances where the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts his readers to future ministration to the saints, and to strangers as well, leave the impression that the recipients of the Epistle were now in an economic position to respond to this plea. The impression is heightened by the author urging the readers to be "free from the love of money" and to be "content with such things as ye have."<sup>3</sup> The readers are exhorted to minister, not as though it were something new but rather, a continuation of and growth in a process already started.

## 2. Their Former Sufferings

When one inquires into the question of the sufferings of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews, one finds material that relates not only to their economic

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 13:1-3.
2. Hebrews 13:16.
3. Hebrews 13:5.

situation but also to their social condition. One reads:

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently the readers of the Epistle had endured a variety of sufferings. The reproaches of their persecutors may have been the hardest of their trials to endure. No one enjoys ridicule--even without material or physical suffering. The criminal is not immune to the taunts of his fellows. But when ridicule is accompanied by afflictions, imprisonment, and loss of property, its edge is even keener. It is only the real Christian who can take the spoiling of his possessions under such circumstances joyfully. Their spiritual hope was an ever-present and abiding possession.

The text seems to indicate that the readers of the Epistle had not yet been subject to martyrdom.<sup>2</sup> They had not made the greatest sacrifice. The example of Jesus is held up before them as one who was despised and spoken against by sinners, that they might not faint. He had resisted sin to the death as they had not yet done.

Then comes that section on chastisement by the Heavenly Father of His sons.<sup>3</sup> Here we have another expla-

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 10:32-34.
2. Cf., Hebrews 12:4.
3. Cf., Hebrews 12:5-13.

nation of some of their sufferings. It is a sign that they are sons and not bastards.

Davidson makes this comment with regard to their sufferings:

" . . their history had been one of varied vicissitudes, for on the back of their first faith they had been subjected to sharp persecutions (x. 32), though presumably their later history, until recently (xii. 4, 11-13), had been more peaceful. Their former persecutions, though in the midst of them they had been subjected to great reproach and loss of goods, and even imprisonment in some quarters, had perhaps not gone so far as to carry any of them to the stake (x. 32 with xii. 4. . .)." <sup>1</sup>

In another place he adds: " . . this does not mean that in their present troubles persecution had not gone the length of bloodshed, but that in their history as a church they had not yet been called upon to shed their blood." <sup>2</sup> Westcott pictures the sufferings of the readers thus:

"In earlier days they had borne reproach and hardships: x. 32 ff.; still they 'had not yet resisted unto blood': xii. 3ff.; though some at least 'in bonds' claimed their sympathy and help: xiii. 3; and perhaps their former 'leaders' had suffered even to martyrdom: xiii. 7." <sup>3</sup>

In speaking of the indifference of the readers of the Epistle, Scott says:

"It was partly a consequence of persecution--all the more difficult to bear because it was not of the kind which evoked heroic effort. Under the contempt and ill-usage of their heathen neighbours the believers had grown weary, and were half-ashamed of a religion which involved them in social ostracism. The pressure from without had discouraged them the more easily because of grave inward weakness." <sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Davidson. Op. cit., pp. 10, 11.
2. Ibid. p. 235.
3. Westcott. Op. cit., Introduction, pp. xxxvi, xxxvii.
4. Scott. Op. cit., pp. 23, 24.

The social situation of the readers, then, as shown by a review of their sufferings, was an extremely difficult one.

### 3. Their Moral Situation

The Epistle to the Hebrews devotes a comparatively small amount of space to the moral situation of the readers but what is said is very pertinent.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts the readers:

"Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you .."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently the author felt that the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews needed to live in harmony with one another. Perhaps the church life was not always peaceful and expressive of a true Christian spirit, for he warns against the danger of bitterness causing many to be defiled.<sup>2</sup>

The readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews are exhorted to honor the marriage relationship. "Let marriage be had in honor among all...for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."<sup>3</sup> Another verse warns against fornication and also against being profane as was Esau when he sold his birthright for "one mess of meat."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 12:14, 15.
2. Cf., Hebrews 12:15.
3. Hebrews 13:4.
4. Hebrews 12:16.

#### 4. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation

Consideration of the economic and social situation of the readers of the Epistle, shows that they were apt pupils. The author has nothing but commendation for their ministration to the saints both in the past and present. He urges them to continue this. In the case of strangers, there is a slight hint that they might have occasionally forgotten to show kindness in the past.

In the days of their former sufferings they had behaved commendably. Their compassion for those who suffered was also praise-worthy. However the writer reminds them that they "have not yet resisted unto blood .."<sup>1</sup>

Such readers had apparently learned the lesson of service fairly well. They were willing to give of their means and sympathy. They were willing to do that even when it involved personal risk as in the case of ministering to those who were in bonds. The author had but to build upon the foundation already laid, to urge his readers on to higher achievements. They played the part of pupils well in this instance.

The readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews are urged by the author to attain the highest moral standards. Failure will be judged by God. A motive is given to the readers as pupils in a life situation. It is true that

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 12:4.

the motive relates to the future, but as Doctor Horne writes: "The best growth includes preparation as a part of its motivation."<sup>1</sup>

D. The Religious Situation of the Readers  
of the Epistle to the Hebrews

1. They Were Professing Christians

When the religious situation of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews is considered the question arises whether or not they were Christians. It is evident from the text that the readers were Christians.<sup>2</sup> In the first chapter the author speaks of God's final revelation in His Son and shows how the Son is superior to the angels. Then the writer, in speaking of the angels says:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation? Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them."<sup>3</sup>

The writer is speaking to people who had heard the Gospel and were familiar with it, but who might be in danger of drifting away from it. The author's kindly inclusion of himself in this last group is direct evidence that the readers were Christians. Probably the crowning evidence to their Christianity is that the writer addresses them as "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Horne, Herman Harrell: The Democratic Philosophy of Education; Companion to Dewey's Democracy and Education. p. 62.
2. Cf., Hebrews 1:14; 2:1.
3. Hebrews 1:14; 2:1.
4. Hebrews 3:1.



In fact the entire Epistle shows plainly that it was written for people who were Christians.

Next, it maybe asked how the readers had become Christians. The answer is that those who had heard the story of salvation from Jesus had told them. God had borne witness to the Gospel "both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will."<sup>1</sup> There is the view that the readers of the Epistle were "Christians of the second or third generation."<sup>2</sup> No final statement can be made on this point since it depends upon the date, authorship, and destination of the Epistle--upon the first of which there is not agreement and the last two of which are unknown.

## 2. They Were in Need of Spiritual Growth

Although the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews were Christians they had by no means reached the stage of growth which the author desired for them.

### a. They Were in Danger of Drifting

The readers were in danger of drifting away from what they had heard. As Bruce describes it: "They are in danger of slipping away from the Christian faith, as a boat is carried past the landing-place by the strong current of a stream (chap. ii.1)."<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 2:4.
2. Scott. Op. cit., p. 24.
3. Bruce. Op. cit., p. 8.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews points out that if the word which came through angels was steadfast and any transgression was punished, they could not escape who neglected the salvation, spoken through the Lord and confirmed to them by human witnesses and God's signs, wonders, powers, and "gifts of the Holy Spirit".<sup>1</sup>

b. They Were in Danger of Unbelief and Disobedience

Drifting leads almost imperceptibly to unbelief, and unbelief to disobedience. In fact unbelief is disobedience. In the third chapter the author warns the readers:

"Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God. . . . And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief."<sup>2</sup>

In the fourth chapter the author continues to warn his readers. He fears lest any one of them might seem to come short of entering into God's rest. He does not want any of them to fall as did Israel in the wilderness.<sup>3</sup>

c. They Were in Danger of Retarded Growth

The lack of spiritual growth of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews is set forth in most pronounced

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 2:1-4. Additional references on drifting (Hebrews 3:12, 13, 18, 19; 4:1, 11; 5:11-6:12; 10:25-31; 13:9) are discussed in the sections which follow, pp. 22-25.
2. Hebrews 3:12, 18, 19.
3. Cf., Hebrews 4:1, 11.

fashion by the author.<sup>1</sup> They had "become dull of hearing" and therefore could not grasp the truths he would present. Not only had they ceased to grow but they had even retrogressed. Instead of being teachers, they needed to have "the first principles" taught to them again. They could take only spiritual milk because they were not yet ready for solid food. Bruce presents this picture of them:

"They have become dull in hearing, and in all their spiritual senses; they are in their dotage or second childhood, and need again to be fed with milk, i.e. to be taught anew the rudiments of the Christian faith, instead of with the strong meat which befits spiritual manhood (chap. v. 11-14)."<sup>2</sup>

Why was this the case? It was because they were "inexperienced in the word of righteousness." They had not used their senses to "distinguish between good and evil" and therefore could not eat the "solid food." That was for "fullgrown men" who had exercised their senses. The writer goes on to express his desire to lead his readers on to perfection or "full growth".<sup>3</sup>

#### d. They Were in Danger of Falling Away

In connection with unbelief the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions "falling away from the living God."<sup>4</sup> In the sixth chapter<sup>5</sup> he discusses the case of the one who, after being enlightened, tasting

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 5:11-6:3.
2. Bruce. Op. cit. p. 8.
3. Cf., Hebrews 6:1.
4. Hebrews 3:12.
5. Cf., Hebrews 6:4-6.

"the heavenly gift," and partaking "of the Holy Spirit", "fell away". Such an individual could not be renewed "unto repentance" as long as he was crucifying "the Son of God afresh". In this connection, Bruce speaks of the readers thus:

"Their state is such as to suggest to a faithful instructor, anxious for their welfare, thoughts of a final apostasy and malignant renunciation of Christ, and to call up before his mind the unwelcome picture of a land well tilled and rained upon, yet bringing forth only thorns and briers, and, so, nigh unto cursing (chap. vi. 6-8). Evidently those of whom such things can be said are men who have never had insight into the essential nature and distinctive features of the Christian religion; who, with the lapse of time, have fallen more and more out of sympathy with the faith they profess, and who are now held to it chiefly by a tie of custom, which, under the stress of outward trial, may be snapped at any moment; insomuch that their friend who writes to them feels it necessary to make a desperate effort to rescue them from the impending danger by trying to show to them what is so clear to his own mind, the incomparable excellence of the Christian religion."<sup>1</sup>

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews adds that he is "persuaded better things of" his readers--"things that accompany salvation." Their works and love were such that God would remember them. However, the writer urges them to keep on with their ministrations unto the very end in order that they might not become sluggish but imitate "them<sup>2</sup> who through faith and patience" inherited the promises.

A final warning against falling away may be seen in the words: "Be not carried away by divers and strange

. . . . .

1. Bruce. Op. cit., pp. 8,9.
2. Hebrews 6:9-12.

teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited."<sup>1</sup>

e. They Were in Danger of Wilful Sin

The danger described in Hebrews 10:26-31 is that of wilfully sinning after knowing the truth. There is no sacrifice for this, the author states, only a "fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries."<sup>2</sup> The author was warning his readers against danger rather than saying that they had committed such sin. This is shown by his reference in the next paragraph<sup>3</sup> to their former sufferings and his exhortation that they keep their boldness and develop patience.

f. They Were in Danger of Forsaking the Assembling of Themselves Together

Another evidence of the lack of spiritual growth among the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews is found in the fact that some of them were neglecting or rather forsaking their assembling with one another. The value of group worship was recognized by the author. Not only was each one to attend but he was to exhort others to do likewise. Group worship contained elements which the readers<sup>4</sup> needed in order to grow properly in their spiritual lives.

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 13:9.
2. Hebrews 10:27.
3. Cf., Hebrews 10:32-39.
4. Cf., Hebrews 10:25.

g. They Were in Need of Increased Faith

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews recognized that his readers needed increased faith to make their spiritual lives what they should be. He says: "Wherefore . . . consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house." <sup>1</sup> One who is faithful in God's service is living his faith. Jesus was the supreme example, of course, but Moses was very important in the minds of the readers of the Epistle, whether they were Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians, who had received the Old Testament when they accepted Christianity.

Again, the author sets forth the need for greater faith by showing what happened when "the word of hearing . . . was not united by faith with them that heard" <sup>2</sup> in the case of Israel in the wilderness.

In the sixth chapter he urges his readers to imitate those "who through faith and patience, inherit the promises." <sup>3</sup>

After his great sections on Jesus as High Priest and Sacrifice, the author urges his readers to draw near to God "with a true heart in fulness of faith" and to "hold fast the confession of your faith that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised .. " <sup>4</sup> He concludes the

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 3: 1,2.
2. Hebrews 4:2.
3. Hebrews 6:12.
4. Hebrews 10:22, 23.

tenth chapter with the words: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition: but of them that have faith<sup>1</sup> unto the saving of the soul."

Then comes the "faith chapter" with its illustrations from the faithful men and women of the Old Testament. How the hearts of the readers must have thrilled as they read these wonderful stories! The writer does not lose this opportunity to stir them to similar exploits, for he says:

"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the author of the Epistle urges his readers to imitate the faith of those who "had the rule over" them as they considered the issue of the lives of their<sup>3</sup> former leaders.

#### h. They Were in Need of Sanctification

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts the readers to "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord .."<sup>4</sup> Sanctification is essential to their spiritual growth.

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 10:39.
2. Hebrews 12:1,2.
3. Cf., Hebrews 13:7.
4. Hebrews 12:14.

Doctor Thomas points out that sanctification has a twofold meaning: "Sanctification is, first, an act of God in setting us apart for Himself, and, then, a process whereby we recognize this and live for His glory."<sup>1</sup> Doctor Thomas makes reference to a passage from Hebrews: "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."<sup>2</sup> This verse presents the first meaning of "sanctification." The second usage of the word appears in the exhortation of the author to "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord .."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. They Were under the Rule of Church Leaders

Evidently certain men "had the rule" in religious affairs over the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. These are spoken of in several ways in the text.

#### a. They Were Exhorted to Remember the Church Leaders

These leaders were men who spake God's word to the readers.<sup>4</sup> Whether they were the ones who brought the Gospel originally<sup>5</sup> is not clear. They may have been leaders who developed within the group itself during the years that had passed since their conversion. At all events they proclaimed God's message to the readers. Their lives were such that

. . . . .

1. Thomas, W.H. Griffith: What is Sanctification.
2. Hebrews 10:10.
3. Hebrews 12:14.
4. Cf., Hebrews 13:7.
5. Cf., Hebrews 2:3.



the issue was to be considered. Probably this is a tribute to their Christ-likeness of life. Perhaps the issue of their lives was martyrdom.<sup>1</sup> Their faith was to be imitated by the readers of the Epistle.

b. They Were Exhorted to Obey the Church Leaders

The author exhorts his readers to obey those ruling over them in spiritual affairs.<sup>2</sup> They were to submit to their leaders. The reason given for this command is worthy of note as suggesting the type of men who were leaders. They were men who watched over the souls of those under them because they felt responsible for their stewardship. The author urges his readers so to live that their leaders might give an account joyfully "and not with grief." The latter case would be unprofitable for the readers themselves.<sup>3</sup>

c. They Were Exhorted to Salute the Church Leaders

The readers were given a final command with respect to their behavior toward their leaders.<sup>4</sup> They were to be saluted or greeted by the readers. Doubtless the salutation of those "of Italy" was to be conveyed to the leaders as well as that of the writer of the Epistle. Probably it was understood that the readers were to share the Epistle with their leaders.

. . . . .

1. Cf., Westcott. Op. cit., Introduction, p. xxxvii.
2. Cf., Hebrews 13:17.
3. Cf., Hebrews 13:17.
4. Cf., Hebrews 13:24.

#### 4. Implications Relating to the Teaching Situation

The religious situation of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews was not good. They were professing Christians, it is true, but they had not grown spiritually. When they should have been teaching others, they had need for more elemental instruction. They were slow and dull. The readers were not ready for advanced work. Nevertheless, the author felt that they must press on to perfection or "perfect growth".

When Bruce looks at the author of the Epistle as a teacher, he says:

"... he refrains from entering on ample discourse . . . on the Melchisedec priesthood, because his spirit is disturbed by the recollection that he writes to persons dull of apprehension, at once ignorant, indolent, and prejudiced, unable and unwilling to take in new ideas, and, like horses with blinders on, capable of seeing only straight before them in the direction of use and wont, and therefore certain to find the thoughts he is about to express hard to understand."<sup>1</sup>

"He desires to teach; but he can teach only in so far as there is receptivity in his scholars."<sup>2</sup>

"Recalling the kindly deeds of his slow-minded pupils, the teacher almost repents of the alarming tone in which he has addressed them, and becomes apologetic . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Davidson points out that

"... there were perhaps some symptoms showing themselves of a mistrust of their teachers, and suspicion of their teaching, possibly owing to influences from without (xiii. 17, 18),--to which influences may also have been

. . . . .

1. Bruce. Op. cit., p. 196.
2. Ibid., p. 200.
3. Ibid., pp. 221, 222.

due a tendency to busy themselves with meats, and to be carried aside by strange teachings."<sup>1</sup>

The examples of the faithfulness of Jesus and of Moses, as well as one entire chapter,<sup>2</sup> furnish illustrations for the author's pupils. He proceeds from the known to the unknown. The writer does not regard their condition as hopeless, for he encourages them by saying: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."<sup>3</sup>

The author of the Epistle gives his readers examples to imitate among their former leaders who perhaps "had suffered even to martyrdom."<sup>4</sup> They are exhorted to obey their present leaders, and to give them the writer's greeting. To a certain extent it is true that pupils cannot learn unless they obey their teachers. Their leaders doubtless were also their teachers.<sup>5</sup> Certainly the carrying of greetings from the writer to their leaders would give them opportunity to serve those who watched "in behalf of" their souls.

#### E. Summary

Examination of the evidence as to the identity of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews and as to their economic, social, and religious situations, with a

. . . . .

1. Davidson. Op. cit., p. 12.
2. Cf., Hebrews 11.
3. Hebrews 10:39.
4. Westcott. Ibid., Introduction, p. xxxvii.
5. Cf., Hebrews 13:7.

view to determining the pedagogical implications of these factors has yielded certain results presented in the foregoing chapter. According to the historical critical evidence the nationality of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot be finally determined. But nothing was found which denied the possibility or probability that the readers were familiar with the Old Testament. If they were Hebrews, the author followed the pedagogical principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown. If they were Gentiles, familiar with the Old Testament, the same principle would apply. It is scarcely conceivable that the author would have made such extensive use of the Old Testament if his readers had not been familiar with it.

When the economic and social situation of the readers is considered, several points are evident. The author commends their ministration to the saints both in the past and present and urges them to continue this practice. There is a hint that they might have failed occasionally in their duty to strangers. However, they have learned the lesson of service well. The author praises their ministration to those who were in bonds as well as their own endurance of the loss of good. Morally the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews are urged to attain the highest standards. God will judge their failure. Here the author gives them a motive to guide their future action.

Consideration of the religious situation of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows that they were professing Christians but that they were in need of spiritual growth. This latter fact is evident since they were in danger of drifting, of unbelief and disobedience, of retarded growth, of wilful sin, and of forsaking the assembling of themselves together. They were in need of increased faith and of sanctification. Despite this picture the author is eager to lead them onward toward perfection. He wishes them to become fullgrown men spiritually. The author seeks to strengthen their faith by examples of men and women from the Old Testament. Thus he again uses the pedagogical principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown.

It is concluded from the above examination of evidence that the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews may be considered as pupils in a teaching situation, under a superb teacher about whom the study to follow will center.

CHAPTER III

THE AIM OF THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

## CHAPTER III

### THE AIM OF THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

#### A. Introduction

In the foregoing chapter it was concluded that the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews might be considered as pupils in a teaching situation. The problem which follows this, then, is to consider the aims of the teacher-author. Did he write the Epistle with a purpose such as a teacher might have? In the text of the Epistle are direct statements or intimations of his aims to be found? If so, may they be interpreted from an educational view-point? This chapter is an attempt to answer these questions, and to classify the aims of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The aims shall be determined by direct statements of purpose made by the author and by his exhortations and commands to the readers. The method of exegesis will be used as an aid to defining the meaning of certain terms within these statements of aim.

#### B. An Analysis of the Epistle to the Hebrews for the Author's Aim

After the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has set forth "Christ's superior claim to be heard when He

. . . . .

speaks in God's name to men,"<sup>1</sup> he says: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them."<sup>2</sup> Westcott observes that this is "a logical necessity and not a moral obligation"<sup>3</sup> to which the author directs his readers. In either case it is the direct aim of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews to have the readers ". . . give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard .."<sup>4</sup> He urges this in order that they may not drift away. Furthermore he points out that ". . . if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward .." they could not hope to escape if they neglected the salvation spoken at first by the Lord and then confirmed to him and others by those who heard.<sup>5</sup> In this is seen that his direct aim is to have them ". . . give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard .."<sup>6</sup>

The author next points out that Jesus was made like His brethren in order "that he might become<sup>7</sup> a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." This he does in order to direct his readers to "consider the Apostle and High Priest"<sup>8</sup> of their "confession, even Jesus." It is

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews chapter 1. See Bruce. Op. cit., p. 59.
2. Hebrews 2:1.
3. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 36.
4. Hebrews 2:1.
5. Cf., Hebrews 2:2, 3.
6. Hebrews 2:1.
7. Hebrews 2:17.
8. Hebrews 3:1.



of significance to the present study to note that the verb "consider" represents the Greek word  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\upsilon\omicron\epsilon\tau\iota\nu$  which, according to Westcott, "expresses attention and continuous observation and regard <sup>1</sup> .." The verb form used is the aorist imperative. Westcott's view supports that of Dana and Mantey who point out that the aorist imperative may denote action to be undertaken at once. <sup>2</sup> The author of this Epistle, therefore, would have his readers begin at once to fix their attention upon Jesus and concentrate their study of Him. The reason for this, he states, is that his readers are Christ's house, "if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." <sup>3</sup> Therefore his aim is to have the readers begin at once to fix their attention upon Jesus and concentrate their study of Him.

In 3:12 there is the command to "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God .." The author here indicates that he aims to warn the readers against unbelief because it involves a "falling away from the living God." <sup>4</sup> He knows that unbelief will lead to disobedience, that it is, in fact, disobedience. This is borne out by his exhortation in 4:11: "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest that no man fall after the

. . . . .

1. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 75.
2. Cf., Dana, H.E., and Julius R. Mantey: A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. p. 300.
3. Hebrews 3:6.
4. Hebrews 3:12.

same example of disobedience." The example of disobedience<sup>1</sup> he finds in Israel's failure to enter into Canaan. Consequently his aim is to warn them against unbelief.

In 4:14 the author then recurs to the idea of Jesus as high priest and urges his readers to hold fast their confession. This he does on the basis that their high priest is not one who cannot feel human infirmities, but has been tempted in every way that man is.<sup>2</sup> Not only are the readers to hold fast their confession but the author exhorts them to "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."<sup>3</sup> His aim here, then, is to have his readers hold fast their confession and take advantage of the offer of mercy and grace for the "time of need."

The author next points out that as men do not become high priests except as they are "called of God . . . So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest ..<sup>4</sup> Moreover Jesus did not belong to the Aaronic order of priesthood but to that of Melchizedek.<sup>5</sup> At this point the author of the Epistle realizes that his readers are not yet ready to appreciate what he has to say about

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 4:1-10.
2. Cf., Hebrews 4:15.
3. Hebrews 4:16.
4. Hebrews 5:4, 5.
5. Cf., Hebrews 5:6, 10.

Melchizedek. Therefore he makes a digression in which he points out that instead of being teachers they are in need of elementary instruction and that instead of partaking of solid food they can take only milk.<sup>1</sup> "Wherefore," he says,

"leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."<sup>2</sup>

Here it is noted that there is not only an exhortation by the author but a direct statement of his aim: " . . this will we do, if God permit"<sup>3</sup>--that is, " . . press on unto perfection .."<sup>4</sup> Westcott remarks on this point that "The fulfilment of the Apostle's purpose is not made in any way to depend on the condition of those whom he addresses. His message has to be delivered."<sup>5</sup>

After "the very somber picture of the apostate"<sup>6</sup> in 6:4-8, the author adds: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak .."<sup>7</sup> Thereupon he calls attention to their ministrations to the saints by way of giving another direct statement of aim:

"And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 5:11-14.
2. Hebrews 6:1-3.
3. Hebrews 6:3.
4. Hebrews 6:1.
5. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 148.
6. Bruce. Op. cit., p. 207.
7. Hebrews 6:9.

through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>1</sup>

He realizes that their ministrations show love for God. Therefore he desires them to continue these services for others. In addition to this ministration, the author expresses the wish that they imitate those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>2</sup> Therefore his aim is to have them show the same diligence in ministration as heretofore and to imitate those who because of their "faith and patience inherit the promises."

Then the author encourages his readers with the promise made to Abraham and sealed by the immutability of God's character and by His oath, in order that they may "lay hold of the hope set before"<sup>3</sup> them. This hope goes "within the veil" where Jesus has gone as a forerunner "having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."<sup>4</sup> Therefore in 7:4 he says: "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils." It is of interest to note that the word "consider" here represents a different Greek word from that used in 3:1. The verb here used is θεωρεῖτε about which Westcott remarks: "The structure of the whole passage shews that the verb is an imperative and not an indicative. The word itself . . . ex-

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 6:11-12.
2. Cf., Hebrews 6:10-12.
3. Cf., Hebrews 6:13-18. See Bruce. Op. cit., p. 226.
4. Cf., Hebrews 6:19, 20.

presses the regard of attentive contemplation .."<sup>1</sup> This idea "of attentive contemplation" is heightened by the fact that the tense used is the present, the significance of which "is the idea of progress."<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is evident that the author's aim is to have his readers give careful attention to Melchizedek to whom Jesus is compared.<sup>3</sup>

In the eighth and ninth chapters Jesus is set forth as high priest. Then the author exhorts his readers with these words:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised .."<sup>4</sup>

The author of the Epistle encourages his readers to draw near to the holy place since they have a great high priest who has already prepared the way for their entrance by going in Himself. The reason for this exhortation is found in the fact that the One who made the promise to them is faithful. The author's aim, therefore, is that his readers waver not, but "hold fast the confession"<sup>5</sup> of their hope.

The author then proceeds to exhort his readers to

. . . . .

1. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 177.
2. Dana and Mantey. Op. cit., p. 181.
3. Cf., Hebrews 7:4-17.
4. Hebrews 10:19-23.
5. Hebrews 10:23.

"consider one another to provoke unto love and good works ..." <sup>1</sup> In this case "consider" represents the same Greek word as that used in 3:1. But the form here used is an example of the "hortatory subjunctive." <sup>2</sup> The author desires that his readers urge one another to love and to engage in helpful activity. This is followed by an exhortation not to forsake their assembling together as some are doing, but to urge one another to share in the common assembly. <sup>3</sup> The reason for this is found in the words: "and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." <sup>4</sup> The author's aim is that his readers " .. consider one another to provoke unto love and good works not forsaking ..." <sup>5</sup> their assembling together, as some had been doing.

After setting forth the danger of wilful sin, <sup>6</sup> the author writes: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings ..." <sup>7</sup> Since they had endured so manfully in the past certainly they will not be guilty of wilful sin. Therefore he urges them: "Cast not away . . . your boldness ..." <sup>8</sup> The reason for this being that their boldness has "great recompense of reward." <sup>9</sup> His aim is

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 10:24.
2. Cf., Dana and Mantey. Op. cit., p. 171.
3. Cf., Hebrews 10:25.
4. Hebrews 10:25.
5. Cf., Hebrews 10:24, 25.
6. Cf., Hebrews 10:26-31.
7. Hebrews 10:32.
8. Hebrews 10:35.
9. Hebrews 10:35.

that they keep their boldness.

Following his presentation of the faithful witnesses of the Old Testament,<sup>1</sup> the author exhorts his readers:

"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us .."<sup>2</sup>

His aim is that his readers live the Christian life unencumbered by any hindrances and that they pursue it patiently, yet as though they were running a race. The strength for this task is to be found when they look unto Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

The author then bids them to " .. consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself .." that they wax not weary, fainting in their souls.<sup>4</sup> The word translated "consider" is  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ . According to Westcott  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\beta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ , another of the 'consider's', "expresses in particular the careful estimate of one object with regard to another."<sup>5</sup> The form used is an aorist imperative which may denote an action to be undertaken at once.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the author's aim is to have his readers undertake immediately to make a careful estimate of Jesus' endurance as compared to their own.

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews chapter 11.
2. Hebrews 12:1.
3. Cf., Hebrews 12:2.
4. Cf., Hebrews 12:3.
5. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 399.
6. Cf., Dana and Mantey. Op. cit., p. 300.

The author next urges his readers to " .. regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord .."<sup>1</sup> Since they accept the chastening of their earthly fathers, he reasons why should they not much more accept that of their Heavenly Father?<sup>2</sup> "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed."<sup>3</sup> The author's aim is that they accept God's chastening, and make a definite effort to live according to His will in order that they may not hinder the faith of others.

The author then exhorts his readers to:

"Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright."<sup>4</sup>

The author's aim is that his readers shall live in harmony with others; be made holy in God's eyes; watch carefully lest any fail to attain to God's grace, lest any cause of bitterness arise, lest there be any fornicator, or profane person.

<sup>5</sup>  
After contrasting Sinai with Mount Zion, he says that they are come

" .. to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 12:5.
2. Cf., Hebrews 12:9.
3. Hebrews 12:12, 13.
4. Hebrews 12:14-16.
5. Cf., Hebrews 12:18-24.



just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."<sup>1</sup>

The reason for this is found in the fact that since those who "refused him that warned them on earth" did not escape, much less could those warned by the One speaking from Heaven.<sup>2</sup> Then since they have an unshakable kingdom, they are exhorted to have grace by which they "may offer service well-pleasing to God .."<sup>3</sup> This is to be done because "God is a consuming fire."<sup>4</sup> The author's aim is that his readers shall have grace so that they "may offer service well-pleasing to God .."<sup>5</sup>

The thirteenth chapter contains many intimations of the author's aim. He urges his readers to continue to love the brethren, not to forget "to show love unto strangers," and to remember those in bonds, and those ill-treated.<sup>6</sup> Marriage is to be honored.<sup>7</sup> They are not to love money, but to be content with what they have since God will not fail them.<sup>8</sup> Next he urges them to remember the example of their former church leaders,<sup>9</sup> and to obey their present leaders.<sup>10</sup> This remembrance, he urges upon them in order that they not be "carried away by divers

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 12: 23-25.
2. Cf., Hebrews 12:25.
3. Cf., Hebrews 12:28.
4. Hebrews 12:29.
5. Hebrews 12:28.
6. Cf., Hebrews 13:1-3.
7. Cf., Hebrews 13:4.
8. Cf., Hebrews 13:5.
9. Cf., Hebrews 13:7.
10. Cf., Hebrews 13:17.

and strange teachings."<sup>1</sup> His aim is that they shall keep the words of their former and present leaders in mind in order that they be not "carried away."

After setting forth Jesus' suffering without the gate,<sup>2</sup> he writes: "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."<sup>3</sup> The reason for this is that their city is not an abiding one, for they are seeking one "to come."<sup>4</sup> This leads to the exhortation to " .. offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually .."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand he urges them "to do good and to communicate" since "with such sacrifices God is well pleased."<sup>6</sup> His aim is that they shall follow Christ's example of suffering, offer continually praise to God, and minister to others.

The author reveals very clearly his aim in 13:20, 21:

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will .."

C. Summary: Classification of the Aims of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

In the foregoing section an analytical study was made of the Epistle to the Hebrews to determine by direct statements or intimation the aim of the author. These now

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 13:9.
2. Cf., Hebrews 13:12.
3. Hebrews 13:13.
4. Cf., Hebrews 13:14.
5. Hebrews 13:15.
6. Hebrews 13:16.

may be classified as follows:

The teacher-author of the Epistle to the Hebrews aimed to have his readers:

1. Concentrate their study upon Jesus.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. To give<sup>2</sup> heed to the things that were<sup>3</sup> heard", which things related to Jesus.
  - b. To "consider the Apostle and High Priest .." of their "confession, even Jesus."<sup>4</sup>
  - c. To consider Melchizedek to whom Jesus is compared.<sup>5</sup>
  - d. To "consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself .."<sup>6</sup>
  - e. To "see that" they "refuse not him that speaketh."<sup>7</sup>
2. Fortify themselves against unbelief and disobedience, and hold fast to their confession.<sup>8</sup>
  - a. To be on the guard against the dangers of unbelief and disobedience.<sup>9</sup>
  - b. To "hold fast" their confession.<sup>10</sup>
  - c. To "draw near" to God.<sup>11</sup>
  - d. To keep their boldness.<sup>12</sup>
  - e. To " .. lay aside every encumbrance .." and to " .. run with patience the race

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:1; 7:1-4; 12:3, 25.
2. Hebrews 2:1.
3. Cf., Hebrews 2:2-4.
4. Hebrews 3:1.
5. Cf., Hebrews 7:1-4.
6. Hebrews 12:3.
7. Hebrews 12:25.
8. Cf., Hebrews 3:12; 4:11, 14-16; 10:21-23, 35; 12:1; 13:9.
9. Cf., Hebrews 3:12; 4:11.
10. Cf., Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:23.
11. Cf., Hebrews 10:21, 22.
12. Cf., Hebrews 10:35.

that is set before .." them.<sup>1</sup>

f. To avoid "divers and strange teachings."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup>  
3. Seek perfection.

a. To " . . press on unto perfection .."<sup>4</sup>

b. To let God make them "perfect in every good thing to do his will .."<sup>5</sup>

c. To seek sanctification.<sup>6</sup>

4. Show respect to church and church leaders.<sup>7</sup>

a. To attend church regularly.<sup>8</sup>

b. To " . . offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually .."<sup>9</sup>

c. To remember the example of the lives of their former church leaders, and to obey their present leaders.<sup>10</sup>

5. Endure chastening.<sup>11</sup>

a. To " . . regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord .."<sup>12</sup>

b. To press on, strengthened by their chastening.<sup>13</sup>

6. Follow Jesus' example in suffering.<sup>14</sup>

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 12:1.

2. Cf., Hebrews 13:9.

3. Cf., Hebrews 6:1-3; 12:14; 13:20, 21.

4. Cf., Hebrews 6:1-3.

5. Cf., Hebrews 13:20, 21.

6. Cf., Hebrews 12:14.

7. Cf., Hebrews 10:25; 13:7, 15, 17.

8. Cf., Hebrews 10:25.

9. Hebrews 13:15.

10. Cf., Hebrews 13:7, 17.

11. Cf., Hebrews 12:5, 11-13.

12. Hebrews 12:5.

13. Cf., Hebrews 12:11-13.

14. Cf., Hebrews 13:12, 13.

7. Enter into the highest social relationships.<sup>1</sup>
- a. To continue to minister to the saints,<sup>2</sup> remembering their own former sufferings.<sup>3</sup>
  - b. To continue to love their brethren.<sup>4</sup>
  - c. To remember strangers.<sup>5</sup>
  - d. To follow the way of "peace with all men."<sup>6</sup>
  - e. To avoid bitterness.<sup>7</sup>
  - f. To avoid fornication and adultery.<sup>8</sup>
  - g. To avoid the common use of the sacred things.<sup>9</sup>
  - h. To be "free from the love of money; content with such things as" they had.<sup>10</sup>

In a summary or comprehensive statement, based upon the foregoing analysis, it may be said that the teacher-author of the Epistle to the Hebrews aimed to have his readers attain full growth both spiritually and in their relations to one another. The implications of this to their Christian lives may be seen in the above classification of aims.

. . . . .

- 1. Cf., Hebrews 6:10, 11; 10:24, 32; 13:1-5, 16; 12:14-16.
- 2. Cf., Hebrews 6:10, 11. See also 10:24; 13:3, 16.
- 3. Cf., Hebrews 10:32.
- 4. Cf., Hebrews 13:1.
- 5. Cf., Hebrews 13:2.
- 6. Cf., Hebrews 12:14.
- 7. Cf., Hebrews 12:15.
- 8. Cf., Hebrews 12:16; 13:4.
- 9. Cf., Hebrews 12:16.
- 10. Cf., Hebrews 13:5.

CHAPTER IV  
PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF  
THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

## CHAPTER IV

### PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

#### A. Introduction

In the previous chapter the aims of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews were considered, which aims revealed the author to be essentially a teacher. As such, his principles and methods of education are of significance to the present study. The author, it will be noted, can be considered in another light--that of a pastor-teacher. How, does he reveal himself in this combined office? In order to answer this question and to determine the principles and methods of education employed by the author, the Epistle will be examined.

#### B. Principles of Education Applied by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

##### 1. Comprehension of Purpose

Although the author's aims may be classified under a number of heads, they may be summarized in his own few words:

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

##### 1. Hebrews 13:20-21.

It is evident throughout his Epistle that he has but one objective, namely, that his "sheep" be "perfect in every good thing to do his will."

## 2. The Use of Tact

The author of the Epistle uses tact when he exhorts his readers "to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them,"<sup>1</sup> because he includes himself in their number. However, the most outstanding passage illustrating the tact of the author is probably that in 6:9-10:

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister."

Since these words follow his reproof of their infant state in religious growth and his warning regarding the danger<sup>2</sup> of falling away, they show the author's love and at the same time spur his readers on to the necessary spiritual growth. As Bruce puts it: ". . . the teacher's complaining gives place to the charity that believeth all things and hopeth all things."<sup>3</sup> In fact, Bruce goes so far as to say: "Recalling the kindly deeds of his slow-minded pupils, the teacher almost repents of the alarming tone in which he has addressed them, and becomes apologetic . . ."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 2:1. See Hebrews 3:6, 14; 4:1, 11, 14, 16; 10:19-26; 12:1, 2, 28; 13:13, 15.
2. Cf., Hebrews 5:11-6:8.
3. Bruce. Op. cit., p. 219.
4. Ibid., pp. 221-222.



Another example of the author's tact is found in his warning against the danger of wilful sin and its consequences. In this he urges his readers to remember their former sufferings, not to cast away their boldness, but to have patience "that, having done the will of God,"<sup>1</sup> they "may receive the promise." From these illustrations it is clear that the author of the Epistle made helpful use of the principle of tact in his teaching.

### 3. Emphasis upon the Positive

The author's exhortations and commands give evidence of his use of the principle that the positive should be emphasized in preference to the negative in teaching. First this is shown by the exhortation: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them."<sup>2</sup> This is positive; the reason for it, negative. Then comes a positive command supported by a positive example:

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house."<sup>3</sup>

This is followed by the command: "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart<sup>4</sup> of unbelief, in falling away from the living God .." The

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 10:32-36.
2. Hebrews 2:1.
3. Hebrews 3:1-2.
4. Hebrews 3:12.

positive command is supported by a negative reason. Parallel to this is the following verse: ". . but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin <sup>1</sup> .." Then comes the exhortation: "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it." <sup>2</sup> Here it appears that a negative exhortation is used and supported by a negative reason, but as Westcott remarks: "In such a case 'fear' is a motive for strenuous exertion." <sup>3</sup> Further examination of the Epistle shows a number of examples of positive commands or exhortations. <sup>4</sup> From this study it is evident that the author made extensive use of the principle of emphasizing the positive in his teaching.

#### 4. The Use of Variety of Form

An examination of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows that the principle of the use of variety of form is employed by the teacher-author. For instance, in every chapter one or more quotations from the Old Testament are found. Exhortations and commands are used extensively as the foregoing section showed. The author employs questions <sup>5</sup> throughout, occasionally using them in his quotations from

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 3:13.
2. Hebrews 4:1.
3. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 93.
4. Cf., Hebrews 4:11, 14, 16; 6:1; 7:4; 10:22-25, 32; 12:1, 3, 12-14, 28; 13:1, 4, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24.
5. Cf., Hebrews chapters 1-3, 7, 9-12.

the Old Testament. Argumentation is employed in the entire Epistle, but especially in the first twelve chapters. In the midst of the argumentation there is vivid description, as in 6:7-8 and 9:2-5. Examples of narrative are found in the eleventh chapter.<sup>1</sup> Poetry, in the form of quotations from the book of Psalms and once from "The Proverbs,"<sup>2</sup> appears frequently. These instances show that the principle of using variety of form is employed by the author of the Epistle.

#### 5. The Use of the Concrete

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the principle that the concrete should be employed to illustrate the abstract. For example, the glory of Jesus in comparison with that of Moses is set forth by the figure of the builder of a house and the house itself.<sup>3</sup> The idea of hardening the heart is illustrated by the case of Israel in the wilderness.<sup>4</sup> Then comes that striking personification of "the word of God" which

"is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."<sup>5</sup>

The term "word of God" takes on great vividness when it is set forth as a "two-edged sword." Next, the call of Jesus

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19, 23-28.
2. Cf., Hebrews chapters 1-5, 7, 10, 12-13.
3. Cf., Hebrews 3:3.
4. Cf., Hebrews 3:7-11.
5. Hebrews 4:12.

to the priesthood is illustrated by that of Aaron.<sup>1</sup> Then, the priesthood of Christ is likened to that of Melchizedek who lived in the time of Abraham.<sup>2</sup> Between the sections on Melchizedek, the danger of falling away is illustrated by the unfruitful field.<sup>3</sup> Next, the ordinances of the first covenant are made vivid by the description of the tabernacle and its ritual.<sup>4</sup> Then the punishment of wilful sin is given point by a concrete example of what happens to the man who sets "at nought Moses' law."<sup>5</sup> Concrete illustrations of "faith," as found in the lives of Old Testament characters, comprise the entire eleventh chapter. It is evident from these instances that the author of the Epistle made abundant use of the principle that the concrete should be employed to clarify and impress the abstract.

### C. Educational Methods Used by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

#### 1. The Use of Illustrations

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews made extensive use of the method of concrete teaching by means of illustration. Examples of this method of instruction appeared in the foregoing section.<sup>6</sup>

#### 2. The Use of Contrasts

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 5:4, 5.
2. Cf., Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20-7:17. See Genesis 14:18-20.
3. Cf., Hebrews 6:4-8.
4. Cf., Hebrews 9:1-10.
5. Cf., Hebrews 10:26-31.
6. Cf., Hebrews 3:3, 7-11; 4:12; 5:4-10; 6:4-8, 20; 7:1-17; 9:1-10; 10:26-31.

The method of using contrasts in teaching may be regarded as a subdivision of the preceding section but since the author of the Epistle has used it with such consummate skill, a separate section is devoted to its consideration. First there is the contrast between the priesthood of Melchizedek, and that of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Westcott regards this as a type. He says:

"The treatment of the history of Melchizedek is typical and not allegorical. . . . The difference between the two modes is clear and decisive. Between the type and the antitype there is a historical, a real, correspondence in the main idea of each event or institution. Between the allegory and the application the correspondence lies in special points arbitrarily taken to represent facts or thoughts of a different kind. . . .

". . the writer of the Epistle takes the Biblical record of Melchizedek, that is Melchizedek so far as he enters into the divine history, and not Melchizedek himself, as a type of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

As Westcott remarks earlier, the question answered by the author of the Epistle with regard to Melchizedek is: "What is the characteristic conception which can be gained from Scriptures of the Priesthood of Melchizedek?"<sup>3</sup>

Then, there is the contrast between the new covenant and the old.<sup>4</sup> Next come five contrasts in 9:6-14 to which F. B. Meyer devotes a chapter. He begins with these words:

"In this marvelous paragraph (vv. 6-14) there are five striking and well-defined contrasts between the picture-symbols of Leviticus, and the realities revealed in the New Testament Scriptures."<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20-7:17.
2. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 202.
3. Ibid., p. 202.
4. Cf., Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-9:1, 15-20; 10:16.
5. Cf., Hebrews chapter 9. Meyer: Op. cit., p. 161

The following are his section headings:

"The First Tabernacle is contrasted with the True (vv. 6, 8, 11)"<sup>1</sup>

"The High-Priests are contrasted with Christ (vv. 7, 11)"<sup>2</sup>

"The Veiled Way into the Holiest is contrasted with our Freedom to enter the Presence of God,"<sup>3</sup>

"The Rites of Judaism are contrasted with Conscience-Cleansing Ordinances of the Gospel,"<sup>4</sup>

"The Blood of Animals is contrasted with the Blood of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

Then there is the striking contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion or the "heavenly Jerusalem." With regard to this Scott says: ". . . the New Jerusalem represents the unseen and eternal, in contrast with the things 'that can be touched'--the lower, material things."<sup>6</sup>

Earlier Scott had remarked that "The conception of the two ages, on which the primitive gospel rested, is fundamental also to the Epistle."<sup>7</sup> But in the case of the "New Jerusalem" he finds a "substitution of the higher world for the future age."<sup>8</sup> These examples show how well the author of the Epistle used this method of teaching by means of contrast.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., pp. 161-162.

2. Ibid., pp. 162-164.

3. Cf., Hebrews 9:8. Meyer: Op. cit., pp. 164-165.

4. Cf., Hebrews 9:9, 10, 14. Meyer: Op. cit., pp. 165-167.

5. Cf., Hebrews 9:12-14. Meyer: Op. cit., pp. 167, 168.

6. Cf., Hebrews 12:18. Scott. Op. cit., p. 110.

7. Ibid., p. 103.

8. Ibid., p. 110.

### 3. The Use of Questions

The author's teaching by questioning will be determined by an examination of the Epistle. For example, in the first chapter there are four questions, all of which are with regard to the angels. Three of them have to do with the superiority of the Son to the angels, and one with their relation to those who "shall inherit salvation."<sup>1</sup> These questions are not answered by the author, in order that they might better be answered by his readers who could not but have supplied the answers in their own minds. Of course, that was exactly what the author intended that they should do. Then the author says that "if the word spoken through angels" was unchanging "and every transgression and disobedience" was punished, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? .."<sup>2</sup> Again the question is to be answered in the minds of the readers.

<sup>3</sup>  
The next group of questions forms a series of interlocking questions and answers; the second question enables the readers to answer the first; the fourth, the third; and the sixth, the fifth (these last two forming part of one compound question). They are:

"For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 1:14.
2. Cf., Hebrews 2:2, 3.
3. Cf., Hebrews 3:16-18.

whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?"<sup>1</sup>

In 7:11 the author sets forth another question which is to be answered only in the minds of his readers. A question of this same type is found in 9:13, 14. Although the next question is to be answered by the readers, the reason on which the answer is based is given by the author.<sup>2</sup> The following question is not directly answered<sup>3</sup> by the author but is given by implication. The next question appears in the midst of the roll of the faithful of the Old Testament heroes where the author asks: "And what shall I more say?"<sup>4</sup> A summary of what he might have said appears in answer to his question.<sup>5</sup> The last two questions relate to God's chastening, the first of which is answered by the author.<sup>6</sup> The second is not, but the reason on which the answers to both must be based is given.<sup>7</sup> From this examination of the questions of the author of the Epistle, it is evident that he was skillful in the use of the method of teaching by questioning.

#### 4. The Use of Familiar Sources

It was pointed out in a foregoing section<sup>8</sup> that

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 3:16-18.
2. Cf., Hebrews 10:2.
3. Cf., Hebrews 10:28-30.
4. Hebrews 11:32.
5. Cf., Hebrews 11:32-40.
6. Cf., Hebrews 12:7, 8.
7. Cf., Hebrews 12:9, 10.
8. See present study, Chapter IV, B. part 4, pp. 54, 55.



the author of the Epistle quoted from the Old Testament at least once in every chapter. Besides these direct quotations there are many references to Old Testament history. An example of the former is the use made of Psalm 95:7-11 (or parts of this passage) in the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle. Here the author warns his readers against the danger of unbelief or disobedience by means of the illustration of Israel in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> Examples of the use of references to the Old Testament are: Moses as a faithful servant;<sup>2</sup> the calling of Aaron;<sup>3</sup> Melchizedek as priest;<sup>4</sup> the Levitical priesthood;<sup>5</sup> the tabernacle;<sup>6</sup> the first covenant (either directly or by implication);<sup>7</sup> the faithful heroes of the Old Testament;<sup>8</sup> Esau;<sup>9</sup> Mount Sinai;<sup>10</sup> and Abel.<sup>11</sup> The author of the Epistle made extensive use of the Old Testament as a source. He proceeded from the known to the unknown by means of references to familiar sources.

##### 5. The Use of Motivated Obedience

The author's use of motivated obedience is shown by his exhortations and commands. In a foregoing section

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 3:7-4:8.
2. Cf., Hebrews 3:2-5.
3. Cf., Hebrews 5:4.
4. Cf., Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20-7:17.
5. Cf., Hebrews 7:5-11.
6. Cf., Hebrews 8:5; 9:2-10, 21; 13:10.
7. Cf., Hebrews 7:22; 8:6, 7, 13; 9:1, 15, 18.
8. Cf., Hebrews chapter 11.
9. Cf., Hebrews 12:16, 17.
10. Cf., Hebrews 12:18-20.
11. Cf., Hebrews 12:24.

relating to the author's emphasis on the positive,<sup>1</sup> there were listed examples of positive exhortations and commands. On the other hand, consideration of the author's use of negative commands and exhortations shows that they are comparatively few in number. The exhortation: "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it,"<sup>2</sup> is included with those that are positive since, as Westcott remarks, it "is a motive for strenuous exertion."<sup>3</sup> In 10:25 part of the exhortation is not to forsake assembling together, and in 10:35 the command is to "cast not away" their boldness. Although both of these commands are negative in form they have reference to positive acts. Similarly reference to positive conduct or thought is found in the remaining commands<sup>4</sup> which are negative in form. The author motivated his readers to be obedient by exhortations and commands. These were either of a positive nature or directed the readers to positive conduct or thought.

D. The Author of the Epistle to the  
Hebrews as a Pastor-Teacher

In the previous chapter the aims of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews were shown to be those of a

. . . . .

1. See present study, Chapter IV, B. part 3, pp. 53, 54.
2. Hebrews 4:1.
3. Westcott. Op. cit., p. 93.
4. Cf., Hebrews 12:25; 13:2, 9, 16.

teacher. His principles and methods of education are set forth in this chapter. Now the author is to be considered as a pastor-teacher.

#### 1. The Definition of a Pastor-Teacher

It is pertinent to this point to note that Webster traces the word "pastor" to the Latin "pascere . . .to pasture, to feed . . ." One meaning of the word is "shepherd."<sup>1</sup> He defines a teacher as "One who teaches, or instructs . . ." and traces the word "teach" to the Anglo-Saxon "tæcean . . . to show, teach . . ."<sup>2</sup> Therefore a pastor-teacher is one who shows or teaches and at the same time is a shepherd who pastures and feeds those under his care. The idea of "shepherd" is especially suitable in connection with the author because he speaks of Christ as the "great shepherd of the sheep."<sup>3</sup> The author exemplifies the assistant shepherd which every true pastor is.

#### 2. The Author's Fulfillment of the Definition of a Pastor-Teacher

It is evident that the author of the Epistle meets the conditions of the definition of a pastor-teacher when his exhortations and commands are considered. These have been listed previously.<sup>4</sup> However, some of them, together with other items, will be noted in order to point

. . . . .

1. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language; Reference History Edition. W. T. Harris, Editor in Chief.
2. Ibid.
3. Hebrews 13:20.
4. See present study Chapter IV, B. part 3, pp. 53, 54, and Chapter IV, C. part 5, p. 61, 62.

out how the author fulfills the function of a pastor-teacher. First, he sets forth Christ as superior to the angels--<sup>1</sup>how great is their Lord! The angels are "ministering spirits"<sup>2</sup> on behalf of believers. Then he urges his readers "to give the more earnest heed to the things<sup>3</sup> that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them." He is ever the solicitous pastor as well as the teacher, eager that his readers realize the greatness of their calling and that they do not drift away from the instruction<sup>4</sup> of their first teachers.

Again the author becomes the pastor as he tells his readers that since Christ has been made a partaker of "flesh and blood . . . he is able to succor them that are tempted."<sup>5</sup> Thereupon the author urges them to " . . consider the Apostle and High Priest of our "confession, even Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house."<sup>6</sup> Once more the pastor-teacher warns his readers. This time it is against the danger of unbelief and disobedience.<sup>7</sup> Then after he has begun to illustrate the high priesthood of Jesus by means of that of Melchizedek, he realizes that his readers are not ready for such instruction. They are yet babes and not full-

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews chapter 1.
2. Cf., Hebrews 1:14.
3. Hebrews 2:1.
4. Cf., Hebrews 2:3.
5. Hebrews 2:14, 18.
6. Hebrews 3:1, 2.
7. Cf., Hebrews 3:7-4:13.

grown men spiritually.<sup>1</sup>

"Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."<sup>2</sup>

Then he warns them against the danger of falling away. To this he quickly adds: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak . . ."<sup>3</sup> Then he mentions their work and love which God remembers, adding:

"And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end; that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>4</sup>

The pastor-teacher reproves when necessary but he does not leave his readers in despair. They "have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil . . ."<sup>5</sup> Again the pastor-teacher is heard in exhortation:

". . . let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith . . . let us hold fast the confession of our hope . . . let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another . . ."<sup>6</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 5:6-14.
2. Hebrews 6:1-3.
3. Hebrews 6:9.
4. Hebrews 6:11-12.
5. Hebrews 6:19.
6. Hebrews 10:22-25.

Then the pastor becomes severe and warns  
against the danger of wilful sin.<sup>1</sup> But the next moment  
he urges them to remember their former sufferings and to  
keep their boldness.<sup>2</sup> However, he is persuaded that  
they are not of those "that shrink back unto perdition;  
but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."<sup>3</sup>  
After the array of Old Testament saints who were faithful<sup>4</sup>  
he calls upon his readers to "lay aside every weight,  
and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and" to "run  
with patience the race that is set before us . . ."<sup>5</sup> Then  
he urges them to consider Christ's sufferings, to endure<sup>6</sup>  
God's chastening,<sup>7</sup> and to seek peace and sanctification.<sup>8</sup>  
They are not to refuse the One speaking to them<sup>9</sup> and are<sup>10</sup>  
to seek grace in order to serve God acceptably.

In the last chapter the pastor-teacher urges  
his readers to remember their church, social, and moral  
duties.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand he writes: "Let us there-  
fore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his  
reproach"<sup>12</sup> -- their duty to the Lord Himself. Then he

. . . . .

1. Cf., Hebrews 10:26-31.
2. Cf., Hebrews 10:32-35.
3. Hebrews 10:39.
4. Cf., Hebrews chapter 11.
5. Hebrews 12:1.
6. Cf., Hebrews 12:3.
7. Cf., Hebrews 12:5-13.
8. Cf., Hebrews 12:14.
9. Cf., Hebrews 12:25.
10. Cf., Hebrews 12:28.
11. Cf., Hebrews 13:1-5, 7, 16, 17, 24.
12. Hebrews 13:13.

urges them to obey their church leaders who, he says:  
"watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give  
account; that they may do this with joy, and not with  
grief: for this were unprofitable for you."<sup>1</sup> The  
crowning example of the author as a pastor-teacher is  
his doxology:

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from  
the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the  
blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus,  
make you perfect in every good thing to do his will,  
working in us that which is well-pleasing in his  
sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>2</sup>

The author is a pastor-teacher with a concern for his  
"sheep", which is second to that of none perhaps, save  
to that of Christ.

#### E. Summary

An examination of the Epistle to the Hebrews  
has revealed that the author employed the following  
principles of teaching: comprehension of purpose;  
the use of tact; emphasis upon the positive; the use  
of variety of form; and the use of the concrete in  
illustrations. Therefore it was evident that the au-  
thor was not only familiar with, but knew how to use  
effective principles of education.

. . . . .

1. Hebrews 13:17.
2. Hebrews 13:20-21.

Further examination of the Epistle to determine what educational methods, if any, were applied by the author disclosed that he used illustrations, contrasts, questions, familiar sources, and motivated obedience. Consequently, it was clear that the author knew how to employ educational methods in teaching.

Therefore it is apparent that the author of the Epistle was familiar with the best in educational theory and practice and knew how to teach with consummate skill.

Consideration of the author as a pastor-teacher showed that he exhibited the qualities indicated in the definition and might be ranked as a solicitous pastor as well as an excellent teacher. Therefore it may be stated that important pedagogical implications have been brought to light by this consideration of the author of the Epistle.



## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It was noted in the Introduction of this thesis that comparatively little had been written with regard to the pedagogical implications of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Were the readers pupils in a teaching situation? What pedagogical implications might be discovered by a consideration of their identity, and the economic, social, and religious situations? Were the aims of the author those of a teacher? What educational principles and methods did he employ? Might the author be considered a pastor-teacher? This thesis attempted to answer these questions. The problem, restated, was to determine the pedagogical implications which may be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the foregoing study of the original readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews were considered their identity, their economic, social, and religious situations. It was found that in the first place their nationality cannot be determined finally by the historical critical evidence. However, it was noted that they were familiar with the Old Testament, extensive use of which was made by the author. Moreover in this connection, whether the readers were Jews, or Gentiles familiar with the Old

Testament, it was found that the author made use of the educational principle of proceeding from known history to the unknown lesson.

In the case of the economic and social situation of the readers, the author commended their past and present ministration to the saints and urged them to continue this service. Although it appears they failed occasionally in their duty to strangers, they learned well the lesson of service. The author commended their ministration to those in bonds, as well as their own endurance of the loss of goods. Morally he urged his readers to attain the highest standards. He motivated them in this direction.

With regard to their religious situation, the Epistle shows that while they were professing Christians, they needed spiritual growth in many directions. This is evident from the fact that they were in danger of drifting, of unbelief and disobedience, of retarded growth, of falling away, of wilful sin, and of forsaking the assembling of themselves together. They needed also increased faith and sanctification. Nevertheless the author showed himself eager to lead them onward toward perfection in order that they might become fullgrown spiritually. Again the author employed the educational principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown

in seeking to strengthen their faith by the examples of men and women from their Old Testament history. In the light of all of this it was concluded that the readers were pupils in a teaching situation, under the direction of a superb teacher.

The analysis of the Epistle which was made in order to determine the aims of the author for his readers revealed that he desired to have them concentrate their study upon Jesus; to fortify themselves against unbelief and disobedience, and to hold fast to their confession; to seek perfection; to show respect to the church and church leaders; to endure chastening; to follow Jesus' example in suffering; and to enter into the highest social relationships. This was summarized in a comprehensive statement of the author's purpose, namely, to have his readers attain full growth both spiritually and in their relations to one another. This it was noted is the aim of a true teacher.

In the foregoing study the educational principles and methods of the author were considered, in which he was found to fulfill the definition of a pastor-teacher. Among the educational principles which, it was pointed out, the author applied were the following: comprehension of purpose; use of tact; emphasis upon the positive; use of variety of form; and use of

the concrete. Of his educational methods the following were noted: the use of illustrations; of contrasts; of questions; of familiar sources; and of motivated obedience. It was evident from this study that the author knew in theory and practiced the art of teaching with consummate skill.

An examination of the Epistle, especially with reference to the commands and exhortations of the author, revealed a pastor-teacher who not only instructed his readers but was solicitous as to their welfare. He would have them realize the greatness of their calling as Christians, be steadfast in adhering to that which they had heard from their first teachers, and become fullgrown spiritually. In these instances the aims of pastor and teacher were one. He reproved on occasion but he also commended. Furthermore, he gave his readers spiritual food in this Epistle which must have strengthened them for subsequent years.

As stated in the Introduction, the Epistle to the Hebrews has been studied from many points of view, but comparatively little attention has been paid to its pedagogical implications. This thesis has attempted to determine what some of these implications are. This study proved of value in giving the writer an insight

into the Epistle from an educational point of view  
such as is not found in any treatment of it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Primary Source

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments Translated out of the Original Tongues, Being the Version Set Forth A.D. 1611 Compared with the Most Ancient Authorities and Revised A.D. 1881-1885. Newly Edited by the American Revision Committee, A.D. 1901. Standard Edition. Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York.

### B. Secondary Sources

Bruce, Alexander Balmain: The Epistle to the Hebrews: The First Apology for Christianity, An Exegetical Study. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899.

Dana, H.E., and Julius R. Mantey.: A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927.

Davidson, A.B.: The Epistle to the Hebrews. In Handbooks for Bible Classes. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, no date.

Horne, Herman Harrell: Jesus--The Master Teacher. Association Press, New York, 1922.

The Democratic Philosophy of Education: Companion to Dewey's Democracy and Education, Exposition and Comment. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1933.

Kuist, Howard Tillman: The Pedagogy of St. Paul. George H. Doran Company, New York, 1925.

Meyer, F.B.: The Way into the Holiest: Expositions of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1893.

Morgan, Charles Herbert: Studies in the Apostolic Church. Jennings and Pye, Cincinnati, c. 1902.



Palmer, George Herbert, and Alice Freeman Palmer: The Teacher: Essays and Addresses on Education. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 1908.

Robinson, Theodore H.: The Epistle to the Hebrews. In The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1933.

Scott, E.F.: The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Doctrine and Significance. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, Second Impression, December 1923.

Thayer, Joseph Henry: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1887.

Thomas, W. H. Griffith: What is Sanctification. Booklet published by The Sunday School Times, Philadelphia, April 1921.

Westcott, Brooke Foss: The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays. Macmillan and Company, Limited, London, Third Edition, 1903.