

Hebrews

Chapter 13:1-14

¹ *Let love of the brothers and sisters continue.*

Barnes > The closing chapter Hebrews 13 of this Epistle is made up almost entirely of exhortations to the performance of various practical duties.

Pink > So far from there being a radical break between Hebrews 12 and 13 the closing verses of the former and the opening ones of the latter are closely linked together. There (chapter 12) the apostle had mentioned the principal duties which believers are to perform God-wards, namely, to "hear" (verse 25) and to "serve Him acceptably" (verse 28); here, he tabulates those duties which are to be performed man-wards. He begins with what is really the sum and substance of all the rest, brotherly love: first, the loving of God with all our heart, and then our neighbor as ourselves. ... But the apostle felt there was danger of their brotherly love decaying, for there were disputes among them concerning the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and wrangling over religious differences bodes ill for the health of spiritual affection. He therefore puts them on their guard, and bids them live and love as "brethren."

(Watch the wordplay in verses 1 & 2)

Love of the brothers and sisters > Strong's > *philadelphia* > the love of brothers, brotherly love (from *philos* > beloved, dear, friendly and *adelphos* > a brother)

Continue > Strong's > A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy)

Utley > This is a (Greek grammar) (not an opposing Greek grammar, as NASB translates), meaning "abide" or "continue." The thing the readers are to continue is "brotherly love" (*Philadelphia*). They have done this in the past and are encouraged to continue.

Constable follows the same line of understanding when he says > When love for Jesus Christ falters, love of the Christian brothers and sisters normally fades as well.

Hughes > The Hebrew Christians to whom this letter is addressed are flagging, it seems, not only in their zeal for the race on which they have set out but also in the ardor of their love for each other

Barclay > The very fact that they took their religion as seriously as they did was in one sense a danger. In a church which is threatened from the outside and desperately in earnest on the inside, there are always two dangers.

- First, there is the danger of heresy-hunting. The very desire to keep the faith pure tends to make people eager to track down and eliminate the heretic and the person whose faith has gone astray.
- Second, there is the danger of stern and unsympathetic treatment of those whose nerve and faith have failed. The very necessity of unswerving loyalty in a hostile pagan world tends to make more rigorous the treatment of any who in some crisis did not have the courage to stand up for their faith.

Precept Austin > (Here is where the beauty of the Greek shines through!)

- The writer issues this exhortation as a *present imperative*, a command signifying that this was to be their supernaturally enabled, Spirit filled, grace strengthened habitual practice!
- In addition he uses the *middle voice* which signifies the subject initiates the action and participates in the carrying out of the action or the results of the action.
- This voice is *reflexive* and gives the sense "you yourself let it continue."

Remember that God's commands always include His enablement, specifically the power of the Holy Spirit to prompt this desire in us and then to enable us to obey in love.

² ***Do not neglect hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.***

Neglect > HELPS > *epilanthánomai* (from *epí*, "on, fitting" and *lanthánō*, "unnoticed") – properly, to overlook, especially *the effects* that go with failing to notice.

Hospitality to strangers > Strong's > *philoxenia* > love of strangers (from *philos* > beloved, dear, friendly and *xenos* > foreign, a foreigner, guest)

Vincent > Lit. be not forgetful of hospitality

Entertained > Strong's > *xenizo* > to receive as a guest, to surprise

Without knowing > Strong's > *lanthánō* > unnoticed

Vincent > The Greek idiom is, "were not apparent as entertaining angels."

³ ***Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are badly treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.***

Remember > Precept Austin > (*mimnesko* through the idea of fixture in mind or of mental grasp) means to recall information from memory, but without necessarily implying that one has forgotten what is recalled. To recollect. To remind oneself.

Remember the prisoners > Utley > Their imprisonment was not for evil deeds, but for their faith in Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 4:14-15). Imprisonment was a real possibility for all early believers, as it is for many believers in today's world also.

1 Pet. 4:14-16 > ¹⁴*If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you.* ¹⁵*Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;* ¹⁶*but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

Precept Austin > This command to *continually remember* (Greek grammar) the prisoners would have been very practical because under Roman law persons could be retained in prison until punishment was meted out.

Those who were enduring lengthy stays in prison often had to depend on outside sources for daily sustenance. In addition, obedience by the saints to this command carried potentially serious consequences, because those who aided the prisoners ran the risk of also being viewed as those who should be themselves placed in prison! And thus to obey this command could mean one would have to "count the cost" in a big way!

Barclay > Aristides the Athenian orator said of the Christians: 'if they hear that any one of their number is imprisoned or in distress for the sake of their Christ's name, they all render aid in his necessity and, if he can be redeemed, they set him free.'

Since you yourselves also are in the body > Wuest translates this as > *as also yourselves being in a body.*

⁴**Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.**

Marriage > Guthrie > Another practical matter of importance is marriage. In New Testament times even the Jews approached the matter with laxity if they followed Hillel's teaching, although the followers of Shammai were more strict.

Honor > Strong's > valued, precious

Utley > There is no verb. If one supplies an indicative, "is," then the statement is against false teaching (cf. 1 Cor. 7:38, which made marriage morally inferior to celibacy or 1 Tim. 4:3). If one supplies an imperative, "Let. . .be. . .," as in NASB of Heb. 13:1, then it is an encouragement against the immoral tendencies of pagan culture (Heb. 13:4 favors this option).

Barclay > When Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, examined the Christians and reported back to the Emperor Trajan, he had to admit, even though he was looking for a charge on which to condemn them, that at their Lord's Day meeting: 'They bound themselves by an oath not for any criminal end but to avoid theft or robbery or adultery, never to break their word nor repudiate a deposit when called upon to refund it.' In the early days, the Christians presented such a purity to the world that not even their critics and their enemies could find a fault in it.

⁵ (Make sure that) your **character** is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you," ⁶ so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"

Character > Strong's > a way, manner, fashion

Free from the love of money > HELPS > *aphilárgyros* (from A, "not," *philéō*, "fond of" and *árgyros*, "silver") – properly, "not fond of silver,"

Swindoll > **Proverbs 18:10-11** declares: *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination.*

Content > Strong's > *arkeo* > to assist, suffice

Precept Austin > In this passage *arkeo* is in the passive voice which conveys the meaning to be satisfied with or contented with something. The present tense calls for this to be one's continual attitude.

Be content with what you have > Vincent > Lit. being contented with the things which are at hand.

Psalm 73:25-26 > ²⁵ *Whom do I have in heaven but You? And with You, I desire nothing on earth.* ²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you > Utley > This is a loose quote with two emphatic double negatives, taken from God's promises to His leaders and people.

Wuest gives the full meaning to this passage as he translates > *I will not, I will not cease to sustain and uphold you. I will not, I will not, I will not let you down.*

"The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" > **Psalm 118:6** > *The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?*

⁷ ***Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their way of life, imitate their faith.***

Remember > Robertson > to be *mindful* of ... Keep in mind

Those who led you > Barnes > The word used here means properly "leaders, guides, directors." It is often applied to military commanders.

Considering > Strong's > to observe carefully

Result > HELPS > (from *ek*, "out from and to" and *bainō*, "move forward, march") – properly, moving out from and to the *outcome* (new destination)

Here is what is written by Precept Austin tying "remember" to "result" > *Remember* is in the present imperative which is a command to keep on remembering! Think back into the past, to leaders who have passed on to glory (cp current leaders in He 13:17, 24). Remember those whose conduct you can survey from beginning to end and consider all of it but consider especially how they ended!

In case we missed "what" we are to take away from our memory of those former saints ... the author makes it very clear > ***Imitate their faith.***

And, again, (Precept Austin) > *imitate* is in the present imperative which means "Keep on imitating the faith of the leaders." Make it your habit to imitate their faith.

Wuest > *Be constantly remembering those ruling over you, especially as they are those who spoke to you the word of God, whose faith imitate as you closely observe the outcome of their manner of life.*

⁸ ***Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday and today, and forever.***

Swindoll > The biblical support for this doctrine of God is found in Malachi 3:6 > *I, the LORD, do not change.* James said that with God, "there is no variation or shifting shadow". Pink > verses **7-9** are intimately related and together form a complete hortatory passage: so far as we have light thereon, we understand them to mean: Hold fast to the testimony of your former leaders, for they proved the sufficiency of the Truth they proclaimed; Christian doctrine does not vary from day to day, for Jesus Christ is ever the same.

Steven Cole, in his comments regarding verses **7-14**, states > ... the more I meditated on these verses, I came to see that there is a common theme, namely, the danger of false teaching and the true antidote to it, namely, the person and work of Jesus Christ. The author was concerned that his readers would be "carried away by varied and strange teachings" (He 13:9), including returning to Judaism. So he calls them to remember the godly teachers who had spoken the word of God to them (He 13:7).

Even though these men had now died, Jesus Christ, whom they preached, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (He 13:8). His grace (He 13:9) and His sacrificial death on the cross (He 13:10, 11, 12) are at the center of sound doctrine. (He then continues on through verse 14)

⁹ ***Do not be misled by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.***

Do not be misled > Precept Austin > s literally to bear or lead along and so means to be carried off as by the force of the wind or a stream of water, but in this passage referring to figuratively being led away from the path of truth.

Varied > (interesting word!) > Strong's > many colored (it's a primary word so it doesn't have a source word)

Strange > (you've seen this word before) > Strong's > *xenos* > foreign, a foreigner, guest

Barnes > That is, they should have settled and fixed points of belief, and not yield to every new opinion which was started ... he cautions them against that vacillating spirit, and that easy credulity, which would lead them to yield to any novelty, and to embrace an opinion because it was new or strange

Strengthened > HELPS > properly, to walk where it is solid (reliable, guaranteed); hence, make *sure* (fully reliable)

So occupied > Guthrie > The word for *adherents* (hoi peripatountes, literally those that walk) ("so occupied" in the NASB) of the food cult suggests that these people were regarding these foods as part of their way of life.

Wuest makes it clarion clear > *Stop being carried away with variegated teachings and teachings foreign to Christianity in that they come from the pagan religions, for it is good when the heart is established by grace, not with foods, by means of which they who ordered their behavior in their sphere were not profited.*

¹⁰ ***We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.***

We have an altar > Pink > His was the sacrifice which fully and forever accomplished that which all the Levitical offerings proclaimed as necessary to redemption, but the repetition of which clearly testified they had never effected. In like manner, Christ is the grand Antitype of all the sacred vessels of the tabernacle: He is the true Brazen-altar, Laver, Golden-altar of incense, Candlestick, Table of shewbread, Mercyseat, and Ark of the Covenant.

Vincent > Those who persist in adhering to the Jewish economy can have no part in the blessing of the new covenant. The two are mutually exclusive.

¹¹ *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Holy Place by the high priest (as an offering) for sin are burned outside the camp.* ¹² *Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood.*

For > Proof source for the argument

Bodies of those animals ... > Barnes > In this verse the consideration is, that the bodies of the beasts that were burnt were taken without the camp, and that in like manner the Lord Jesus suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, and that we should be willing to go out with him to that sacrifice, whatever reproach or shame it might be attended with.

Constable > Jesus' death outside the gate of Jerusalem fulfilled the Day of Atonement ritual (v. 12). The Jewish high priest burned the remains of the two sacrificial animals outside the precincts of the wilderness camp

Constable > Far from defiling those who associated with Jesus Christ, who is our Sin (purification) Offering, associating with Him leads to holiness.

Vincent (a long passage ... but very important) By the Levitical law it was forbidden to eat the flesh of the victim offered on the Great Day of Atonement; so that, if the Levitical law still holds for you, you cannot partake of the Christian's atoning victim. The law under which you are prohibits you. According to that law, there is nothing to eat of in an atoning sacrifice, since the body of the victim is burned. Neither priest nor people have anything more to do with it, and, therefore, it is carried outside of the camp or city, outside of the region of O.T. covenant-fellowship. Similarly, so long as you hold by Judaism, participation in Christ's atoning sacrifice is impossible for you. It is outside your religious sphere, like the body of the victim outside the gate. You cannot eat of our altar.

The blood of the Levitical victim was carried into the holy of holies and remained there. If you seek the benefit of that blood, it must be within the camp, at the Levitical tabernacle or temple. And you cannot have the benefit of Christ's blood, for that compels you to go outside the gate, where he suffered. According to the O.T. law, you could partake of the benefit of the blood, but you could not eat of the body. Christ's sacrifice gives you both body and blood as spiritual food; but these you must seek outside of Judaism. Thus, by means of the O.T. ritual itself, it is shown that the Jewish and the Christian systems exclude each other. Christ must be sought outside of the Jewish pale

¹² *Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood.* ¹³ *So then, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*

Guthrie > This verse may be regarded as the crux of the conclusion, a final direct appeal to the readers to identify themselves wholly with Christ. The word *therefore* (“So then” in the NASB) draws attention to the fact that the appeal naturally follows the preceding line of argument (cf. a similar use in Luke 20:25).

The decisive character of this appeal is evident in the verb *let us go forth*, an act which involves a definite break, which is reinforced by the words outside the camp. Such an act involves separation from the existing society of Judaism, but this has already been endured by Jesus himself. It was part of the offence of the cross that it brought with it a rejection from official Judaism.

¹⁴ *For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.*

Wuest > *Wherefore, also Jesus, in order that He might set apart for God and His service the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us be going out to Him outside of the camp, bearing His reproach, for we do not have here an abiding city, but we are seeking that one which is to come.*