ROBERT K. SPRADLING

HEBREWS CHAPTER 1

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS SHOWS THAT THE BELIEVER HAS ACCESS TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST. WE LEARN IN THIS EPISTLE THAT CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST. IN THE FIRST CHAPTER WE SEE THAT CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ANY SYSTEM OF RELIGION. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS UNKNOWN. MY OWN OPINION IS THAT IT IS PAUL. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE LETTER WERE JEWISH. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE FIRST CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH WERE JEWISH BELIEVERS. IN OUR STUDY, WE WILL NOT DWELL ON THE TECHNICALITIES OF THE BOOK. IN CHAPTER ONE, CHRIST IS SHOWN TO BE SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS AND THE ANGELS. IN THIS LETTER PAUL WAS SEEKING TO SHOW THE EARLY CONVERTS OF JUDAISM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RECEIVING CHRIST AS SAVIOUR. HE SHOWS THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING BETTER IN NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN CONTRAST TO OLD TESTAMENT JUDAISM. THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING CHAPTER ONE IS SUMMED UP IN THE THREE WORDS "GOD HAS SPOKEN".

1:1-2 THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD SOMEWHERE BUT THAT HE IS NOT A PERSONAL GOD. HE, OR THAT IMPERSONAL FORCE, IS LOCKED OUT OF HIS UNIVERSE. THIS IS NOT THE PICTURE PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE. HE IS OVER AND ABOVE HIS CREATION AND ABLE TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN HIS GRASP. THE GOD OF THE BIBLE CAN AND DOES HELP THOSE WHO ARE HIS OWN. IN THESE VERSES IT IS SEEN THAT GOD SPOKE TO MEN IN MANY WAYS, THROUGH THE PROPHETS. THE TERM "FATHERS" REFERS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT LEADERS SUCH ASABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, JOSEPH, ETC. THIS TERM IS USED MUCH IN THE SAME WAY AS WE USE OUR "FOUNDING FATHERS". THE WORD "PROPHET" REFERS TO THOSE MEN WHO SPOKE TO MEN FOR GOD. MEN WHOM GOD USED TO COMMUNICATE TO MEN. THE WORD PROPHET COMES FROM A HEBREW WORD THAT MEANS "TO BOIL UP." IT SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF A GEYSER AND SPEAKS OF A MAN WITH DIVINE COMPULSION TO PREACH THE MESSAGE OF GOD. (COMPARE EZEKIEL 2:5) IN TURNING TO VERSE ONE, GOD SPOKE TO MEN IN A PIECEMEAL OR BIT BY BIT FASHION. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD DID NOT SPEAK TO MEN AT A GIVEN TIME WITH A FULL OR COMPLETE REVELATION. THE MESSAGE OF GOD CAME TO MEN THROUGH AN UNFOLDING OR OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. THE WAYS IN WHICH GOD SPOKE TO MEN WERE

MANY: (1) DIRECT VOICE - EXO. 33:11; I SAM. 3:6
(2) DIRECT WRITING - EXO. 31:18
(3) DREAMS - GENESIS 40
(4) VISIONS - EZEKIEL 1:1
(5) THE FORCES OF NATURE - ROM. 1:20-21; PSALM 19:1
(6) HISTORICAL EVENTS - I CORIN. 10:6

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE VERSES LET ME HASTEN TO SAY THAT GOD NO LONGER SPEAKS TO MEN IN THIS FASHION. IF SOMEONE SHOULD SAY TO YOU THAT HE SAW THE LORD IN A DREAM, OR THAT HE APPEARED TO THEM AND SPOKE AUDIBLY FROM HEAVEN, ONE WOULD HAVE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR DENYING SUCH A PRESENTATION. I DO NOT QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF SUCH PEOPLE BUT THEIR EXPERIENCE IS IN CONTRADICTION OR VIOLATION OF A CLEAR BIBLE FACT. GOD NO LONGER SPEAKS DIRECTLY OR MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO MEN - HE DOES NOT NEED TO, FOR HE HAS SPOKEN CLEARLY AND COMPLETELY THROUGH CHRIST. WE NOW HAVE A COMPLETED CANON OF SCRIPTURE AND GOD HAS NOTHING MORE TO SAY TO MEN IF THEY WILL NOT HEAR HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. WE HAVE A FULL LENGTH PORTRAIT OF CHRIST IN THE BIBLE. ACCORDING TO THESE VERSES JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S FINAL WORD TO MEN. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE WORD "WORLD" IN VERSE TWO SHOULD BE TRANSLATED "AGES." THIS VERSE REFERS TO HISTORY AND TEACHES THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD OF HISTORY. (COMPARE HEB. 11:3, I TIMOTHY 1:7, ISAIAH 9:6)

1:3 - THIS VERSE TELLS US SOMETHING ABOUT THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. THE WORDING OF THIS VERSE IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. THE PRECISE MEANING IS NOT EASY TO DEFINE. HOWEVER THE VERSE IS SHOWING THE DEITY OF CHRIST. (COMPARE JOHN 1:1, JOHN 14:28, JOHN 5:18, I TIM. 1:13 THE WORD "UPHOLDING" REFERS TO THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS GUIDING THIS WORLD TO A SPECIFIED GOAL. (COMPARE COLOSSIANS 1:17) HIS WORK IN REDEMPTION REMINDS ONE OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. (COMPARE LEVITICUS 16, JOHN 1:29, EPHESIANS 1:7) THERE IS AN INTERESTING COMPARISON BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND HIS WORK ON THE CROSS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIEST. AT THE DAY OF ATONEMENT THE PRIEST NEVER SAT DOWN.

1:4-7,13-14 - These verses teach that Jesus Christ is superior to the angels. This is very important in light of the current heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses concerning Jesus Christ. The people of God were the subject and benefactors of angelic ministry. In the Old Testament men like Abraham, Jacob, and Daniel revered and respected angels as messengers of God. According to verse 4 Jesus' name is superior to that of the angels. No angel can save, but Jesus can and does. (Matt. 1:21) In verse 5 Christ is called "God's Son." This suggests a unique relationship to the Father. (Compare John 3:16, Phil. 2:9-10) The crowning argument of Christ's superiority over angels is in verse 6. The word "worship" reminds us that no angel or man is ever permitted to accept worship. Jesus did accept worship and encouraged such! (Compare Rev. 22:8-9) During Jesus' public ministry He received the worship of men and women. (Compare Matt. 8:1-4, Matt. 28:9)

1:8-9 - These verses address the Son as God. The quality of His Messianic splendor is characterized as righteous in nature. In verse 13 Messiah's enemies are said to take the place of low subjection. (Joshua 10:24 - Relate picture in the Indianapolis Star with his foot on the neck of a prisoner. His posture suggests total sub-ordination.)

Rec PM Dec. 1993

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

OCTOBER 3, 1976

Intro. I can P.M. Save NASA Billions... yes - life in our univ.

THEMES IN HEBREWS: ANGELS

HEBREWS 1:14

RELATE INFORMATION REGARDING STUDY CLASSES. THESE THEMES ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PICKING UP INTERESTING STUDIES WHICH TIME IN THE CLASSES WILL NOT PERMIT TO LOOK INTO. BILLY GRAHAM'S BOOK HAS AROUSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT OF ANGELS. THE TEXT IN HEBREWS HAS SEVERAL INTERESTING TRANSLATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WAY TRANSLATION SAYS "THE ANGELS! WHAT ARE THEY ALL BUT SERVANTS, SPIRITS WHO RENDER SERVICE TO GOD, WHO ARE HOUR BY HOUR BEING DESPATCHED ON ERRANDS OF MINISTRATION FOR THE HELP OF US WHO ARE DESTINED TO HAVE SALVATION AS OUR HERITAGE?" OR THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION WHICH SAYS "SURELY THE ANGELS ARE NO MORE THAN SPIRITS IN THE SERVICE OF GOD, COMMISSIONED TO SERVE THE HEIRS OF GOD'S SALVATION." THIS PARTICULAR VERSE RAISES AN INTERESTING QUESTION:

I. WHAT IS THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS TODAY?

THIS VERSE TEACHES THAT ANGELS ARE SPIRIT BEINGS. THEY BEAR THE MARKS OF PERSONALITY IN THAT THEY ARE INTELLIGENT, SPEAK, THINK, AND PRAISE GOD. THIS VERSE SUGGESTS THAT ANGELS DO SERVICE TO GOD AND MAN. IN THE O. T. ANGELS HASTENED TO CARRY OUT THE COMMANDS OF GOD. (PSALM 103:20) SOME STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD READY TO CARRY MESSAGES TO MEN. (LUKE 1:19, 2:8-14) AS I HAVE SAID, THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE O. T. AND THERE ARE AT LEAST SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE N. T. WHERE ANGELS MINISTERED TO MEN (MATT. 28:5-8, ACTS 8:26, 10:1-8). ANGELS SEEM TO BE ESPECIALLY PROMINENT WHEN NEW DISPENSATIONS OR AGES ARE BEGUN. SOME BIBLE TEACHERS AND COMMENTATORS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS HAS CONTINUED INTO THE PRESENT AGE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO SAY THAT ANGELS HAVE CEASED THEIR MINISTRY FROM SCRIPTURE. TO BE SURE, THE CHURCH AGE IS AN AGE OF FAITH AND ANGELS NO LONGER APPEAR TO MEN. HOWEVER THIS DOES NOT TAKE AWAY FROM THE FACT THAT THEIR MINISTRY COULD BE A VEILED TYPE MINISTRY. (I CORIN. 11:10) THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ANGELIC MINISTRY WILL HAVE SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FUTURE AS RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. ACCORDING TO VERSES LIKE REV. 7:1-3 AND REV. 16:1-12 ANGELS HAVE ABILITY OVER THE VERY ELEMENTS OF NATURE.

II. WHERE DO ANGELS COME FROM AND WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?-

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ANGELS ARE CREATED BEINGS. THE TIME OF THEIR CREATION IS NOT REVEALED BUT APPARENTLY ANGELS WERE IN EXISTENCE AND IN ATTENDANCE WHEN THE EARTH WAS CREATED. (PSALM 148:2-5, JOB 38:6-7) ANGELS SEEM TO BE A DIRECT CREATION FROM THE HAND OF THE CREATOR. THEY DO NOT REPRODUCE OR PROCREATE. (COLOSSIANS 1:15-17) AS WAS STATED A MOMENT AGO, ANGELS ARE NOT VISIBLE TO MEN DURING THIS DISPENSATION. HOWEVER, ON OCCASIONS IN THE O. T. WHEN THE HAVE APPEARED TO MEN, THE RESEMBLED MEN IN APPEARANCE (COMPARE GEN. 18:2, 20:2; 19:1,5) ANGELS ARE REFERRED TO IN THE MASCULINE GENDER AND THE NAMES GIVEN TO ANGELS ARE MASCULINE NAMES, SUCH AS GABRIEL AND MICHAEL. SORRY ABOUT THAT LADIES! IN ADDITION TO LOOKING LIKE MEN, THEY ARE SAID TO BE YOUNG IN APPEARANCE. (MARK 16:5) THE ANGELS MENTIONED IN THIS PASSAGE WERE CREATED THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE BUT STILL RETAINED A YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE. SOMETIMES IN THE BIBLE ANGELS ARE DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF BRIGHTNESS AND GLORY. ARTISTS CONCEPTIONS SUGGEST THAT ANGELS HAVE WINGS. TO BE SURE, THE BIBLE DOES SAY THEY ARE ABLE TO FLY. THE EMPHASIS IN SCRIPTURE IS THAT THEY ARE BOTH SWIFT AND POWERFUL. WHETHER OR NOT ANGELS HAVE WINGS ONE CAN NOT SAY WITH SCRIPTURAL CLARITY. IF A LADY'S HUSBAND SHOULD SAY SHE LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL, IT COULD BE OFFENSIVE TO HER!

Rev. 14:6

III. HOW MANY ANGELS ARE THERE AND WHAT CAN THEY DO?

IN THE O. T., THE WORD "HOST" IS USED CONCERNING THE ANGELIC ARMIES UNDER GOD'S CONTROL. JESUS SAID HE COULD HAVE CALLED 12 LEGIONS OF ANGELS TO COME TO HIS ASSISTANCE. A ROMAN LEGION CONSISTS OF 6,000 MEN PLUS SOME AUXILIARY TROOPS. JESUS REFERED TO AT LEAST 72,000 ANGELS AT HIS COMMAND IN THE REFERENCE IN MATT. 26:53. ACCORDING TO REV. 5:11 THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF ANGELS COULD BE NO LESS THAT ONE HUNDRED MILLION. THE REASON FOR THIS EXPRESSION IS THAT THERE IS NO NUMBER FOR MILLION IN THE BIBLE. COUPLED WITH THIS VERSE IS THE REFERENCE IN HEB. 12:22 WHERE THE WORD "INNUMERABLE" REFERS TO THE MYRIADS OF ANGELS. ALL OF THESE TERMS SUGGEST THE NUMBER OF ANGELS IS LARGE AND DIFFICULT TO COMPUTE. THE ABILITY

72,000

Num Beeless = a very great but indefinite Number.

OF ANGELS TO ACT IN POWER IS GREATER THAN THAT OF MEN. HOWEVER THESE POWERS SEEM TO BE LIMITED. ANGELS ARE SPOKEN OF AS BEING VERY POWERFUL (MATT. 28:2) THEY DO SEEM TO HAVE SUPERNATURAL POWERS. (ACTS 12; 7,10) Limited.

IV. WHAT KIND OF ANGELS ARE THERE?

A. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THERE ARE TWO MAJOR CLASSES OF ANGELS. EVIL ANGELS ARE ANGELS ASSOCIATED WITH SATAN AND HIS FALL. HE IS THE WICKED COMMANDER OF AN ANGELIC ARMY OF WILLING SUBJECTS. SATAN WAS THE FIRST OF THIS ORDER. (COMPARE EZEKIEL 28:14-16) GOD DID NOT CREATE THE DEVIL, HE CREATED AN ANGEL NAMED LUCIFER WHO IN HIS SELF-WILL SINNED AGAINST GOD AND BECAME THE DEVIL. REV. 12:7 SPEAKS OF THE DRAGON, THAT IS SATAN, AND HIS ANGELS. THE DRAGON IS CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS SATAN IN V. 9. THE PRIMARY PASSAGES WHICH DEAL WITH EVIL ANGELS ARE II PETER 2:4 AND JUDE 6-7.

B. THE OTHER CLASSIFICATION OF ANGELS IS GOOD ANGELS. ANOTHER TERM FOR THESE ANGELS IS ELECT OR HOLY ANGELS. (I TIM 5:21, MATT. 25:31, 41) IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE DECISION OF THE EVIL ANGELS TO FOLLOW LUCIFER WAS PERMANENT IN ITS CONSEQUENCES. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM THAT THE HOLY ANGELS WERE CONFIRMED IN THEIR LOYALTY TO GOD. THERE WAS NO INDICATION IN SCRIPTURE THAT THE EVIL ANGELS COULD OR WILL EVER RETURN TO GOD. THAT IS, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS REDEMPTION FOR THE ANGELS. THE MINISTRY OF GOOD ANGELS IS PRIMARILY TO PRAISE, WORSHIP AND WORK FOR GOD. THEY ARE SPECTATORS OF EARTHLY AFFAIRS AND SERVE THE LORD. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH GOOD ANGELS ARE WATCHERS OVER THE NATIONS. (COMPARE DANIEL 4:17, 12:1) IN THE EARLY CHURCH, THEY BROUGHT ANSWERS TO PRAYER. (ACTS 12:5-7) ALSO IN THE EARLY CHURCH THEY BROUGHT COURAGE TO PAUL IN TIMES OF DANGER AND TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH THEY DELIVERED IN TIMES OF DANGER, (ACTS 27:23-24, 5:19)

Dan 10:13

UFOs & ETs — AW's Angels watching

V. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO EVIL ANGELS?

ACCORDING TO II PETER 2:4 AND JUDE 6 SOME EVIL ANGELS ARE ALREADY SUFFERING PUNISHMENT. THEY WILL ALSO BE BROUGHT INTO JUDGMENT AT SOME FUTURE TIME. I CORIN. 6:3 INDICATES THAT BELIEVERS WILL SHARE

IN SOME KIND OF JUDGMENT UPON ANGELS AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. ACCORDING TO MATT. 25:41 THERE IS A PLACE OF FINAL JUDGMENT FOR EVIL ANGELS. THE FACTS THAT AT LEAST 34 BOOKS IN THE BIBLE, SPEAK OF THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS AND THAT THE WORD ALONE APPEARS NO LESS THAT 250 TIMES IN THE BIBLE AND THE FACT THAT JESUS NEVER QUESTIONED THEIR EXISTENCE BUT RECEIVED BENEFIT FROM THEIR MINISTRY REMINDS US THAT THERE IS AN ENTIRE ORDER OF BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE KNOWN AS ANGELS. ONE OF THE HAUNTING QUESTIONS OF SCIENTISTS OF OUR DAY HAS TO DO WITH LIFE ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE. BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE BEING SPENT TO FIND OUT IF THERE IS LIFE ON MARS, AND OTHER PLANETS. THERE IS OTHER LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE BUT IT IS THE WORK OF GOD JUST AS THE CREATION OF MAN WAS THE WORK OF THE CREATOR.

RKS

BCC/AM

3/2/75

"SALVATION ON A HEBREWS theme" 5-8-83

"SO GREAT SALVATION" – IN HEBREWS 12-29-91 AM

HEBREWS 2:1

IN 1887, THE SHIP BOUNTY UNDER CAPTAIN BLIGH SET SAIL FOR TAHITI IN THE SOUTH SEAS TO TRANSPLANT FOOD-BEARING TREES TO THE UNINHABITED ISLANDS IN ORDER TO MAKE THEM HABITABLE. AFTER A VOYAGE OF TEN MONTHS, THE SHIP ARRIVED AT HER DESTINATION AND SPENT SIX MORE MONTHS COLLECTING RESOURCES FROM THE ISLANDS. THE SAILORS, MEANWHILE, HAD FORMED STRONG ATTACHMENTS TO THE NATIVE GIRLS AND UPON RECEIVING ORDER TO EMBARK, THEY MUTINIED, SENT THE CAPTAIN AND A FEW MEN ADRIFT IN AN OPEN BOAT AND RETURNED TO THE ISLAND. CAPTAIN BLIGH, HOWEVER, SURVIVED THE ORDEAL AND EVENTUALLY ARRIVED HOME IN ENGLAND FROM WHENCE A PUNITIVE EXPEDITION WAS SENT OUT TO CAPTURE THE FOURTEEN MUTINIEERS. ~~ANOTHER~~ NINE HAD TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER ISLAND WHERE THEY FORMED A NEW COLONY. ~~ACCORDING TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA~~ THE COLONY DEGENERATED SO FAST AND BECAME SO FIERCE AS TO MAKE LIFE IN THE ISLANDS HELL ON EARTH. THE CHIEF PROBLEM WAS THE DISTILLATION OF WHISKEY FROM A NATIVE PLANT. QUARRELS, ORGIES, AND MURDERS WERE A COMMON FEATURE OF LIFE. FINALLY ALL THE NATIVE MEN AND ALL THE WHITE MEN EXCEPT ONE WERE KILLED OR DIED OFF. ALEXANDER SMITH WAS LEFT ALONE WITH A CROWD OF NATIVE WOMEN AND HALF-BREED CHILDREN. THEN A STRANGE THING HAPPENED. IN ONE OF THE SAILOR'S CHESTS, HE FOUND A BIBLE. HE READ IT, BELIEVED IT, AND BEGAN TO PRACTICE ITS TRUTHS. HE DETERMINED TO MAKE AMMENDS FOR HIS PAST EVIL LIFE, SO HE GATHERED THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN AROUND HIM AND TAUGHT THEM FROM THE BIBLE. THE YEARS PAST THE CHILDREN GREW UP AND THE PEOPLE BECAME CHRISTIANS. THE COMMUNITY PROSPERED AND AFTER TWENTY YEARS A U.S. SHIP VISITED THE ISLAND AND BROUGHT WORD BACK TO EUROPE AND TO ENGLAND OF THE PEACEFUL STATE OF THE ISLAND. THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT TOOK NO FURTHER ACTION. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO -- GOD HAD CHANGED THE PEOPLE AND THE ISLAND. THERE WAS NO CRIME, NO STRONG DRINK, NO ill & Tears, no description of life. Moral Standards of the people – high. "The Rest of the Story!"

ILLITERACY, NO DISRUPTION OF LIFE. THE MORAL STANDARDS OF THE PEOPLE WERE AS HIGH AS ANY PLACE IMAGINABLE. WHAT HAD BROUGHT ABOUT THIS ASTOUNDING TRANSFORMATION? THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE, NAMELY, SALVATION IN CHRIST. THE MUTINY OF THE BOUNTY HAS BEEN POPULARIZED BY HOLLYWOOD, BUT I HAVE SEEN THIS REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION TAKE PLACE IN HUNDREDS OF LIVES AND SCORES OF HOMES. THIS WONDERFUL SALVATION IS THE THEME OF OUR STUDY TODAY.

I. A WARNING ABOUT NEGLECT OF SALVATION - 2:1

THE WRITER OF HEBREWS IS DRAWING A WORD PICTURE WITH NAUTICAL TERMS. PICTURE A SHIP WHICH IS DRIFTING PAST THE SURE HARBOR. IT IS A VESSEL WITHOUT POWER OR ABILITY TO MOVE AGAINST THE CURRENT. IT IS DRIFTING SURELY TOWARD THE CATASTROPHY OF THE FALLS BELOW. THE WORD SLIP DRAWS SUCH A PICTURE. NOTICE IN OUR TEXT THAT THE WORD "REJECT" IS NOT USED-IT IS THE WORD "NEGLECT". THE WRITER OF HEBREWS IS SAYING THAT A PERSON DOES NOT NEED TO SHAKE HIS FIST IN GOD'S FACE, CURSE THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND DENY EVERYTHING THAT IS MORAL AND RIGHT IN ORDER TO BE LOST. VERY FEW PEOPLE WILL DO THIS. MOST PEOPLE WHO MISS HEAVEN WILL DO SO SIMPLY THRU NEGLECT. HOWEVER, THE OUTCOME IS EXACTLY THE SAME WHETHER ONE REJECTS OR NEGLECTS SALVATION IN CHRIST. (1) THE PATIENT WHO REFUSES TO HEED HIS DOCTOR'S INSTRUCTION WILL NOT ESCAPE THE DESTRUCTIVE DISEASE WHICH THREATENS HIS LIFE. (2) THE MAN WHO HAS A FARM BUT NEVER CUTS A WEED OR A BUSH DOES NOT NEED TO SET OUT TO DESTROY HIS FARM THROUGH OVER-ACTION. ALL HE NEEDS TO DO IS SIT BACK AND DO NOTHING AND NOTHING WILL TAKE ITS TOLL! (3) THE MAN WHO OWNS A BUSINESS NEED NOT WORK TO DESTROY IT; ALL HE NEEDS TO TO IS NEGLECT IT AND HE WILL GO BROKE.

QUESTION: WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?
ANSWER: NOTHING, AND ONE DAY YOU WILL HAVE HEARD YOUR LAST HYMN, LAST SERMON, LAST CHRISTIAN PRAY, LAST INVITATION TO BE SAVED AND YOU WILL BE LOST SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU DRIFTED AWAY THE SURE MOORING AVAILABLE IN CHRIST. THIS VERSE IS ONE

S.A.

Warning

Heart Insist!

OF GOD'S MANY WARNINGS IN THE BIBLE. NO THINKING MAN WOULD RUN PAST THE WARNING FLASHING LIGHTS AT A RAILROAD CROSSING OR THE STOP LIGHT AT AN INTERSECTION, OR THE SIGNS AND LOCKS AT THE HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES OR THE WARNING ON THE MEDICINE BOTTLE, AND SO THE BIBLE IS FILLED WITH WARNINGS CONCERNING THE DANGER OF NEGLECTING SALVATION. MANY YEARS AGO A YOUNG LADY WAS DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG MAN HER OWN AGE. HE WAS AT THE POINT OF LEAVING FOR INDIA AND DESIRED TO PROPOSE MARRIAGE BEFORE HE LEFT. HOWEVER, HE WAS VERY SHY AND COULD NOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF BEING REFUSED SO HE PUT HIS PROPOSAL IN A LETTER SAYING THAT IF SHE DID NOT RESPOND TO HIS PROPOSAL, THAT HE WOULD UNDERSTAND HER SILENCE WAS INDEED A REFUSAL. HOWEVER, BEING DEEPLY IN LOVE THE YOUNG LADY HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN ANSWERING THE LETTER, WROTE HER REPLY WITHIN THE HOUR, AND BECAUSE IT WAS RAINING HARD GAVE THE LETTER TO HER BROTHER TO TAKE TO THE POST OFFICE. HOWEVER, AS THE DAYS SLIPPED BY HER FIANCE NEVER CAME. SHE NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN. SOME YEARS LATER, SHE HEARD OF HIS MARRIAGE AND OF HIS REMAINING IN INDIA WHERE HE HAD ENJOYED AN HONORABLE CAREER. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS THE YOUNG LADY WHO CONTINUED TO LIVE WITH HER BROTHER MOVED TO A NEW HOUSE AND IN AN OLD COAT BELONGING TO HER BROTHER WHILE GOING THRU THE POCKETS SHE FOUND THE LETTER SHE HAD WRITTEN--YELLOW, CRUMPLED, THE SEAL UNBROKEN, THE STAMP UNTOUCHED. THE BROTHER HAD SIMPLY FAILED TO MAIL THE LETTER AND HIS NEGLECT HAD DESTROYED HIS SISTER'S HAPPINESS.

II. THE EVIDENCES WHICH ACCOMPANY SALVATION--6:9

TIME WILL NOT PERMIT US TO DEAL WITH ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN HEBREWS 6:4-6. LET ME STATE BRIEFLY THAT I BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SHORT OF REGENERATION. PAUL'S CONCLUSION TO THESE DIFFICULT VERSES IS VERSE 9. IF A PERSON IS GENUINELY BORN AGAIN, THERE SHOULD BE EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION. IT IS SAID THAT NIETZSCHE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER, WHO WAS THE SPIRITUAL FATHER OF NAZISM, CAME UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SOME CHRISTIAN PEOPLE EARLY IN HIS LIFE. AS A MATTER

OF FACT, HE DETERMINED TO LIVE WITH THESE PEOPLE TO SEE WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE LIKE. BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR FAILURE HE SAID "THESE CHRISTIANS WILL HAVE TO LOOK A LOT MORE REDEEMED BEFORE I CAN BELIEVE IN IT." THIS IS THE CRY OF THE UNCHRISTIAN TODAY. SHOW ME REALITY AND I WILL BELIEVE! LET ME SUGGEST THREE CHANGES WHICH SHOULD ACCOMPANY SALVATION IN CHRIST:

(1) APPETITE -- I PETER 2:2, II PETER 3:18

IT IS UNIVERSALLY TRUE THAT PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW JESUS CHRIST FIND THE BIBLE DIFFICULT TO READ AND MORE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. IT IS A CURIOSITY PIECE, A GOOD LUCK CHARM, AN ADORNMENT IN THE HOME, BUT NOT A GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING. WHEN A PERSON RECEIVES CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, HIS FIRST NOTICEABLE CHANGE IS HIS KEEN INTEREST IN THE BIBLE. IT BECOMES FOOD AND DRINK TO HIS SOUL. A FRIEND OF MINE READ THE NEW TESTAMENT THROUGH 37 TIMES THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS NEW FAITH IN CHRIST.

(2) ATTITUDE -- GALATIANS 5:19-23

YOUR WIFE/HUSBAND SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD PEOPLE IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN. IF THE ATTITUDE IS NOT CHANGED, THERE IS GRAVE QUESTION WITH REFERENCE TO GENUINE CONVERSION. (cut)

(3) APPEARANCE -- MARK 5:15

"AND THEY CAME TO JESUS, AND SEE HIM THAT WAS POSSESSED WITH THE DEVIL, AND HE HAD THE LEGION, SITTING, AND CLOTHED, AND IN HIS RIGHT MIND: AND THEY WERE AFRAID." I HAVE SEEN THIS TRANSFORMATION DOZENS OF TIMES WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST BY FAITH. - Dope addicts Hippies

(4) ASSOCIATION -- MARK 5:18-19

WHEN YOU GET SAVED, YOU WILL GATHER A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF FRIENDS. SOME OF YOUR OLD ONES WILL LEAVE YOU. YOUR NEW ONES NEVER WILL.

they urged Jesus to leave Gadara — 2000 dead pigs!
the crazy dead urged to go with them. more impt.
Who was crazy??? To them

= Present Salvation

III. THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST AND SALVATION -- 7:25

POWER

(2 Cor. 1:10)

A GREAT DEAL IS SAID ABOUT THE PAST WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS, BUT THE BIBLE ALSO EMPHASIZES THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST ON THE THRONE. EVERY PERSON HAS KNOWN THE HELPLESS FEELING AND THE SHEER LONELINESS WHICH COMES WHEN SEVERE TRIALS AND DEATH INVADE OUR LIVES. IT IS AT THAT TIME, IF AT NO OTHER TIME, WE LIKE TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE IS PRAYING FOR US. IT IS AT THAT TIME WE SEEK OUT CHRISTIAN PEOPLE IN WHOM WE HAVE CONFIDENCE TO PRAY IN OUR BEHALF. IT MAY BE THAT WHEN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES COME TO YOU, OTHERS MAY FORGET TO PRAY. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE PERSON IN HEAVEN WHO NEVER FORGETS TO PRAY FOR US. HE NEVER FAILS HIS OWN BECAUSE HE IS ALIVE FOR THAT PURPOSE TODAY. IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, IT WAS OUR LORD'S INTERCEDEING ON PETER'S BEHALF THAT KEPT PETER FROM UTTERLY FAILING. "SIMON, SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE THEE, BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE THAT THY FAITH FAIL NOT." I AM SURE THAT SIMON IS NOT ALONE CONCERNING SATAN'S DESIRE FOR THE BELIEVER. JESUS CHRIST IS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST. YOU NEED NO EARTHLY PRIEST IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN. HE INVITES YOU TO COME INTO THE VERY THRONE ROOM OF GOD WITH YOUR REQUESTS AND WITH ASSURANCE THAT HE WILL HEAR AND INTERCEDE IN THE BELIEVER'S BEHALF. THESE HEBREW CHRISTIANS TO WHOM PAUL WAS WRITING WERE LIVING IN A WORLD THAT SEEMED TO BE FALLING APART--NOTHING WAS DEPENDABLE. IT SEEMED AS IF WICKEDNESS AND GODLESSNESS WERE EVERYWHERE. PAUL REMINDED THEM THAT CHRIST WAS ABLE TO HELP. HE IS ALIVE, HE IS NOT IDLE, HE IS FULFILLING HIS WORD, WE MAY TRUST HIM IN LIFE'S DESPERATE HOURS.

IV. GOD HAS ONE WAY OF SAVING MEN -- 11:7

1. PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE NOT SAVED BY KEEPING THE LAW OR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. THEY WERE NOT SAVED BY DOING THE BEST THEY COULD.
2. ALL MEN EVERYWHERE HAVE BEEN SAVED THE SAME WAY -- BY FAITH. THE STORY OF NOAH IS ASTOUNDING! HE LIVED IN AN AGE OF REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS WHEN

PRIMITIVE MAN WAS IMPRESSED WITH HIS ABILITY TO ACHIEVE. NOAH WAS A NON-CONFORMIST. HE BELONGED TO A MINORITY GROUP WHO STOOD ALONE IN A DAY OF MORAL DARKNESS AND CRISIS AND DARED TO BELIEVE GOD. FOR 120 YEARS THIS MAN PREACHED ONE SINGLE MESSAGE -- JUDGMENT. I AM SURE HE WAS LAUGHED AT AND CALLED A FUNDAMENTALIST FANATIC. THINK OF IT, HE PREPARED A BOAT ON DRY LAND AT A TIME WHEN IT HAD NEVER RAINED! THAT BOAT WAS 450 FEET LONG, SEVENTY-FIVE FEET WIDE, FORTY-FIVE FEET HIGH AND NOAH BUILT IT. THE POINT OF THIS CHAPTER IS THAT NOAH BELIEVED SOMETHING HE HAD NEVER SEEN. FAITH ENABLED HIM TO DO THAT. IN EVERY AGE, GOD ASKS MEN TO DO EXACTLY WHAT NOAH DID - TO BELIEVE GOD. WE HAVE GOOD REASON TO HEED THE MESSAGE OF NOAH TO HIS GENERATION. JESUS SAID, "AND AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO SHALL IT BE ALSO IN THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN. THEY DID EAT, THEY DRANK, THEY MARRIED WIVES, THEY WERE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED INTO THE ARK AND THE FLOOD CAME AND DESTROYED THEM ALL." WHAT WAS THE GREAT SIN OF NOAH'S DAY? IMMORALITY, GODLESSNESS, YES, ALL OF THAT, BUT THE SIN THAT CAUGHT THEM UNPREPARED WAS THAT THEY WERE SO PRE-OCCUPIED WITH ORDINARY THINGS IN LIFE, THEY WERE SO INDIFFERENT TO GOD THAT THEY PAID NO ATTENTION; THEY SIMPLY DID NOT BELIEVE WHAT NOAH PREACHED AND THEIR UNCONCERN COST THEM THEIR LIVES. THE MESSAGE OF FAITH IS SIMPLY A MESSAGE OF SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY. IN ORDER TO GO TO HEAVEN, A MAN HAS TO DECLARE THAT HE HAS NO ASSETS OF HIS OWN BUT RATHER DECLARES HIS FAITH IN CHRIST, HIS SOLE BASIS FOR HEAVEN. FAITH DECLARES THAT YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND ALL ABOUT SALVATION IN CHRIST, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND ALL ABOUT IT IN ORDER TO BELIEVE IT. AS SOMEONE HAS WELL-SAID, "I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL ABOUT ELECTRICITY, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO SIT AROUND IN THE DARK UNTIL I DO!" MOVE FROM SPIRITUAL DARKNESS INTO SPIRITUAL LIGHT THROUGH CHRIST TODAY.

Faith is not some mystical power or quality of mind, it's Reliance or trust in a trustworthy God who promises to forgive/cleanse all who trust Him.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING OCTOBER 10, 1976 P.M.

THEMES IN HEBREWS: SALVATION

HEBREWS 2:3

DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR USING THE WORD "SAVED", OR "SALVATION." IT IS COMMON PRACTICE TO MAKE FUN OF THESE TERMS, THAT IS, BY THE UNSAVED WORLD. THEY LIKE TO PICTURE ~~OLD~~ EVANGELICAL BELIEVERS AS WILD-EYED FANATICS WHO WALK DOWN THE STREET, GRABBING PEOPLE BY THE LAPELS AND SAYING, "BROTHER, ARE YOU SAVED, REPENT OR PERISH." THIS BRINGS TO MIND A COMMENT BY MY VENERABLE PROFESSOR, DR. ALVA MCCLAIN, WHO TALKED ABOUT A COMMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE MENTALITY OF PEOPLE WHO WRITE "JESUS SAVES" ON ROCKS ALONG THE HIGHWAY. DR. MCCLAIN DOUBTED VERY SERIOUSLY IF HE WOULD EVER DO SUCH A THING, BUT HE QUICKLY POINTED OUT THAT THE TRUTH OF THE MESSAGE IS THERE AND THAT SHOULD BE OUR CONCERN, MAINLY, WHEREVER WE SEE THE MESSAGE, IT IS STILL TRUE THAT JESUS SAVES! THE WORD "SALVATION" IS SPOKEN OF IN A THREE-FOLD SENSE IN THE BIBLE. WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE NOW. (JOHN 5:24) HOWEVER, THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH WE ARE SAVED PAST PRESENT, AND FUTURE. THIS BIBLE TRUTH MAY BE ILLUSTRATED WITH THE STORY OF THE MAN, WHO IS UNABLE TO SWIM, WHO FALLS INTO WATER OVER HIS HEAD. FROM THE MOMENT THE LIFEGUARD REACHES HIM IT COULD BE SAID THAT HE IS SAVED FROM DROWNING AT THAT VERY POINT. HOWEVER, THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH HE IS BEING SAVED WHILE BEING PULLED TO SHORE. FINALLY, WHEN HE REACHES SOLID GROUND AND ALL DANGER IS PAST, IT COULD BE SAID THAT HE IS FULLY AND COMPLETELY SAVED FROM DROWNING. THE PAST TENSE OF SALVATION DEALS WITH THE PENALTY OF SIN, THE PRESENT TENSE OF SALVATION DEALS WITH THE POWER OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER, THE FUTURE TENSE OF SALVATION DEALS WITH THE PRESENCE OF SIN.

2 Cor. 1:10

I. SALVATION SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED - VERSES 1-3

I NEVER THINK OF THE WORD "NEGLECT" BUT THAT I REMEMBER A STORY TOLD BY GEORGE HENDERSON ABOUT THE YOUNG LADY WHO WAS DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG MAN. HE WAS PREPARING TO LEAVE FOR INDIA AND DESIRED TO PROPOSE TO THIS YOUNG LADY BEFORE HE WENT. HOWEVER, HE WAS VERY SHY AND COULD NOT BEAR TO THINK OF BEING REFUSED AND THEREFORE, WROTE A LETTER TO THE YOUNG LADY IN QUESTION, IN WHICH HE SUGGESTED THAT IF SHE DID NOT RESPOND TO HIS PROPOSAL THAT HE WOULD TAKE HER SILENCE AS A REFUSAL. HOWEVER, THE YOUNG LADY HAD NO

DIFFICULTY IN ANSWERING THE LETTER AND SHE WROTE HER REPLY WITHIN AN HOUR. IT WAS A WET DAY, AND SHE ENLISTED HER BROTHER TO TAKE THE LETTER TO THE POST OFFICE. TO HER AMAZEMENT, HER FIANCE NEVER CAME TO SEE HER AGAIN. YEARS LATER, SHE HEARD OF HIS MARRIAGE TO ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN, AND OF HOW HE HAD REMAINED IN INDIA IN A RESPONSIBLE AND HONORABLE CAREER. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THE LADY IN QUESTION AND HER FAMILY MOVED INTO A NEW HOUSE AND AN OLD COAT BELONGING TO HER BROTHER CAME TO HER ATTENTION. WHEN THE POCKETS WERE TURNED INSIDE OUT IN PREPARATION FOR PACKING, SHE DISCOVERED A LETTER, YELLOW AND CRUMPLED WITH AGE, THE SEAL UNBROKEN, STAMP IN PLACE. IN A SINGLE MOMENT, THAT LADY REALIZED THAT HER HAPPINESS IN LIFE HAD BEEN RUINED SIMPLY BECAUSE HER BROTHER HAD NEGLECTED TO MAIL A LETTER ENTRUSTED TO HIM. I AM FULLY CONVINCED THAT MOST PEOPLE WHO MISS HEAVEN WILL NOT DO SO THROUGH SOME DELIBERATE SHAKING OF THE FIST IN THE FACE OF GOD. MOST PEOPLE WILL GO TO HELL SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY FAIL TO DO SOMETHING OR SHOULD I SAY BECAUSE THEY DO NOTHING TO CORRECT THEIR PRESENT CONDITION. THEY GO THROUGH LIFE WAITING FOR A CONVENIENT TIME WHICH THE DEVIL WILL SEE TO THAT IT NEVER COMES. DEATH-BED REPENTENCE IS ALMOST UNHEARD OF TODAY. THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE TEXT IS THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE SEA. IT PICTURES THE DRIFTING OF A SHIP PAST THE SURE MOORINGS OF THE HARBOR. IT IS A VESSEL WITHOUT POWER, DRIFTING WITH THE CURRENT. THE WAY TO NEGLECT SALVATION IS SIMPLY TO DO NOTHING. "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST? THE ANSWER IS NOTHING. (JOHN 3:18) IF A PERSON CONTINUES ON IN HIS PRESENT STATE THE DAY WILL COME WHEN HE HAS HEARD HIS LAST SERMON, LAST HYMN, LAST PRAYER, LAST TESTIMONY, AND HE WILL HAVE DRIFTED INTO HELL! THE PRINCIPLE OF NEGLECT IS EASY TO SEE IN LIFE. THE MAN WHO OWNS A BUSINESS DOES NOT NEED TO SEEK TO ACTIVELY DESTROY IT; ALL HE HAS TO DO IS NEGLECT IT AND IT WILL FALL APART BY ITSELF. THIS IS TRUE OF A FARM. A FARMER DOES NOT NEED TO SOW WEED SEED; ALL HE HAS TO DO IS REMAIN INACTIVE AND THE WEEDS WILL DO THE REST. THE PATIENT WHO IS SERIOUSLY ILL DOES NOT NEED TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE; ALL HE NEEDS TO DO IS TO REFUSE TO SEE A PHYSICIAN, TAKE MEDICINE, OR GO TO THE HOSPITAL AND THE DISEASE WILL TAKE ITS COURSE. THE MAN DRIFTING DOWN THE RIVER TOWARD THE WATER FALLS IN A BOAT DOES NOT HAVE TO ROW TOWARD HIS DESTRUCTION, ALL HE HAS TO DO IS JUST SIT THERE AND THE CURRENT WILL DO THE REST.

THE POINT OF THIS PASSAGE, IS THAT NEGLECT OF SALVATION IS AS DEADLY AS THE REJECTING OF SALVATION, THE OUTCOME IS EXACTLY THE SAME. THIS VERSE IS A TIMELY REMINDER TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS THAT AS WE GO THROUGH LIFE, THERE ARE WARNINGS IN THE BIBLE TO REMIND US OF THE DANGER OF NEGLECTING SALVATION. FOR MANY YEARS NOW, I HAVE WATCHED PEOPLE DURING A GOSPEL INVITATION, SOME CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET OUT OF THE DOOR. SOME HANG ONTO THE PEW UNTIL THEIR KNUCKLES TURN WHITE. SOME TALK, LAUGH OR WHISPER.

II. SALVATION IS FOR ALL MEN - VERSE 9

I DO NOT WISH TO GET INTO A LONG THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT. NO MAN CAN HONESTLY SAY "CHRIST DID NOT DIE FOR ME." THIS VERSE SAYS HE DID! WHAT CHRIST DID FOR SINNERS AT CALVARY IS SOMEWHAT LIKE A WEALTHY MAN PLACING A DEPOSIT IN A BANK IN BEHALF OF ANYONE WHO WILL MAKE A WITHDRAWAL. ENOUGH FUNDS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE BANK; HOWEVER, THE APPROPRIATION OF THE FUNDS DEPEND UPON THE ONE IN NEED. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT YOU AND I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACCEPT THE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL AND THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S WORK ON CALVARY. TO IGNORE THIS IS A FATAL MISTAKE. LOOK AT SOME INTERESTING VERSES WHICH DEAL WITH CHRIST'S ATONEMENT (II CORIN. 5:18, II PETER 2:1, 3:9, I JOHN 2:2, I TIMOTHY 2:4, 4:10.) AS TIME PERMITS DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE TWO GREEK PREPOSITIONS OF "HUPER" AND "ANTI")

III. SALVATION DELIVERS US FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH - VERSE 14-15.

BEFORE I CAME TO KNOW CHRIST, THE FEAR OF DEATH HAUNTED ME. SINCE RECEIVING CHRIST, I HAVE HAD SEVERAL BRUSHES WITH DEATH -- ENJOYED NONE OF THEM-- BUT THERE WAS NO ULTIMATE FEAR. THE FEAR OF HELL IS GONE. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT SATAN IS A DEFEATED FOE. (JOHN 12:31, JOHN 16:11) SATAN HAS BEEN UNMASKED AND HIS BANKRUPTCY IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS HAS BEEN REVEALED. THIS MAGNIFICENT ANGEL KNOWN AS LUCIFER IS A FAILURE. SATAN IS ON HIS WAY TO ETERNAL DOOM, HE IS A DEFEATED FOE, AND HIS ONLY DESIRE IS TO TAKE AS MANY PEOPLE WITH HIM AS POSSIBLE. I DO NOT MEAN TO MINIMIZE THE FACT THAT DEATH IS STILL THE BELIEVER'S ENEMY. (I CORIN. 15:25-26). JOHN WESLEY WAS ON BOARD SHIP

ON ONE OCCASION WHEN THE SHIP WAS CAUGHT IN A TERRIBLE STORM IN THE ATLANTIC. THE ONLY PEOPLE ON BOARD WHO WERE NOT TERROR-STRICKEN WERE A SMALL GROUP OF MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES. AFT THE STORM, IT WAS PERFECTLY THAT THESE PEOPLE HAD BEEN UNMOVED BY THE ACTIVITIES. WHEN ASKED WHY THEY WERE NOT AFRAID, THEIR REPLY WAS, "WHY SHOULD WE BE AFRAID, WE KNOW CHRIST." WESLEY NEVER FORGOT THIS EXPERIENCE.

IV. SALVATION PROVIDES COMFORT IN TIME OF TESTING - VERSES 17-18

THIS MORNING WE DEALT WITH THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF COMFORT. THE WORD SUCCOUR" MEANS TO COMFORT. IT IS TRANSLATED AS HELP IN HEBREWS 4:16. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE NEED HELP IN LIFE. WHEN HEALTH FAILS AND DEATH COMES TO OUR HOUSE WE WILL NEED HIS HELP. I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED HOW UNSAVED PEOPLE FEEL WITH THE ADVERSITIES OF LIFE WITHOUT THE LORD'S HELP. IN CLOSING, LET ME RETURN TO THE FIRST ASPECT OF OUR STUDY OF THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION, NAMELY, THE COST OF NEGLECT. LEON CZOLGOSZ IS A NAME UNFAMILIAR TO MOST AMERICANS. HOWEVER, HE IS REMEMBERED FOR A SPECIFIC CRIME. HE WAS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF PARENTAL NEGLECT. HIS GRANDFATHER WAS SO TAKEN UP WITH BUSINESS AND SOCIAL INTERESTS THAT HE HAD LITTLE TIME FOR HIS SON WHO HAD CONTACTED A SOCIAL DISEASE. SUPPOSEDLY CURED, THIS BOY MARRIED A GIRL WHO DIED GIVING BIRTH TO A SON-LEON. THE NEWBORN BABY WAS HALF BLIND AND MENTALLY WEAK BECAUSE OF THE SIN OF HIS FATHER. SEEING HIS SON IN SUCH POOR CONDITION AND FEELING GUILTY, THE YOUNG FATHER TOOK HIS OWN LIFE WITH A REVOLVER. LITTLE BABY LEON LIVED AND YEARS LATER STOOD IN LINE TO SHAKE HANDS WITH PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY AND WHEN HIS TURN CAME HE DREW A PISTOL AND KILLED THE PRESIDENT OF THE U. S. HE WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH. WHAT STARTED OUT TO BE A FAMILY TRAGEDY AND THE NEGLECT OF A FATHER FOR HIS SON TURNED OUT TO BE A NATIONAL TRAGEDY.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

OCTOBER 17, 1976
P.M.

THEMES IN HEBREWS:

OUR HIGH PRIEST-HEB. 3:1

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY CHURCHES HAVE PASTORS AND NOT PRIESTS? THIS IS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT MEN UNIVERSALLY FEEL THAT SOMEHOW THEY HAVE OFFENDED THE DEITY TO WHOM THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE AND TO WHOM THEY MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR DEEDS IN THIS LIFE. THEY LONG TO APPEASE THAT DEITY AND BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE ON EARTH SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED AND QUALIFIED TO ACT IN THEIR BEHALF IN ORDER TO SECURE PARDON FOR SIN. A PRIEST THEREFORE, IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SINNER BEFORE GOD. BEFORE WE ANSWER THE QUESTION LET US LOOK AT THE IDEA OF PRIESTHOOD IN THE O. T.

(1) PRIESTHOOD IN SOME FORM OR ANOTHER SEEMS TO HAVE EXISTED FROM THE EARLY FORM OF THE RACE. THE FATHER IN THE FAMILY ACTED AS THE PRIEST BEFORE GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, NOAH, ABRAHAM, AND JOB ALL OFFERED PRIESTLY SACRIFICES CONCERNING THEIR RESPECTIVE ~~RESPECTIVE~~ FAMILIES. (COMPARE GEN. 8:20, 22:13, JOB 1:5)

IN THE DAYS OF MOSES THIS PRIESTLY IDEA EXPANDED TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL. THE PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS WAS CONFINED TO THE FAMILY OF AARON WHO WERE DESIGNATED TO BE THE PRIEST FAMILY IN ISRAEL, WEARING THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS AND PERFORMING PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS BEFORE THE NATION. LATER ON THE TRIBE OF LEVI CONTINUED TO PERFORM THIS MINISTRY. THUS THE IDEA AND THE FUNCTION OF THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD CONTINUED THROUGH THE TIME OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY AND UNTIL THE FALL OF JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70. IN LUKE 1:5-9 ZACHARIAS PERFORMED CERTAIN PRIESTLY DUTIES IN THE TEMPLE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE "HIGH PRIEST" WAS A VERY POWERFUL POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER EVEN IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST AS THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE SANHEDRIN. THE ANSWER TO OUR QUESTION IS THAT SINCE THE DEATH OF CHRIST WE NO LONGER NEED A PRIEST ON EARTH BECAUSE OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD AND EACH BELIVER IS HIS OWN PRIEST AND ABLE AND ENCOURAGED TO COME INTO THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST. WE NEED NO EARTHLY MEDIATOR TO PERFORM THIS TASK. (I PETER 2:5) A PASTOR IS NOT A GO-BETWEEN FOR BELIEVERS AND GOD. HE IS PRIMARILY A TEACHER OF THE WORD OF GOD AND A LEADER IN THE CHURCH SO THAT THE CHURCH MAY CARRY ON ITS EVANGELISTIC AND EDIFICATION

Lord Convert
(Short-cut)

One reason why no clerical garb!

MINISTRY. HE IS NOT A PRIEST! YOU WILL HUNT IN VAIN TO FIND ANY IDEA OF THE CHURCH HAVING AN OFFICIAL PRIESTHOOD. THE IDEA IS FOREIGN TO SCRIPTURE! THE IDEA OF ONE PERSON ACTING AS A PRIEST IN THE BEHALF OF ANOTHER IS NOT N. T. IN ORIGIN! WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, TO HELP ONE ANOTHER SPIRITUALLY, BUT THIS IS NOT ACTING AS A PRIEST. IN THE O. T. MEN IN GENERAL DID NOT HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO GOD. IN ORDER TO APPROACH GOD THEY MUST DO IT THROUGH MEDIATORS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF A CLASS OF PRIESTS WHO ALONE WERE PERMITTED TO COME INTO GOD'S PRESENCE AND REPRESENT OTHER MEN FOR HIM. HOWEVER, WHEN JESUS CHRIST DIED ON CALVARY AND THE VEIL WAS RENT IN THE TEMPLE IT WAS A DIVINE REMINDER THAT THROUGH CHRIST'S VICARIOUS DEATH BELIEVERS COULD ENTER INTO THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST. (ROM. 5:1-3) BY VIRTUE OF ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST, A BELIEVER HAS DIRECT APPROACH TO GOD AND A RIGHT OF APPROACH WHICH IS THAT OF A SON AND NOT OF A PRIESTLY PRIVILEGED GROUP. EVERY PERSON MUST STAND ON HIS OWN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IS THE SIMPLE N.T. BASIS FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIVERS. THIS BIBLICAL IDEA WAS ONE OF THE BONES OF CONTENTION THAT MARTIN LUTHER HAD WITH THE ROMAN CHURCH AT THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION. THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS PART OF HIS THREE-FOLD OFFICE WORK. THE FAMILIAR TERMS PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING REFER TO CHRIST'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE MINISTRY. IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH HE PERFORMED A PROPHETIC MINISTRY. (ISAIAH 61:1-2, LUKE 4:16-20) TODAY HE ACTS AS OUR PRIEST. (PSALM 110:4, HEB. 5:5-6) IN THE FUTURE HE WILL ASSUME HIS KINGLY MINISTRY. (ZECH. 9:9 MAT. 21:1-9 THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THE O. T. PRIESTS TYPLIFY THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF CHRIST. THEY WERE SIMPLY TYPES AND SHADOWS OF HIS MINISTRY. WE'RE ALSO REMINDED FROM THE BIBLE THAT THE TWO PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF A PRIEST WERE TO SACRIFICE AND MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THE PEOPLE TO GOD. JESUS ACCOMPLISHED THIS FACT ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY. THIS GREAT TRUTH WILL BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION AS WE STUDY CH. 9. HOWEVER THE APPLICATION TO THE BELIEVER PRIEST IS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE. OUR BODY IS SPOKEN OF AS ALIVING SACRIFICE. (ROM. 12:1) WE ARE ALSO TOLD TO SACRIFICE PRAISE TO GOD INDICATIVE OF OUR PRIESTHOOD. (HEB. 13:15) ALSO OUR PROPERTY AND GOODS

ARE TO BE PART OF OUR SACRIFICIAL MINISTRY. (HEB. 13:16 TC.) THE SECOND ASPECT OF THE PRIEST'S MINISTRY WAS THAT OF INTERCESSOR. (HEB. 4:16, 7:25) IT WAS THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF THE HIGH PRIEST THAT PEOPLE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL HAD ACCESS TO GOD. NONE DARED ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE APART FROM A DIVINELY AUTHORIZED INTERCESSOR. (THIS WAS THE PROBLEM OF AARON'S TWO SONS-LEV. 10) THE SUBJECT OF PRIESTHOOD CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY COVERED IN THIRTY MINUTES. HOWEVER, IN THE REMAINING TIME LET US LOOK INTO THE BOOK OF HEB. AND LEARN SOME GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST.

I. THE SACRIFICIAL WORK OF OUR HIGH PRIEST-HEB. 9: 7,11,24-28-10:4,11-14

EVERY OTHER HIGH PRIEST ENTERED INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES WITH THE BLOOD OF AN ANIMAL. ALL OF THESE SACRIFICES SIMPLY POINTED FORWARD IN FAITH TO A DAY WHEN THE LAMB OF GOD WOULD ENTER INTO HEAVEN ITSELF AND OFFER HIS OWN BLOOD AS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

II. THE SINLESS CHARACTER OF OUR HIGH PRIEST- HEB. 7:25-28

THE O.T. PRIESTS OF AARON'S ORDER WERE APPOINTED FOR LIFE BUT EVERY ONE OF THEM HAD TO MAKE PROPER SACRIFICE FOR HIS OWN SIN. IN TIME, DEATH OVERTOOK THEM. AT THE VERY BEST, THEY WERE MEN OF HIGH MORAL PRINCIPLES WHO MET THE SPECIFICATIONS REQUIRED IN O.T. LAW. HOWEVER, EVERYONE OF THEM DIED AND BY THIS VERY FACT DEMONSTRATED THEIR SINFULNESS! OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISDEC AND NOT ONLY IS HE SINLESS BUT HE IS ETERNAL AND WILL NOT DIE. WE MAY TRUST OUR CASE INTO HIS CAPABLE HANDS.

III. THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF OUR HIGH PRIEST - HEB. 4:14-15, 2:17-18)

IT IS AMAZING, THAT THERE IS NOT A SINGLE REFERENCE TO THE HIGH PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF JESUS UNTIL HEB. 2:17. IN THIS LETTER, HEBREW CHRISTIANS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FASTEN THEIR ATTENTION ON HIM. THE RITUAL OF THE TEMPLE WOULD ONE DAY BE DESTROYED AND JEWS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORLD. THEIR ATTENTION SHOULD NOT BE UPON

THEIR RITUAL BUT UPON HIM. THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN THEY WOULD NEED A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO COULD HELP THEM IN THEIR NEED. NO LONGER DO WE STAND OUTSIDE THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND TREMBLE AS SOME OTHER HUMAN BEING REPRESENTS US BEFORE GOD. WE HAVE ONE IN THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD WHO IS GOD HIMSELF WHO UNDERSTANDS OUR INFIRMITIES , OUR WEAKNESSES AND OUR NEEDS AS MEN. IT IS INTO HIS PRESENCE WE ARE ASKED TO COME IN TIMES OF NEED. ONE REASON WHY THE PRIESTLY ASPECT OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY IS SO IMPORTANT IS THAT TOO FEW BELIVERS UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF OUR PRIVILEGE AND OUR NEED. WE ARE ALL PRONE TO DEPEND UPON MEN TO DO SOMETHING FOR US THAT ONLY GOD CAN DO. WHATEVER OUR NEED, WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING IT TO OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING OCTOBER 31, 1976 P.M.

"THEMES IN HEBREWS: THE WORD OF GOD"

HEBREWS 4:12

FOR THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS, I HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE FED UP WITH DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS AND A TOTAL DISREGARD FOR THE SCRIPTURES. IN LETTERS AND IN PHONE CONVERSATIONS I HAVE BEEN ASKED WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THE SUCCESS OF THE BIBLE CENTER CHURCH? HOW CAN WE DUPLICATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THAT CHURCH IN OUR CITY? THE ANSWER I HAVE GIVEN IS ALWAYS THE SAME, MAJOR IN THE SCRIPTURES! GET THE WORD OF GOD INTO PEOPLE AND PEOPLE INTO THE WORD OF GOD. WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY WITH MEN APART FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD. THE BOOK ENTITLED THE BATTLE OF THE BIBLE SHOWS THAT WHETHER IT BE A DENOMINATION, SEMINARY OR PREACHER WHENEVER MEN ABANDON THE DOCTRINE OF THE INFALLIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE IT IS THE HOLE IN THE DIKE WHICH CAUSES EVERYTHING TO COLLAPSE. IT IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THE FLOOD OF HUMAN OPINION AND PRONOUNCEMENTS FILLS THE CHURCH AND THE WORD OF GOD FALLS SILENT. ANOTHER BOOK WHICH HAS BEEN OF INTEREST IS J. SIDLOW BAXTER'S RETHINKING OUR PRIORITIES. HE DEVOTES THE FIRST SEVERAL CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLE IN OUR MINISTRY. LET ME QUOTE ONE IMPORTANT PARAGRAPH IN THE LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SUPER CRITICAL OF FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO HAVE STOOD FORTHRIGHT FOR THE WORD OF GOD IN THE MIDST OF AN ERA WHEN CONCESSIONS CONCERNING THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE HAVE BEEN MADE EVERYWHERE.

"IT SEEMS THE VOGUE IN THE U.S.A. JUST NOW, EVEN IN MAGAZINES MORE OR LESS EVANGELICAL, TO DISPARAGE THE EARLY FUNDAMENTALISTS: BUT AMERICANS WILL NEVER KNOW ALL THEY OWE TO THOSE CLEAR-BRAINED MEN WHO SAW THE CRISIS OVER THE BIBLE FOR WHAT IT REALLY WAS AND HAD THE COURAGE TO COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE. CHRISTIANITY WOULD HAVE BEEN IN A FAR WORSE PLIGHT TODAY BUT FOR THOSE BRAVE SEPARATISTS. THEY NOT ONLY CAME OUT; THEY FOUGHT THE INTELLECTUAL BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE. THEY BUILT THEIR OWN NEW CHURCHES AND COLLEGES. THEY WROTE BOOKS, LAUNCHED MAGAZINES, INVADED THE RADIO AND LATER THE TELEVISION. THEY BROUGHT THE ISSUE OVER THE BIBLE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AT LARGE AND MADE IT A LIVING, THROBBING

CONCERN. WE MUST NEVER JUDGE THOSE FIRST FUNDAMENTALISTS BY SOME OF THE BOSSY, LITTLE BIGOTS." UNDOUBTEDLY BAXTER HAS THE GREAT CLASSIC CONFLICTS OF MACHEN AND OTHERS IN MIND. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT THE BATTLE OF OUR GENERATION IS FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES. MEN WHO TAKE A FORTHRIGHT STAND ON THE WORD OF GOD ARE UNDER ATTACK EVERYWHERE. CRISWELL WAS SUBJECTED TO ALL KINDS OF ATTACK WHEN HE WROTE HIS BOOK IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH WHILE PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. IN THAT BOOK HE POINTS OUT THAT FOR YEARS LIBERALS HAD BEEN TRYING TO SAVE CHRISTIANITY BY THROWING HER CARGO OVERBOARD. THEY HAVE BEEN TOSSING OUT DOCTRINE AFTER DOCTRINE AND NOW ARE ATTEMPTING TO SAIL THE SEA OF CHRISTIANITY WITH AN EMPTY SHIP. HE TELLS THE STORY OF A FRIEND WHO WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO FOR A HIGHER DEGREE. WHILE THERE HE BECAME CLOSELY ACQUAINTED WITH A STUDENT IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL. GRADUATION WAS NEAR FOR BOTH OF THEM. THE YOUNG THEOLOGIAN SAID TO THE OTHER MAN "I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. I HAVE BEEN CALLED TO PASTOR A CHURCH IN THE MIDWEST BUT IT IS ONE OF THOSE OLD FASHIONED CONGREGATIONS WHO BELIEVE THE BIBLE. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE BIBLE. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO." THE OTHER MAN SAID I CAN TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. THE YOUNG PREACHER ASKED, WHAT?" "SIR, I WOULD QUIT THE MINISTRY!" THERE IS NO PLACE IN THE PULPIT FOR THE PREACHER WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD! MAY I ALSO ADD A WORD OF CAUTION. DO NOT BE SMUG AND SECURE IN OUR PRESENT STATIS AT OUR CHURCH. THE ENTIRE PICUTRE COULD CHANGE IN LESS THAN ONE GENERATION! ALL YOU NEED IS SOME INFLUENCIAL MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT BORNAGAIN TO MINIMIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL AND EMPHASIZE THE SOCIAL CONCERN OF THE CHURCH. THESE PRESSURES ARE PUT ON ME FROM THE COMMUNITY CONSTANTLY! WE ARE PRIVATELY RIDICULED FOR WHAT OTHERS CALL OUR LACK OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONCERN (DEAR FRIENDS, WE ARE INTERESTED IN SOULS 52 WEEKS A YEAR AND DO NOT WAIT FOR SOME OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION TO FOSTER A CITY WIDE PROGRAM ONCE EVERY FIVE TO TEN YEARS TO GET INTERESTED IN THE LOST.) THE V. IN OUR TEXT, TONIGHT TEACHES THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS "LIVING." IT IS ALSO "POWERFUL." THE WORD FOR POWERFUL IS THE

ENGLISH WORD FOR ENERGY. THAT WORD IS ALSO ABLE TO PENETRATE INTO THE INNERMOST PART OF A MAN'S BEING AND REVEAL HIM IN THE WHITE LIGHT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT. THERE ARE MANY BOOKS AND PERIODICALS WHICH MAY BE READ TODAY AND FORGOTTEN SOON AFTER. NOT SO WITH THE WORD OF GOD. LET ME SUGGEST SOME AREAS CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

I. THE WORD OF GOD HAS POWER TO CONVICT - Acts 2:37

THE WORD "PRICKED" IN THE TEXT MEANS TO PIERCE, STING OR STUN. PETER LAID THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION AT THE FEET OF HIS HEARERS. THEY WERE GUILTY BEFORE GOD AND MEN. IN THE SIMPLE PREACHING OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST APPROXIMATELY 3000 PEOPLE RECEIVED CHRIST AS SAVIOR ON THAT OCCASION ALONE. THE PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD TRANSFORMED THAT REBELLIOUS CROWD INTO A CHURCH OF BLESSING AND JOY AND EFFECTIVE WITNESS TO THE WORLD. THE PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD WILL CONVICT MEN OF SIN. (RELATE THE INCIDENT OF JONATHAN EDWARDS, JOHN WESLEY, JOHN KNOX, AND OTHERS WHO PREACHED THE BIBLE WITH SUCH POWER THAT MEN TREMBLED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ITS MINISTRY.

Acts 24:25

II. THE WORD OF GOD HAS POWER TO CONVERT - Ps. 19:7

HOWEVER THERE ARE MANY VERSES IN THE BIBLE WHICH SPEAK OF THE LIFE GIVING POWER OF GOD'S WORD. Ps. 119:93 SAYS "I WILL NEVER FORGET THY PRECEPTS; FOR WITH THEM THOU HAST QUICKENED ME." Rom. 10:17 RELATES SAVING FAITH TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST THOSE WHO WERE SAVED WERE THOSE WHO "GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD." (Acts 2:41) REMEMBER THE REMARKABLE STORY OF THE MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY. A SINGLE COPY OF THE WORD OF GOD TRANSFORMED A GROUP OF DRUNKEN SAILORS INTO A COLONY OF BORN AGAIN BELIEVERS. NO CHURCH THAT BELIEVES IN N.T. EVANGELISM WILL ABANDON THE WORD OF GOD. IT IS THE WORD THAT BRINGS MEN TO CHRIST.

John 3

III. THE WORD OF GOD HAS POWER TO CLEANSE-Ps. 119:9

ONE OF THE FIRST PROBLEMS THE NEW BELIEVER DISCOVERS AFTER MAKING A PROFESSION OF FAITH IS HOW TO STAY CLEAN BEFORE THE LORD. JESUS POINTED OUT THIS

Hope for youthful lusts & passion?
Priest - Laver.

Deal w. the the festering sins.

PROBLEM TO HIS DISCIPLES. (JOHN 13:10, 15:3, 17:17) CLEANSING HAS TO DO WITH OUR PRESENT SANCTIFICATION. AS YOU KNOW, SANCTIFICATION IS THREE-FOLD IN THE BIBLE: THROUGH THE BLOOD, THE BOOK AND THE BLESSED HOPE. ONE OF THE GREATEST NEEDS OF THE CHURCH AND IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS IS THE CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO THE WORD OF GOD. NOT ONLY IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, BUT IN PRIVATE DEVOTION. (EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY DEVOTIONAL LIFE. -MK 1:35)

IV. THE WORD OF GOD HAS POWER TO COUNSEL - ~~PS. 73:24~~ PSA. 119:24 PSA. 119: 105, 130

WE ARE PRONE, LIKE THE PSALMIST, EITHER TO MISUNDERSTAND GOD AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO SINNERS. WE SEE THE APPARENT SUCCESS OF EVIL AND LIKE THE PSALMIST WE ARE DISTRESSED. GOD WILL GUIDE US THROUGH HIS WORD AS WE TRUST HIM. ONE OF THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN LIFE IS HOW TO KNOW GOD'S WILL. GOD MAY DIRECT US IN SEVERAL WAYS BUT NEVER CONTRARY TO HIS WORD. A STEADY DIET OF THE WORD OF GOD WILL PROVIDE SPIRITUAL REINFORCEMENT WHEN ANY MAJOR DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE. THERE WILL BE COUNSELLING IN THE WORD. I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT THE "LUCKY DIP" TYPE OF DIRECTION, BUT THE STEADY LIGHT OF THE SACRED PAGE ON THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

(X) Everyone needs guidance. (Doctors / lawyers / friends / teachers) — Neighbors,

* (Jer. 10:23)

Road Map. (Road of life) Pilgrim
Compass (Sea of life) Voyage

Proverbs = God's Psychology Book.
(31) Daily

For Example:

(1) Morals - Prov. 6:23, 7:27
(2) Family - Prov. 12:4
(3) Social - Prov. 20:1
(4) Personal Rel. - Prov. 17:22
(5) Spiritual - Prov. 16:7, 29:25

V. The Word of God Has Power To Comfort. - Psa. 119:50 (Sorrow —)

PRIESTHOOD 3:1

HEBREWS 4:12-16

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION WAS BASED PRIMARILY ON THREE GREAT DOCTRINAL ISSUES. (1) THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR FAITH AND PRACTICE. (2) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. (3) THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER. CONCERNING THE LAST POINT, UNLIKE MANY RELIGIONS, THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT EVERY BELIEVER IS HIS OWN PRIEST. OUR HIGH PRIEST IS IN HEAVEN. WE NEED NO ONE TO BRING US INTO HIS PRESENCE. "YE ALSO, AS LIVELY STONES, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST." (I PETER 2:5) "AND HATH MADE US TO BE A KINGDOM, PRIEST UNTO GOD..." (REV. 1:6) THE SUBJECT OF PRIESTHOOD IS FASCINATING. DEEP IN THE HEART OF MEN, THERE IS A STRONG DESIRE TO HAVE A PRIEST OR MEDIATOR TO REPRESENT THEM BEFORE GOD. THIS DESIRE IS AS OLD AS CIVILIZATION. WHEN MISSIONARIES INVADE STRONGHOLDS OF HEATHENISM, THEY FIND THAT THIS IDEA OF PRIESTHOOD IS LATENT IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE. THIS ENTIRE IDEA WAS SOMETHING GOD HAS GIVEN TO MAN, THAT IS, TO HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE STATION IN THE PRESENCE OF DIETY.

THE IDEA OF PRIESTHOOD DID NOT MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO GENTILE BELIEVERS. HOWEVER, TO JEWISH CHRISTIANS WHO HAD KNOWN AND STUDIED ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD AND ITS VITAL PART IN THE FUNCTION IN THE NATION OF ISRAEL, THE SUBJECT OF PRIESTHOOD WAS VERY PRECIOUS. THEY WOULD REMEMBER THE GREAT WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. THEY WOULD KNOW HOW HE WAS WASHED WITH WATER, ARRAYED IN BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, ANNOINTED WITH OIL AND MAKING PROPER SACRIFICE AND ENTERING INTO THE VERY HOLY OF HOLIES WHERE THE BLOOD OF THE OFFERING WAS APPLIED. ACCORDING TO EXODUS 29:20, THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE WAS APPLIED TO THE TIP OF THE RIGHT EAR, THE THUMB OF THE RIGHT HAND, AND UPON THE GREAT TOE OF THE RIGHT FOOT OF THE PRIEST HIMSELF. THIS SYMBOLICAL ACTION INDICATED THAT THE WHOLE PERSON AND HIS CAREER WERE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF THE BLOOD. THE BLOOD-STAINED EAR SPOKE OF HEARING AND OBEYING GOD'S WORD. THE BLOOD-STAINED HAND SUGGESTED CONSECRATED SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY, AND THE BLOOD-STAINED FOOT SUGGESTED THAT HIS WALK SHOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD IN THE COURTS OF THE LORD'S HOUSE. THE FOUNDATION OF THE BLOOD WAS IMPORTANT IN ALL MAN'S RELATIONSHIPS TO GOD. THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS

COULD UNDERSTAND THIS AS WELL WE MIGHT IN THESE DAYS WHEN THE BLOOD IS BEING DENIED. ALL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD SIMPLY POINTED TO THE COMING OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE IDEA OF PRIESTHOOD WAS VERY MUCH IN THE MIND OF THE HEBREW WRITER IN VERSE 13. SOME WRITERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE PHRASE "BUT ALL THINGS ARE NAKED AND OPEN UNTO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO," IS A SACRIFICIAL PHRASE INDICATING THE PRIESTLY ACT OF THROWING THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL ON ITS BACK SO THAT IT LAY EXPOSED, HELPLESSLY, TO THE READY KNIFE OF THE PRIEST. THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SUGGEST THAT GOD'S WORD LAYS US ALL BARE BEFORE THE EYES OF THE LORD. MAN HAS NO SECRETS WITH GOD. (PSALM 139):

IN VERSE 12, WE LEARN THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD. GOD'S WORD IS ACTIVE AND ENERGETIC. IT PENETRATES INTO THE INNERMOST RECESSES OF A MAN'S LIFE. GOD'S WORD COMPELS US TO LOOK AT HIM. "THERE COMES A TIME TO EVERY MAN WHEN HE HAS TO MEET THAT GOD FROM WHOSE EYES NOTHING IS AND NOTHING EVER CAN BE CONCEALED." (BARCLAY) WE UNDERSTAND SOMETHING OF THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORD IN HISTORY. A PHRASE OR SENTENCE CAN BE USED TO CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION OF A NATION.

ILLUSTRATION: (1) IN THE DAYS OF WORLD WAR I, A BODY OF BRITISH TROOPS WERE BESIEGED FOR A LONG TIME. BOREDOM BECAME THEIR NO. 1 PROBLEM. AMONG THE SOLDIERS THERE WAS A MAN OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION, BUT HE WAS AN ATHIEST. IN THE SIEGE HE MISSED, ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE, SOMETHING TO READ. IN DESPAIR, HE WENT TO THE CHAPLAIN THINKING HE MIGHT HAVE SOME BOOKS. ALL THE CHAPLAIN HAD TO OFFER WAS THE BIBLE. AT FIRST THE MAN DECLARED THAT THE BIBLE WOULD BE USELESS TO HIM BUT OUT OF SHEER DESPERATION HE TOOK IT AND BEGAN TO READ IT. HE STARTED WITH THE BOOK OF ESTER. THE MAN'S ATTENTION WAS CAPTURED. THE MAN CONTINUED READING PORTIONS OF THE BIBLE AND EVENTUALLY WAS CONVERTED. (2) ANOTHER STORY RELATES TO AN ARMY DOCTOR WHO WAS CONVERTED READING THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS BECAUSE OF ITS REGULATIONS FOR SANITATION AND HYGIENE WERE SO EMINENTLY SENSIBLE. I CANNOT THINK OF TWO LESS LIKELY BOOKS TO BRING MEN TO CHRIST THAN ESTER AND LEVITICUS. THE POINT IS THAT THIS SIMPLY CONFIRMS THE TRUTH OF THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD TO CHANGE LIVES.

THE OFFICES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ARE THREE-FOLD. (1) PROPHET, (2) PRIEST, (3) KING. DURING THE DAYS

OF HIS FLESH, HE WAS THE GREAT PROPHET IN ISRAEL. TODAY, HE IS THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST FOR THE CHURCH. TOMORROW, HE WILL REIGN AS KING ON THE EARTH. THESE THREE OFFICES WERE KEPT SEPARATE IN ISRAEL BUT OUR LORD EMBODIES ALL THREE.

I. WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST - VERSE 14

THE PRIESTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LEVITICAL SYSTEM WERE NEVER CALLED GREAT. THIS TERM WAS NEVER ASCRIBED TO AARON OR HIS SONS. QUESTION: WHAT MADE HIM GREAT? HE DID WHAT NO EARTHLY PRIEST COULD EVER DO. (COMPARE HEBREWS 7:25-28) HIS HONORS WERE NOT CONFERRED UPON HIM BY OTHER MEN. HE WAS GREAT IN HIS OWN RIGHT, IN HIS OWN ESSENCE AND BEING. GREATNESS WAS NOT CONFERRED UPON HIM IN THE SENSE OF DELEGATED AUTHORITY; HE WAS GREAT FROM THE BEGINNING. HE DID NOT GROW INTO GREATNESS. ONE INDICATION OF HIS GREATNESS IS IN THE PHRASE, "THAT IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS." EVERY OTHER PRIEST WHO HAS EVER LIVED HAS PASSED TO THE GRAVE. ONLY ONE HAS COME FROM DEATH TO ENTER INTO THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD IN HEAVEN. HIS GREATNESS IS REFLECTED IN THE FACT THAT EVEN NOW HE APPEARS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD PERFORMING HIS PRIESTLY FUNCTION FOR HIS OWN. NO OTHER PRIEST EVER HAS OR COULD PERFORM IN SUCH A WAY.

II. WE HAVE A GOOD HIGH PRIEST - VERSE 15

A. HE WAS TESTED

THIS VERSE DEALS WITH THE IMPECCABILITY OF CHRIST. HE WAS TESTED IN EVERY WAY YOU AND I ARE TESTED WITH ONE EXCEPTION, THAT IS, WITH RESPECT TO SIN. THERE WAS NOTHING IN HIM THAT COULD RESPOND TO SIN. HE HUNGERED, WAS THIRSTY, WAS WEARY, LONELY AND OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD. SOME HAVE SAID THAT BECAUSE OF HIS SINLESSNESS THE LORD JESUS WAS UNABLE TO ENTER INTO OUR SITUATIONS AND UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEMS, BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE. IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT A DOCTOR SHOULD HAVE HAD EVERY DISEASE THAT HE TREATS AMONG MEN. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO HAVE BEEN A DRUNKARD IN ORDER TO HELP A DRUNKARD OVERCOME HIS PROBLEM. LOVE THAT SUFFERS, NOT THE WEAKNESS WHICH FAILS, IS THAT WHICH IS ABLE TO HELP, SAYS GEORGE HENDERSON. GOD KNOWS THE TESTINGS WE GO THROUGH. HE KNOWS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE LEDGER. HE KNOWS FROM DESCRIPTIVE AS WELL AS

EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE.

B. HE CAN BE TOUCHED -

THE PHRASE "TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF" IS THE GREEK WORD IN WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD "SYMPATHY." THE SAVIOUR KNOWS HOW TO SYMPATHIZE, THAT IS, TO FEEL WITH OTHERS. A SYMPATHIZER IS ONE WHO CAN ENTER INTO OUR DISTRESSES AND SHARE OUR FEELINGS ABOUT THEM. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT HE SYMPATHIZES WITH OUR INFIRMITIES BUT NOT OUR SINS. WHEN WE SIN, WE CANNOT HAVE THE TOUCH OF THE SYMPATHIZING SAVIOUR. HOWEVER, IN OUR GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT AND SICKNESS, WE MAY BE ASSURED OF HIS SYMPATHY. WE DO NOT SERVE AN UNTOUCHABLE GOD. RATHER WE SERVE ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS. SOME PEOPLE LIVE AND EASY, SHELTERED LIFE, PROTECTED FROM THE KNOCKS AND BANGS OF ORDINARY LIVING. WILLIAM BARCLAY TELLS THE STORY OF A WOMAN WHO WAS LISTENING TO THE RADIO DURING WORLD WAR II AS THE JAPANESE WERE INVADING PARTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. AS SHE LISTENED ONE DAY SHE BURST INTO TEARS WHEN THE COMMENTATOR MENTIONED A SPECIFIC CITY. WHEN ASK ABOUT HER TEARS, SHE SAID THAT SHE HAD LIVED IN THAT CITY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE STATES. TO HER THIS CITY WAS MORE THAN A NAME, IT WAS A PLACE WHERE SHE HAD LIVED, GONE TO SCHOOL, HAD FRIENDS, A PLACE SHE LOVED. SHE HAD BEEN THERE AND LIVED THERE. THESE VERSES TELL US THAT GOD HAS BEEN WHERE WE LIVE. THERE IS NO PART OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE THAT GOD DOES NOT KNOW AND APPRECIATE. HE KNOWS OUR PROBLEMS BECAUSE HE HAS TRAVELED THE SAME ROAD. GOD CAN HELP US AND WILL IF WE WILL TRUST HIM TO DO SO.

III. WE HAVE A GIVING (GENEROUS) HIGH PRIEST - VERSE 16

(OBTAIN = RECEIVE)

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTS WAS ONE OF RESTRICTION. THE HIGH PRIEST WOULD ENTER ALONE INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD TO MINISTER FOR THE PEOPLE. TODAY, WE NEED NO HUMAN PRIEST BECAUSE THERE IS ONE WHO HAS ACCOMPLISHED OUR REDEMPTION AT CALVARY AND WHO INTERCEDES FOR US NOW. TO THAT ONE WE ARE ASKED TO COME BOLDLY. WHAT ONLY THE HIGH PRIEST IN ISRAEL COULD DO ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT ONCE A YEAR, EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN DO EVERY MOMENT OF HIS EARTHLY LIFE, THAT IS, COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD. THE THRONE TO WHICH WE COME IS CALLED A THRONE OF GRACE. IN THE FUTURE THAT THRONE WILL BE CALLED THE THRONE OF GLORY. (COMPARE MATTHEW 19:28, 25:31). THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS THE GREAT THRONE BOOK OF THE BIBLE. 45 OF THE 60 REFERENCES TO THE TERM "THRONE" IN THE NEW

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TESTAMENT APPEAR IN REVELATION. THERE IS A GREAT CONTRAST BETWEEN THE THRONE IN REV. 4:2 WHERE THERE IS A RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE AND THE THRONE MENTIONED IN REV. 20:11 WHICH IS THE WHITE THRONE OF JUDGMENT. ONE THRONE SPEAKS OF GRACE; THE OTHER SPEAKS OF JUDGMENT. THE THRONE OF GOD TODAY IS A THRONE OF GRACE. THERE IS NO CIRCUMSTANCE TOO SMALL, NO CRY TOO INSIGNIFICANT, NO PROBLEM TOO DIFFICULT, NO SITUATION WHICH WE ARE NOT PRIVELEGED TO BRING TO OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST. EACH OF US HAS A TIME OF NEED. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE NEED GRACE AT HOME, GRACE TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN, GRACE TO LIVE AND WORK IN A DIFFICULT WORLD, GRACE TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN HEARTS WITH THE SIGHS AND TEARS THAT COME THROUGH DAILY LIVING. WE DO NOT WEARY THE LORD BY BRINGING ALL OF THESE NEEDS TO HIM. GOD ALWAYS SENDS HELP WHEN WE NEED IT BUT NOT A MOMENT BEFORE NOR A MOMENT TOO LATE.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow
greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors
increase,
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials; His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is
half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's forgiving has only begun.

Chorus: His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundary known unto men.
For out of his infinite riches in Jesus, He
giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING FEBRUARY 25, 1990
A.M.

THE MEASURE OF MATURITY

HEBREWS 5:11-6:1

INFANTS ARE CUTE AND CUDDLY BUT AN ADULT WHO ACTS LIKE A CHILD IS NOT. TO BE CHILD-LIKE IS DESIRABLE, TO BE CHILDISH IS NOT. GROWING UP AND GROWING OLD ARE NOT THE SAME. SENSIBLE PARENTS WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO GROW UP TO BE STRONG ADULTS. THE LORD WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO DO THE SAME, SPIRITUALLY. (BY THE WAY, IT IS UNTHINKABLE OF CHILDREN TO BE DOCTORS, LAWYERS, PILOTS AND ENGINEERS BUT IN CHURCHES WE TAKE SPIRITUAL BABIES AND PUT THEM ON COMMITTEES AND BOARDS AND WONDER WHY THEY AND CHURCHES GET IN TROUBLE. INSTEAD OF GROWING UP THEY BLOW UP!) ((COMMENT REGARDING TRIP TO HOSPITAL AND LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW AT THE BABIES WHO WERE CUTE BUT THE WOMAN HOLDING THEM WASN'T.) THERE ARE TWO WORDS IN THE TEXT THAT REFER TO MATURITY. THEY ARE FULL AGE AND PERFECTION, BOTH FROM THE GREEK TELEIOS TRANSLATED FULFILLED, FINISH, END. ALL REFER TO THE IDEA OF ACHIEVING AN END OR GOAL. THE WORD PERFECTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SINLESSNESS. IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH CHRIST-LIKENESS. (MATTHEW 5:48 - THERE ARE NO SINLESS PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET.) THE PROCESS MENTIONED IN THIS PASSAGE IS REMINISCENT OF OUR FARMHOUSE KITCHEN AND THE DOOR FACING WHERE OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS THERE WERE "MARKS" OF GROWTH REGISTERED ON THE DOOR FACING. MOM - DAD - ME. I WAS TALLER THAN MOM FROM THE EARLY TEENS BUT NEVER QUITE AS TALL AS DAD UNTIL HE STOOPED WITH AGE AND I STOPPED GROWING FOR THE SAME REASON: QUESTION: WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY? "...IT IS THE ABILITY TO MEET THE DEMANDS AND EMERGENCIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN A MATURE AND NOT IN A CHILDISH WAY." (SANDERS)

Look out Boys Ch

Paul

THE SPIRITUAL MATURE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS ABLE TO FUNCTION IN A JOYFUL MANNER NO MATTER IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES OR LIFE SITUATION HE FINDS HIMSELF. KEEP IN MIND PHILIPPIANS 4:4 WAS WRITTEN FROM A JAIL CELL BY A MATURE BELIEVER. IN EVERY LIFE SITUATION, JESUS ACTED IN A MATURE MANNER. WHATEVER THE STRESSES AND STRAINS OF LIFE, HE REMAINED STRONG AND STEADY IN WHAT OTHERS WOULD CALL IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS BUT HE NEVER ACTED IMMATURELY OR IMPULSIVELY. ONCE AGAIN, SANDERS SAYS: "CHRIST SET THE STANDARD IN EVERYTHING. HE WAS NEVER PETULANT, ALWAYS CALM; NEVER REBELLIOUS, ALWAYS OBEDIENT; NEVER FEARFUL, ALWAYS COURAGEOUS; NEVER VACILLATING, ALWAYS RESOLUTE; NEVER PESSIMISTIC, ALWAYS CHEERFUL; NEVER SUBTLE, ALWAYS SINCERE; NEVER GRASPING, ALWAYS GENEROUS; NEVER ACTING FROM EXPEDIENCY, ALWAYS FROM PRINCIPLE. HE IS THE PATTERN OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY." THE PASSAGE IN HEBREWS OFFERS SEVERAL AREAS WHEREBY WE MAY EXAMINE THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY:

(5 TESTS:)

I. THE TEACHER-PUPIL TEST v.12

THERE IS A NORMAL AND DESIRABLE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING ABNORMAL ABOUT A PUPIL WHO STAYS AT THE SAME LEVEL OF LEARNING FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. IT IS A FORM OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT AND IT IS SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT AS "DULL OF HEARING." v.11 IT SPEAKS OF FOLK WHO ARE SLOW OR SLUGGISH IN GRASPING SPIRITUAL TRUTH OR THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY RETARDED. MOST OF MY ADULT LIFE I HAVE LISTENED TO THE SAINTS COMPLAIN ABOUT DULL PREACHERS - THIS VERSE STRIKES AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM WITH DULL PARISHIONERS - IT IS A TWO-WAY STREET. THERE IS A TIME WHEN A PERSON'S LEVEL OF LEARNING SHOULD BE HIGHER AND WHEN THE STUDENT STOPS LEARNING HE'S IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. (COMMENT ON THE FELLOW OUT WHERE WE USED TO LIVE IN THE LATE 1940'S WHO APPLIED

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FOR A JOB IN A LOCAL FACTORY. ON THE APPLICATION AND IN AN ORAL INTERVIEW HE STATED HIS EDUCATION DID NOT GO BEYOND THE FOURTH GRADE - REASON HE WAS DRAFTED BEFORE HE COULD MAKE FIFTH GRADE.) THIS KIND OF EXAGGERATION IS NOT FUNNY WHEN IT APPLIES TO PEOPLE WHO STAY OR SLIDE BACKWARD IN THEIR SPIRITUAL BABYHOOD. (THINK OF THE MANY CHURCH ATTENDERS WHO HAVE HEARD SERMONS, ATTENDED SEMINARS, CONFERENCES, WATCHED FILMS, GONE TO BIBLE STUDY GROUPS OF EVERY IMAGINABLE CLASSIFICATION YET HAVE MADE LITTLE OR NO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IN THE THINGS THAT COUNT. THE TWO WORDS "OUGHT" AND "AGAIN" SPEAK TO THOSE WHO HAVE FAILED THEIR EXAM REGARDING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. GOD DOESN'T GRADE ON THE CURVE AND NEITHER DOES HE PROMOTE PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH UNTIL THE EXAMS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY AND THE COURSE OF STUDY PASSED. UNLESS ONE PASSES THE EXAM WE WILL STAY IN BASIC TRAINING OR BOOT CAMP FOREVER. SOME OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE STAY ON THE PLAYGROUND AND NEVER GET TO THE BATTLEGROUND OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. THEIR INTEREST IS ON SURVIVAL AND NOT SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OTHER PEOPLE. EVERY COLLEGE AND SEMINARY HAS ITS PERENNIAL PUPIL PROBLEMS, THAT IS, THOSE WHO NEVER LEAVE THE SECURITY OF THE SCHOOL AND NEVER PUT INTO OPERATION THOSE THINGS LEARNED IN THE CLASSROOM. (ONCE A TEACHER HAD SOMEONE REFERRED TO AS "HER PUPIL." THE TEACHER HASTENED TO POINT OUT THAT THE PARTICULAR STUDENT IN QUESTION HAD ATTENDED HER CLASSES BUT WAS NEVER HER PUPIL - THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. (COMMENT ON TEACHERS WHO TEACH - PERRY, MEADOWS, MCCLAIN.) MATURE BELIEVERS DESIRE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THE CROWD, A CLASS, A CLIENT, OR EVEN A CROOK FOR THE SHEER LOVE OF PASSING ON THE GOOD NEWS TO SOMEONE ELSE. THE INDICTMENT IN THIS

E. Teacher-Pupil

PASSAGE IS THAT WHEN THESE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TEACHERS THEY WERE STILL TODDLERS PLAYING WITH TOYS AND NOT TRAFFICKING IN TRUTH!

II. THE MILK AND MEAT TEST (v.12)

CHILDREN ARE NOT USUALLY CONCERNED ABOUT A BALANCED DIET. THEY WILL CHOOSE CANDY, COOKIES, COKES AND CONES OF ICE CREAM OVER MEAT, VEGETABLES, BREAD AND MILK. THEIR SOLE BASIS FOR EATING SOMETHING IS DOES IT LOOK AND TASTE GOOD. IN OTHER WORDS DO I LIKE IT, NOT DOES IT LIKE ME. IF IT TASTES GOOD, IT MUST BE GOOD. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT MILK IS ESPECIALLY SUITED FOR BABIES. IN ORDER TO ENJOY MEAT ONE MUST HAVE TEETH - AND THAT SUGGESTS GROWTH. ONE AREA OF CONSIDERATION AND EXPLANATION REGARDING THESE TWO TERMS IS THAT IT IS NOT THE DOCTRINE THAT IS IN QUESTION HERE BUT THE DEPTH TO WHICH ONE HAS EMBRACED THE SUBJECT. A BELIEVER MUST NOT ONLY GROW UP BUT GROW DOWN IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. THAT IS, HIS ROOT SYSTEM SHOULD BE AS SUBSTANTIAL AS THE BRANCH SYSTEM. MANY LOOK UPON THE GOSPEL AS THE MILK OF THE WORD AND SUBJECTS IN ESCHATOLOGY AND THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE AS THE MEAT OF THE WORD. THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY THE CASE. PAUL TAUGHT THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY EARLY IN THEIR CHRISTIAN LIFE. (COMPARE I PETER 2:2 AND COLOSSIANS 3:16.) AS WE GROW IN CHRISTIAN GRACE, WE SHOULD MOVE FROM NIPPLE AND THUMB-SUCKING TO CHEWING THE CUD OF THE WORD. (JOSHUA 1:8) (ILLUSTRATE WITH NUMMY BREAK - THREE PACIFIERS, ONE FOR THE MOUTH AND ONE FOR EACH HAND - LAURIN.)

1. Teacher / Pupil
2 Milk / Meat

III. THE BABY-ADULT TEST - v.13/14A

THE WORD "BABE" IN THE TEXT IS THE WORD FOR INFANT. FULL AGE REFERS TO MATURITY. THE ONE CHARACTERISTIC THAT DISTINGUISHES BABES FROM ADULTS IS THE PLACE OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND SPIRITUAL DIET. THE BABY IS "UNSKILLFUL" OR UNDERDEVELOPED AND LITERALLY "WITHOUT EXPERIENCE" IN THE WORD OF GOD. HE DOES NOT KNOW OR KNOW HOW TO USE HIS BIBLE IN ORDER TO FEED HIMSELF IN A CONSISTENT DEVOTIONAL LIFE AND TO MINISTER TO OTHERS. THE REASON: "BABIES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING THEIR WAY MORE THAN GETTING INTO THE WORD." WATCH TWO KIDS PLAYING WITH ONE TRUCK IN A SAND PILE. IT WILL BE SNATCH, GRAB, HIT, THROW AND CRY TIME! CHILDREN MUST LEARN AS THEY DEVELOP THAT THIS IS NOT THE WAY GROWNUPS ACT - AT LEAST ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO ACT! (COMPARE I COR. 3:1, I COR. 13:11) BY THE WAY, THE SAME GREEK WORD APPEARS IN THIS PASSAGE AND IN THE CORINTHIAN PASSAGE. IT IS - NEIPIOS AND COMES FROM A WORD WHICH MEANS "NOT TO SPEAK". WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SMALL BABY. IT IS USUALLY SELFISH, DOESN'T CARE OR THINK MUCH ABOUT OTHERS. CRIES EASILY AND OFTEN. CAN'T FEED HIMSELF. SLEEPS A LOT. HITS OTHERS TO GET ITS WAY, RESORTS TO TANTRUMS AND TAKING INSTEAD OF TOUCHING AND TALKING. ALMOST ABOVE ALL ELSE, A BABY IS DEPENDENT ON OTHERS TO FEED, DRESS, BATHE AND LEAD THEM AROUND. EVERYTHING HE NEEDS HE GETS FROM OTHERS. THE SPIRITUAL BABY IS MUCH LIKE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHEN THEY CAME OUT OF EGYPT. THEY WERE OUT OF EGYPT'S DANGER BUT NOT INTO CANAAN'S DELIGHT.

IV. THE RIGHT AND WRONG TEST

THE WORD "DISCERN" MEANS TO MAKE DISTINCTIONS. THAT IS, THE MATURE BELIEVER SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON THE WORD OF GOD, SPIRITUAL COUNSEL AND THE INTERNAL PROMPTINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. INFANTS ARE USUALLY BOTH UNCONCERNED AND UNSKILLFUL ABOUT TWO MAJOR AREAS: DANGERS AND DECISIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS SOMETHING VERY UNBECOMING A 50-YEAR OLD MAN WHO HAS TO CALL MOMMIE AND POPPIE TO ASK IF HE CAN BE AWAY FOR THE WEEKEND OR HOW MANY GROCERIES SHOULD HE BUY, OR WHAT COLOR SUIT SHOULD HE PURCHASE. INABILITY TO DECIDE IS ONE STRIKING SHORTCOMING OF SPIRITUAL INFANCY. THE RIGHTNESS OR WRONGNESS OF A SITUATION IS CATEGORIZED AS ETHICS. THE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE IS ETHICALLY ANEMIC. THE SPIRITUAL BABE IS PLAGUED BY QUESTIONS OF HOW TO BEHAVE, WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO DO, HOW TO DRESS, WITH WHOM TO FELLOWSHIP, AND DOZENS OF QUESTIONS IN THAT REGARD. (COMMENT REGARDING JWM - LATE-NIGHT CALL - LADY HAD READ JOHN R. RICE'S BOOK AND WANTED TO KNOW HOW LONG IS LONG AND HOW SHORT SHOULD SHE CUT HER HAIR? HIS SPIRITED RESPONSE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH SHAVING THE HEAD OR BALDNESS - DON'T ELABORATE!

V. THE FOUNDATION-SUPERSTRUCTURE TEST

IN PAUL'S ANALOGY, HE STATES THAT THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IS NOT THE WHOLE BUILDING. THE ABCs OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE ARE THE START OF LEARNING AND NOT THE SUM. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO MOVE FROM BASICS TO BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS. (ALONG THE ROADS OF SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA THERE ARE MANY "FORSAKEN FOUNDATIONS" - EXPLAIN.) SOME FOLK WHO GO FORWARD IN A MEETING SOON "GO BACKWARD" FROM CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT. JUSTIFICATION IS THE GATE

THAT LEADS TO A PLACE CALLED SANCTIFICATION THAT IS THE GARB OR GAMUT THAT LEADS TO GLORIFICATION AND THE BELIEVER'S ULTIMATE GOAL AND GLORY. (RELATE STORY IN SANDERS' BOOK ON "HE DIED CLIMBING" - THE TOMBSTONE OF A MAN WHO DIED IN A FALL WHILE CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN IN THE ALPS. IN MY LIBRARY THERE ARE SEVERAL BOOKS ON HEBREWS. ONE BY W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS IS ENTITLED "LET US GO ON." THE SUBTITLE IS "THE SECRET OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS" OR IN THE WORDS OF WIERSBE - THE PROGRESS OF A PILGRIM. THE INSCRIPTION IN THAT BOOK FOR CHRISTMAS 1953 SAID SIMPLY: "DOROTHY; GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU GO ON WITH THE LORD." SIGNED ELMA.

A Race!

Grow up

Go For it

Go On!

Don't Coast

A doctor - op. Room -
"it always too soon to quit!

Soldiers of Christ -
Stand in the breech -
Let us go on!

"Let us go on to maturity...

RKS

BCC - AM
8/26/73

MATURITY

HEBREWS 5:11-6:9

"Pilgrims Should Make Progress" (Wiersbe)

THE BASIS FOR THE SUBJECT TODAY IS THE WORD PERFECTION IN 6:1. IT IS EXACTLY THE SAME GREEK WORD THAT IS TRANSLATED "OF FULL AGE IN 5:14. GOD'S DESIRE FOR HIS CHILDREN IS THE SAME AS ANY RESPONSIBLE PARENT. HE WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO GROW UP AND LIVE SUCCESSFUL LIVES. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS ONE OF THE MAJOR SEGMENTS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS. A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF THE PROBLEMS IN ANY CHURCH HAVE TO DO WITH SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY. IT WAS THE BASIS FOR THE ACCUTE PROBLEMS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH. IT HAD DIVIDED THEM INTO GROUPS AND HAD ARRESTED THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS SIMPLY OUR DEALING WITH EVERY SITUATION WHICH COMES INTO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN A MATURE WAY. SANDERS SAYS, "IT IS THE ABILITY TO MEET THE DEMANDS AND EMERGENCIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN A MATURE AND NOT IN A CHILDISH WAY." THE SPIRITUAL MATURE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS ABLE TO FUNCTION HAPPILY IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE IS THE PERSON WHO CREATES STRAIN AND TENSION AND INDULGES IN SELF-CENTERED EMOTION WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE. ONCE AGAIN SANDERS HAS SAID "IF FINANCIAL REVERSES COME, HE IS AT LOSS TO KNOW WHY THIS SHOULD COME TO HIM AND HE BLAMES GOD. WHEN HOPES ARE DASHED, HE LOSES HEART AND DROPS HIS BUNDLE. WHEN ADVERSITY OVERTAKES HIM, HE IS SWALLOWED UP IN SELF-PITY. IN DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES HE INDULGES IN TANTRUMS OR SULKS AND CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE THAT MARS HOME UNITY. WHEN PLACED WITH OTHER DIFFICULT PEOPLE, HE FALLS A PREY TO CENSORIOUS CRITICISM AND GIVES AS GOOD AS HE GETS. WHEN HIS WILL IS THWARTED BY GOD OR MAN HE BECOMES REBELLIOUS AND BITTER." (SANDERS) SPIRITUAL MATURITY DOES NOT COME TO THE BELIEVER EASILY NOR NATURALLY. IT TAKES TIME AND YIELDEDNESS TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD ALONG WITH SOME SPIRITUAL INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF THE BELIEVER. (Israel - Safely delivered from Egypt — short of Canaan Rest)

I. MARKS OF SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY - 5:11-14

1 ONE OF THE FIRST INDICATIONS OF SPIRITUAL BABYHOOD IS CALLED "DULLNESS OF HEARING." THE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE ARE DULL IN SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. THEY ARE LAZY AND UNDISCIPLINED WHEN IT COMES TO SPIRITUAL SENSES. I DO NOT MEAN TO MINIMIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SIMPLE GOSPEL, BUT THERE ARRIVES A POINT IN LIFE WHERE THE CHRISTIAN MUST MOVE TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS PREACHING THE GOSPEL. THE WORD DULL CARRIES WITH IT SLOWNESS OF MIND OR ONE WHO IS WITLESS OR NUMBED AS FAR AS HIS SPIRITUAL SENSES ARE

CONCERNED. THERE IS NO SIN LIKE THE SIN OF DULLNESS. THERE IS NOTHING WORSE THAN TO BE CALLED SPIRITUALLY DULL. THEIR INTEREST WAS ONLY AT THE VERY LOWEST LEVEL WHEN IT CAME TO SPIRITUAL TRUTH. THEY WERE INCAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING ANYTHING BEYOND THE VERY ELEMENTARY TRUTH OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. ANOTHER INDICATION OF SPIRITUALLY ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT HAD TO DO WITH THEIR DIET. THEY WERE MILK DRINKERS ONLY. THEIR SPIRITUAL BABYHOOD WAS REFLECTED IN THEIR DIET. MILK IS NECESSARY FOR CHILDREN AND SOME OF IT IS NECESSARY FOR ADULTS, BUT IT IS ABNORMAL FOR AN ADULT IN HIS MIDDLE-AGE SPAN TO DRINK ONLY MILK! THERE WAS SOMETHING SPIRITUALLY WRONG WITH THE CHRISTIAN WHO REFUSES TO GROW UP, WHO IS CONTENT TO REMAIN AT A CHILD'S LEVEL OF SPIRITUAL INTERESTS AND RESPONSIBILITY. THE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE ARE UNSKILLFUL IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. ONE MARK OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE DESIRE AND ABILITY TO TEACH OTHERS THE WORD OF GOD. THE MATURE CHRISTIAN WILL SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES AND LOOK FOR OCCASIONS TO TEACH OTHERS AND SHARE HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD. TEACHING OTHERS WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IS SIMPLY A SPIRITUALLY NORMAL REACTION. THE REASON WE DO NOT WANT TO SHARE THE WORD OF GOD WITH OTHERS IS BECAUSE WE HAVE NOTHING TO SHARE! THE MAN WHO IS IN THE BOOK WILL ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE BOOK! SPIRITUAL BABES ARE DESTITUTE AND UNSKILLFUL OF GOD'S WORD. THE MATURE MAN REALIZES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS WONDERFUL TOOL GOD HAS GIVEN HIS PEOPLE. ANOTHER MARK OF SPIRITUAL BABYHOOD IS IN THE AREA OF DISCERNMENT. MEN OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH ARE QUICK TO DISCERN WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG. DISCERNMENT COMES WITH MATURITY. CHILDREN ARE DEPENDENT UPON THEIR PARENTS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT DEVELOPED THE POWERS OF DISCERNMENT. GOOD JUDGMENT COMES WITH THE EXPERIENCES OF LIFE. A MATURE MAN DOES NOT MAKE THE CHILDISH CHOICES HE DID AS A YOUNGSTER. ONLY BELIEVERS WHO FILL THEIR MINDS WITH GOD'S WORD WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE CORRECT VALUE JUDGMENTS.

II. CALL FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT - 6:1-3

THE CALL TO CHRISTIAN LIVING IS TO MOVE BEYOND THE FOUNDATION TRUTHS. THE WORD "LEAVING" IN VERSE 1 DOES NOT SUGGEST THE IDEA OF FORESAKING OR ABANDONING THESE TRUTHS, BUT RATHER TO MOVE FROM THE FOUNDATION TO THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AS A BUILDING MOVES TOWARD COMPLETION. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE GOOD PROGRESS IF ONE NEEDS TO KEEP LAYING THE FOUNDATION OVER AND

(From Basics to Better things)

Growth is normal where there is LIFE.

Skilled - more to different grades of development so in Ch. living.

OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN ORDER TO TEACH. THE FIRST TWO DOCTRINES MENTIONED IN VERSE 1 HAVE TO DO WITH THE BELIEVER'S CONVERSION AND HIS RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL. THE SECOND PAIR OF FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS MENTIONED IN VERSE 2 HAD TO DO WITH JEWISH CEREMONIAL ABLUTIONS AND INITIATORY RITES. THE LAST TWO FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES HAVE TO DO WITH SOME OF THE EARLY TRUTHS WE LEARN WITH REFERENCE TO LIFE AND JUDGMENT. THESE DOCTRINES ARE IMPORTANT AND ARE IN NO WISE MINIMIZED IN THE TEXT BUT THEY ARE FOUNDATIONAL AND WE SHOULD MASTER THEM AND MOVE ON TO OTHER BIBLE TRUTHS FOR OUR LIVES.

III. WARNING ABOUT SPIRITUAL DISASTER 6:4-9

THIS PASSAGE IS ONE OF THE MOST DISPUTED IN ALL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN SETTLE THE DISPUTE IN OUR LIMITED TIME PERIOD. HOWEVER, LET ME HASTEN TO SAY THAT THOSE WHO TEACH THAT THIS PASSAGE INDICATES THAT A SAVED PERSON MAY BE LOST HAVE NOT READ IT OR STUDIED IT CAREFULLY. IT SPEAKS OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE OF WHOM RESTORATION IS IMPOSSIBLE ONCE THEY HAVE ENTERED INTO THIS PARTICULAR AREA - VERSE 4! I HAVE MET VERY FEW ARMINIAN PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT THIS POSITION. IF THESE VERSES TEACH THAT A CHRISTIAN MAY BE LOST, THEY ALSO TEACH THAT HE IS LOST AND DOOMED FOREVER WITHOUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF BEING RECLAIMED. I THINK IT IS A VERY UNWISE POLICY TO TAKE DIFFICULT PASSAGES SUCH AS THIS WITH PORTIONS NOT EASILY UNDERSTOOD AND MAKE THEM THE BASIS FOR UNDERMINING SOME VERY SIMPLE AND CLEAR TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER. IT SEEMS THERE ARE TWO EXTREMES IN THIS VERSE AS DELITZSCH HAS SUGGESTED. FOR SOME IT IS A PILLOW OF CARNAL SECURITY. FOR OTHERS IT IS A RACK OF DESPAIR. NEITHER OF THESE POSITIONS IS CORRECT. MY NEW TESTAMENT PROFESSOR BELIEVED THAT PAUL WAS REFERRING TO A HYPOTHETICAL CASE NOT A CASE IN FACT. IN HIS VIEW, PAUL BEGAN WHERE THESE JEWS BEGAN SUPPOSING THAT APOSTASY WAS POSSIBLE, EVEN FOR A PROFESSING CHRISTIAN. SO PAUL BEGAN WITH THEIR ASSUMPTION THOUGHT THE ASSUMPTION WAS FALSE. PAUL USES THIS HYPOTHETICAL CASE AS A WARNING AGAINST THE TERRIBLE END OF A PERSON WHO ASSUMES THE WRONG THING. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTICE THAT PAUL DOES NOT SAY THAT THESE HEBREWS HAD INDEED FALLEN AWAY NOR DOES HE DIRECTLY ASSERT THAT ANY TRUE CONVERT CAN; HE SIMPLY AGREES OR BEGINS WITH THEIR ASSUMPTION AND PROCEEDS TO A LOGICAL CONCLUSION. W. H. GRIFFITH

Shame More

(1) (2) the writer's Method

Principle: Interp. the Obscure by the Obvious. (with care)

THOMAS STATES CONCERNING THIS PASSAGE, "THE PASSAGE IS APPARENTLY A SUPPOSED CASE TO CORRECT THEIR WRONG IDEAS, AND THE ARGUMENT SEEMS TO BE THAT IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD EXPERIENCES OF VERSES 4-6 TO FALL AWAY, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM UNLESS CHRIST DIED A SECOND TIME." A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE IS IN VERSE 9. FOR THE MAN WHO IS TRULY SAVED, THERE IS NO PROBLEM WITH THIS PASSAGE. THERE ARE CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ACCOMPANY SALVATION IN HIS LIFE. IF HE IS REALLY SAVED, HE WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT FACT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT, AND SPECIFICALLY VERSE 6 AND THE PHRASE "FALL AWAY." THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DAVID AND PETER, WHO FALL AND STUMBLE IN THEIR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE, AND A MAN LIKE JUDAS WHO FELL AWAY FROM THE VERY TRUTHS HE PRETENDED TO PREACH. HENDERSON HAS POINTED OUT THAT THE UNSAVED MAN WILL GO A LONG AWAY IN HIS ZEAL FOR GOD AND YET NOT BE SAVED. ESAU WAS TEARFUL AND REMORSEFUL ABOUT HIS SIN. JUDAS WAS THE SAME, BALAAM WAS LOOKING FOR CORRECT ACTION, SAUL AND PHARAOH AND AHAB AND JEHU AND HEROD AND MANY OTHERS APPEARED TO WANT TO SERVE GOD AND DO THE RIGHT THING BUT WERE FAR FROM BEING CHILDREN OF GOD!

IV. MARKS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

SINCE THE BULK OF THIS PASSAGE HAS TO DO WITH SPIRITUAL MATURITY, IT WOULD BE WELL TO EXAMINE, IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE, WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY. DOCTOR A. W. TOZIER HAS SUGGESTED SEVERAL SUCH MARKS.

(1) 1) HE IS OCCUPIED WITH HOLINESS AND NOT HAPPINESS. HOLINESS IS ATTRACTIVE ONLY TO THE MATURE CHRISTIAN. THE IMMATURE IS AFRAID OF IT. A MARK OF BABYHOOD OR CHILDISHNESS IS THE DESIRE TO BE HAPPY ABOVE THE DESIRE TO BE GOOD.

(2) 2) OUR SOCIETY IS OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA OF HAPPINESS. THE MATURE BELIEVER IS MORE INTERESTED IN GIVING THAN IN RECEIVING. A CHILD PREFERS RECEIVING TO GIVING. HE HAS TO BE TAUGHT THE JOY OF GIVING AND SHARING AND THIS RUNS IN OPPOSITION TO HIS OWN SELFISH MOTIVES.

(3) 3) THE MATURE CHRISTIAN PREFERS SERVING TO BEING SERVED. CHILDREN PRESS TO HAVE EVERYONE SHOWER ATTENTION UPON THEM. IMMATURITY DESIRES TO STAND IN THE SPOTLIGHT AND IS UNWILLING TO SHARE THAT LIGHT WITH ANYONE ELSE. COMPARE MARK 10:45

(4) 4) A MATURE CHRISTIAN MANIFESTS A CHEERFULNESS AND JOYFULNESS IN HIS PERSONALITY. A GLOOMY, MOODY PERSON SIMPLY REVEALS THE EVIDENCE OF HIS OWN INNER CONFLICTS.

THE MATURE CHRISTIAN DOES NOT LIVE IN THE SHADOWS OF SUCH CONFLICT. (5) A MATURE CHRISTIAN WILL BE A FRUITFUL AND NOT A BARREN PERSON (COMPARE JOHN 12:24). (6) A MATURE CHRISTIAN WILL ACCEPT DISCIPLINE. A MATURE CHRISTIAN MAY NOT ENJOY THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD BUT HE IS WILLING TO ENDURE IT BECAUSE HE KNOWS IT IS FOR HIS WELL-BEING. ONE OF THE CRUCIAL AREAS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS THAT OF A PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL LIFE. ONE REASON WHY MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO AWAY TO COLLEGE OR TO THE ARMED FORCES DO NOT STAND THE STRAIN IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT LEARNED HOW TO FEED THEMSELVES SPIRITUALLY. THE WARM SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT OF A STRONG CHURCH IS IMPORTANT BUT IT IS NOT THE ONLY SAFEGUARD TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY. THIS IS A MATTER OF PERSONALLY GETTING INTO THE WORD OF GOD, PRAYING, AND WITNESSING.

IT IS NOT EASY TO ADMIT OUR OWN SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY. WE WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT WE ARE VERY SPIRITUALLY SOPHISTICATED. IT REQUIRES REAL GRACE TO FACE THE POINT OF OUR FAILURE AND SEEK, BY GOD'S GRACE, TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM. GOD'S WILL AND DESIGN FOR THE BELIEVER IS TO GROW UP AND TO GO ON TOWARDS SPIRITUAL ADULTHOOD.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING DECEMBER 14, 1980

A.M.

THE OFFICES OF CHRIST: PRIESTHOOD

HEBREWS 4:14-16

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY INDEPENDENT CHURHCES, LIKE OURS, HAVE PASTORS INSTEAD OF PRIESTS? AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORD OF GOD WILL REVEAL THAT THE APOSTLES WERE NEVER CALLED PRIESTS AS DISTINQUISHED FROM OTHER BELIEVERS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT NO ONE IS EVER CALLED A PRIEST IN THE SACRIFICIAL SENSE OTHER THAN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE TERM PRIEST IS RECORDED SOME THIRTY TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. NINETEEN OF THOSE REFERENCES HAVE TO DO WITH THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WHICH HAS BEEN DONE AWAY, THREE APPLY TO THE ENTIRE BODY OF BELIEVERS AND THE REST TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS PRIESTHOOD. ONE WILL SEARCH THE NEW TESTAMENT IN VAIN TO FIND THE TERM PRIEST IN A SACRIFICING SENSE APPLIED TO A CHRISTIAN MINISTER. THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE SPOKE OF THEIR FELLOW LABORERS AND CO-WORKERS IN THE GOSPEL WITH VARIOUS TERMS BUT NEVER AS PRIESTS. THE REASON WHY SOME LETHARGICAL RELIGIOUS GROUPS CALL THEIR CLERGYMAN PRIESTS IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE TURNED THE SACRAMENT INTO A SACRIFICE AND THE PRIEST IS THE ONE WHO OFFICIATES AND ACTS AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN OFFERING SACRIFICE FOR THE FAITHFUL, SO SAYS THE RITUAL. DEEPLY ENGRAINED IN THE NATURE OF MAN IS THE IDEA THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON CANNOT HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO GOD. HE MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF INTERMEDIARY, THAT IS A PERSON OR CLASS OF PERSONS, WHO HAVE SPECIAL FAVOR OR ACCESS TO GOD AND WHO CAN REPRESENT THEIR FELLOW MAN BEFORE GOD. THE NEED FOR A PRIEST IS BOUND UP IN THE UNIVERSAL FEELING THAT SOMEHOW MAN HAS OFFENDED DEITY, TO WHOM MAN IS RESPONSIBLE, AND THEREFORE, SOME QUALIFIED PERSON OR PERSONS MUST BE AVAILABLE TO PETITION THE GODS OR TO APPEASE THEM. IN SUCH A RELIGIOUS CLIMATE, IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW A PRIESTLY CLASS OF MEN MIGHT RISE TO POWER AND EVEN DOMINATE THEIR FELLOW MAN. MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE INVADED THE STRONGHOLDS OF HEATHENISM HAVE FOUND THE IDEA OF PRIESTHOOD LATENT

IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER. MARTIN LUTHER AND OTHERS REBELLED AGAINST THE IDEA OF A SPECIAL CLASS OF PRIESTS WHO INTERCEDED FOR THE SAINTS. ALONG WITH THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURES AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER WAS ONE OF THE TENETS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE FATHER ACTED AS PRIEST IN THE FAMILY, AS IN THE CASE OF JOB, ABRAHAM, NOAH AND OTHERS. IN THE DAYS OF MOSES, A PRIESTLY CLASS OR TRIBE AROSE TO FUNCTION IN ISRAEL. AARON AND LEVI SERVED IN THAT CAPACITY. LET US LEARN AT LEAST ONE BASIC BIBLE FACT ABOUT PRIESTHOOD AS IT RELATES TO BELIEVERS.

FACT:

BY VIRTUE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, YOU AND I AS GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPROACH GOD DIRECTLY WITH NO EARTHLY PRIEST ACTING AS GOBETWEEN. (ROMANS 5:1-2). THE REASON THIS IS TRUE IS BECAUSE THE WORD OF GOD SAYS YOU AND I ARE OUR OWN PRIEST ON EARTH, (I PET. 2:5, 9 - NOTICE THE EMPHASIS ON THE WORDS "YE ARE" WHICH LITERALLY MEANS YE YOURSELVES ARE YOUR OWN PRIEST. (REV. 1:5-6) NOTICE THE THREE WORDS PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND THE FACT THAT CHRIST MADE US SUCH! ACCORDING TO THESE TWO VERSES, PRIESTHOOD IS THE PRIVILEGE OF EVERY BELIEVER! THERE IS NO PERSON ON EARTH NEEDED TO INTERVENE ON OUR BEHALF. (RECITE STORY OF IRISH MAN WHO BECAME CONVERTED, WENT TO HIS PRIEST AND DEVISED A SHORT CUT!) NO PERSON HAS SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO SPEAK TO GOD ON YOUR AND MY BEHALF. EVERY BELIEVER HAS THE RIGHT OF DIRECT APPROACH AND MUST STAND ON HIS FEET, SPIRITUALLY, IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. MANY PEOPLE DO NOT ACT AS THEIR OWN PRIEST BECAUSE:

(1) SOME ARE NOT SAVED
(2) SOME ARE UNAWARE OF THE CLEAR TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE
(3) SOME ARE CAUGHT UP IN CHURCH TRADITION AND PRACTICE.

TO BE SURE, THERE IS SOMETHING COMFORTING TO SOME IN THE IDEA OF HAVING SPECIAL PERSON WHO IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SPECIAL PRIVILEGE OR ENDOWMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO FAVOR WITH GOD. AS A MATTER OF

FACT, MEDICAL AUTHORITIES SPEAK OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NECESSITY OF HAVING SOME KIND OF CONFESSOR ON EARTH FOR THE THERAPEUTIC VALUE IT BRINGS TO THE HUMAN SOUL. DR. TOURNIER SAYS THAT SOMETIMES DOCTORS BECOME AS SUCH TO PEOPLE WITHOUT A RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND. HOWEVER, YOU AND I NEED TO LIVE UP TO OUR PRIVILEGE AS RECORDED IN THE WORD OF GOD. WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO COME TO THE LORD, CONFESS OUR SINS, AND BE CLEANSED. ALL OF THIS TAKES PLACE WHEN WE ACT AS OUR OWN PRIEST. WE OFTEN SPEAK OF THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS AS IT RELATES TO HIS PAST MINISTRY. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THERE IS AN UNFINISHED WORK OF CHRIST THAT HAS TO DO WITH HIS PRESENT MINISTRY. TODAY, HE IS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVEN. ONE MIGHT ASK THE QUESTION, WHY DO WE NEED A PRIEST AT ALL? WHY NOT JUST GO TO GOD WHEN YOU NEED HIM AND ASK OR SOLICIT HIS HELP? THE PROBLEM HAS TO DO WITH SIN. MEN CANNOT COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD UNTIL SIN HAS BEEN DEALT WITH AND THIS APPLIES TO BOTH SINS PENALTY AND POWER, GUILT AND DEFILEMENT. SIN KEEPS PEOPLE FROM GOD AND FOR THAT REASON EVERY BELIEVER NEEDS HIS HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVEN AND NEEDS TO ACT AS HIS OWN PRIEST ON EARTH. TODAY WE WILL LEARN SOME BIBLE FACTS CONCERNING OUR LORD'S PRESENT PRIESTLY MINISTRY IN HEAVEN.

I. CHRIST, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST - HEBREWS 4:14

THE TERM GREAT IN THE TEXT IS THE WORD MEGAS WHICH IS PART OF OUR ENGLISH WORD MEGAPHONE, MEGATON, MEGACYCLE, MEGALOPOLIS AND MEGALOMANIA - A DISORDERED MENTAL CONDITION IN WHICH THE PATIENT HAS GRANDIOSE DELUSIONS. THE MEGA OR GREAT IS APPLIED TO OUR LORD NO LESS THAN THREE TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

(1) GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP - HEBREWS 13:20

"NOW THE GOD OF PEACE, THAT BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; TO WHOM BE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN."

(2) Great God - Titus 2:13
(3) Great High Priest - Hebrews 4:14

The term great is often associated with honors bestowed upon men by men involving external trappings of power and privilege. Our Lord's greatness was His essential glory and the greatness of His past, present and future service. We remember the lesson Jesus taught His disciples when He rebuked them for their self seeking concerning kingdom rule and taught them that the measure of greatness is the measure of service. Liddon reminds his readers: "A man who can bring social force, wealth and high intelligence to bear upon any subject which he has at heart will always pass for a great man in the world's current language, if only because whether for good or evil, he can leave his mark conspicuously upon it." Most of us know that great wealth does not make great men. Our Lord's greatness had to do with His great work for mankind and He did not and does not consider that work beneath His dignity. The priests of the Old Testament Levitical system were never called great. This term was never used concerning the sons of Aaron or Levi. Our Lord was great in His own right and His greatness was not conferred upon Him in the sense of delegated authority. He was great from the beginning. He is great now. The phrase: "That is past into the heavens" in Hebrews 4:14 suggests an area of greatness. Every other priest who has ever lived has passed to the grave. Our Lord is the only one who has come from death to enter into the very presence of God in heaven. His greatness is reflected in the fact that now He appears at the right hand of God performing His priestly function for His own. No other priest has or could perform in such a way.

A. <u>His Great Ability</u> - Hebrews 2:18

There are three words in Hebrews which begin with the letter "S" which speak of our Lord's great ability.

(1) ~~He is able to save~~ - Hebrews 7:25, 2:17
This term says that our Lord is able to bring to its finality or completion the salvation of the soul.

ONE COMMENTATOR SUGGESTS THAT IN ROMANS, SALVATION IS WITH REFERENCE TO DEATH, JUDGMENT AND HELL. IN HEBREWS SALVATION IS DELIVERANCE FROM THE PRESSURE OF THINGS WITHOUT AND WITHIN AND SUGGESTS THAT THERE IS NO PROBLEM WHICH COMES TO THE BELIEVER IN THIS LIFE THAT OUR LORD IS NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE THE SOLUTION. THERE IS NO SIN FROM WHICH HE IS NOT ABLE TO DELIVER AND NO FOE OR ADVERSITY FROM WHICH HE CANNOT RESCUE THE TRUSTING SON OF GOD. THERE IS NO OTHER PERSON OR SOURCE UNDER HEAVEN WHEREBY A PERSON MAY BE FORGIVEN AND CLEANSED FROM SIN APART FROM JESUS CHRIST.

(2) HE IS ABLE TO SUCCOR - HEBREWS 2:18

THE WORD SUCCOR IS AN OLD ENGLISH WORD WHICH MEANS TO COMFORT OR HELP. OUR LORD IS ABLE TO HELP MEN. THIS ABILITY GOES FAR BEYOND A SIMPLE WILLINGNESS OR DESIRE TO HELP, IT SUGGESTS ONE WHO HAS THE POWER TO HELP. (THE WORD ABLE IN THE TEXT IS THE WORD DUNAMOS.) ALSO, THE WORD SUCCOR IS TRANSLATED ANOTHER PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN AN INTERESTING FASHION. (ACTS 27:17 - THE WORD HELPS USED TO UNDERGIRD, ENCIRCLE THE SHIP TO KEEP IT FROM BREAKING APART IN THE STORM IS THE SAME WORD AS SUCCOR IN THE TEXT. (RELATE STORY OF M. MOORE WHO CONFESSED SHE HAD HEARD A GREAT DEAL OF TALK AND PREACHING ABOUT OUR LORD'S COMFORTING PRESENCE BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL SHE LOST HER HUSBAND THAT SHE EXPERIENCED THIS AS A FACT.)

(3) HE IS ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE - HEBREWS 4:15

THE PHRASE "TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF" IS THE GREEK WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD SYMPATHY. JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT CONDONE OUR SINS BUT HE DOES SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES. THIS PHRASE CARRIES THE IDEA OF TO SUFFER WITH. JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN THROUGH EVERY EXPERIENCE OF TESTING KNOWN TO MAN AND EMERGED SINLESS. HE WAS ASSAULTED BY SATAN AS NO OTHER MAN AND CAME OUT VICTORIOUS. NO PERSON CAN SAY TO GOD "YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND OR KNOW HOW I FEEL". IN ONE SENSE OF THE TERM GOD CAN SAY "I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, I'VE BEEN THERE." IT IS ONE THING FOR A PERSON TO GIVE ADVICE AND HELP TO SOMEONE GOING ON A JOURNEY, IT IS ANOTHER

THING FOR A PERSON TO GIVE DIRECTION WHO HAS TRAVELED THE ROAD BEFORE YOU. THE BEST PERSON TO HELP YOU THROUGH AN ILLNESS IS SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD THE SAME ILLNESS. (RELATE PICTURE IN PAPER OF GOVERNOR AT FLOOD SCENE.) THE HEATHEN IDEA OF GOD IS ONE WHO HAS INABILITY TO FEEL ANYTHING, THAT IS ANY KIND OF HUMAN EMOTION. THIS IS NOT TRUE OF CHRIST.

B. HIS GREAT AVAILABILITY - HEBREWS 4:16

THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE IN ORDER THAT HE MAY FIND TIMELY HELP OR THAT IS, GRACE AND MERCY JUST WHEN IT IS NEEDED. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE HIGH PRIEST WOULD DRAW NEAR ONCE EACH YEAR BUT NOW MEN ARE INVITED TO COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD AS OFTEN AS IS NEEDED. THERE IS NO CASE TOO HARD, TOO LARGE OR SMALL, NO PERSON TOO POOR AND NO PROBLEM TO BIG FOR THE LORD TO HANDLE. THERE IS A PLACE WHERE YOU AND I MAY GO IN THE TIME OF NEED AND FIND ASSISTANCE FOR OUR INNER MAN. (RELATE THIS VERSE TO MAN HANGING BY FINGERTIPS OR MAN CROSSING BRIDGE IN TAMPA, FLORIDA WITH FOURTEEN INCHES TO SPARE.)

THE BIOGRAPHER OF THE LIFE OF C. I. SCOFIELD IN THE FINAL CHAPTER COMMENTED ABOUT THIS REMARKABLE LAWYER TURNED BIBLE SCHOLAR. HE SAID: "THERE IS SOMETHING IN SCOFIELD THAT DRAWS PEOPLE CLOSE TO HIM." DR. SCOFIELD HAD AN EASE WITH WHICH PEOPLE COULD GET TO HIM. WHEN HE GREETED INDIVIDUALS HE DID SO AS IF THEY WERE DOING HIM A FAVOR BY LETTING HIM WRITE IN THEIR BIBLES! HE NEVER SEEMED TO FEEL ANY DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND ANY PERSON WITH WHOM HE WAS TALKING. FOR THAT REASON, PEOPLE SOUGHT HIM OUT AND HE WAS READILY AVAILABLE. IF SUCH IS THE CASE OF ONE OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS THINK HOW MUCH MORE IT IS TRUE OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

II. CHRIST OUR GOOD HIGH PRIEST - HEBREW 7:24-28

DURING THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, JESUS REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD (JOHN 10:11-14) IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MEN TO RISE TO PLACES OF LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY EVEN IN THE CHURCH OR

RELIGIOUS CIRCLES AND NOT NECESSARILY BE GOOD IN CHARACTER. CHRIST IS QUALIFIED TO BE OUR HIGH PRIEST BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS NAMELY, HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED AND SEPARATED FROM SINNERS. LEVITICAL PRIESTS HAD TO OFFER FIRST OF ALL SACRIFICE FOR THEIR OWN SINS. (HEBREWS 7:27) HOWEVER, FOR CHRIST NO SUCH SACRIFICE WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE NO SUCH SIN WAS PRESENT! THE TERM HOLY SPOKE OF HIS SEPARATION AND FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF HIS DUTY TO GOD. HARMLESS MEANT THERE WAS NO EVIL IN HIS LIFE AND HE WAS ABSOLUTELY TRUSTWORTHY. HE NEVER DECEIVED OR HURT ANY MAN. UNDEFILED MEANS HIS LIFE WAS FREE FROM STAIN OR BLEMISH. SEPARATE FROM SINNERS - SPEAKS OF HIS MORAL SEPARATION EVEN THOUGH HE MOVED AMONG MEN HE WAS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MEN. NOWHERE IS THAT SEEN MORE CLEARLY THAN IN HIS IMPECCABILITY, AS REVEALED IN HEBREWS 4:15.

III. CHRIST OUR GLORIOUS HIGH PRIEST - HEBREWS 9:24-28

THE THREE "APPEARINGS" OF CHRIST IN THIS PASSAGE CORRESPONDS TO THE APPEARANCE OF AARON ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. THE HIGH PRIEST MADE THREE SIGNIFICANT APPEARANCES ON THAT DAY.

(1) HE APPEARED AT THE BRAZEN ALTAR WHERE THE SACRIFICE WAS SLAIN.

(2) HE APPEARED INSIDE THE TABERNACLE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD TO SPRINKLE THE BLOOD ON THE MERCY SEAT.

(3) AFTER COMPLETING HIS WORK HE REAPPEARED TO BLESS THE WORSHIPPERS.

THESE THREE APPEARINGS CORRESPOND TO THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE MINISTRIES OF CHRIST. THE PHRASE "HEAVEN ITSELF" SUGGESTS TO THE READER OF HEBREWS THAT HEAVEN IS A PLACE WHERE LITERAL PEOPLE LIVE! OUR LORD HAS FINISHED HIS SACRIFICE AND IS CURRENTLY IN HEAVEN DOING HIS PRIESTLY WORK. THE CHURCH AWAITS HIS GLORIOUS RETURN FOR US. (RELATE REACTION TO NEWS OF INVASION, HIGH PRIME RATE, INFLATION, EARTHQUAKES, ETC.) NOW A PROMINENT RELIGIOUS LEADER HAS SEEN A NINE HUNDRED FOOT VISION OF JESUS.

MY REACTION WAS TO TURN TO ANOTHER CHANNEL. WE'VE HAD ABOUT ALL THE BAD NEWS WE CAN TAKE. NOW THE GOOD NEWS, GOOD NEWS FOR THE SAINT, JESUS IS COMING. BAD NEWS FOR THE SINNER, ONE HAD BETTER BE READY.

CLOSE WITH 9:27 - DEATH IS NOT THE END.

ASSOCIATE HOPE WITH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND FUTURE AS IT IS BOUND UP IN JESUS CHRIST.

I. HOPE IS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH HELD OUT TO THE BELIEVER - Vs. 18

THE BORNAGAIN CHRISTIAN IS A REFUGEE IN A DYING AND DECAYING WORLD. THE PHILOSOPHIES OF MEN ARE LIKE THE SHIFTING SANDS OF THE DESERT, THEY CHANGE WITH THE TIMES. YESTERDAY'S "SURE ANSWER" HAS BEEN ABANDONED TODAY. ONE NEW GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION GIVES WAY TO ANOTHER WITH ALL OF ITS PROMISES AND RHETORIC. IN A WORLD WHERE NOTHING SEEMS TO BE A "SURE THING" HOPE IS SET BEFORE A BELIEVER AS A SURE THING. WHEN ALL AROUND US MEN GIVE IN TO DESPAIR, IT IS CHRISTIAN HOPE THAT GIVES LIGHT AT THE END OF A DARK TUNNEL. (RELATE THE STORY IN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS OF HOPE THAT DELIVERED THEM FROM THE GIANT AND THE CASTLE OF DESPAIR)

II. OUR HOPE IS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL - vs. 19

AN ANCHOR IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A VESSEL. AMONG OTHER THINGS IT KEEPS THE VESSEL FROM DRIFTING AND GIVES THE BOAT CAPABILITY TO PENETRATE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA AND SETTLE IN THE SOLID GROUND ON THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN. THEREFORE, ONE PURPOSE OF AN ANCHOR IS TO KEEP A BOAT FROM DRIFTING. THIS VERSE SAYS THAT HOPE IS TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE WHAT AN ANCHOR IS TO A SHIP. OUR WORLD IS FILLED WITH AIMLESS, PURPOSELESS, UNHAPPY AND DISSATISFIED PEOPLE. THEY HAVE NO WORTHWHILE MORAL GOALS IN LIFE. THE IMPORTANT GOALS IN LIFE FOR THEM ARE MEASURED BY MONETARY GAINS. WHEN THEIR ECONOMIC OR DOMESTIC WORLD IS SHAKEN THEY HAVE NOTHING UPON WHICH TO ANCHOR THEIR SOUL. (RELATE INCIDENT IN FOUNDRY CONCERNING ANCHORS FOR ROW BOATS.) HOPE IN THE SOUL OF THE CHRISTIAN WILL KEEP HIM FROM DRIFTING ON LIFE'S SEA AND SET HIS FAITH ON JESUS CHRIST AND HIS PROMISES. THIS ANCHOR OF THE SOUL IS DESCRIBED BY THE TERMS "SURE" AND "STEADFAST." THE WORD SURE MEANS IT WON'T TOPPLE OVER. THE WORD STEADFAST MEANS IT WILL NOT BREAK DOWN UNDER PRESSURE. (THE IDEA IS THAT OF A CAR OR TRUCK GOING OVER A BRIDGE. RELATE INCIDENT OF CEMENT TRUCK AND COAL RIVER BRIDGE.) WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR

LIFE AND MINE, IF HOPE RESIDES IN OUR LIVES, WE WILL NOT FALL OVER OR BREAK DOWN UNDER THE STORMS OF LIFE. THIS IS GOOD NEWS, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE ARE "BREAKING DOWN" UNDER THE PRESSURES OF LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST.

III. OUR HOPE IS IN CHRIST WHO IS IN HEAVEN -v.19B-20

DR. IRONSIDES RELATES AN INTERESTING STORY ABOUT THE USAGE OF THE TERM "FORERUNNER." HE SUGGESTS THAT THIS TERM REFERS TO A SMALL BOAT THAT WAS USED BY GREEK SHIPS WHEN THEY CAME TO A HARBOR THAT WAS NOT PASSABLE AT LOW TIDE. AT THAT TIME, IT WAS CUSTOMARY TO PLACE THE ANCHOR IN A BOAT THAT WAS CALLED THE FORERUNNER AND TO CAST THE ANCHOR INSIDE THE HARBOR THUS SECURING THE SHIP UNTIL THE TIDE COULD CHANGE. OUR SECURITY IS GUARANTEED, BECAUSE OUR HOPE IS BOUND UP IN JESUS CHRIST WHO IS SAFE INSIDE THE HARBOR OF HEAVEN. WE ARE SIMPLY AWAITING A CHANGE OF THE TIDE UNTIL WE JOIN HIM THERE. UNDOUBTEDLY THIS IS WHAT JOHN HAD IN MIND IN HIS REFERENCE OF I JOHN 3:3. I LIKE THE WORDS OF THE SOND ENTITLED "HARBORED IN JESUS":

FRIEND ARE YOU DRIFTING,
WITH NONE TO CARE?
FRIEND ARE YOU DYING,
DEEP IN DESPAIR?
COME UNTO JESUS,
HE'LL SET YOU FREE
HARBORED IN JESUS, ETERNALLY.
HARBORED IN JESUS, SAFE AND SECURE.
HARBORED IN JESUS, SAFE EVERMORE."

ROBERT K. SPRADLING NOVEMBER 21, 1976
P.M.

THEMES IN HEBREWS: MELCHISEDEC

HEBREWS 7 A mystery Person.

I Outline II Tough Down Points

THERE ARE THREE PRIMARY PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE WHICH DEAL WITH THIS SUBJECT. THE FIRST IS IN GE. 14, THE SECOND PS. 110, AND HEB. 5-7. TO THE JEWS WHO WERE THINKING OF A RETURN TO JUDAISM THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS A **SUPERIOR PRIEST** TO THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM. TO ILLUSTRATE THIS FACT, THE WRITER POINTS TO AN OLD TEST. PERSON TO WHOM ABRAHAM BOWED AND PAID TITHES. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS GREAT FACT, MELCHISEDEC **SYBOLIZED** ONE WHO WAS ETERNAL AND TO WHOM THE FATHER OF THE HEBREW NATION SUBJECTED HIMSELF. ANY PERSON OF THIS MAGNITUDE IS WORTHY OF OUR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

I. THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF MELCHISEDEC IN SCRIPTURE- GEN. 14

A Person in History

(First War mentioned in Bible "mini-War")

THE BACKGROUND OF THIS CHAPTER HAS TO DO WITH THE ABDUCTION OF ABRAM'S NEPHEW LOT AND THE CONFISCATION OF THE MATERIAL RESOURCES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH. ABRAHAM CAME TO THE RESCUE OF LOT AND COMPLETELY DEFEATED THOSE KINGS WHO HAD KIDNAPPED HIM. IN HIS RETURN FROM VICTORY, ABRAHAM WAS MET BY A KING OF A CITY-STATE CALLED "SALEM." THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THIS MAN IS THAT HE WAS BOTH A KING AND A PRIEST. HE WAS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ONE TRUE GOD IN A PAGAN LAND. HE WAS ONE OF THOSE FEW PERSONS WHO HELD TO THE FAITH THAT HAD BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM THE DAYS OF NOAH. WE ARE SURPRISED TO FIND A MAN LIKE MELCHISEDEC IN THE LAND OF CANAAN. A THOUSAND YEARS LATER IN THE PSALMS, DAVID WOULD POINT OUT THE FACT THAT MELCHISEDEC TYPICAL SIGNFICANCE WAS THE HE WAS A PRIEST-KING, A HISTORICAL PERSON WHO TYPLIFIED CHRIST. ABRAHAM IN GIVING TITHES TO THIS MAN SHOWS HIS HIGH PLACE IN GOD'S ECONOMY. ABRAHAM WAS THE FATHER OF THE JEWISH NATION AND YET HE HELD MELCHISEDEC IN A PLACE OF SUPERIORITY TO HIMSELF. THIS IS AN UTTERLY ASTONISHIN FACT TO ANY HEBREW. SCOFIELD SUGGESTS THAT MEL. IN TYPE APPLIES TO THE PRIESTLY WORK OF CHRIST IN RESURRECTION. MELCHISEDEC SPEAKS OF A PRIESTHOOD

History: Land of Canaan subdivided - small city-State.
Ched. = 12 yr. Supremacy LoT = P. of War.

Mel = a mysterious meteor in the Bible sky" NOT Christ - pre incarnate But a Type.

THAT WAS ENDLESS IN DURATION AND OF AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ORDER THAN THE O.T. SYSTEM. IT WAS A BETTER PRIESTHOOD. (HEB. 7:22-25) ONE INTERESTING SIDELIGHT IN GEN. 14 IS THE REFERENCE TO THE TITHING. IN THIS CONTEXT, TITHING WAS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF WHAT WE HAVE AND AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO BELIEVERS TO BE FAITHFUL IN THIS REGARD. IN PRINCIPLE, TITHING WAS IN EXISTENCE BEFORE THE LAW OF MOSES. THIS IS THE FIRST MENTION OF THE SUBJECT IN THE BIBLE AND IT IS NOT STRICTLY JEWISH IN NATURE OR LEGAL IN APPROACH. SOMEONE HAS SAID OF THE THREE REFERENCES OF MELCHISEDEC IN THE SCRIPTURE THAT THE GEN. PASSAGE SPEAKS OF HIM HISTORICALLY. THE PS. 110 SPEAKS OF HIM PROPHETICALLY. AND THE HEB. PASSAGE SPEAKS OF HIM DOCTRINALLY. THE GREATNESS OF MELCHISEDEC IS EXPRESSED IN THE FACT THAT HE UNITED THE DIGNITY OF KINGSHIP WITH THE SANCTITY OF PRIESTHOOD. IN THIS REGARD HE WAS A REMARKABLE TYPE OF CHRIST WHO PERSONIFIES THIS TRUTH. NOTICE IN CONTRAST THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER ABRAHAM CONSULTED WITH MELCHISEDEC HE ENCOUNTERED THE KING OF SODOM. IMMEDIATELY HIS ATTITUDE CHANGED. NO LONGER WAS ABRAHAM CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT HE WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF A SUPERIOR BUT RATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF A KING WHOSE INTERESTS SEEMED TO BE MATERIAL IN NATURE. IN A COURTEOUS AND SPIRITUAL FASHION ABRAHM REFUSED ANY GRATUITY FOR HIS RESCUE OF LOT. THIS PASSAGE INDICATES THAT ABRAHAM WAS NOT A COVETOUS MAN. GAIN AND POSSESSIONS HAD NOT BEEN THE PURPOSE OF HIS MILITARY EXPLOITS. ABRAHAM WAS CONCERNED THAT GOD BE GIVEN THE UPPERMOST PLACE IN HIS LIFE EVEN IN TIMES OF PROSPERITY. TO ABRAHAM HIS REPUTATION AND HIS SPIRITUAL STANDING BEFORE GOD WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MATERIAL GAINS. THIS WAS EXPRESSED IN GEN. 14:23. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID CONCERNING THE KING OF SODOM THAT THE WORLD IS NOT TOO MUCH INTERESTED IN GIVING GOD THE GLORY FOR VICTORIES IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS BUT IS MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING BACK THE BOOTY. SOME PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE IMPRESSED WITH THE KING OF SODOM THAN THEY WERE WITH MELCHISEDEC! ABRAHAM'S KEEN SPIRITUAL INSIGHT MADE HIM AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO MEN. ONE STOOD FOR GOD AND THE OTHER STOOD FOR POLITICAL AND MONETARY POWER. THE OUTSTANDING FACT OF V.23 IS THAT IF GOD IS INDEED THE POSSESSOR OF EARTH AND HEAVEN AS ABRAHAM HAD

HAD ALREADLY STATED, THEN HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF HIS SERVANT ABRAM. AND ABRAHAM DID NOT NEED TO COMPROMISE WITH A SODOMITE KING IN ORDER TO GAIN GREAT WEALTH. (THIS SHOULD BE A VALUABLE LESSON TO EVERY BELIEVER ABOUT UNGODLY COMPROMISES FOR THE PURPOSE OF GAIN.) (cf. LOT)

II. THE SECOND APPEARANCE OF MEL. IN SCRIPTURE - PS. 110:4 (A Priest in Prophecy)

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS PSALM IS MESSIANIC IN NATURE. IT IS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT THE PRIMARY APPLICATION CANNOT BE TO ANY JEWISH KING IN HISTORY BUT IS IN FACT A PREDICTION OF CHRIST JESUS AS PRIEST-KING. OUR LORD GAVE THIS INTERPRETATION OF THE PASSAGE IN MK. 12:35-37 AND MATT. 22:41FF. THIS PSALM TEACHES THE ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD OF MESSIAH AND IT AFFIRMS THE DEITY OF CHRIST WHEN CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF THE MATT. PASSAGE. SCROGGIE SAYS OF THIS PASSAGE "NO PSALM IS QUOTED AND REFERRED TO SO OFTEN IN THE N.T. AS THIS ONE, A FACT WHICH INDICATES ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE." IN V. 1 THE ETERNAL GOD WHO IS CALLED JEHOVAH SPEAKS TO HIS SON THE MESSIAH WHO IS CALLED ADONAI AND WHOM DAVID CALLS HIS LORD! IN MATT. 22:44 JESUS INTERPRETS THE MEANING OF THIS V. SIMPLY STATED, THE PSALM CANNOT BE BOTH BY DAVID AND ABOUT HIM! THE SIGNIFICANCE OF V. 4 IS THAT THE PRIEST IN QUESTION IS NOT OF THE LEVITICAL ORDER BUT RATHER WHOSE PRIESTHOOD IS UNIVERSAL AND EVERLASTING.

III. THE THIRD APPEARANCE OF MEL. IN SCRIPTURE - HEB.-/ (5:6\10\ 6:20

OF ALL THE MENTIONS OF MELCHISEDEC V. 3 HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST BAFFLING. COMMENTATORS HAVE WONDERED ABOUT THE MEANING OF THIS V. UNDOUBTEDLY IT REFERS TO THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NO GENEALOGY OR RECORD WHICH TRACED MELCHISEDEC TO THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM. (CF. EZRA 2:61-62) THIS PASSAGE SPEAKS OF PERSONS WHO WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE THERE WAS NO GENEALOGICAL RECORD. IF CHRIST WERE NOT A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PRIEST AT ALL! ACCORDING TO V. 14 CHRIST WAS OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH AND NOT OF LEVI. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IS MENTIONED AS ONE THAT IS NOT AFFECTED BY DEATH AND IT DOES NOT PASS FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER. FOR THAT REASON WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO IS ABLE TO SAVE US

FULLY AND COMPLETELY TO THE VERY END. WE DO NOT NEED TO FEAR THAT HE WILL DIE. (CF. THE ILLUSTRATION OF CITIES OF REFUGE TO OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PASSAGE IS GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD BE TAKEN UP WITH CHRIST AND NOT RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS AND RITUALS. THE IMPORTANCE FACT ABOUT PRIESTHOOD IS WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHES FOR THE BELIEVER AND NOT THE RITUAL WHICH ONE GOES THROUGH.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING NOVEMBER 28, 1976
P.M.

THEMES IN HEBREWS: THE NEW COVENANT

HEBREWS 8:8

THE SIMPLE DEFINITION OF A COVENANT IS THAT IT IS AN AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT BETWEEN MEN OR BETWEEN MAN AND GOD. SIMPLY SPEAKING, THE BIBLE IS DIVIDED INTO TWO MAJOR COVENANTS OR TESTAMENTS; THE OLD AND THE NEW. THERE ARE MORE COVENANTS THAN TWO IN THE BIBLE AND WE SHALL TALK ABOUT THESE IN A MOMENT. THER ARE BASICALLY TWO KINDS OF COVENANTS IN THE BIBLE.
(1) CONDITIONAL - THAT IS, THE BASIS OF THE COVENANT IS DEPENDENT UPON MAN AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO IT. (EXO. 19:5 - NOTICE THE WORD "IF")
(2) UNCONDITIONAL - THAT IS, FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON GOD. (GEN. 12:1-3)
THERE WERE VARIOUS WAYS OF MAKING COVENANTS, SUCH AS THE USAGE OF SALT, A SHOE, A SACRIFICE. THERE ARE NO LESS THAN 8 MAJOR COVENANTS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.
1. THE EDENIC COVENANT - THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN GOD AND ADAM CONCERNING LIFE IN EDEN AND ADAM'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, SEE GE. 1:28-30, 2:15-17 THE COVENANT LAID DOWN MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE EARTH, THE ANIMAL CREATIONS, HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP THE GARDEN. THE BASIC CONDITIONS OF THE COVENANT WERE : TO ABSTAIN FROM EATING FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. MAN'S FAILURE : RESULTED IN PHYSICAL DEATH AND EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN.
2. THE ADAMIC COVENANT -(GEN. 3:14-19) THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN ADAM AND GOD. THIS COVENANT HAD TO DO WITH MAN OUTSIDE THE GARDEN OF EDEN. IT SPEAKS OF THE CURSE OF SATAN, JUDGMENT UPON WOMAN, JUDGMENT UPON MAN, AND THE CURSE ON CREATION BECAUSE OF MAN'S SIN.
3. THE NOAHIC COVENANT - (GEN. 8:20-9:17) THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN NOAH AND GOD. IT WAS UNCONDITIONAL IN NATURE AND HAD THE RAINBOW AS THE SIGN. THERE WERE SEVERAL FEATURES OF THE COVENANT BUT THE PRIMARY ONE WAS THE FACT THAT GOD WOULD NEVER AGAIN DESTROY ALL LIVING THINGS BY WATER.(-8:21-22) THERE WERE OTHER FEATURES OF THE COVENANT, SUCH AS THE ORDER OF THE SEASONS, MAN'S DOMINION OVER ANIMA CREATION, THE LAW OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, WHICH BY THE

See McClain - p. 46

Promises wholly of God not conditioned on meritorious acts of Abraham... received by Abraham by faith. Fulfilment of the cov. depends on God - the cove. it cannot fail.

Divine Promise = Divine Protection

WAY HAS NEVER BEEN ABOLISHED BY GOD.

4. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT - (GEN. 12:1-3) THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND GOD. IT WAS UNCONDITIONAL IN NATURE. THERE WERE SEVERAL FEATURES OF THE COVENANT MENTIONED, BUT THE PRIMARY ONE IS THAT THE NATION OF ISRAEL WOULD BE A MIRACLE NATION AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL WOULD BE THEIRS FOREVER. THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD DO NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY THE FACT THAT THROUGH THIS COVENANT GOD NOT ONLY PROMISED TO BLESS THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD THROUGH ABRAHAM BUT INCLUDED IN THE COVENANT THE TITLE DEED TO THE LAND OF CANAAN. (GEN. 13:14-17) THIS PROMISE WAS MADE OF A LAND IN THE POSSESSION OF OTHER NATIONS AT THAT VERY TIME AND TO A MAN WHO WAS CHILDLESS AND 90 YEARS OF AGE! SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT ISRAEL BELONGS TO THE JEWS BY (1) RIGHT OF DIVINE GRANT. BY HOMESTEAD RIGHT - DEUT. 32:8, (2) BY CONQUEST - JOSHUA 11:20-23; AND BY (3) POSSESSION. THEY LIVED ON THE LAND FOR ALMOST 1500 YEARS.

5. THE MOSAIC COVENANT - (EXO. 19:5-6) THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN THE JEWS AND GOD. IT WAS A COVENANT MADE TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THROUGH MOSES. IT WAS CONDITIONAL IN NATURE AND DEPENDENT UPON ISRAEL LIVING UP TO THEIR COMMITTMENTS. THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT WAS THE SABBATH DAY. THIS COVENANT WAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL AND NEVER TO THE GENTILE

6. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT - (II SAM. 7:8-19) THIS COVENANT WAS MADE BETWEEN GOD AND DAVID. IT PROVIDED FOR THE CONTINUATION OF AN HEIR OF DAVID UPON THE THRONE IN ISRAEL. THROUGH IT GOD PROMISED DAVID A KINGDOM AND A KING. THE COVENANT WAS UNCONDITIONAL IN NATURE AND THE DURATION, ACCORDING TO II SAM. 7:14, WAS FOREVER. AND. IRREVOCABLE.

Jer. 33: 15-26 Irrevocable

7. THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT - (DEUT. 30:1-10) IN A STRICT SENSE, THIS WAS A CONTINUATION OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT. IN THIS COVENANT THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS TO THE ENTIRE WORLD WAS FORSEEN. IT PROMISED THE RETURN OF THE PEOPLE FROM AMONG THE NATIONS TO THEIR RESTORED LAND AFTER THE RETURN OF MESSIAH. IT ALSO FORSAW GREAT BLESSING AND PROSPERIT TO THE NATION. THE LAST OR THE EIGHT COVENANTS IS CALLED 8. THE NEW COVENANT. IT IS MENTIONED IN OUR TEXT TODAY AND ALSO IN JER. 31:31. IT WAS MADE WITH THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND WAS THE CONTINUATION OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT WITH SOME CHANGES. IT WAS MADE

POINT: the N. Cov. guarantees Israel a converted remnant as the foundation of all her blessing.
(Remnant)

V. 33

WITH ISRAEL AND JUDAH. THE HEART OF THE COVENANT IS THAT UNLIKE THE O.T. LAW WRITTEN ON TABLES OF STONE, THIS COVENANT WOULD BE WRITTEN ON THE HEART. THE OLD COVENANT COMMANDED OBEDIENCE BUT GAVE MEN NO POWER TO DO SO. THIS NEW COVENANT WOULD BE WRITTEN ON THE HEART OF MAN AND MAN WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO OBEY. EVEN THOUGH THE COVENANT WAS MADE PRIMARILY TO THE JEWS, THOSE WHO KNOW CHRIST TODAY ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF THE N. COVENANT. WE CAME INTO THIS BLESSING THROUGH UNION WITH CHRIST THE GREAT MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT. THERE ARE NO CONDITIONS IN THE COVENANT AND THE BLESSING WE ENJOY TODAY THROUGH CHRIST ARE BASED UPON HIS BLOOD. THE OUTSTANDING FEATURE OF THIS COVENANT IS THAT OF REGENERATION. (CF. EZEK. 36:26)

Jn. 3

Dwight

Remnant Conclusion:
When the covenants are studied —
Seven significant features — relative
To the Nation of Israel

1. A Nation forever - Dan. 2:44
2. A land forever
3. A King forever
4. a Throne forever
5. a Kingdom forever
6. A New Covenant
7. Blessings forever.

RKS

BCC-AM
9/2/73

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

HEBREWS 9:11-14

MANY YEARS AGO, A PARLIMENT OF RELIGIONS WAS HELD IN CHICAGO IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORLD'S FAIR. THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD WERE REPRESENTED. ONE BY ONE, THE SPOKESMAN REPRESENTING BUDDHISM, CONFUCIANISM, HINDUISM AND MOHAMMEDISM TOLD OF THE GREAT ~~CHARACTER~~ features QUALITIES OF THEIR PARTICULAR RELIGION. DR. JOSEPH COOK OF BOSTON WAS CHOSEN TO REPRESENT CHRISTIANITY. WHEN HIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK CAME, HE STOOD AND SAID, "HERE IS LADY MAC BETH'S HAND, STAINED WITH THE MURDER OF KING DUNCAN. SEE HER AS SHE WALKS THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF HER PALATIAL HOME CRYING 'WILL THESE HANDS NEVER BE CLEAN?'" COOK THEN TURNED TO THE REPRESENTATIVES SEATED ON THE PLATFORM AND SAID, "CAN ANY OF YOU WHO ARE SO ANXIOUS TO PROPAGATE YOUR RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OFFER ANY CLEANSING EFFICACY FOR THE SIN AND GUILT OF LADY MAC BETH'S CRIME?" AN OPPRESSIVE SILENCE WAS MAINTAINED BY ALL AND WELL THEY MIGHT, FOR NONE OF THE RELIGIONS THERE REPRESENTED NOR ANY OTHER RELIGION ON EARTH CAN OFFER CLEANSING ~~POWER~~ FOR THE GUILT OF SIN. ONLY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST CAN PURGE THE CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD. WHEN THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, IN THE SIMPLIST DEFINITION, THIS IS SIMPLY A SYNONYM FOR THE DEATH OF CHRIST EMPHASIZING THE ~~AWFUL~~ PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST REFERS TO THE SUPREME SACRIFICE OF THE SAVIOUR WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN DEATH THAT WE MIGHT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. THE SCRIPTURES ABOUND WITH VERSES ON THIS VERY SPECIAL SUBJECT: "...UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD," (REV. 1:5) "AND THEY SUNG A NEW SONG, SAYING, THOU ART WORTHY TO TAKE THE BOOK, AND TO OPEN THE SEALS THEREOF: FOR THOU WAST SLAIN, AND HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD..." (REV. 5:9) "...AND HE SAID TO ME, THESE ARE THEY WHICH CAME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION, AND HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES, AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB." (REV. 7:14) "IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE." (EPHESIANS 1:7) "MUCH MORE THEN, BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM." (ROMANS 5:9) IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, AND ESPECIALLY THIS 9TH CHAPTER, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT CAN BE SEEN. THE ENTIRE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM WAS A TYPE TO SHOW US THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST FOR OUR SINS. WHEN GOD SLEW ANIMALS TO PROVIDE SKINS TO COVER THE NAKEDNESS OF ADAM AND

Lehman Strauss comment re contemporary Ch. music — NO BLOOD!

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, HE DEMONSTRATED THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS. THE PRINCIPLE WAS SEEN IN THE LIFE OF CAIN AND ABEL, THE PASSOVER IN EXODUS 12, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN LEVITICUS 16. ALL OF THESE TYPES AND SHADOWS CULMINATED AT A PLACE CALLED CALVARY WHERE GOD DEALT WITH THE SINS OF MANKIND WITH THE SHEDDING OF JESUS' BLOOD.

THIS GREAT DOCTRINE IS THE MISSING ELEMENT IN MODERN-DAY PREACHING AND TEACHING. LIKE CAIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, MEN DESPISE THE DOCTRINE OF BLOOD-BOUGHT REDEMPTION. (RELATE THE STORY OF EARNEST REVEAL AND J. ALLEN BLAIR AT THE EVANSVILLE RESCUE MISSION.) THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE SINNER'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS. (QUOTE THE HYMN "WHAT CAN WASH AWAY MY SINS.") RECENTLY, WHILE STUDYING THE SUBJECT OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, I NOTICED THREE WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH SUGGEST THE BENEFITS CHRIST'S DEATH PROVIDES FOR US.

I. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST PROVIDED PEACE TO THE BELIEVING SINNER - COLOSSIANS 1:20

Pat W. throw Conversion

THE PEACE TO WHICH PAUL REFERS IN THIS PASSAGE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE EMOTION OF HOW WE FEEL. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR A BELIEVER TO FEEL HE IS PERFECTLY AT PEACE WITH GOD AND NOT HAVE IT. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT A STATE OF ENMITY EXISTS BETWEEN GOD AND THE SINNER. THIS RELATIONSHIP IS MENTIONED IN ROMANS 5:10 AS A STATE OF BEING ENEMIES TOWARD GOD, THAT IS THE SINNER IS AN ENEMY OF GOD! UNSAVED MEN ARE REBELS AND HAVE THEIR BACKS TOWARD GOD. IF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SHOULD RENOUNCE HIS GOVERNMENT AND FLEE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, EVEN THOUGH HE WERE A REFUGEE THERE, THERE WOULD EXIST A STATE OF ENMITY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS GOVERNMENT. THE ONLY WAY TO CHANGE THIS ENMITY WOULD BE TO CORRECT THE CRIME. THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS PASSAGE IS THAT WHEN A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, THE STATE OF ENMITY IS TAKEN AWAY AND THERE IS PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND THE BELIEVING SINNER. IT WAS JESUS CHRIST, WHO IN HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS, BROUGHT PEACE BETWEEN US AND GOD. THERE WAS A DAY WHEN I THOUGHT WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING ABOUT THE JUDGMENT BAR OF GOD AND MY STANDING BEFORE HIM. NOW THAT WE ARE IN CHRIST, THERE IS NO DREAD OF THAT JUDGMENT BECAUSE THE STATE OF ENMITY WHICH EXISTED BECAUSE OF OUR SIN HAS BEEN

Gen 4

Pronouncing Evolution Godless

Testimony

1 Cor. 2:14

Enmity = ill will, hostility, animosity, dislike for God / things of God.

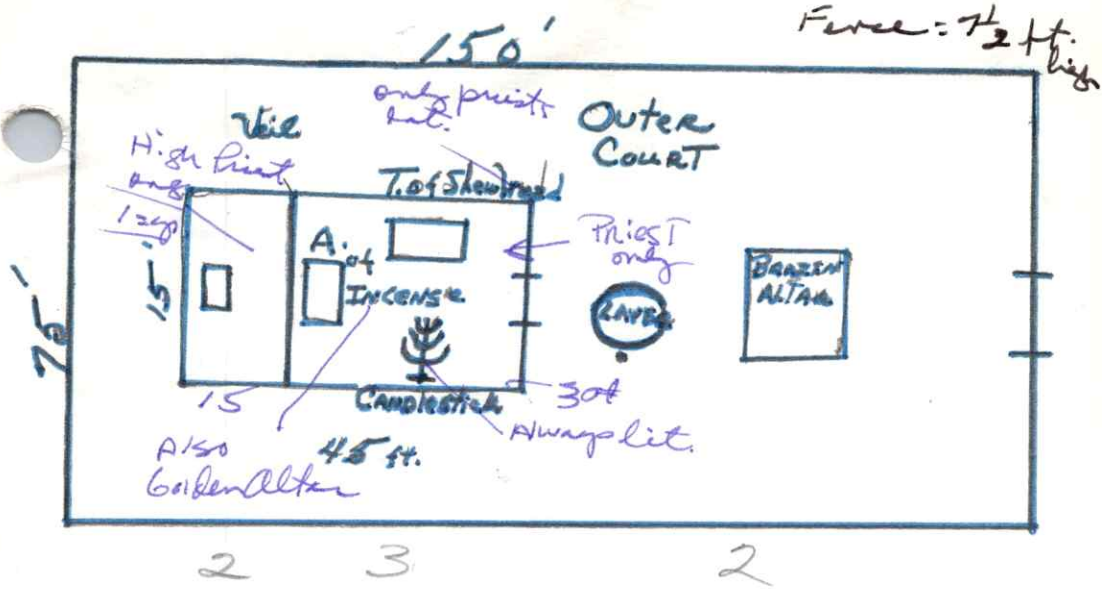
REMOVED. (ILLUSTRATION: THE STORY IS TOLD OF TWO AFRICAN TRIBES IN CONFLICT. ONE TRIBE KIDNAPPED THE SON OF THE CHIEF. AS THEY ATTEMPTED TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES, THE CHIEF REMINDED HIS ENEMIES THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACE UNTIL THE QUESTION OF HIS SON HAD BEEN RESOLVED. IN THE FULLEST SENSE OF THE WORD, THERE CAN BE NO PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND THE SINNER UNTIL HIS SON HAS BEEN DEALT WITH!

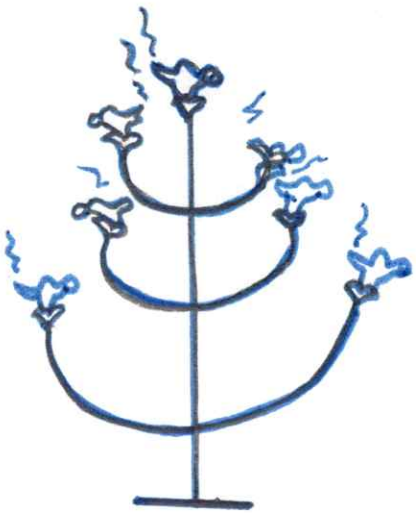
II. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND THE PURCHASE OF THE CHURCH - ACTS 20:28

JUST AS EVE WAS TAKEN FROM THE SIDE OF ADAM, SO THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO BEING THROUGH THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD. THERE WOULD BE NO CHURCH IF THERE HAD BEEN NO CALVARY. "AND I SAY ALSO UNTO THEE, THOU ART PETER, AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT." (MATTHEW 16:18) THE CHURCH BELONGS TO OUR BLESSED LORD. I AM AWARE OF THE TWO-FOLD SCRIPTURAL DISTINCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH IS CHRIST'S CONCERN AND NOTHING WILL STAND IN THE WAY OF ITS ULTIMATE GOAL. CHRIST IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH TODAY, GATHERING OUT OF THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAMESAKE. THIS WORK WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND IT IS THE DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL CHURCHES TO SEEK TO DO HIS WORK IN HIS WAY. PAUL REMINDED THE EPHESIAN BRETHREN THAT CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF THE WATER BY THE WORD THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH. (EPHESIANS 5:25-27) THE EXTENT OF OUR LORD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH WAS GIVEN TO THE CORINTHIANS WHO WERE ENGAGED IN DIVIDING THE CHURCH. I CORINTHIANS 3:16-17 WAS A SOLEMN WARNING TO THE CORINTHIANS ABOUT CREATING PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH. THIS IS AN ORGANISM AND ORGANIZATION WHICH BELONGS TO JESUS CHRIST. IT IS HIS CHURCH AND WOE BE TO THOSE WHO SEEK TO INFLICT THEIR CARNAL WAYS UPON THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

III. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND THE PURGING OF SINS - HEBREWS 9:14

THE EFFORTS OF THE NATURAL MAN, THAT IS THE UNSAVED MAN, TO WORK OR PLEASE GOD ARE CALLED DEAD WORKS. THE WORKS ARE DEAD BECAUSE THE WORKER IS SPIRITUALLY DEAD. THERE IS NOTHING THE SINNER CAN DO TO MERIT FAVOR BEFORE GOD. THE ONLY THING THE SINNER CAN DO IS TO BY FAITH RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR. THIS ALONE WILL DEAL WITH HIS SINS. WHEN THE NATURAL MAN GIVES MONEY TO THE CHURCH, GOD CALLS IT DEAD WORKS. WHEN HE TEACHES A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, SINGS IN THE CHOIR, USHERS, WITHOUT BEING BORN AGAIN, IT IS ALL CLASSIFIED AS DEAD WORKS! THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATURAL MAN NEEDS TO BE CLEANSED. WHEN THE SINNER COMES WITH THE BURDEN AND GUILT OF HIS SINS WEIGHING HEAVILY UPON HIM, THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WHEN GOD FORGIVES HIM, IMMEDIATELY AND COMPLETELY, HIS CONSCIENCE IS CLEANSED. NEVER AGAIN WILL THOSE SINS RISE TO HAUNT HIM. "CONSCIENCE, LIKE A RELEASED SPRING, RETURNS TO ITS NORMAL ACTION OF WARNING AGAINST THE FRESH APPROACH OF SIN AND ADJUDICATING ON THE CHARACTER OF MORAL ACTION. WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE DEAD WEIGHT OF PAST SINS, THE SOUL SOARS LIKE A RELEASED LARK WITH A SONG INTO ITS NATIVE ELEMENT. THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO APPLIES THE POWERFUL SOLVENT OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST TO THE DEFILED CONSCIENCE IN RESPONSE TO OUR FAITH, DELIGHTS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO HENCEFORTH LIVE WITH A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENSE TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD MEN." (SANDERS) IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS CHAPTER, THE WRITER UNDOUBTEDLY HAD IN MIND THOSE TIMES WHEN ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE BROUGHT TO GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, IN NUMBERS 19 THE RED HEIFER WAS SLAUGHTERED WITHOUT THE CAMP. THE PRIEST WOULD SPRINKLE THE BLOOD OF THE HEIFER BEFORE THE TABERNACLE SEVEN TIMES. THEN THE BODY OF THE BEAST WAS BURNED TOGETHER WITH CEDAR AND HYSSOP AND A PIECE OF RED CLOTH. THE ASHES WERE LAID OUTSIDE THE CAMP IN A CLEAN PLACE, ALL OF WHICH WAS DONE FOR A PURIFICATION FOR SIN. WHAT THE WRITER OF HEBREWS IS SAYING IS THAT ALL OF THESE ANCIENT SACRIFICES COULD PROVIDE CEREMONIAL CLEANSING FOR THE BODY BUT COULD NOT CLEANSE THE SOUL. A PERSON COULD GO THRU ALL THE RITUALS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW AND STILL NOT HAVE HIS SINS DEALT WITH. CEREMONIAL CLEANSING CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY THE GUILT OF A MAN'S SIN UPON HIS INNERMOST BEING AND CONSCIENCE. ONLY JESUS AND HIS WORK ON CALVARY'S CROSS CAN DO THIS. SO MANY PEOPLE TODAY





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Menorah = Heb. word for candle or candlestick

(חנוכה)

ROBERT K. SPRADLING DECEMBER 26, 1976
P.M.

"THEMES IN HEBREWS: SANCTIFICATION"

HEBREWS 10:10 Picture - dress suit deposit

SOME CHRISTIAN PEOPLE LOOK UPON SANCTIFICATION AS A STATE OF PERFECTION REACHED IN THIS PRESENT LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY SINLESSNESS. MANY SINCERE PEOPLE SEEK A "SECOND BLESSING EXPERIENCE" BECAUSE THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE A KIND OF DEDICATION AND GODLINESS IN THIS LIFE WHICH IS ABOVE THE NORMAL RUN OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. I DO NOT WISH TO DISCOURAGE THESE HOLY ASPIRATIONS; HOWEVER, LET US BE VERY CAREFUL THAT WE BASE OUR EXPERIENCE UPON THE CLEAR TEACHING FO THE WORD OF GOD. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE V. IN THE BIBLE WHICH HINTS OF A SECOND WORK OF GRACE. IN MY JUDGMENT, THERE IS A SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AD INFINITIS. THERE ARE NO VERSES WHICH LINK SANCTIFICATION WITH PRAYING OR WITH SPEAKING IN TONGUES. THE SAFE AND CORRECT APPROACH TO THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IN SIMPLE WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH? SIMPLY STATED, THE WORD SANCTIFICATION MEANS TO SET APART. IT IS THE SAME ROOT WORD FOR THE WORD SAINT AND HOLY. BOTH THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS USE THE WORD SANCTIFICATION IN THIS REGARD. IN THE O.T. CERTAIN (1) INANIMATE OBJECTS, SUCH AS HOUSES, FIELDS, GIFTS, AND THE TABERNACLE, WERE SET APART FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES CONCERNING GOD. AS A MATTER OF FACT THE (2) ENTIRE NATION OF ISRAEL WAS SET APART AS A PECULIAR PEOPLE. THE N.T. TEACHES THE BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN HAS BEEN SET APART FROM SIN UNTO GOD. JUST AS JUSTIFICATION IS THE ACT WHEREBY GOD DECLARES US RIGHTEOUS, SANCTIFICATION IS THE PROCESS WHEREBY GOD MAKES US HOLY. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF SANCTIFICATIO IN A THREE FOLD MANNER: (1) PAST OR POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION (2) PRESENT OR EXPERIMENTAL, PROGRESSIVE, PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION (3) FUTURE, PERMANENT OR ULTIMATE, COMPLETE SANCTIFICATION.

I. POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION - HEB. 10:10-14

ACCORDING TO THIS V. POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION IS BY THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHEREBY BELIEVERS WERE SET APART AS FOREVER BELONGING TO GOD. ACCODING TO V. 14, THIS ACT ASCRIBES TO THE BELIEVER

PERFECT HOLINESS. THIS WAS NOT DONE AS A RESULT OF MERIT OR CHARACTER ON THE BELIEVER'S PART, BUT RATHER THROUGH OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PERFECT CHRIST. TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION IS AS PERFECT AS CHRIST IS PERFECT. IT IS FULL AND COMPLETE IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER A BELIEVER IS WEAK OR STRONG. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WERE A STRANGE LOT. SOME OF THE UNMENTIONABLE SINS WHICH WERE CARRIED ON BY THE CORINTHIANS DO NOT SPEAK WELL OF THEIR CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. HOWEVER, AT LEAST ON TWO OCCASSIONS THE WORD SANCTIFICATION IS LINKED TO THEM. (I CORIN. 1:2, 6:11) POSITIONAL SANCT. MIGHT BE COMPARED TO CITIZENSHIP IN A COUNTRY. A COUNTRY MAY HAVE ALL KINDS OF CITIZENS, GOOD ONES, BAD ONES, LOYAL AND PATRIOTIC, AND DISLOYAL AND UNPATRIOTIC CITIZENS. THE POINT HOWEVER, IS THAT ALL ARE FULL CITIZENS AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP DOES NOT DEPEND UPON THEIR DAY BY DAY CONDUCT. IT IS A RIGHT OF BIRTH. SIMPLY STATED, THE BELIEVER HAS BEEN SET APART AS BELONGING TO GOD FOREVER.

II. PRESENT SANCTIFICATION - JOHN 17:17

PRESENT SANCTIFICATION IS A PRESENT WORK OF GOD WHEREBY THE BELIEVER IS BEING PROGRESSIVELY SET APART TO GOD FROM SIN. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE BOOK OF GOD. PRESENT SANCTIFICATION IS THEWORK OF GOD WHEREBY HE IS MAKING US HOLY FROM DAY TO DAY. DR. STRONG HAS SAID IT THIS WAY, "THE STEAMSHIP WHOSE MACHINERY IS BROKEN MAY BE BROUGHT INTO PORT AND MADE FAST AT THE DOCK. HE IS SAFE, BUT NOT SOUND. REPAIRS MAY LAST ALONG TIME. CHRIST DESIGNS TO MAKE US BOTH SAFE AND SOUND. JUSTIFICATION GIVES US THE FIRST-SAFETY; SANCTIFICATION GIVES THE SECOND-SOUNDNESS." THERE ARE SEVERAL INSTRUMENTS WHICH GOD USES IN PROGRESSIVE OR PRESENT SANCTIFICATI THE PRIMARY MEANS IS (1) THE WORD OF GOD. IT IS THROUGH THE WORD BELIEVER'S ARE CONSCIOUS OF SIN. (JAMES 1:23-24) IT IS THE WORD OF GOD THAT HE USES TO CLEANSE FROM SIN. (PS. 119:9, JN 15:3)
(2) PRAYER. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO BE REGULAR IN HIS PRAYER LIFE. (LUKE 18:1) WHERE THE WORD FAINT MEANS "NOT TO BECOME WEARY OR DISHEARTENE IN I THESS. 5:17 THE CHRISTIAN IS TOLD TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. THE IDEA BEHIND THIS TERM IS THAT OF A

HACKING COUGH. WHEN A PERSON HAS THIS KIND OF COUGH HE DOES NOT ACTUALLY COUGH ALL THE TIME BUT HE FEELS LIKE HE WANTS TO. IT IS A KIND OF CHRONIC CONDITION WHEREBY AT REGULAR INTERVALS A PERSON'S LIFE IS INTERUPTED BY COUGHING. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO BE IN AN ATTITUDE OF PRAYER AT ALL TIMES. (3) FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS. ONE OF THE DEVILS FAVORITE TRICKS IS TO CIRCUMVENT THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ESTABLISH WORSHIP GROUPS OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH. THIS IS SOMETIMES DONE BY PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKING FOR A DEEPER EXPERIENCE AND LOOK UPON THE CHURCH AS TOO GENERAL AND ALL INCLUSIVE FOR THEM. THESE FOLKS HAVE THE "COUNTRY CLUB" APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN LIVING, BELIEVING THAT GOD SPEAKS MORE TO THE ELITE THAN HE DOES TO THE ORDINARY. THESE FOLK OFTEN BRAG ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE EARLY CHURCH MET IN HOMES AND KEPT SMALL ON PURPOSE. THEY ARE SIMPLY OVERLOOKING A FACT. THE EARLY CHURCH MET IN HOMES BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT ERECT BUILDINGS IN WHICH TO ASSEMBLE. ALSO, THESE SPECIAL GROUPS SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN EVANGELISM. I DO NOT MINIMIZE THE IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE OF HOME BIBLE STUDY GROUPS AS LONG AS THEY ARE CONDUCTED AS A MEANS OF FOSTERING THE N.T. PRINCIPLE OF LOCAL CHURCHES.

III. PERSPECTIVE SANCTIFICATION - I THESS. 5:23-24

THIS ASPECT OF OUR SANCTIFICATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BLESSED HOPE. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO THE BELIEVER ASSURES THAT FACT THAT ONE DAY WE SHALL BE CHANGED AND CONFIRMED IN HOLINESS. AT THAT TIME, THE BELIEVER WILL BE DELIVERED FROM THE VERY PRESENCE OF SIN AS WELL AS FROM ITS POWER IN HIS LIFE. TODAY, A CHRISTIAN MAY BE BLAMELESS BEFORE THE LORD, IF NOT FAULTLESS. THAT IS TO SAY, AS A CHILD WORKS TO COPY LETTERS FROM THE ALPHABET ON A PIECE OF PAPER SO HIS WORK IS BLAMELESS IF NOT FAULTLESS. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH WE WALK BEFOE THE LORD BLAMELESSLY INCREASING IN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE FROM DAY TO DAY. SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED IT AS A "PERFECTION WITHIN IMPERFECTION." WE ARE NOT COMPLETE, WE ARE IMMATURE AND LACKING IN MANY WAYS BUT THIS WILL BE CHANGED SOMEDAY WHEN THE BELIEVER IS FULLY AND COMPLETELY SANCTIFIED.

RKS

BCC-AM
9/9/73

FAITH

HEBREWS 11:1-7

"let your faith loose!"

FAITH IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE. I HAVE ATTENDED CHURCH SERVICES WHERE PEOPLE SPOKE OF FAITH AS IF IT WERE SOME WEIRD MYSTICAL SIXTH SENSE THAT ENABLED A PERSON TO THROW ALL REASON AND COMMON SENSE TO THE WIND AND SIMPLY LAUNCH OUT IN BLIND INDIFFERENCE. THE BIBLE WORD FAITH IS THE NOUN FORM OF THE VERB BELIEVE. FAITH IS NOT SOME MYSTICAL QUALITY OF THE MIND OR SOME STRANGE INTUITIVE POWER WHICH ENABLES ONE TO PEER INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD BUT RATHER IS SIMPLY RELIANCE AND TRUST IN A TRUSTWORTHY GOD WHO ALWAYS DOES WHAT HE PROMISES TO DO. OCCASIONALLY, SOMEONE WILL SAY, "I JUST CAN'T BLINDLY ACCEPT THE BIBLE." I FIND IT VERY INTERESTING THAT PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT ACCEPT THE BIBLE BY FAITH WILL ACCEPT THE WORD OF ANOTHER MAN BY FAITH, ESPECIALLY IF HE IS A DOCTOR OR A BANKER; THEY RIDE ON AIRPLANES AND AUTOMOBILES AND TRAINS BY FAITH, YET THEY PROTEST THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS TO TRUST GOD! DR. DONALD BARNHOUSE USE TO TELL THE STORY OF A COLLEGE GIRL WHO ONCE SAID TO HIM, "I HAVE NEVER HAD FAITH IN ANYONE IN ALL MY LIFE, HOW CAN I TRUST THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?" IT WAS DURING THE TIME JUST BEFORE A VACATION PERIOD AND HE ASK HER HOW SHE WAS GOING TO GET BACK TO SCHOOL. SHE REPLIED SHE WAS GOING TO FLY. "DO YOU HAVE YOUR TICKET?" "NO," SHE SAID, "BUT I HAVE TO FIND OUT THE DETAILS LATER ON." DR. BARNHOUSE QUESTIONED HER ABOUT HOW SHE WAS GOING TO SECURE HER TICKET, HOW SHE WAS GOING TO GET TO THE AIRPORT, ETC. HE THEN ASKED HER IF SHE WAS GOING TO RIDE IN A TAXI WITH A DRIVER WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW, TAKE A TICKET FROM A CLERK WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW, CLIMB ONTO AN AIRPLANE AND FLY WITH A PILOT WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW. HOW STRANGE DR. BARNHOUSE SAID THAT SHE COULD EXHIBIT REAL TRUST IN MEN AND YET DENY AND REFUSE FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I. FAITH'S DESCRIPTION - VERSES 1-3

THE TEXT OF VERSE 1 IS NOT, IN THE TECHNICAL SENSE, A DEFINITION OF FAITH. IT IS A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT FAITH DOES. THE WORD "SUBSTANCE" IS TRANSLATED IN THE AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION AS "ASSURANCE." THE WORD "EVIDENCE" IS TRANSLATED "CONVICTION." FAITH THEN IS THE BIBLICAL ASSURANCE AND GOD-GIVEN CONVICTION THAT WHAT GOD HAS SAID IS TRUE AND WE MAY ACT

IN CONFIDENCE UPON HIS WORD. FAITH ENABLES THE CHRISTIAN TO LOOK INTO THE FUTURE WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY. TO BE CERTAIN OF UNSEEN THINGS REQUIRES FAITH. MAN LOOKS AT THE TRACKS OF GOD ACROSS THE PAGES OF HUMAN HISTORY AND IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND BELIEVES THAT HE IS. FAITH IS REQUIRED FOR THIS ACTION. THE WORD ELDERS IN VERSE 2 DOES NOT REFER TO ELDERS IN THE CHURCH SENSE OF THE TERM BUT RATHER TO THE PATRIARCHAL ANCESTORS OF THE JEWISH NATION. VERSE 3 IS ONE THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD MASTER. WHAT YOU AND I BELIEVE ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINS WILL COLOR EVERYTHING ELSE WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE. NO ONE WAS PRESENT AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION. WHEN MAN CAME ONTO THE SCENE THE UNIVERSE WAS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ORIGINS WE ACCEPT BY FAITH. THE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN ACCEPTS BY FAITH THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE WHICH, BY THE WAY, HAS NEVER BEEN CONTRADICTED. THE UNBELIEVER ACCEPTS BY FAITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION. NO HUMAN SPECTATORS WERE PRESENT IN THE CREATION. THEREFORE, WHAT ONE BELIEVES ABOUT IT IS ACCEPTED BY FAITH. AS A BELIEVER, I FEEL MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE IN KNOWING THAT GOD DESIGNED THE WHOLE SCHEME OF TIME AND SPACE AND OUR PLACE THEREIN. FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS MEN HAVE BEEN SPECULATING ABOUT ORIGINS, AS A MATTER OF FACT THIS IS VERY MUCH IN THE MINDS OF SCIENTISTS IN THE SPACE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, NO MAN HAS FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE. IF HE IS GOING TO KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, MAN IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT UPON THE LORD TO MAKE THIS KNOWN. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ACCEPT WHAT GOD HAS SAID ABOUT ORIGINS. ANY REFUSAL OF GOD'S REVELATION ON THE SUBJECT LEAVES MAN WITHOUT ANY CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE WITH REFERENCE TO HUMAN ORIGINS. EVERYTHING ELSE IS SIMPLY GUESSING, EVEN THOUGH IT MAY BE VERY SCHOLARLY GUESSING

II. FAITH IN OPERATION - VERSES 4-7

THIS CHAPTER LISTS A DOZEN OR SO KEY MEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK WAS MEASURED IN TERMS OF FAITH. MEN TODAY LOOK FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF VIRTUES IN MEN BUT GOD LOOKS FOR FAITH. WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE FIRST THREE OF THIS GROUP AND, IN EACH INSTANCE, THEIR FAITH WAS OUTSTANDING.

(A) THE FAITH OF ABEL (WORSHIPS) - VERSE 4. ABEL'S OFFERING PROVED HIS HEART WAS RIGHT WITH GOD. CAIN'S OFFERING PROVED THAT HIS LIFE WAS DEVOID OF FAITH AND RELIGION WAS A MERE RITUAL TO HIM. ABEL'S RESPONSE TO GOD WAS THE ONLY KIND OF WORSHIP GOD WILL ACCEPT. THE FAILURE

OF CAIN TO EXERCISE FAITH IN GOD BROUGHT ABOUT THE FIRST MURDER IN THE WORLD. WHEN MEN DO NOT WALK BY FAITH, THEY RESORT TO THEIR OWN MEANS AND ALWAYS TO THEIR OWN HURT. (THE STORY OF CAIN AND ABEL IS RECORDED IN GENESIS 4:1-15) THE INTERESTING PHRASE AT THE END OF VERSE 4 INDICATES THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH IN GOD'S SIGHT. EVEN THOUGH HE DIED PREMATURELY HIS LIFE SPEAKS OF THE GREAT WORTH AND VALUE OF FAITH IN THE LIFE. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW, ABEL'S LIFE CONTINUES TO SPEAK TODAY. WHEN WE THINK OF ABEL, WE THINK OF HIS GREAT FAITH AND NOT HIS GREAT ABILITY.

(B) THE FAITH OF ENOCH - VERSE 5. THE BRIEF STORY OF ENOCH IS GIVEN IN GENESIS 5:21-24. THIS IS THE CHAPTER THAT JOSEPH PARKER CALLED THE CHAPTER OF "NOBODYISM." HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS CHAPTER IS RATHER DULL READING UNTIL YOU COME TO ENOCH. ENOCH WAS A MAN WHO WALKED WITH GOD AMIDST A GODLESS GENERATION. IT WAS A TIME OF CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION BUT CULTURAL ADVANCEMENT LED MEN NOT TO GOD BUT RATHER AWAY FROM HIM. IT WAS A TIME WHEN CRIME, LAWLESSNESS AND BRUTALITY FILLED THE EARTH. IT WAS A TIME OF REBELLION WHERE EVERY INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY TENDED TO PULL MAN DOWN AND AWAY FROM GOD. MEN HAD FORGOTTEN GOD AND WERE LIVING FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND LUSTS. THE CHAPTER WOULD INDICATE THAT FOR THE FIRST 65 YEARS OF ENOCH'S LIFE, LITTLE WAS SAID ABOUT HIM. BUT IN THAT 65TH YEAR, A BABY WAS BORN AND HIS NAME WAS METHUSELAH. SOMEHOW, THE BIRTH OF THIS BABY CHANGED ENOCH'S LIFE. ONE INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF HIS NAME IS "WHEN HE IS DEAD, IT SHALL BE SENT." SOME COMMENTATORS BELIEVE THAT THE BIRTH OF THIS BABY WAS A SIGN TO ENOCH AND HIS GENERATION. AS LONG AS HE LIVES, JUDGMENT WILL BE SPARED, BUT WHEN HE DIES, JUDGMENT WILL COME. IF THIS INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, I CAN SEE HOW IT WOULD CHANGE ENOCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORLD. WHATEVER HIS REASON, ENOCH LIVED IN CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IN A TIME WHEN EVERYONE ELSE WAS LIVING FOR THEMSELVES. THERE WAS NOTHING SENSATIONAL ABOUT THIS MAN, HE JUST LIVED EVERY DAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH GOD. THE THING THAT MADE ENOCH'S LIFE PLEASING TO GOD WAS THAT ENOCH JUST SIMPLY BELIEVED GOD. ENOCH WAS UNUSUAL BECAUSE THE BIBLE SAYS HE WALKED WITH GOD WHEN OTHER MEN WERE WALKING AWAY FROM GOD. HE MADE THE QUEST OF HIS LIFE

TO DRAW NEARER AND NEARER TO GOD, AND FOR THAT REASON HE WAS TAKEN TO HEAVEN WITHOUT DYING. THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION SAYS ENOCH WAS PROMOTED TO THE ETERNAL WORLD WITHOUT EXPERIENCING DEATH. HE DISAPPEARED FROM THIS WORLD BECAUSE GOD PROMOTED HIM, AND BEFORE THAT HAPPENED, HIS REPUTATION WAS THAT HE PLEASED GOD. THE POINT OF VERSE 6 IS THAT WE, LIKE ENOCH, MUST HAVE FAITH IN ORDER TO PLEASE GOD. FAITH ENABLES A PERSON TO UNDERSTAND AT LEAST TWO OF LIFE'S GREAT QUESTIONS: (1) HOW DO I DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF DEATH? - VERSE 5. (2) IS THERE A GOD? - VERSE 6. FAITH RESOLVES BOTH OF THESE QUESTIONS. SOMEONE HAS LIKENED FAITH TO EYESIGHT. A MAN WHO IS BLIND CAN KNOW NOTHING ABOUT COLORS AND SIGHT UNTIL HE HAS ACTUALLY BEEN ABLE TO SEE THEM. MANY PERSONS ARE SPIRITUALLY BLIND AND COMPLAIN THAT THEY CANNOT SEE GOD SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE REFUSED THE WAY OF SEEING GOD, WHICH IS BY FAITH!

(C) THE FAITH OF NOAH - VERSE 7. NOAH IS ONE OF THE FACINATING MEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT NOAH HAD NEVER SEEN A LARGE VESSEL IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE. AND IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT HE HAD NEVER SEEN IT RAIN. WHAT GOD ASKED NOAH TO DO REQUIRED FAITH, FOR FROM THE HUMAN STANDPOINT IT SEEMED LIKE UTTER FOOLISHNESS AND FOLLY. (I COR. 1:18) NOAH STAKED EVERYTHING ON THE RELIABILITY OF GOD'S WORD. IF I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HUMAN NATURE, NOAH WAS MADE A LAUGHING STOCK FOR BUILDING A HUGE SHIP ON DRY LAND SO FAR FROM WATER. THE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN WILL BE CALLED UPON BY THE LORD TO CHART HIS LIFE ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTION OF GOD. HE WILL HAVE TO ABANDON THE STANDARDS AND VALUES OF THIS WORLD AND ACCEPT A WHOLE NEW SET OF STANDARDS FOUND IN THE WORD OF GOD. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO BE CAUGHT UP IN THE STINGS OF THE MOCKERY OF HIS PEERS BUT NOAH CHOSE TO LISTEN TO GOD'S WARNING AND BE SAVED FROM DISASTER. THE CHOICE IS EXACTLY FOR MEN OF EVERY GENERATION. THEY CAN LISTEN TO GOD AND BE SAVED AND IGNORE GOD'S WORD AND BE LOST. NOAH, LIKE ENOCH, LIVED IN A DAY WHEN MEN DISREGARDED GOD'S WORD BUT NOAH WAS SENSITIVE IN THE LORD'S DIRECTION IN HIS LIFE AND HE FEARED GOD. NOAH WAS A NONCONFORMIST IN THE BEST SENSE OF THE TERM. HE BELONGED TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WERE IN THE MINORITY BUT WAS WILLING TO STAND ALONE IN A DAY OF MORAL DARKNESS. NOAH BELIEVED SOMETHING HE HAD NEVER SEEN. ACCORDING TO GENESIS 6:1-13, THERE WERE TWO PRIMARY

CHARACTERISTICS OF NOAH'S DAY: (1) SEXUAL PERVERSION, (2) EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE. HE LIVED IN A SOCIETY THAT WAS OBSESSED WITH SEX. VIOLENCE HAD INCREASED TO THE POINT THAT MAN COULD NO LONGER SURVIVE UNDER THIS KIND OF ADMINISTRATION. BY THE WAY, THIS IS THE PRICE ANY SOCIETY PAYS FOR TURNING ITS BACK UPON GOD. AMERICA IS PAYING A STIFF PRICE FOR ITS FLAGRANT DISREGARD FOR GOD AND HIS WORD. THE PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT NOAH WAS A RELIGIOUS FANATIC, SOME KIND OF NUT, WERE PERSISTENT IN THEIR PERSECUTION FOR THE ENTIRE PROCESS TOOK ABOUT 120 YEARS. DURING THAT TIME, NOAH CONTINUED TO PREACH TO A DEAF GENERATION. NOT ONE SINGLE PERSON REPENTED AT THE PREACHING OF NOAH. THE ARK WHICH HE BUILT WAS AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE AND SHELTER FOR HIS OWN DURING A TIME OF JUDGMENT. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE ARK HAD BUT A SINGLE DOOR, INDICATING THAT THERE IS BUT ONE WAY INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD. (JOHN 14:6, ACTS 4:12) PLEASE NOTICE THAT NOAH DID NOT WORSHIP THE ARK, HE WORSHIPED GOD. WHAT HE BUILT WITH HIS HANDS SIMPLY INDICATED THE FAITH THAT WAS IN HIS HEART. IN A DAY WHEN OTHER MEN BUILT A TOWER AT BABEL AND SOUGHT TO BUILD A WORLD FROM WHICH GOD HAD BEEN EXCLUDED, THERE WAS ONE MAN WHOSE WORK INDICATED FAITH IN GOD. MEN CAN TELL WHERE OUR FAITH LIES IN WHAT OUR HANDS AND FEET DO. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NOAH'S DAY IN COMPARISON TO OUR OWN CAN BE SUMMED UP BY READING LUKE 17:26-28. OUR GENERATION IS THE SAME AS NOAH'S, NAMELY ONE OF PRACTICAL ATHEISM. MEN WHO BELIEVE GOD'S WORD TODAY ARE LAUGHED AT AND MOCKED. CHRISTIANS HAD BETTER BE WILLING TO BEAR THAT STIGMA AND OBEY GOD. FAITH OBEYS GOD WHEN IT CANNOT SEE TO THE END OF THE ROAD. GOD SAYS THAT JUDGMENT IS COMING AGAIN UPON THIS WORLD AND ONLY THOSE, WHO LIKE NOAH, TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD WILL BE PRESERVED.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING MAY 25, 1980
P.M.

MOMENTS OF DECISION

HEBREWS 11:24-29

(RECOGNIZE PRINCIPAL, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, FELLOW PASTORS, GRADUATING SENIORS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS,) STORY OF TEXAN AND WEST VIRGINIAN...FARMERS.... "I USED TO HAVE A TRUCK LIKE THAT MYSELF." IN THE POEM ENTITLED THE PRESENT CRISIS, JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL WROTE: "ONCE TO EVERY MAN AND NATION COMES THE MOMENT TO DECIDE; IN THE STRIFE OF TRUTH WITH FALSEHOOD, FOR THE GOOD OR EVIL SIDE." TONIGHT LET US CONSIDER THE SUBJECT: MOMENTS OF DECISION. WE WILL USE AS A BASIS FOR OUR CONSIDERATION THE LIFE OF MOSES. LIFE IS THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL THE DECISIONS WE MAKE. THE ABILITY TO MAKE PROPER DECISIONS IS NOT AS EASY AS ONE MIGHT THINK. ("DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE MAKING UP YOUR MIND? WELL, YES AND NO!") (STEVENSON COINED A WORD, "YO".) IN OUR TEXT, WE WILL DISCOVER THAT MOSES MADE SOME DECISIONS WHICH DRAMATICALLY CHANGED HIS LIFE AND FOR WHICH HE IS REMEMBERED IN THE PAGES OF HUMAN HISTORY.

I. MOSES REFUSED WHAT MANY WOULD HAVE RELISHED - VS. 24

THE STORY OF BABY MOSES IS WELL KNOWN TO MOST. HE BECAME THE SON OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER AND ROSE TO THE POSITION OF HEIR APPARENT TO THE THRONE OF EGYPT BY VIRTUE OF HIS ADOPTION INTO PHARAOH'S FAMILY. AS PHARAOH IN EGYPT, MOSES WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOD TO THE PEOPLE AND WORSHIPPED BY THEM. HE WOULD HAVE PRESIDED OVER ONE OF THE GREAT CIVILIZATIONS OF ALL TIME. THE MAGNIFICENCE OF ANCIENT EGYPT WAS BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION IN A VERY DRAMATIC WAY. (RELATE STAY IN CAIRO AND THE FIRST SIGHT OF THE PYRAMID OF GIZA. THE CAIRO MUSEUM AND KING TUT DISPLAY.) THE GLORY AND RULE OF EGYPT WAS MOSES FOR THE TAKING, BUT HE REFUSED THAT POSITION! AT THAT TIME IN HISTORY, MOSES WAS ONE OF THE FEW FREE HEBREWS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, ALL OTHERS WERE SLAVES! THE PROSPECT OF A BRIGHT FUTURE FILLED WITH EASE, WEALTH, PLEASURE AND POWER, EVEN THOUGH AT HIS FINGERTIPS, WAS NOT TO HIS LIKING. MOSES CAME TO THE PLACE IN

LIFE WHERE HE HAD TO DECIDE, EITHER CAST HIS LOT WITH THE GLORY OF EGYPT OR WITH A NATION OF SLAVES WHO WERE IN LARGE MEASURE WEAK, UNDISCIPLINED, DISCOURAGED AND REBELLIOUS. MOSES MADE THIS DECISION "BY FAITH." FAITH IS A GREATLY MISUNDERSTOOD TERM. "WHAT IS FAITH?" ASKED A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER. IN A FLASH THE YOUNG BOY SAID, "FAITH IS BELIEVING SOMETHING YOU KNOW ISN'T TRUE." THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT FAITH IS THE CONVICTION THAT UNSEEN THINGS, THOUGH UNSEEN TO THE HUMAN EYE, ARE REAL NEVERTHELESS. FAITH IS TRUST IN THE PROMISE OF GOD WHO ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD. (DR. DONALD BARNHOUSE USED TO TELL THE STORY OF A COLLEGE GIRL WHO ONCE SAID TO HIM, "I HAVE NEVER HAD FAITH IN ANYONE IN ALL MY LIFE, HOW CAN I HAVE FAITH IN GOD?" THIS CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE WHILE SHE WAS HOME ON VACATION FROM COLLEGE. THE DOCTOR ASKED HER IF SHE WAS GOING TO FLY BACK TO SCHOOL. SHE REPLIED THAT SHE WAS AND WAS ASKED IF SHE HAD PURCHASED HER TICKET. THE ANSWER WAS NO, NOT YET. HE ASKED HOW SHE WAS GOING TO SECURE HER TICKET. SHE EXPLAINED THE PROCEDURE. HE INQUIRED ABOUT A RIDE TO THE AIRPORT IN A TAXI WITH A DRIVER WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW, THE PURCHASE OF A TICKET FROM A CLERK SHE DID NOT KNOW, THE RIDE IN AN AIRPLANE WITH A PILOT WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW AND WHOSE CREDENTIALS SHE HAD NOT PERSONALLY CHECKED. DR. BARNHOUSE CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS STRANGE THAT WE EXHIBIT REAL TRUST IN MEN AND THE DECISIONS THEY MAKE AND YET REFUSE TO HAVE FAITH IN GOD.)

QUESTION: WAS MOSES' DECISION A FOOLISH OR WISE CHOICE? LET US ANSWER THE QUESTION WITH A SIMPLE EXPERIMENT: NEXT SUNDAY GO INTO THE LOWER GRADES OF THE CHURCH ~~OR SYNAGOGUE WHERE~~ YOU ATTEND A HOUSE OF WORSHIP AND ASK THE PUPILS TO IDENTIFY RAMSES, II. IN ALL PROBABILITY YOU WILL GET A LOOK OF BEWILDERMENT AND NO GOOD ANSWER. THEN ASK THEM TO IDENTIFY MOSES. IN MOST CASES THEY CAN GIVE YOU A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE OF MOSES, FIRST MEDIATORY LEADER OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. (RELATE THE SAME KIND OF DECISION WITH ST. PAUL. THE NAME NERO HAS BECOME A SYNONYM FOR ALL THAT IS EVIL IN MANHOOD. HIS CRIMES MADE HIM ONE OF THE GREATEST CRIMINALS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. HE ARRANGED FOR THE MURDER OF OCTAVIA; KICKED HIS SECOND WIFE TO DEATH WHEN SHE WAS EXPECTING A CHILD. HE SET FIRE TO ROME TILL THE CITY BURNED FOR SEVEN DAYS AND NIGHTS AND THE CITIZENS WERE UNITED IN HOPELESS

MISERY AND THEN BLAMED THE FIRE ON THE CHRISTIANS AND TORTURED THEM BY ROLLING THEM IN PITCH, SETTING THEM AFLAME, USING THEM AS LIVING TORCHES IN HIS GARDEN. HE SEWED THEM UP IN SKINS OF WILD ANIMALS AND THEN SET SAVAGE HUNTING DOGS IN THEIR PURSUIT TO TEAR THEM TO PIECES. PAUL WAS IN NERO'S JAIL BUT HE WAS NEVER NERO'S PRISONER. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE IMPACT OF THESE TWO MEN ON HISTORY, NOTE A SIMPLE FACT: WE NAME OUR DOGS NERO AND OUR SONS PAUL!)

II. MOSES CHOSE WHAT MANY WOULD HAVE REFUSED - vs. 25

SOMEONE HAS SAID THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO KINDS OF COURAGE: (1) THE COURAGE OF REACTION. THE SOLDIER WHO WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT HURLS HIS OWN BODY ON A GRENADE TO SAVE THE LIVES OF HIS COMRADES. (2) THE COURAGE OF REASON. - THE MAN WHO LOOKS AT A SITUATION CAREFULLY AND UNDERSTANDS FULL WELL THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DECISION HE IS ABOUT TO MAKE AND MAKES THE DECISION ANYWAY. WHEN MOSES CHOSE AFFLICTION INSTEAD OF AFFLUENCE, HE JOINED ONE OF THE SMALLEST MINORITY GROUPS IN THE WORLD. THE SHEPHERD LIFE OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE COUPLED WITH THE RUGGED TERRAIN AND THE OVERALL HARDSHIP OF GOVERNING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WAS SOMETHING FEW PEOPLE COULD OR WOULD HAVE CHOSEN. HOWEVER, THE COMFORTABLE LIFE IN EGYPT WAS NOT CONDUSIVE FOR MOLDING THE LEADER OF THE FORTHCOMING NATION OF ISRAEL. GOD WAS WORKING IN MOSES TO DEVELOP HIM INTO THE KIND OF LEADER SUITABLE FOR THE TASK BEFORE HIM. IF WE COULD PLAN OUR LIVES, WE WOULD PLAN A LARGE MEASURE OF SUNNY DAYS AND SMOOTH SAILING. HOWEVER, GOD KNOWS THAT STRENGTH COMES FROM STRUGGLE. (1) (SEE THE CATERPILLAR STRUGGLING TO FREE ITSELF FROM THE CONFINES AND RESTRICTION OF THE COCOON. AS IT STRUGGLES, SOMEONE TAKES A PAIR OF SCISSORS AND CUTS THE COCOON OPEN BUT INSTEAD OF A BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY THERE EMERGES A GRUBBY LOOKING WORM. YOU SEE, GOD KNOWS THAT THERE IS VALUE IN THE STRUGGLE OF LIFE. (2) (IN JULY OF 1967, A 17 YEAR OLD GIRL DIVED INTO CHESAPEAKE BAY AND BROKE HER NECK. SINCE THAT DAY, SHE HAS BEEN A QUADRIPLEGIC, CONFINED FOR LIFE TO A WHEELCHAIR. IN HER BIOGRAPHY, JONI EARECKSON SPEAKS OF THE BLESSING OF HER ACCIDENT. IT TURNED HER FROM A SELF SEEKING, SELF SERVING TEENAGER TO A GIRL WITH

AN INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY HELPING THOUSANDS THROUGH HER WRITINGS AND PERSONAL MINISTRY. THIS SUMMER A FILM DEPICTING THE STRUGGLES OF HER LIFE IS BEING RELEASED ACROSS AMERICA. "I SOMETIME SHUDDER TO THINK WHERE I WOULD BE TODAY IF I HAD NOT BROKEN MY NECK. I COULDN'T SEE AT FIRST WHY GOD WOULD POSSIBLY ALLOW IT BUT I AM SURE NOW. HE HAS GOTTEN MUCH MORE GLORY THROUGH MY PARALYSIS THAN THROUGH MY HEALTH. AND BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW RICH THAT MAKES ME FEEL.")

III. MOSES SAW WHAT MANY NEVER SEE - vs. 27

MOSES LOOKED BEYOND HIS IMMEDIATE CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE FUTURE AND A TIME WHEN HE WOULD STAND BEFORE GOD. BY FAITH, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT WHAT WE WEAVE IN TIME WE WILL WEAR IN ETERNITY. MOSES UNDERSTOOD THAT GOD HAD A PLAN FOR HIS LIFE AND THAT PLAN DID NOT INCLUDE THE SPLENDOR AND GLORIES OF EGYPTIAN RULE. GOD WANTED MOSES TO LEAVE EGYPT AND LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE OUT OF BONDAGE. MOSES WAS NOT UNIQUE IN RESPECT TO GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES. SOLOMON SAID--PROVERBS 3:5-6. MOSES, THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF FAITH, COULD LOOK INTO THE FUTURE AND SEE NOT A NATION OF SLAVES BUT A KINGDOM WITH RULERS SUCH AS DAVID AND SOLOMON AND ULTIMATELY A GREATER KINGDOM WITH CHRIST REIGNING. MOSES TOOK THE LONG VIEW. MOSES UNDERSTOOD THAT SATISFACTION IN LIFE COMES FROM DOING THE WILL OF GOD. SOMEONE HAS SAID HAPPINESS IS LIKE A SHADOW. IF PURSUED IT FLEES FROM US, BUT WHEN ONE TURNS TO WALK THE PATH OF DUTY, IT FOLLOWS CLOSE BEHIND. AGUSTINE WAS CORRECT WHEN HE SAID: "THOU HAS FORMED US FOR THY-SELF, AND OUR HEARTS ARE RESTLESS TILL THEY FIND REST IN THEE." ALSO, THE WESTMINISTER CONFESSION WAS CORRECT WHEN IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN?, THE ANSWER: "MAN'S CHIEF END IS TO GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER." (IN THE LATE 1920'S, A MAN PURCHASED A FORD AUTOMOBILE IN DEARBORN, MICHIGAN. WHILE DRIVING IT ALONG A NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD, THE CAR STOPPED. DESPITE EVERY ATTEMPT, THE CAR REFUSED TO START. AFTER A WHILE, ANOTHER AUTOMOBILE CAME ALONG AND A TALL WHITE-HAIRED MAN STEPPED OUT AND ASKED WHAT WAS WRONG. HE LOOKED UNDER THE HOOD AND MADE A FEW MINOR ADJUSTMENTS AND THEN ASSISTED THE MAN IN STARTING HIS CAR. AFTER EXPRESSING HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE

SERVICES RENDERED, AND ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, THE MAN ASKED THE KIND STRANGER HIS NAME. "MY NAME IS HENRY FORD." THE MAN WHO MADE THE CAR KNEW WHAT IT TOOK TO MAKE IT RUN. THE GOD WHO MADE US KNOWS WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE US HAPPY. WISE IS THE PERSON WHO SEEKS HIS COUNSEL AND DIRECTION IN LIFE. THE THREE GREATEST DECISIONS OF YOUR LIFE WILL BE MADE WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG. (1) WHAT YOU WILL DO REGARDING VOCATION. (2) WITH WHOM YOU WILL SPEND A LARGE PORTION OF YOUR LIFE, MARRIAGE OR NOT TO MARRY. (3) YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST. WE, LIKE MOSES, CAN ONLY CHOOSE GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES BY FAITH. (HEBREWS 11:6)
(RELATE PERSONAL TESTIMONY AS TIME ALLOWS.)

RKS

BCC-AM
9/16/73

CHASTISEMENT
HEBREWS 12:4-11

I AM GRATEFUL FOR PARENTS WHO BELIEVED IN DISCIPLINE. THEY DID NOT RESORT TO THE LATEST PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT NEITHER OF THEM HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND COLLEGE THEY SEEMED TO KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS. MY LAST ENCOUNTER IN THIS REGARD LINGERS IN MY MIND WITH AMAZING CLARITY. (RELATE THE INCIDENT OF CLEANING OUR BARN.) IF OUR CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT WERE LEFT UP TO US, WE WOULD ALWAYS TAKE THE EASY WAY. THIS WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THE KIND OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY GOD IS SEEKING IN HIS CHILDREN. TOO MANY OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE LOOK UPON CHASTISEMENT AS AN INDICATION OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE WITH US. TOO FEW ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT GOD DEALS WITH US AS A WISE FARMER WITH A CHOICE PIECE OF GROUND. THE GROUND MUST BE BROKEN UP BY THE PLOW AND, IF A SUITABLE CROP IS TO COME FORTH, THE PLOWING MUST BE DEEP. SO GOD PLOWS UP THE WEAK AREAS OF OUR LIFE, SOMETIMES PERMITTING THE WINDS AND RAIN OF SUFFERING TO SATURATE OUR SOULS IN ORDER THAT OUR LIVES MAY BRING FORTH A HARVEST OF GRAIN FOR HIS GLORY. HENDERSON REMINDS US: "GOD HAD ONE SON WITHOUT SIN, BUT HE NEVER HAD A SON WITHOUT SUFFERING." CHASTISEMENT IS A NECESSARY PART OF THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. IT DOES NOT INDICATE GOD'S DISPLEASURE WITH US BUT, INDEED, MAY INDICATE JUST THE REVERSE-THAT HE IS TREMENDOUSLY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES. A WORD OF CAUTION IS IN ORDER TO ALL BELIEVERS IN THE MATTER OF JUDGING OTHERS WITH REFERENCE TO CHASTISEMENT. WE ARE PRONE TO EQUATE SORROW AND DISTRESS IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER WITH SOME KIND OF HIDDEN SIN IN THEIR LIVES. THE FRIENDS OF JOB MADE THIS SAD MISTAKE. IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE TO NOTICE THAT SOME OF GOD'S CHOICEST PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED MOST IN THIS LIFE. (RELATE THE STORY OF GEORGE MACKEY AND THE DEATH OF THEIR TWO-YEAR OLD SON.) GOD AND HIS CHILDREN ARE USUALLY THE ONLY ONES WHO ARE AWARE OF HIS CHASTISEMENT. IT IS REALLY NONE OF OUR BUSINESS WHAT GOD DOES IN THE LIFE OF HIS OWN. ALSO, OUR REACTION TO CHASTISEMENT IS USUALLY "WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS?" THE CHAPTER BEFORE US TODAY WILL ASSIST BELIEVERS IN ASSESSING GOD'S PURPOSE IN DEALING WITH US IN DISCIPLINE.

Reason - Reaction - Reward

Some often saints think they get to the place don't need discipline around!

I. THE REASON FOR CHASTISEMENT (VERSES 6-7)

THE WORD "CHASTENING" IS A MUCH BROADER WORD THAN THAT OF WHIPPING OR SPANKING. IT IS A GREEK WORD WHICH
A. MEANS TO TRAIN OR EDUCATE A CHILD. IT CARRIES WITH IT THE IDEA OF INSTRUCTION AS WELL AS CORRECTION. IT MEANS ALL THAT GOES INTO THE METHOD OF TRAINING A CHILD IN ORDER THAT HE MAY GROW UP TO BE A MATURE PERSON. JUST AS THE TEACHER IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE OR THE SERGEANT IN THE ARMY OR THE MUSIC TEACHER ALL HAVE A PURPOSE: TO TRAIN, SO GOD IS INVOLVED IN TRAINING HIS OWN CHILDREN. HE DOES NOT ENTRUST THIS SACRED RESPONSIBILITY TO ANYONE ELSE. SOMETIMES GOD BRINGS SUFFERING INTO OUR LIVES AS PART OF THAT DISCIPLINARY PROCESS. GOD CANNOT LET US HAVE OUR OWN WAY IF THAT WAY IS CONTRARY TO HIS WILL AND WORD. HE MAY ALLOW PHYSICAL SUFFERING, MENTAL ANGUISH, LOSS OF MATERIAL RESOURCES, AND A HUNDRED OTHER THINGS TO INVADE OUR LIVES IN ORDER TO COMPEL US TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. WHEN WE ARE CARELESS AND PRAYERLESS WITH OTHER THINGS OCCUPYING OUR LIVES OTHER THAN THE THINGS OF GOD, HE SENDS TIMES OF AFFLICTION IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT SEARCH OUR LIVES, CONFESS OUR SINS AND ESTABLISH A PROPER RELATIONSHIP OF FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM. GOD IS THE MASTER EDUCATOR. HE KNOWS HOW TO MOTIVATE AS WELL AS RESTRICT HIS CHILDREN. ONE OTHER REASON FOR GOD'S CHASTENING IS
B. THE MATTER OF LOVE. SOMETIMES WE MAY MISUNDERSTAND HIS ACTS OF LOVE. HOWEVER, ALL OF HIS WORKS IN OUR LIVES ARE BECAUSE HE LOVES US. (THERE WAS A TIME IN MY EARLY LIFE WHEN I WOULD HAVE LIKED THE CAREFREE, UNDISCIPLINED LIFE OF A FRIEND OF MINE WHO HAD NO EARTHLY FATHER. HIS FATHER WAS NOT DEAD HE JUST SIMPLY HAD NO TIME FOR HIS SON. IN MY EARLY TEENS THIS BOY WAS THE ENVY OF MY OWN HEART, BECAUSE NO ONE EVER RESTRICTED HIS ACTIVITIES. AS I GREW OLDER AND CHAFED UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF OUR OWN HOME, I WAS SURPRISED WHEN THIS BOY WENT TO THE PENITENTIARY.) THERE MAY BE TIMES WHEN THE DEVIL'S CROWD, IN THEIR UNDISCIPLINED ACTIVITIES, MAY SEEM TO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE. THIS IS AN INCORRECT APPRAISAL. GOD KNOWS THERE ARE SOME THINGS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED THAT CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH CHASTENING. EVERY PARENT SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS PRINCIPLE. THE VERSES IN THIS DIVISION ALSO TELL US ONE REASON FOR GOD'S CHASTENING
3. IS TO MARK US AS HIS OWN SONS. THE DEVIL NEVER SAYS NO TO ANYBODY! THAT IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF OUR GENERATION. WHEN GOD SAYS NO, WE USUALLY REACT IN A NEGATIVE WAY. GOD CORRECTS EVERY SON IN ORDER THAT

WE WILL NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD. GOD IS CONCERNED WITH THE EDUCATION OF HIS CHILDREN. THIS IS THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF A GOOD PARENT. (IT IS NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY TO EDUCATE THE NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN.)

II. THE REACTION TO CHASTISEMENT - VERSES 5, 9

A. WE MAY DESPISE THE LORD'S CHASTENING - V.5

THE WORD DESPISE CARRIES WITH IT THE IDEA OF REBELLING AND REFUSING TO LEARN THE LESSON GOD HAS FOR US. IT IS THE IDEA OF THE HARDENING OF THE HEART, INDIFFERENCE AND DEFIANCE AGAINST GOD. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO LOOK UPON GOD AS SOME KIND OF VINDICTIVE JUDGE AND THEMSELVES AS UNDESERVING OF ANY KIND OF PUNISHMENT. INSTEAD OF YIELDING BEFORE THE LORD AND SEEKING TO FIND OUT WHAT GOD IS TRYING TO TEACH THEM, THEY BECOME BITTER AND RESENTFUL TOWARD GOD. OUR CHURCHES ARE FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO STARTED OUT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BUT, WHEN THEY WERE CHASTENED BY THE LORD, THEY SIMPLY DROPPED OUT OF CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LIVING BECAUSE OF THE BITTERNESS OF THEIR OWN SOUL.

B. WE MAY FAINT UNDER THE LORD'S CHASTENING - V.5

THE WORD FAINT MEANS TO COLLAPSE IN DEPRESSION AND SELF-PITY. USUALLY THESE PEOPLE FEEL SORRY FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THE DIFFICULTY THAT HAS COME THEIR WAY. THEY LOSE HEART AND GIVE UP, REFUSING TO LEARN THE LESSON GOD HAS FOR THEM. THESE FOLK USUALLY THINK CHRISTIAN LIVING IS JUST TOO HARD AND NOT REALLY WORTH THE EFFORT SO THEY GIVE UP.

C. WE MAY SUBMIT TO CHASTENING - V. 9

SUBMISSION INDICATES THAT WE ARE AWARE THAT GOD IS AT WORK IN OUR LIVES EVEN IN THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE SIMPLY WHISPER A CALM AMEN TO WHAT GOD IS DOING. THE MATURE CHRISTIAN KNOWS THAT EVERYTHING GOD DOES IN OUR LIVES IS DESIGNED TO MAKE US BETTER CHRISTIANS. WHY FIGHT GOD? (ILLUSTRATION OF ERBY KING'S DAUGHTER.)

III. THE REWARD OF CHASTISEMENT - VERSES 10-11

CARNALITY NEVER WELCOMES CHASTISEMENT. IT ALWAYS RESISTS AND JUSTIFIES ITSELF AND QUESTIONS GOD'S WORK IN THE LIFE. NOT ONLY DOES CHASTISEMENT PROVE OUR SONSHIP BUT IT IS FOR OUR PROFIT IN THE MATTER OF

HOLINESS. GOD IS SEEKING TO ACHIEVE CERTAIN GOALS AND PRODUCTS IN OUR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. IN HOLINESS, GOD SEEKS THRU THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REPRODUCE JESUS CHRIST IN OUR LIVES. (USE ILLUSTRATION OF SORROWS AND AFFLICTIONS AND CHASTISEMENT BEING GOD'S TRACING PAPER TO PERMIT THE IMAGE OF CHRIST TO SHINE THROUGH OUR LIVES. THE IMAGE DOES NOT APPEAR UNTIL THE RUBBING PROCESS BEGINS) J. OSWALD SANDERS POINTS OUT THAT A BAR OF STEEL USED FOR MAKING HORSESHOES WOULD NOT BE WORTH NEARLY AS MUCH AS THE SAME AMOUNT OF STEEL TURNED INTO WATCH SPRINGS. THE VALUE WAS INCREASED THE MORE THE STEEL WAS HAMMERED AND BEATEN AND TEMPERED IN THE FIRE. THE MORE WE ARE SUBMISIVE TO GOD'S DISCIPLINES, THE MORE VALUABLE WE WILL BE IN HIS SERVICE. DR. JOSEPH PARKER, A PREACHER OF ANOTHER GENERATION, LOOKED UPON GOD'S DISCIPLINE AND CHASTISEMENT IN HIS LIFE AS THE WORK OF THE "DIVINE PLOWMAN" AT WORK IN HIS LIFE. THE FOLLOWING PRAYER WAS UTTERED BY DR. PARKER IN THIS REGARD: (~~write this book "Plowed up my heart"~~)

> "PLOW ON, LORD, I WANT MY LIFE TO BE PLOWED ALL OVER, THAT IT MAY BE SOWN ALL OVER, AND THAT IN EVERY CORNER THERE MAY BE GOLDEN GRAIN OR GLORIOUS FLOWERS. PITY ME THAT I EXCLAIMED WHEN I FIRST FELT THE PLOWSHARE; THOU KNOWEST MY FRAME, THOU REMEMBEREST THAT I AM BUT DUST; BUT NOW I RECOLLECT, I PUT THINGS TOGETHER, I SEE THY MEANING. SO DRIVE ON, THOU PLOWMAN OF ETERNITY."

SEVERAL YEARS AGO AT A BIBLE CONFERENCE, I HEARD MY GOOD FRIEND WARREN WIERSBE SPEAK OF GOD'S PLOWING UP THE SOIL OF HIS HEART AS THE RESULT OF AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT WHICH ALMOST TOOK HIS LIFE. IT WAS A TURNING POINT IN HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY. DURING THOSE MANY MONTHS OF CONVALESCENCE, GOD WAS AT WORK IN HIS OWN HEART. I KNOW HOW HE FELT FOR I HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE. (SEVERAL YEARS AGO IT WAS MY DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DISCIPLINE ONE OF OUR DAUGHTERS. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO ADMINISTER THE NECESSARY DISCIPLINE. HOWEVER, I SHALL NEVER FORGET THE RE-ACTION. AFTER THE SPANKING WAS OVER, SHE TURNED NOT AWAY FROM ME BUT RATHER TO ME AND WITH TEARS IN HER EYES SAID, "I LOVE YOU DADDY." WHY CAN'T WE CHRISTIANS IN TIMES OF CHASTISEMENT TURN TO THE LORD AND NOT AWAY FROM HIM, AND REALIZE THAT HE IS CHASTENING US BECAUSE HE LOVES US.)

The comment of the aged Christian concerning our Lord bears repeading--"The Bible says the Lord is the Rock of My Salvation and I know this is true. I have often trembled while standing on the Rock but the Rock has never trembled under me."

One of the interesting words of the N.T. is the word "abide." We do not use it much in our language today but it is very beautiful. The word abide is translated several ways in the Word of God. Heb. 13:14--"continuing" 1 Peter 1:23-25 "abideth and endureth. 1 Cor. 3:14. The word abide simply means to remain and endure. In John 12:34 a group of our Lord's critics seemed to stumble over one of the great truths of Scripture. God's Word abides, God's Work abides---because He Abides Forever. When every star has fallen from the sky, every mountain crumbles to dust--He will remain--and so will those who have put their faith in Him.

Rev. 1:18

II. AN UNSHAKABLE PRINCIPLE: THE LORD CHASTENS HIS CHILDREN--v.5-11

1 Tim 1:2 "own"

The Lord has no illegitimate children. Only those who have been born of the Spirit belong to Him. The Lord does not spank the devil's children. He deals only with his genuine sons. (** I can never remember my father disciplining the neighbors kids.) Fathers train and discipline their children if they care for them. Parents who do not do this do not love their children!

Sometimes we behave as children when our Heavenly Father begins training us for Christian growth and maturity. We think He is unkind and harsh and we pity ourselves and seek others to sympathize with us, God has many ways of training His children. In some respects he does with us personally what He did with Israel as a nation in their growth and development.

Dif. Ben. Very Stern Now—

Sometimes we think the Lord is too strict in his dealings with us. But God is not like we are--we tend to pamper our children into deliquency and discover too late that we were not strict enough but the problem is we have no second chance---no reruns. God does it right the first itme around in his dealings with us, We would be wise too accept the disciplines of God and thank Him for them with full assurance that when we look back over our life all He permitted to come into our lives was to refine us as Christians and make us more like Him.

God uses many methods in training us as His sons. We make a garave mistake to equate chastening with punishment. God uses instruction as well as correction in His methods. He uses circumstances, sickness, death, sorrow, and every other thing in life necessary to make us what we ought to be for Him.

C.C.

reaction of immaturity

The fact that God chastens us does not mean we learn the lessons He is trying to teach. It is possible to be chastened and learn nothing from it. It is possible to have the wrong attitude and reaction to it. The text suggests 3 reactions to chastening:

1. We may despise it-- v.5

Rebelling against the hand of God and refusing to see why it is necessary. Refusing to learn the lesson. Hardening of heart or even treating it loosely. Insensitive to what God is trying to do. cf. ESAU AS EXAMPLE.

2. We may faint under it--v.5

To give up or give in to grow despondent as if our load is greater than we can bear. To collapse in the situation feeling that the burdens of life are too great, not worth the struggle. This attitude leads to pity and bitterness. Turley

3. We should be willing subjects--v.9

The flesh never welcomes discipline. We must keep in mind that chastening proves we are sons.v.8 Chastening is profitable. v.10 ***Sanders suggests that refining enhanses value. cf. a bar of steel used as or for making horse-shoes or rails for rail road. Worth more if made into knife blades or raizor blades but the same material made inot watch springs much greater worth. Point: The more it was hammered and pounded the greater its value! Chastening produces godliness in the life. v.10 Chastening is a long-run, long view matter. v.11 Joseph Parker looked upon lifes disciplines as the plough of the Lord turning up the soil of his heart and life in order that God might plant the seeds of beautiful flowers and grain. "So drive on, Thou Ploughman of Eternity." *** Twice within the past 10 or 15 years came very near to death. Each time has done something to me spiritually above everything else. Difficult but helpful to see with eyes that appreciate Him more.

III. AN UNSHAKABLE PROMISE: THE LORD IS GOING TO SHAKE HEAVEN AND EARTH--v.25-29

The writer takes us back to Sinai and the giving of the Law to Moses. The contrast is between what Moses received and what Christ has said and done. The point is the same as in Heb. 2:1 ff. If this was the situation with Moses and the O.T. law, how much more will be the punishment of the man who refuses to obey the words of Christ. To further show the contrast the writer uses the term fire with reference to God. God is many things--Light, Love, Light---and Fire! men speak of His love and forget His holiness! It is used to remind men that there is a terrible fate awaiting men who violate Gods laws and pay no attention to His Son.

9.11!

I think we live in a world where men have missed this aspect of God---He will and must judge sin and it is fire that reminds us of that part of his nature. **** Shortly after World War II a hotel in Atlanta had the worst fire in its history. Sometime after midnight it was discovered. Before many could be warned the building was engulfted in flames. In just a few minutes the streets below the hotel were filled with fire equipment and spectators. Soon bright search lights probed the darkness of the smoke filled night to the upper stories of the building to reveal the terror-stricken faces of people at windows and standing on the ledges of the building. Loud speakers from the fire department began to plead with the people not to jump. "Please don't jump, we will try to reach you." But those poor person trapped in the upper stories looked down on what seemed to be a hopeless situation. With the flames at their back, they began to jump from the 6-7th story to the pavement below. Death and sorrow filled Atlanta that night and in the cold gray dawn over 127 person had died. The question comes--how on earth could a person jump from a building like that? The answer--"Men will do almost anything to escape fire! In our country has grown up a generation of people who do not read their Bibles, know very little about it. For them there is no warning about eternity and what is just beyond the grave. Remember this point---Jesus Christ believed in Hell and He warned men to fleesthat place.

In a future day when everything about us is going to be shaken you are going to need an anchor for your soul. Nothing is more important than being united to Christ. He will not be shaken and if you are saved neither will you.

RKS

BCC-AM
9/23/73

RESPONSIBILITY

HEBREWS 13:1-17

Review:

SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT THE TWO GREATEST ABILITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ARE RESPONSIBILITY AND DEPENDABILITY. A FRIEND ONCE ASK DANIEL WEBSTER WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT THOUGHT THAT EVER OCCUPIED HIS MIND. WEBSTER'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE WAS "THE MOST IMPORTANT THOUGHT THAT HAS EVER OCCUPIED MY MIND WAS THAT OF MY INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD." IN THIS CHAPTER, WE WILL LOOK AT THREE PRIMARY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY.

I. THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER - VERSES 1-4 (SA)

A. Home

EARLY BELIEVERS HAD A CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AREA OF HOSPITALITY. PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS WERE SCARCE, EXPENSIVE, AND MORALLY OFFENSIVE TO GOD'S PEOPLE. CHRISTIANS WHO TRAVELED WERE IN NEED OF THIS KIND OF ASSISTANCE. EVERYWHERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT KINDNESS TO THE STRANGER IS ENCOURAGED. "HE DOTH EXECUTE THE JUDGMENT OF THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOW, AND LOVETH THE STRANGER, IN GIVING HIM FOOD AND RAIMENT. LOVE YE THEREFORE THE STRANGER: FOR YE WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT," (DEUTERONOMY 10:18-19) IN OUR DAY, THERE ARE SOME ADVANTAGES TO HAVING ACCEPTABLE PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS. HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN YOU WILL BE THE BENEFACTOR IN HAVING MISSIONARIES AND BIBLE TEACHERS IN YOUR HOME. THEIR PRESENCE WILL BE A SPIRITUAL BLESSING TO YOUR FAMILY. THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LIVES OF YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN ON MANY SUBJECTS WILL BE VALUABLE. THESE PEOPLE CAN TALK ABOUT A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS, INCLUDING FOOD, POLITICS, PEOPLE, CUSTOMS, AND YOU SHOULD HAVE THEM IN YOUR HOME AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. DO NOT LET A BUSY SCHEDULE, LIMITED BUDGET, A HUMBLE HOME KEEP YOU FROM THESE BLESSINGS. WE ARE LIVING IN PARADOXICAL TIMES WITH BOTH PARENTS IN THE FAMILY WORKING, TAKING MOST OF OUR TIME AND WITH MORE MONEY THAN WE HAVE EVER HAD BEFORE, IT IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO ENTERTAIN. THIS IS A PECULIAR KIND OF SELFISHNESS. (RELATE STORY OF STAYING WITH PHIL BAUR - THEIR MEALS AND ACCOMMODATIONS.) ANOTHER AREA OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAD TO DO WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS WHO WERE IN PRISON. THIS IDEA IS DIFFICULT FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY TO GRASP. HOWEVER, AT THIS TIME MANY PEOPLE WERE IN PRISON AND PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH. BELIEVERS WERE TOLD TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THESE BRETHREN. IDENTITY AND ASSISTANCE WERE IMPORTANT TO

B. Prison

(2 Tim. 4:16)

THESE MEN IN PRISON. JOHN BUNYON SPENT MANY YEARS IN BEDFORD PRISON BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH. SO DID THE APOSTLE PAUL AND OTHERS IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES. PAUL SPOKE IN GLOWING TERMS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO REMEMBERED HIM IN HIS BONDS. ANOTHER AREA OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAD TO DO WITH MARRIAGE. MARRIAGE IS NOT ONLY SANCTIONED BY GOD FOR ALL BUT HE TEACHES THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN PRIVILEGES WITHIN THE CONFINES OF MARRIAGE. THOSE WHO BREAK SUCH PRIVILEGES ARE CALLED FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE LITTLE REGARD FOR THE HOME AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. WE HAVE TAKEN SEXUAL SINS TOO LIGHTLY IN OUR DAY. THIS VERSE IS A SOLEMN REMINDER THAT MEN WHO VIOLATE THEIR MARRIAGE VOWS WILL ANSWER TO GOD! IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOMETIMES MEN AND WOMEN AVOID DETECTION FOR THEIR IMMORALITY. GOD REMINDS THEM THAT THIS WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED. THE LAST AREA OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS PORTION HAS TO DO WITH CONTENTMENT. THE WORD COVETOUS MEANS A MONEY LOVER. OUR SOCIETY PLACES THE EMPHASIS ON MATERIAL GAIN. MATERIAL WEALTH IS THE CONSUMING PASSION OF THE AMERICAN WORKER. LIFE IS MEASURED BY HOW MUCH WE CAN ACCUMUALTE. EVERY YEAR BRINGS THE DESIRE FOR A BIGGER AND BETTER SOMETHING. HOWEVER, SOME OF OUR PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR VALUES AND INTERESTS HAVE BEEN ON THE WRONG THINGS. IT IS POSSIBLE TO INVEST ONE'S LIFE IN THE PURSUIT OF IMPROPER VALUES. MATERIALISM IS, IN SHORT, THE WORSHIP OF THINGS. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT REAL HAPPINESS IN LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN INCREASING OUR POSSESSIONS BUT RATHER IN LIMITING OUR WANTS. THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE OCCUPIED AND INTERESTED IN THE LORD AND HIS WORK ON EARTH AND THIS SHOULD BE HIS SUPREME DESIRE. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SET ONE'S MIND ON THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH AND ALSO DOING THE WILL OF GOD AT THE SAME TIME. PEOPLE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND THAT THE LORD IS OUR HELPER AND NOT MONEY, POSITION OR ABILITY. (RELATE LES PIPKIN'S STORY ABOUT AN ENGINEER WHO CAME TO A.B.I. THIS PAST WEEK.) IT IS STILL TRUE THAT THE THINGS THAT ARE MOST WORTH POSSESSING IN THIS WORLD ARE THE THINGS WHICH MONEY CANNOT BUY. "MONEY IS A UNIVERSAL PROVIDER OF EVERYTHING BUT HAPPINESS, AND A PASSPORT TO EVERYTHING BUT HEAVEN." (I HAVE A STORY IN MY FILES OF A FAMILY WHO INHERITED $200,000 AND SPENT IT IN A MATTER OF WEEKS. THEY INVESTED VERY LITTLE OF IT AND SQUANDERED IT ON CARS, TRIPS, CLOTHES AND ANYTHING THEIR HEARTS DESIRED. AT THE END OF A YEAR THEY HAD NOTHING TO SHOW FOR THEIR MONEY. IT WAS THEN THAT THEY BEGAN TO FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES AND

TO QUARREL OVER THE WAY THEY HAD SPENT THE MONEY. THEY LIVED IN A DREAM WORLD FOR A YEAR BUT WHEN THE DREAM WAS OVER THEIR LIFE WAS SHATTERED.)

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND DOCTRINE - VERSES 7-9, 17

PAUL SEEMS TO BE REFERRING TO FORMER LEADERS AMONG THE JEWISH BELIEVERS TO WHOM HE IS WRITING. BELIEVERS IN A LOCAL CHURCH HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO FOLLOW GOD-GIVEN LEADERSHIP AS LONG AS IT IS ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD. THE WORD RULE IN VERSE 7 SHOULD MORE ACCURATELY BE TRANSLATED LEADERSHIP. THERE IS A TENDENCY TO FORGET THE PRINCIPLES OF SUBMITTING TO LEADERSHIP IF THERE IS A CONFLICT IN PERSONALITY. WE ARE PRONE TO REMEMBER THAT GOD REQUIRES LEADERS TO LEAD BUT HE ALSO REQUIRES FOLLOWERS TO FOLLOW. IF YOU FEEL LED TO BE A MEMBER OF A LOCAL CHURCH AND THE MAJORITY OF THAT CHURCH IS FOLLOWING THE TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD, BOTH IN THE AREA OF ORGANIZATION AND OUTREACH, THEN TO OPPOSE THE MINISTRY OF THAT CHURCH IS TO OPPOSE THE WORK OF GOD ON EARTH. AND FOR THIS KIND OF DISOBEDIENCE, A BELIEVER WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD. IN VERSE 9 THE ADMONITION IS FOR DOCTRINAL PURITY. THE WORD ESTABLISHED IS ENCOURAGING. TOO MANY OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE FICKLE AND CHANGING IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES. ONE DAY THERE IS DEEP CONVICTION AND DESIRE TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAY. HOWEVER, IN ONE DAY THIS CAN ALL BE WASHED AWAY AND THE HEART IS RESTLESS ONCE AGAIN. A WORD OF ADMONITION IS IN ORDER. THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR CHRISTIANS TO SEEK TO ESTABLISH THEIR HEARTS BY RELIGIOUS WORKS. WE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR THE LORD THAN WORSHIPING HIM. THERE IS ALSO THE DANGER OF BEING CARRIED AWAY WITH A SINGLE ASPECT OF GOD'S WORD TO THE DISTORTION OF OTHER SIDES OF HIS TRUTH. (COMPARE THE TONGUES MOVEMENT TODAY AND CALVANISM) THE ONLY WAY WE CAN BE ESTABLISHED IN THE THINGS OF GOD IS WITH GRACE.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH - VERSES 13-16

OUR LORD, IN HIS DEATH, WAS TREATED AS A COMMON CRIMINAL. THERE IS ONLY ONE SAFE COURSE FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO FOLLOW AND THAT IS TO STAY NEAR TO CHRIST. OUR LORD WAS SEPARATED AND HUMILIATED OUTSIDE THE CITY WALL OF JERUSALEM. THE WORLD

SPAT UPON HIM AND TREATED HIM SCORNFULLY. HE TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO EXPECT NO BETTER. HOWEVER, IN MODERN TIMES WE HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THE SOCIETY IN WHICH HE LIVES FOR GOOD. THERE IS A GREAT DESIRE ON THE PART OF MANY TO STAY WITHIN THE CAMP AND TRY TO STEM THE TIDE OF EVIL; TO TRY TO CHANGE THE WORLD FOR GOOD APART FROM ACCEPTANCE OF THE SAVIOUR. OUR LORD WAS REJECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THEIR CAME A TIME WHEN HE STOOD UTTERLY ALONE FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED. THERE WILL COME A TIME WHEN YOU, AS A CHRISTIAN, WILL HAVE TO MAKE THAT CHOICE. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THERE IS A REPROACH OF THE GOSPEL. IF YOU ARE THE KIND OF CHRISTIAN YOU OUGHT TO BE, THERE MAY BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OSTRACISM FOR ONES FAITH. WILLIAM SANGSTER TELLS THE FOLLOWING STORY IN THIS REGARD. HE SAID "I WAS VISITING A CHRISTIAN FRIEND AND WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THIS MATTER OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. I ASKED HIM HOW FRIENDLY HE WAS WITH HIS NEIGHBORS. HE SAID THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THERE HAD BEEN SEEMINGLY GENUINE INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE NEIGHBORS UNTIL SOME HELD A COCKTAIL PARTY. HE SAID WHEN WE WENT AND KEPT TO SOFT DRINKS, THEY LOST WHAT TASTE THEY HAD FOR OUR COMPANY. THEY SEEMED INCAPABLE OF FELLOWSHIP WITHOUT DRINK. THEY THINK YOU ARE POSITIVELY STRANGE WHEN YOU DO NOT JOIN THEM AND HE SAID WE WERE VERY LONELY THERE." IF YOU HAVE NOT DISCOVERED THAT THERE WILL BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OSTRACIZATION IF YOU DO NOT SING THE WORLD'S TUNE AND SUBSCRIBE TO THEIR STANDARDS, THEN YOU ARE IN FOR A REAL SHOCK SOMEDAY. I HAVE BEEN A CHRISTIAN LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT SOME CAPABLE CHRISTIANS ARE BYPASSED IN INDUSTRY FOR THEIR STRONG STAND AND THEIR REFUSAL TO GET INVOLVED IN THE MORAL CESS-POOL THAT IS OFTEN ATTACHED TO CLIMBING THE EXECUTIVE LADDER. WHEN YOU REFUSE TO DRINK THEIR COCKTAILS AND LISTEN TO THEIR STORIES AND ABIDE BY THEIR STANDARDS, YOU WILL BE SET APART AND MADE FUN OF. I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO DELIGHT IN BEING ODD OR STRANGE OR DIFFERENT, NEITHER AM I TALKING ABOUT THOSE CRITICAL PEOPLE WHO FEEL IT THEIR CALLING IN LIFE TO CRITICIZE EVERYBODY WHO SMOKES A CIGARETTE OR DRINKS A GLASS OF BEER. I AM TALKING ABOUT WELL-ORDERED WELL-BALANCED CHRISTIANS WHO ARE CALLED UPON TO BEAR THE REPROACH OF OUR BLESSED LORD SIMPLY BECAUSE THEIR STANDARDS ARE NOT THE SAME AS THIS WORLD'S SYSTEM! SOMETIMES YOUNG PEOPLE ESPECIALLY IN SEEING THE PRICE THAT MUST BE PAID TO MAINTAIN THEIR CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY LOSE HEART.

SANGSTER RELATES THE FOLLOWING STORY ON THE MATTER OF BEARING CHRIST'S REPROACH. MANY YEARS AGO A YOUNG GIRL NAMED PRICILLA LIVINGSTON STEWART BECAME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR GIRLS IN HER NEIGHBORHOOD. ALL THE FELLOWS WANTED TO DATE HER AND WENT TO ANY LENGTH TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. THEN MISS STEWART CAME TO KNOW CHRIST. THIS LOVELY YOUNG LADY CHOSE TO BECOME IDENTIFIED WITH A SALVATION ARMY GROUP AND WALKED IN THE STREETS WITH THEM WHEN THEY WERE PELTED WITH STONES, EGGS, AND OLD SHOES. SHE SAID "NONE OF MY FRIENDS RECOGNIZED ME IN THE STREET, AND ALL THE YOUNG MEN WHO WERE FOND TO WALK WITH ME BEFORE I WAS SAVED NOW TURNED THEIR BACKS." THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT THING FOR HER TO DO BUT THIS DETERMINATION TO SERVE CHRIST EVENTUALLY SENT HER TO CHINA AS A MISSIONARY WHERE SHE BECAME THE WIFE OF AN EXTRA ORDINARY MAN NAMED C. T. STUDD. UNDOUBTEDLY SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE GONE TO CHINA NOR MET AND MARRIED ONE OF THE WORLD'S UNUSUAL MISSIONARIES HAD SHE NOT DETERMINED IN THOSE EARLY YEARS TO BEAR THE REPROACH OF THOSE WHO ARE ENEMIES OF CHRIST. NOTICE THE EMPHASIS OF THE TEXT, GOD WILL NOT DRAG YOU TO A PLACE OF SEPARATED LIVING - IT WILL BE YOUR CHOICE. IT IS AN HONOR AND LIMITED TO THOSE WHO REALLY MEAN BUSINESS FOR JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE PRICE MANY ARE UNWILLING TO PAY IN OUR PRESS FOR POPULARITY. HOWEVER, FOR THOSE RARE BELIEVERS, WHO ARE WILLING TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH JESUS CHRIST WHATEVER THE COST, GOD'S BLESSING AND PRESENCE WILL REST UPON THEIR LIVES.

Vic Olsen's story in DekTak - - -

THE LETS IN A LETTER
HEBREWS 13

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS REVEALS ~~THAT~~ JESUS CHRIST AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. THAT SYSTEM WAS TYPE AND SHADOW, WHEREAS HE IS THE REALITY TOWARD WHICH THE SYSTEM POINTED. THE KEY WORD IN THE BOOK IS "BETTER", USED 13 TIMES. HEBREWS WAS WRITTEN TO THOSE RECENTLY CONVERTED JEWS WHO ~~STILL CLUNG~~ TO RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES IN JUDAISM. THE TEMPLE, TRADITIONS, TEACHINGS, AND TIES OF JUDAISM WERE STILL VERY STRONG, EVEN THOUGH NOW THEY WERE IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST. THIS BOOK SPEAKS OF THE GREATER PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN KNOWING AND SERVING GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. THE LAST CHAPTER OF HEBREWS REVEALS SOME VERY PRACTICALS WAYS CHRISTIANS SHOULD MANIFEST THE REALITY OF CHRISTIAN LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE GREAT DOCTRINAL TRUTHS OF THE BOOK. WE WILL FOCUS OUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS CHAPTER AROUND THE THREE LETTER WORD LET.

I. THE LET OF COMPASSIONATE LIVING - VERSES 1-4

BROTHERLY LOVE IS A VERY PRACTICAL OUTWORKING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST. BELIEVERS MUST HAVE AN AFFECTIONATE CONCERN AND REGARD FOR ONE ANOTHER. THE WORD LOVE IN THE TEXT IS RELATED TO THE WORD FRIEND. THE TERM CONTINUE MEANS TO REMAIN, ABIDE, SIT, OR STAY ~~not~~. IT IS USED IN JOHN 19:31 OF OUR LORD'S BODY REMAINING ON THE CROSS. THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT BROTHERLY LOVE SHOULD COMMENCE, THAT IS ASSUMED IT IS TO KEEP ON ABIDING. (SANDERS TELLS THE STORY OF AN OLD SCOTTISH FAMILY HAVING FAMILY DEVOTIONS IN A CATECHISM FASHION. ON THIS PARTICULAR MORNING, A HOUSE GUEST WAS ASKED: "HOW MANY COMMANDMENTS ARE THERE?" HIS ANSWER WAS: "ELEVEN." THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH A WELL-TAUGHT MAN COULD BE SO IGNORANT OF THE SCRIPTURES. HOWEVER, WHEN PRESSED FOR AN ANSWER, THE STRANGER SAID: "A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER.") THE WRITER OF HEBREWS MENTIONS THREE AREAS OF LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH WHICH THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE CONCERNED.

A. HOSPITALITY - VERSE 1.

THE WORD HOSPITALITY REFERS TO A LOVE OF STRANGERS. ANCIENT ETIQUETTE MADE HOSPITALITY AN INDISPENSIBLE VIRTUE OF LIFE. ANCIENT INNS AND OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS WERE SO POOR AND SO

MORALLY DEGRADING THAT IT BECAME NECESSARY FOR CHRISTIAN PEOPLE TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY IN AN UNUSUAL AND EXTENSIVE WAY FOR THE ONGOING OF THE LORD'S WORK AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH. THE HOST IN BIBLE TIMES WAS DUTY-BOUND TO DEFEND HIS GUESTS AGAINST ALL DANGERS. THE INTERESTING PROCEDURE REVEALED IN GENESIS 18:1-8 REVEALS THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY WHICH RESTED UPON THE HOST. WITH THE CHANGE IN CULTURE IN MODERN TIMES, I AM NOT SURE I KNOW HOW TO APPLY THIS VERSE. SOMEHOW, HOSPITALITY MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE LARGER AREA OF CHARITABLENESS MUST BE INVOLVED. IT SURELY INVOLVES MORE THAN JUST ENTERTAINING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN THE HOME. AS A MATTER OF FACT, TODAY THE CHARITABLE PART MIGHT LET ONE GUEST STAY IN A MOTEL WITH ITS CONVENIENCES, AS OPPOSED TO STAYING IN THE HOME! THE IDEA BEHIND HOSPITALITY IS CERTAINLY THAT OF A CARING, GENEROUS PERSON, AND THAT RESPONSIBILITY HAS NOT CHANGED. (BARCLAY REMINDS US THAT IN PAUL'S DAY, SLAVES LITERALLY HAD NO HOME AND NO RESOURCES FOR OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS. WANDERING PREACHERS, SUCH AS PAUL, ALSO WERE AT THE MERCY OF CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.)

B. BRETHREN IN DIFFICULTY - VERSE 3

THE IDEA OF PRISONERS AND THOSE WHO SUFFERED ADVERSITY ARE MENTIONED IN THE TEXT. SOMETIMES PEOPLE WERE IMPRISONED FOR THEIR FAITH AND SOMETIMES FOR INDEBTEDNESS. THE ADMONITION TO THE EARLY CHURCH WAS NOT TO FORGET THOSE WHO WERE SO IMPRISONED AND BE CONCERNED ABOUT GIVING ASSISTANCE CONCERNING THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE AND EVEN SETTING THEM FREE. THE TENDENCY MIGHT BE TO OVERLOOK OR FORGET THEM. I SUSPECT, IN ANY SOCIETY, THE MOST FORGOTTEN AND NEGLECTED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE THOSE INCARCERATED. ALSO, THOSE WHO ARE ILL-TREATED SOMETIMES ESCAPE OUR ATTENTION, AND WE ARE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO LET CIRCUMSTANCES GO BY AS LONG AS WE ARE NOT INVOLVED. PAUL'S ADMONITION WAS FOR THE SAINTS OF GOD TO BE CONCERNED AND GET INVOLVED WITH THOSE WHO WERE SERVANTS SUFFERING FOR THEIR FAITH. THEY ARE PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND WE SHOULD LOOK UPON THEIR DISTRESSES AS OUR OWN. SUCH AN ATTITUDE IS THE MANIFESTATION OF REAL BROTHERLY LOVE.

C. THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP - VERSE 4

IN THIS VERSE, THE UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND THE MORAL STANDARDS OF MARRIAGE ARE MENTIONED. THE IDEA OF MARITAL FIDELITY AND PURITY ARE MENTIONED, WHICH IDEAS WERE TOTALLY NEW TO A HEATHEN CULTURE. WHAT I AM ABOUT TO SAY

IS NOT THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS VERSE BUT AS IT APPLIES TO THE GENERAL IDEA OF COMPASSIONATE LIVING. THERE IS PROBABLY NO RELATIONSHIP IN THE WORLD WHERE COMPASSION AND PURE CHRISTIAN COURTESY IS OVERLOOKED MORE OFTEN THAN IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP. IF MORE LOVING CONCERN WERE MANIFESTED IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP, FAR MORE MARRIAGES WOULD STICK TOGETHER. TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CULTURE TO WHICH PAUL WAS WRITING, RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE AND OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE WERE THE NORMAL PRACTICE AND ACCEPTED AS PART OF THE WAY OF LIFE. MARITAL INFIDELITY WAS THE USUAL AND ORDINARY APPROACH TO LIFE, AND THE WRONGNESS OF ADULTERY SIMPLY WAS NOT MENTIONED. WHERE THERE IS GENUINE CHRISTIAN LOVE, THERE WILL BE MARITAL HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT. WITHOUT THIS NECESSARY INGREDIENT, MARRIAGES EVEN AMONG CHRISTIANS WILL BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.

II. THE LET OF CONTENTED LIVING - VERSES 5-6

THE VERSE IS ACTUALLY ADMONISHING THE BELIEVER TO HAVE HIS LIFE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY, FOR THAT IS WHAT THE WORD COVETOUS IN THE TEXT MEANS. IS THIS VERSE DESIGNED TO DISDAIN ALL EFFORT TO INCREASE ONE'S MATERIAL POSSESSIONS? DOES THIS VERSE ADVOCATE A PASSIVE ATTITUDE OF INDIFFERENCE TOWARD ONE'S DOMESTIC SITUATION? FOR EXAMPLE, IF ONE LIVES IN A RUN-DOWN SLAB SHACK WHO DRIVES A CAR WITH THE BUMPER WIRED ON WITH BAILING WIRE, WEARING OLD TATTERED CLOTHING, AND DOING A TYPE OF WORK WHICH INVOLVES NO RESPONSIBILITY AND FEW OR NO HARD DECISIONS - IS THAT POSITION IN LIFE HE SHOULD ACCEPT AND THE GOAL TOWARD WHICH HE SHOULD MOVE? I FIND THIS VERY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE OR ACCEPT. THEN, WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN? IN MY JUDGMENT, PAUL IS ADVOCATING A CERTAIN PRINCIPLE IN LIFE. HE IS SHOWING CHRISTIANS THAT THE TENDENCY TO PUT MATERIAL THINGS OVER SPIRITUAL IS UNDESIRABLE AND DANGEROUS. THE REVERSE SHOULD BE TRUE; THAT IS, THE SPIRITUAL THINGS IN OUR LIVES SHOULD BE PRIMARY AND NOT SECONDARY. NOTHING WE DO MATERIALLY CAN INPROVE OUR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING. INCREASING OUR POSSESSIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY HELP ONE SPIRITUALLY; IT MAY INDEED COMPLICATE ONE'S SPIRITUAL LIFE. IN THE TEXT, THE WRITER SHOWS HOW THE LORD'S PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES IS WHAT REALLY COUNTS FOR CONTENTMENT AND ALL ELSE FAILS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR LIVES SHOULD HAVE A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION, AND THE MAN WHOSE LIFE IS UNDULY INVOLVED WITH THE LOVE OF MONEY IS DOOMED TO DISAPPOINTMENT. WE LIVE IN AFFLUENT TIMES AND, EVEN THOUGH POVERTY EXISTS IN ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE GREAT

MAJORITY OF BELIEVERS IN AMERICA ENJOY, BY WORLD STANDARDS, ENORMOUS PROSPERITY. IN OUR SOCIETY, POSSIBILITIES FOR EDUCATION ARE VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED AND OPEN TO ALL. ALMOST ANY PERSON WHO DESIRES TO GET AHEAD FINANCIALLY AND IS WILLING TO WORK AT IT MAY ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. AS A MATTER OF FACT, ECONOMIC SECURITY IS IMPORTANT TO MOST PEOPLE BECAUSE IT AFFORDS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROTECTION FROM THE UNDESIRABLE FEATURES OF LIFE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE INADEQUACIES AND DANGERS INHERENT WITH PROSPERITY. FINANCIAL SUCCESS MAY MAKE A PERSON CARELESS ABOUT GOD AND NEGLIGENT OF THE BASIC AND IMPORTANT VALUES IN LIFE, NAMELY, FAMILY, GOOD NAME, ABILITY TO SLEEP AT NIGHT. PAUL IS SHOWING THAT IT IS WRONG TO PLACE ONE'S TRUST IN MONEY. THE BIBLE WARNS OF THE DANGER OF BECOMING TOO FOND OF MONEY AND THE THINGS MONEY CAN BUY. THE UNHEALTHY OBSESSION WITH MONEY IS, IN THE WORDS OF THE TEXT, CALLED COVETOUSNESS, AND THAT SPIRIT IS INHERENT IN THE HUMAN NATURE OF EVERY PERSON. THE PURSUIT OF MONEY OFTEN TAKES THE PLACE OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PURSUER. THAT TIME, ENERGY, AND THOUGHT PLACED IN THE PURSUIT OF PROSPERITY IS OFTEN DIVERTED FROM A PERSON'S PURSUIT OF GOD! THE PERSON WHOSE SUPREME INTEREST AND LOYALTY IS TO GOD WILL HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH EITHER THE WAY HE MAKES HIS MONEY OR THE WAY HE SPENDS IT! (WILLIAM BARCLAY MAKES AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION ABOUT THE RICH YOUNG RULER. HIS PROBLEM WAS NOT HIS POSSESSIONS, BUT HIS POSSESSIVENESS. HE WAS POSSESSED BY HIS POSSESSIONS. JESUS KNEW THAT THE ONLY CURE FOR THIS MAN'S LOVE OF THINGS WAS A RADICAL CHANGE IN HIS APPROACH TO THE WHOLE MATTER OF POSSESSIONS AND THAT INVOLVED A SURGICAL ERADICATION OF THE PASSION OF POSSESSIVENESS IN HIS LIFE. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE KEPT THE COMMANDMENTS, AND YET HIS CLAIM WAS A LIE, AND HIS WEALTH WAS THE VERY THING WHICH PREVENTED HIM FROM KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS. IF HE HAD USED HIS POSSESSIONS TO HELP OTHERS, JESUS WOULD NEVER HAVE MENTIONED THE NEED, BUT HIS CONDITION WAS SUCH THAT HE EITHER HAD TO ABANDON HIS POSSESSIONS OR ABANDON HIS ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW JESUS. IT WAS NOT HIS WEALTH THAT CONDEMNED HIM, BUT HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD IT. HE WAS SO DOMINATED BY HIS DESIRE TO HAVE AND HOLD TO MORE AND MORE THAT IT BECAME IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SERVE CHRIST.) SIMPLY STATED, THE MORE ONE HAS, THE MORE COMPLEX HIS LIFE BECOMES AND THE MORE HE NEEDS THE LORD. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN ONE'S LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ACCUMULATION OF MONEY. (THERE IS THE OLD STORY OF A KING WHO WAS SUFFERING FROM A PAINFUL ILLNESS AND WHOSE ASTROLOGER TOLD HIM THAT THE ONLY CURE FOR THE AILMENT WAS TO FIND A CONTENTED MAN, GET HIS SHIRT,

AND WEAR IT FOR A DAY AND NIGHT. MESSENGERS WERE DISPATCHED THROUGHOUT THE KING'S DOMAIN TO FIND SUCH A MAN AND TO RETURN WITH THE SHIRT. MONTHS PASSED AND, AFTER A THOROUGH SEARCH THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE MESSENGERS RETURNED. THE QUESTION WAS ASKED IF THEY HAD FOUND SUCH A CONTENTED MAN, TO WHICH THE ANSWER WAS AFFIRMATIVE. WHERE, THEN, WAS THE SHIRT? THE REPLY WAS THAT THE MAN HAD NO SHIRT. ALSO, THERE IS A STORY ABOUT THE FARMER WHO ADVERTISED THAT HE WOULD GIVE AWAY FORTY ACRES OF HIS RICH FARMLAND IF HE FOUND ANYONE WHO WAS PERFECTLY SATISFIED. WHEN INQUIRIES WERE MADE, THE FARMER WOULD ASK IF THE PERSON INQUIRING WAS PERFECTLY SATISFIED. WHEN THE ANSWER WAS YES, THEN HE WOULD ASK: "THEN WHY DO YOU WANT THIS LAND?") THE VERSE INFORMS US THAT, WITH CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN OUR LIFE, WE NEED NOT FEAR THE THINGS WHICH MOST PEOPLE FEAR SO DESPERATELY - NAMELY, ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OR INSECURITY. WHEN ONE'S FOUNDATION IS RESTING ON CHRIST, THE LOSS OF MATERIAL WELL-BEING WILL NOT DESTROY HIS CONTENTMENT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THERE ARE LIMITATIONS TO MONEY. TO BE SURE, WEALTH CAN BUY A FINE BED, BUT IT CANNOT GUARANTEE SLEEP. IT CAN BUY BOOKS BUT NOT BRAINS, FOOD BUT NOT APPETITE, MEDICINE BUT NOT HEALTH, A CRUCIFIX BUT NOT CHRIST, RELIGION BUT NOT SALVATION!

III. THE LET OF CONSECRATED LIVING - VERSES 9-16

THE PICTURE IN THESE VERSES TAKES THE READER BACK TO THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS. THE OFFERINGS AND, SPECIFICALLY, THE SIN OFFERING, ARE MENTIONED. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SIN OFFERING WITH ITS BLOOD SPRINKLED ON THE HOLY PLACE AND THE DEAD CARCASS OF THE ANIMAL TAKEN OUTSIDE THE CAMP OF ISRAEL. THE BOOK OF HEBREWS TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS THE CONSUMMATION AND FULFILLMENT OF THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. THAT SIN OFFERING TYPIFIED JESUS CHRIST AND HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS OUTSIDE THE WALL OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. OUR LORD'S DEATH, ON AN INSTRUMENT OF SHAME, WAS A REPROACHFUL THING. IN THESE VERSES, THE WRITER REMINDS CHRISTIANS THAT THERE IS A REPROACH ASSOCIATED WITH OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST. IF ONE CHOOSES TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP, THERE IS A PRICE TO BE PAID. SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO RUN WITH THE HARE AND HUNT WITH THE HOUNDS. THEY BELIEVE THAT A PERSON CAN BE HALF CHRISTIAN AND HALF WORLDLY IN A SUCCESSFUL FASHION. THESE PEOPLE WANT TO BELIEVE IN JESUS BUT NOT BELONG TO HIM. THEIRS IS A KIND OF FAITH WITHOUT FIDELITY. LIKE LOT, THEY WANT TO SETTLE DOWN IN A POLLUTED ATMOSPHERE,

BECOME PART AND PARCEL OF SODOM'S LIFE, AND HOPE NOTHING ADVERSE WILL HAPPEN. IN MY JUDGMENT, THERE IS STILL A REPROACH ASSOCIATED WITH OUR BLESSED LORD. AS A CHRISTIAN, YOU CANNOT DRINK THE WORLD'S DRINKS, PLAY ITS GAMES, AND ADOPT ITS PHILOSOPHY. AND THEREFORE, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED DIFFERENT, ODD, AND SUSPICIOUS. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN BELSHAZZAR GAVE HIS GREAT BANQUET WITH ALL OF THE DRUNKENNESS AND IMMORALITY ATTENDANT, IT WAS NOT UNTIL GOD'S HAND BROKE UP THE PARTY THAT THEY INVITED DANIEL TO ATTEND! IF WE ARE NOT WILLING TO IDENTIFY OURSELVES WITH THE REPROACH OF OUR LORD, WE ARE NOT READY TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH HIM. IT IS A MISERABLE EXPERIENCE TO TRY TO BE HALF CHRISTIAN AND HALF WORLDLY. THE PHILOSOPHIES ARE ABSOLUTELY INCOMPATIBLE. WE MUST CHOOSE EITHER THE SMILE OF THE WORLD OR THE SMILE OF OUR LORD. SANGSTER TELLS THE STORY OF A FINE CHRISTIAN WOMAN WHO BORE WITNESS OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE FACTORY WHERE SHE WORKED. IN HER TESTIMONY, SHE TOLD HOW IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO TALK TO GIRLS ABOUT RELIGION OR HIGHER MORAL STANDARDS IN SOCIETY. WHENEVER THESE TOPICS WERE BROUGHT UP, HER COLLEAGUES WOULD NOD APPROVAL, EVEN THOUGH OFTEN SILENT IN THE CONVERSATION. HOWEVER, WHEN THE SUBJECT OF JESUS CHRIST AND SALVATION BY GRACE CREPT INTO THE CONVERSATION, THE VERY MENTION OF JESUS' NAME WAS OFFENSIVE TO THE HEARERS. HAVE YOU MADE THAT STARTLING DISCOVERY? YOU MAY TALK ABOUT A VARIETY OF RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS AND GAIN ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL, BUT CHRIST AND HIS WORK AT CALVARY DRAWS THE LINE OF SEPARATION AND DEMARCATION, AND MEN MUST CHOOSE ON THE BASIS OF CHRIST AND CHRIST ALONE.