

Index of Articles

Inspiration of Scripture	W. Warke
That Beautiful Flock	A. Dryburgh
Position and Condition	J. G. Good
Order in God's House (1 Tim. 3)	J. Portman
High Priesthood of Christ	
When was He Rich?	E. J. Checkley
Be Still and Know...	W. Scott

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURES

William Warke

The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, is one of the cardinal truths of Christianity and most surely believed among us.

1. The Fact of Inspiration

The apostle states in 2 Tim. 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness".

Holy Bible, Book divine
Precious treasure, thou art mine.

As God created man out of the dust of the ground, breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul, so every word of Scripture is God-breathed and His Word is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, (Heb. 4: 12). If we look at the setting in 2 Tim. 3, the apostle is speaking of the last days; as we read *this* description, and look around us we see how well the Spirit of God has foretold the conditions that abound on every hand.

Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The houses of pleasure and amusement are filled, while it is with difficulty anyone is persuaded to come and listen to the gospel of God's grace. The religious world has a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, and from such we are told to turn away.

Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. In the midst of this confusion and iniquity, the message of God to us is clear

and plain. "But continue thou in the things which thou has learned." There is no hint here of silencing certain truths or changing our practice to conform to those around us to attract them. We are rather exhorted to continue in the things which we have learned from the Holy Scriptures which are inspired of God. God's people who want to please Him will be attracted by our adherence to the ways of God as set before us in the holy Scriptures.

In 2 Tim. 1:15, the apostle writes, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me", *but* instead of advising Timothy to change *his* practice he exhorted him to, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou has heard of me, *in* faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us", (1:13-14).

The all-sufficiency of the inspired word is declared in 2 Tim. 3:15-17. Instilled into the mind, it is able to make one wise unto salvation. It is profitable to the Christian for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And it thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good works.

The apostle now gives Timothy a solemn charge that we do well to heed. "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing, and His kingdom; Preach the Word" (4:1-2). It matters not what conditions were, this was his solemn responsibility, and also ours. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord,

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and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23: 28-29).

There is no more effective way to reach the hearts of men than by preaching the Word of God. Abraham said to the rich man in hell, regarding his brothers, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead". (Luke 16:31). The preaching of the Word of God will accomplish His purposes. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:10, 11).

2. The Manner of Inspiration

As to the manner in which God inspired the Holy Scriptures, it is stated in 2 Peter 1:21, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost". Here first of all is the character of the men whom God employed to write the inspired Word; they were "holy men of God", of different caliber, and from different stations in life, but in this they were all alike:

If God was so particular in the choice of those who should write His Word, we cannot believe that He is any less careful regarding those who preach it. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52:11), is surely fitting still. Paul before exhorting the Philipians to hold forth the Word of life, reminds them that their lives must be right before those to whom they would preach. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of life". (Phil. 2:15-16).

These holy men of God were borne along in their utterances and writings by the Holy Spirit, they were completely under His direction and control, thus no prophesy is of any private interpretation. The prophets under the guidance of the Holy Spirit often spoke of things beyond their understanding and the age in which they lived.

We are told in 1 Peter 1:11 that when they spake of the salvation which we have received, they "inquired and searched diligently, . . . searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto

themselves, but unto us they did minister".

In view of this Peter said to those who were established in the present truth, (2 Peter 1:1), "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts". (2 Pet. 1:16-19).

3. The Extent of Inspiration.

Some hold that God, inspired the thoughts of the prophets, and left them to clothe them in their own words, while others maintain, and we believe rightly so, that God not only inspired the thought, but controlled the words employed to express the mind of God. In Galatians 3:16, the apostle Paul bases his argument on the lack of the letters, and from this fact it can be said, that not only are the words of Scripture inspired, but the very letters themselves. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed which is Christ". What a difference the addition of the letter "s" would make here! All the promises of God are in one, Christ.

4. The Silence of Inspiration.

By this we mean that God in His wisdom, and for His own purpose intentionally kept certain things out of the sacred records. Thus we read concerning Melchisedec in Heb. 7:3 that he was, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually".

There is no question but Melchisedec had a father and mother, a beginning of days and end of life, but God saw to it that no record of these was inserted in the pages of Holy Scripture that he might appear there as a type of Christ, "who is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us", (Heb. 7:25).

May we be able to say with the psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee", (Psalm 119:11). Then we shall have the right thing, in the right place, for the right purpose.

The five inspired writers of the epistolary portion of the New Testament are as follows:

Paul addresses the Church of God
 Peter writes for the Flock of God
 James writes to the Israel of God
 Jude addresses the Saints of God
 John writes to the Children of God

Where the few together gather unto his name,
 Pleasing thee his God and father,
 each mind the same;
 In the midst his place he taketh,
 Holy thus the gathering maketh,
 Every thought of him awaketh,
 Praise in his name.

That Beautiful Flock

Alex Dryburgh

The Uniqueness of an Assembly

In the New Testament, we see the church universally and we have the church locally. In Mt. 16:18 we see the church universally: "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." When we consider the Church universally, we think of the Ephesian epistle. There it is viewed as a building, as a body, and as a bride.

A body that cannot be defiled;
 A building that cannot be demolished;
 A bride suggests that it cannot be divorced.

Then in Mt. 18:17, "Tell it unto the church," it is the church locally. In the Corinthian letter we see the church locally. It is seen as an husbandry, as a building, as a temple, as a new lump, as a body, as an epistle of Christ, and as a chaste virgin.

A husbandry is marked by fruitfulness
 A building is marked by stability
 A temple is marked by holiness
 A new lump is marked by freshness
 A body is marked by unity
 As an epistle, it can be read.
 A chaste virgin is marked by purity.
 It is house of God, it is church of God, it is the dwelling place of divine persons.

It was always the desire of God to walk with men to dwell with men. Psa. 132:14: "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." You see the tabernacle, you see the temple, and you see a local assembly. All were places where God dwelt. 2 Cor. 6:16: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God and they shall be my people." It is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 3:16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Then in Mt. 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

That is why "holiness becometh thy house, oh Lord forever". An assembly does not belong to an evangelist. The Evangelist may work hard; he sows the seed of the Word of God, he sees sinners saved and the assembly planted. But no assembly belongs to an Evangelist. No assembly belongs to a company of Elders. Yes, they feed it, tend it, guard it, care for it. But no assembly belongs to a company of elders. It is Church of God, House of God, God's husbandry, God's building, God's temple. It is flock of God. Keep in mind that names given by men divide the people of God, but names given by God unite the people of God.

The Value of an Assembly

In Psa. 19:10, I see the value of the Word of God: "More to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter than honey, Yea than the honeycomb." In Psa. 119:72: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver". It is by the Word of God we are born again. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). By the Word of God we are cleansed, by the Word of God we are built up. We notice the value of the Bible. If we are going to be fresh and fragrant and fruitful, it is by the Word of God.

In the Song of Songs I see the value of the Beloved. "His head as the most fine gold. . . His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl. . . His legs are as pillar of marbles set upon sockets of fine gold". (5:11-15). Precious and peerless One beyond compare in thought, in word, and in deed. He is a Son who is precious to God. "Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious" (1 Pet. 2:4). He is a Savior that is precious to you and me. "Unto you therefore that believe He is the preciousness" (1 Pet. 2:7 JND). He is the stone that is precious to Zion: "Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect and precious" (1 Pet. 2:6). In Rom. 14 we see the value of a brother. Notice what we can do to a brother. We can judge a brother (v.10). We can set at naught a brother (v. 10). We can destroy a brother (v.15). Remember that God received that brother, remember that Christ died for that brother. "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died" (v. 15). In Acts 20, I see the value of an assembly of God.

Notice two things: What Paul passed through to plant it, v. 19. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and with temptations (trials) which befell me by the lying in wait (plots) of the Jews." "The church of God which he purchased by the blood of his own" (v. 28 JND). Psa. 119 shows the value of the Bible. We see the value of the Beloved in Song of Songs 5. The value of a Brother is in Rom. 14. The value of the Body of Christ is in Eph. 5:25: "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." Then the value of the Building and the Bride is seen in the local assembly. (to be continued)

The weakness of the church today is attributable to many things, not the least of which is worldliness. Horatius Bonar (1808-89) said many years ago, "I looked for the church and I found it in the world; I looked for the world and I found it in the church." Imagine what his reaction would be if he were here today! Occupation with worldly things so consumed Noah's generation that the flood came upon them in swift judgment. In our time it is possible that a similar occupation with worldliness and materialism may so grip us that we fail utterly in our Christian service. Let it not be so!

POSITION AND CONDITION

by J. G. Good
(AT May/June 1980)

How often we have heard the prayer, "let me be weighed in an even balance" (Job 31:6). The dangers of legalism and levity have ever posed a threat to the Christian, and this is present with us today. There was only One Man Who walked with perfect balance, "fine flour mingled with oil" (Lev. 2:4), every trait of His character evenly blended together. He wept over the city, (Luke 19:41), He drove the moneychangers out of the temple, (Matt. 21:12), of Him it could be said, "Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

As we read the history of the life of David, we see two men preeminent, yet with no link except that they were both connected with David, i.e., Jonathan and Joab. The solemn truth is this, that despite their seeming nearness to David, neither gained a place on the list of David's mighty men (2 Sam. 23). As we ponder this we ask, "Is there not a cause?"

The record of Jonathan's love for David, which was reciprocal, has thrilled the hearts of those who read it. The conquest of Goliath by David in the valley won the heart of Jonathan, who himself was a victorious soldier (1 Sam. 13:2). As a result of this,

Jonathan stripped himself of all, placing his robe, garments, sword, bow, and girdle at the feet of David. Jonathan was a selfless man and recognized in David the future King of Israel and his love for David was constantly manifest. Was Jonathan's love only a natural love? It was true he equally loved Saul his father! We must see beyond a servant to his Lord, a much needed lesson for our day! Jonathan had the character and qualities which could have been used by the king, but alas, when the time of crisis came, we read, "Jonathan went into the city" (1 Sam. 20:42). Jonathan was subject to a man who acted contrary to the will of God, Saul was his father who despite his failure to act for God made laws of his own to which he demanded a ready obedience (1 Sam. 14:43). The love of Jonathan for David was wonderful, and yet it was not strong enough to break the strong ties of nature and take him to the cave of Adullam with David! The life of Jonathan ends on Mount Gilboa with Saul, (2 Sam. 1:23). His personal grace failing to separate him from the evil of his father, he remained fettered to him even in death. It is indeed a solemn thing to be subject to a man or system, acting contrary to the revealed will of God, and with no place for the Man destined to reign!

There is a truth throughout the Word of God, that God takes up the man with the wilderness experience, who has proved his faithfulness in times of adversity! Have we identified ourselves with the King in His rejection! Heart attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ should take us to the place where He is honored and revered!

We observe that Joab had the wilderness experience, yet his name is omitted from David's roll of honor, and this for a reason too obvious. Joab represents a man void of affection for David, and yet at the same time he is actively engaged in the establishment of David the king, having due regard to his own position. There is the grave possibility that we, too, in a legal sense could be in the place of rejection but without heart attachment to our Lord! If Joab had been bound to David by the cords of love, would he have acted as he did? Without doubt Joab was a man of blood, who acted independently of David, and by his actions, brought agony of soul and sorrow of heart to the king. Joab murdered Abner in cold blood (2 Sam. 3:27), he was guilty of the death of Absalom (2 Sam. 18:14), and he was the instrument of David's sin in causing the death of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:17).

David was unable to deal with Joab because of his part in the death of Uriah, and he could not condemn that which he had condoned, so he could not punish

that which he had permitted. David had said earlier "These men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me," (2 Sam. 3:39). The price of compromise can prove to be costly! The conduct of Joab was indeed a most bitter memory to David, and when Solomon was declared king, David reminded him, of what Joab had done, and requested that his hoar head should not go down to the grave in peace (I Kings 2:5, 6). Joab proved to be a merciless man, who despite clinging to the horns of the altar himself, was shown no mercy (I Kings 2:28).

We do well to remind ourselves that there is the possibility of falling short of the commendation of our David. Is there a link between our 'position' and 'condition', and are we identified with our rejected Lord on account of love or is it legality? May our response be, "Thine are we David, and on Thy side, Thou son of Jesse" (I Chron. 12:18).

Unto Thee, the homeless stranger
 Outside the camp,
 Forth we hasten, fear no danger,
 Outside the camp.
 Thy reproach far richer treasure
 Than all Egypt's boasted pleasure;
 Drawn by love that knows no measure,
 Outside the camp.

If our hearts were entirely given up to God, we should welcome all His will, admire all He sends, acquiesce in all He does, and be not only contented, but thankful in every state.

Order in God's House

1 Tim. 3a

Joel Portman

At this point in 1 Timothy, Paul has arrived at God's method to maintain His order in His house. The Holy Spirit raises men in local assemblies (Acts 20:28), who are charged with the responsibility to act according to God's will in the assembly (Matt. 18:18) as they seek to understand it from truth revealed in His Word. All is to be done unto edifying of the assembly and must be done decently (honestly) and in order (1 Cor. 14:26,40). This is clearly not man's order or rules, yet men have the responsibility to ensure that God's will prevails.

Therefore, God raises men in local assemblies who are qualified and capable to fill this need. They are called

Elders (Acts 14:23, 15:2, 20:17),
 Spiritual Maturity
 Respect from Saints

Overseers (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:1 where bishops should be "overseers")

Spiritual Responsibility

Responsibility to the Lord

Pastors (Shepherds) (1 Pet. 5:1-2, Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11)

Spiritual Capacity

Requisites to Saints

A comparison of the terms and their contexts shows us that these terms refer to the same persons who function together as a body, never being one man, such as "the pastor of a church". There is preservation and fellowship in sharing this work and it provides balance as these men share the responsibility of caring for the saints.

Responsibility of Overseers

These men are to Lead the assembly (Heb. 13:7,22) by their example and guidance, Feed the little flock by their teaching (Acts 20:28, 1Pet. 5:2), Guide the saints with spiritual direction, and Care for (tend) the assembly by their prayers for and visits to the believers (1 Tim. 3:5). They are not dictators, nor lords over God's people (1 Pet.5:3) but use the authority gained by respect for their character and example as well as by their ability to handle God's Word. Their work (never solely an office or position), involves great responsibility and heavy requirements (Heb. 13:22), for they give account to the Lord for the welfare of the assembly.

The character of a local assembly depends on the character of the men who lead and the quality of their work. For this reason, the requisites in God's Word are not optional and imply a very high standard. If a man doesn't meet these qualifications, he cannot expect to adequately fulfill the responsibility of this work.

Some have said that since there are no apostles in our day, we don't have authority to have elders in a local assembly. Without doubt, Paul ordained, or pointed out, elders in assemblies that he saw established in Acts (Acts 14:23) and also instructed Titus to do so (Titus 1:5). They identified such men who were displaying the necessary qualities, but we learn from Acts 20:28 that it is the Holy Spirit who raises those men, and He still functions in our day. Elders are not elected or ordained by men; rather they are identified and recognized by the saints and their authority is acknowledged as a result.

The list of qualifications in 1 Timothy was given to an established assembly with elders already func-

tioning. Therefore, we conclude that its purpose wasn't to determine if those men should be overseers, but rather to indicate those qualities that God recognized and should be continued. It seems that Paul indicates God's mind for this work to continue into the future, even after he and these men were gone. As long as assemblies exist, until the rapture of the church, there will be a need for exercised and qualified brethren to care for each company. We do not have apostolic succession, but there must be a spiritual succession of responsible men to continue God's work.

Since 1 Timothy deals with an established assembly with elders, the qualifications emphasize moral fitness and capacity for the work. His teaching in Titus 1 deals with newly established gatherings and the list emphasizes spiritual qualifications. Both are needed for such indicated men to function for God.

Desire for Overseership

Our AV uses "office of a bishop" (v. 1) but sadly, this was due to the mandate of King James to the translators of the Bible. It is better expressed, as in Mr. Darby's Translation, "aspire to exercise overseership" and the phrase following clearly indicates that this is a work, not an office. Any brother who "reaches after" this work needs to understand what is involved in it. Some men might want a position over believers, the importance of being "in charge", but if they comprehend the immense extent of the work and responsibility, they would only desire it because the Spirit has moved their hearts to expend themselves for the welfare of the saints and the assembly. It is a work of unceasing toil and unending concerns and exercise. It is a "good" (beautiful, noble) work, an important work and one that will result in eternal reward for those exercised in it (1 Pet. 5:4). We need such men today who are burdened with a love for the saints and the local assembly. It should be our prayer that the Lord will raise such men in every gathering.

Description of Overseers

It seems that the term "blameless" is all-inclusive (*What the Bible Teaches, 1 Timothy*, James Allen). To be "blameless" means that no one can legitimately raise a charge against him, he is without reproach and there is no reason that anything in his life can be used as a weapon against him. We then see that the qualifications for an overseer indicate that they are

1. Moral Men - Manifesting a positive example to the saints

2. Spiritual Men - Being subject to Spirit Control, Spiritually exercised

3. Temperate Men - Displaying control of self in every area of life

4. Capable Men - Competent to Teach and Apply God's Word

5. Mature Men - Steady, dependable, consistent

Looking at these qualifications briefly (one can examine their meanings in more detail by using the available helps) we mark these characteristics:

1. Husband of One Wife. This qualification seems to indicate primarily that he is devoted to one woman as his wife. His eyes are on one only. (There are other interpretations of this expression that may also have validity; there have been at least four interpretations given and one can examine them by referring to commentaries on this passage.)

2. Vigilant. Otherwise translated "sober" in 3:11, Tit. 2:2. He is circumspect in his actions. In general, this tells us that he is careful, thoughtful and alert to the needs and dangers of the assembly.

3. Sober. Control of self, temperate (Tit. 2:2, 5). His behavior is of the highest standard.

4. Good behavior. Orderly, dignified, modest (1 Tim. 2:9). He is not an ostentatious person, with a life that is controlled and directed properly.

5. Given to Hospitality. Tit. 1:8 "lover of hospitality". Using his home for others and their blessing. This would especially be needed in days when the saints were suffering loss and when those who traveled needed lodging, but it implies an open home and desire to entertain the saints.

6. Apt (able) to Teach. Same as 2 Tim. 2:24. Has ability to handle God's Word, privately or publicly. He may not be able to speak publicly, but he can handle Scripture properly to instruct.

7. Not given to wine. Not a brawler, or showing inclination toward those characteristics that accompany drinking, those things that would mar good judgment or behavior. Certainly he is not a drunkard (see 1 Cor. 5:11), but including avoiding strong drink or anything that would adversely affect his behavior.

8. No striker. Not contentious or combative. Such a man would not be approachable and saints would fear to speak to or confide in him.

9. Not greedy of money, not a money-lover. (This is omitted in some manuscripts and is similar to #12 below). Making money is not his goal, money is not his god.

10. Patient, gentle (Phil. 4:5), showing moderation in his responses and actions.

11. Not a brawler (not contentious). Opposite of previous characteristic.

12. Not covetous, not a lover of silver or money. (See #9).

13. Ruling his own house. He shows ability to guide his own family in an orderly manner. His ability to lead the saints as part of the household of God is shown by the same ability in the home. It also indicates that his home life is not contrary to his public life. He is one who has weight before his own family with the ability to lead them in a right way.

14. Not a novice, not newly saved and without spiritual maturity that comes from experience. Without that maturity, he will become proud of a position and will attempt to control the saints through use of carnal methods.

15. Good report in the community. His reputation in the community will affect the testimony of the assembly, so he must represent the highest character of the assembly and how the believers should conduct themselves.

Charge to Overseers

When Paul addresses the elders of the Ephesian assembly in Act 20, he first reminds them of his own activity and example among them. He had set the standard for labor, leaving them with the responsibility to continue in the same pattern. He had been with them, labored among them, wept over them, taught them unreservedly, and visited them constantly. He displayed constancy, had warned them and sought to establish them. It seems that this is the pattern for the labors of overseers among God's people.

At the end of Paul's speech, he charges them to do four things:

1. Watch (v. 31)... to be alert and aware of dangers, devices of Satan, deceptions, deficiencies among the saints.

2. Remember (v. 31)... keep in mind and have a

clear understanding of what he had taught them.

3. Depend on God (v. 32) ...recognizing their need for Divine grace and support, trusting the Lord to enable them for this work.

4. Obey His Word (v. 32) ... their only resource resides in their clear understanding of Divine truth and confidence in its power.

Such men need and deserve the prayers of the saints along with encouragement that comes from knowing that the saints of the assembly appreciate and understand their work and the need for it. May the Lord raise such men in our midst to continue this important work in every assembly until our Lord comes.

Whatever God gives us is for the benefit of others as well as ourselves. It is light that must shine, salt that must season, a talent that must be employed. Both the world and the church have a right to look to us for something. Do we realize this?

High Priesthood of Christ

See Heb. 4:14, 7:26, 8:1, 10:12

Character of our High Priest

We want to consider the Royal and Great High Priest who is now enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is a delight to consider His greatness and His service as well as those who are served by His ministry. We see Him as Son, Apostle, Heir, and Creator. He possesses Divine power, an Exalted Position, as well as a Finished Work. He is Holy, (in contrast to the priests among men, Heb. 9:12), Harmless (guileless), Undefiled (uncontaminated), Separate from Sinners, (of a different nature than they), and Heavenly (for on earth He could not be a priest, Heb. 8:4). He has entered the Holy Place (Heb. 9:12), which is typified by the High Priest's garments of glory and beauty as He wore the breastplate upon His love, being bound to His shoulders of everlasting strength).

How glorious is the One Who combines in His person the glory and dignity of two priesthoods, both that of Melchizedek in his unchangeable and perpetual (Heb. 5:6, 7:1-3, Zech. 6:13) priesthood of blessing, and that of Aaron who was ordained as the representative of Israel in all things pertaining to God (Heb. 5:1).

The appointment of the priesthood for Israel (Ex. 28) had its origin in God's heart of love. He knew His peoples' feeble state and yet desired to have a dwelling place for His divine glory among them who were redeemed by His work. As a result, He made a provision of the priesthood so that they might be acceptably represented before Him. Now He is our appointed Priest, the Same one who represented us in His lowly stoop to the cross where He made atonement for His people, but who is now exalted to the highest place, truly representing us in His heavenly glory with regard to our infirmities. He maintains our approach and fellowship with God, supporting, sympathizing, strengthening and supplying, "ever living to intercede", (Heb. 4:14-16) and "saving to the uttermost". Not once a year, as of old, but now and continuously, unchangeably appearing in the presence of God for us. He has not only Divine knowledge of our sorrows and needs, but He has also had a personal experience of them in His humanity.

Capability of our High Priest

His is no earthly, mortal priesthood. God has said to Him, "Thou art my Son" (Heb. 4:14, 5:1-10). No less a Person could be "such a Priest", who is able to be touched with our infirmities, bodily weaknesses, and bereavements, because He is acquainted with our sorrows. He, "Who in the days of His flesh" was moved to "crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7), is now acquainted with all that is our experience in this life (Heb. 2:17-18), and so "became us", (Heb. 7:26). He is One who acts as Mediator in whom God approaches to man (1 Tim. 2:5-6); He is our Advocate, restoring us where we have fallen into sin (1 John 2:1-2); and our Priest, presenting believers perfect before God. He feels the objects of His love with deepest, heartfelt interest before God; they are those who "come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). He has made a world-embracing propitiation, having "tasted death for everything" (1 John 2:2, JND translation). Yet He exercises His priestly ministry "in things pertaining to God" for His own (Heb. 2:17, 9:23) but not for the world (John. 17:9). We are His redeemed, "holy brethren", "partakers of the heavenly calling", separated (sanctified) to God through the confession of Christ, now in a relationship with God, "perfected forever", in whom we are seen representatively in all His high Priestly beauties and excellencies.

Compassion of our High Priest

The majesty of the very One Who once hung on the shameful cross is a glorious sight to our eyes. He came from God to us, as "Apostle", to speak to us

about God. Now as High Priest, He has gone back to God for us, to speak to God about us. This is not to obtain righteousness or justification, but it is on behalf of those who are saved, who know His saving grace as Savior, and who now need His sustaining grace as High Priest. He is the One who lovingly responds to the call of "His own" (Matt. 14:30, Rom. 10:13), to preserve them from otherwise insurmountable snares. He is not declared to the Priest to the Church, but for each tried individual saint. The believer may say "my Priest" who will never fail me as Priest any more than as Savior. He is conscious that the same love that moved God to give His Son as Savior also appointed Him as Priest (Heb. 5:5, 7:21), to sympathize--not with sins, for He suffered for them, (1 Pet. 3:18) and made propitiation with His blood (Heb. 2:17)--but to sympathize with those He desires to have in the holiest, who have been washed and now enter "in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22), delighting in their ever-loving, ever-faithful High Priest.

Priesthood relates to communion; it differs from feet washing, for "part with Himself" calls for application of His Word to cleanse (John 13). It differs too from shepherding, tending, feeding, and leading. Priesthood follows redemption, and it is for those who are now passing through a wilderness with our High Priest's wakeful eye upon us. He knows who and what I am as I march heavenward with foes surrounding and a traitor within. These trials and temptations cause the holy nature of a believer to need priestly sympathy, mercy, grace, seasonable help during all the time of trial here below. Having One who loves us, knows us, and never loses sight of us encourages our "coming boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16), to find His Word "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:29) fulfilled to those who come. We receive "salvation to the uttermost" from the world, the power of Satan, the workings of the flesh, etc; it is such a resource as Rom 8:34 provides, "intercession at the right hand of God", a "more excellent ministry" surely. It is portrayed in the Levitical priesthood, exercised for an earthly people in its ministry of power, love and representation "before the Lord" (Ex. 28:12, 29, 30, 38). Each precious stone set in gold and tied with the breastplate (Ex. 28:11, 25, 28) could never slip away. The golden plate proclaimed "holiness to the Lord" (Ex. 28:36). His people appeared in all the fragrance of the High Priest (Ex. 29:7), and the "precious ointment" descending "from his head to the skirts of his garments" (Ps. 133:2). The High Priest entered into the Holiest by the blood of sacrifice (Lev. 16:14),

where there was no natural light, but the glory cloud that denoted the Divine presence. All this would reveal objects that say to us, "We see Jesus" (Heb. 2:9), telling us that as Christ is to the heart of God, so precious also are His people.

Confidence in our High Priest

We are told of the mercy seat in Rom. 3:24-25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a mercy seat (R.V.). The cherubim' eyes no longer behold sin to be judged, but look upon the sprinkled blood on the covering over the Ark, that sacred emblem of Jesus Christ our Lord. The acacia wood speaks of His humanity and the gold represents His deity, while within are the tables of the law that answer to "Thy law is within my heart", (Ps. 40:8, 119:11). We find also the pot of manna, which speaks of the "bread which came down from heaven" and Aaron's rod that budded, a symbol of Christ in resurrection, picturing life out of death. It was all behind the varied colored veil, which Heb. 10:20 tells us represents His flesh and all His blessed attributes. The censer and its perfume speak of Christ's merits ascending to God. We look at those curtains, which in their materials and colors exhibit Christ's holiness, heavenly character and royalty.

These items in Jehovah's presence are full of Christ. All demand and deserve the unwavering confidence of those who are exhorted to "hold fast" (Heb. 10:23), conscious that He has firmly taken hold of us (Heb. 2:16). Whether mindful of Him or not, His faithful, unchanging, merciful, unwearied heart always presents us before the face of God, demonstrating that we belong and are linked with that place that is "higher than the heavens". Not eternity itself can erase our names from the breastplate that is worn so near to His heart, and God's thoughts concerning His beloved Son and His exaltation that we share produce a holy contemplation of His High Priesthood that is set before our souls.

The superiority of our great High Priest lies in the abundant provision that He has made for us:

1. He has opened the holiest for us to enter in as worshipers, and He gives our worship a faultless acceptance before God.
2. He has provided a never-failing security that is grounded upon His faithfulness, His grace and goodness.
3. He has perfect sympathy. "He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust". He understands and His heart is touched. He is mindful of that in

our case which He, as a Man, felt the pressure of when He lived in circumstances of human experiences.

4. He succors with a watchful eye, a heart that cares, knowing the dangers we face. There is not a snare, a fiery dart, or a wile of Satan, but He is ready and able to preserve the tempted soul from its results.

5. He provides a perfect Deliverance. After saving our souls from wrath, He meets our present needs day by day, breaking down every hindrance. He never forsakes, never forgets, never sleeps. "Such a high priest" offers all prevailing intercession constantly.

We have a Great High Priest. His Name is Jesus. This speaks of its tender meaning that is ours as He is now in the glory. He is over the House of God (Heb. 10:21) and controls, and we submit with rejoicing to Him.

It is a very blessed thing to see the different thoughts the mind of Christ has in different epistles, in connection with His coming. First, in Ephesians, He present to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, as the bride. Second, in Philippians, poor things groaning in vile bodies, He will work in them, and change the body of humiliation into a body of glory. Third, in Colossians, life hid in Him, to be manifested with Him in glory. In a little while, He who is your life shall come forth, and you with Him. Fourth, in 1 John 3, the relationship, formed by Christ, of sons to the Father, so that He will treat them as sons, they shall behold Him and be like Him, He will show Himself to them as He is.

"When was He Rich?"

E. J. Checkley

Business had called me to a remote village in the northern part of Ontario, where I passed the night. I came down to the small station the next morning to wait for the train, and as I walked into the waiting room I found the station master in earnest conversation with an aged minister. They were discussing some religious question, and as I could not but overhear the conversation, I came to know that the minister was stoutly contending for the eternal Sonship of Christ which the other was denying. The arguments advanced by the

young man were weak and worthless, a perversion of both reason and Scripture, but they were so new to the other that he could not maintain his cause, notwithstanding the fact that he had the truth on his side; so he was becoming dejected and sorrowful, while the station master was triumphant.

After looking to the Lord for wisdom and guidance I said to the young man:

“Do you believe the Bible?”

“Certainly I do,” he replied.

“Scripture tells us,” I said, taking my Testament from my pocket and opening it at 2 Cor. 8:9, “In speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich”. Now, when was He rich?”

“Yes”, shouted the old minister triumphantly, “When was He rich? When was He rich?”

The young man stopped; he considered; he looked down at the floor; and finally turning suddenly on his heel, he went into his office, banging the door after him, without having uttered a word in reply. The old minister went to the office door and called out, “When was He rich?” and as just then the train came along, he went out repeating again and again, “Yes, when was He rich?” He was not journeying my way, so I saw him on the train, and the last I heard as he disappeared from sight and hearing was, “Yes, when was He rich?”

The denial of the eternal deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is but one of the many Satanic devices now abroad for the capture of souls; none are worse, but all have this character, that either the person or the work of the Lord Jesus are attacked, and if a soul can be brought to doubt the deity of Christ, he has no Savior, for if Christ were not the eternal

God He could not have borne sin's heavy load; and on the other hand, if He had not become a Man He could not have taken the place of men.

Be Still, And Know That I am God

It is hard to be still when all is turmoil and commotion around —when dangers thicken and troubles multiply on every hand. There is at least a moral heroism in battling single-handed with opposing hosts even if you fall in the struggle. Controversy has its uses as well as its dangers, and never let us forget that the Judah-remnants who returned to Jerusalem from their forced exile of 70 years were men who could wield the sword as well as handle the trowel. “For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded” (Nehemiah 4:18). There are times and seasons, when the advances of our wily foe on the citadel of our most holy faith, must be resisted in spiritual energy — foot to foot, and inch by inch. The sword must not be sheathed, must ever be sharpened and burnished for ready use. The armor is needed for conflict with Satan and wicked spirits in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:11-13).

There are, however, times when God seems to hide Himself, when our only safety is in doing nothing. The voice of our Savior-God is heard beside many a Red Sea difficulty,—Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” It is a hard lesson to “stand still” in the presence of opposing foes. Jehovah is the Living God. Cloud and storm are beneath His feet and His throne remains unmoved. Can't you, won't you let Him act for you? Be still and see the wonder-working arm of Jehovah clearing a path for your feet. Once more the seas divide and Jehovah has triumphed, and then we sing.

— from the Selected Writings of Walter Scott

A Christian disciple is more than a believer. A disciple is more than a learner, at least, a learner in the ordinary sense of the word. A disciple is more than a follower and imitator of Christ, more than a holy enthusiast for Christ, yea even more than living a life of full devotion to the Lord. A disciple is a believing person living a life of conscious and constant identification with the Lord in life, death, and resurrection through words, behavior, attitudes, motives, and purpose, fully realizing Christ's absolute ownership of his life, joyfully embracing the Saviorhood of Christ, delighting in the Lordship of Christ and living by the abiding, indwelling resources of Christ according to the imprinted pattern and purpose of Christ for the chief end of glorifying his Lord and Savior. There is divine fullness and content in the concept of discipleship which we must not limit. Larson, referring to a study by A. Friedrichsen, points out the fact that the expression cross-bearing was a contemporary metaphor indicating “radical social isolation and humiliation.”