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A Study of the Protestant Conception of the Priesthood of Believers

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A STUDY OF THE PROTESTANT CONCEPTION
OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

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APPROVAL SHEET

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Bible contains several references to the priesthood of believers. Through the years very little has been done to clarify this phrase in the mind of those included. A great portion of what has been done has been in relation to the church and along the line of church government. However, it is not the purpose of this study to stress this aspect. The work that has been done on the personal aspect of the subject is very sketchy and each reference includes few of the actual implications of the subject as discussed in the Bible. Several writers mention the subject and many imply the existence of the priesthood of believers but no adequate treatment of the subject has been found in the research carried on for this thesis.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Statement of purpose. The purpose of this study was to discover the protestant conception of the priesthood of believers as revealed in the Bible and interpreted by various Bible scholars.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The Bible references. Unless otherwise stated the Bible references have been taken from the American Standard Version.

Importance of the study. This study is particularly important because it involves the relationship of the believers to God, to the church, and to their fellow-men. The variety of opinion and inadequate treatment of the priesthood of believers has made it advisable to make a further study into the matter at this time.

Believers. Believers, as used in this thesis, are those who with their whole heart believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Savior of men. They are those who have eternal life as a result of being born again, into the household of God, and who outwardly manifest this relationship.

Priesthood of believers. A basis for the use of the term, priesthood of believers, is found in both the Old and New Testaments. Most of the supporting references will be taken from the New Testament. Following are a few of the references upon which this study is based, plus comments by Bible scholars, on some of the verses.

...and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.....¹

¹ Exodus 19:6.

....according to the original idea of the Hebrew theocracy, all Israelites were to be priests: 'ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation' (Exod. XIX.6). This idea is fulfilled in the Christian church; it is holy priesthood. Here [I Peter 2:5] and in ver. 9 the church collectively is called a priesthood; in the Book of the Revelation (i.6; V. 10; XX.6) Christians individually are called priests....²

Huther gave the relation of the Old Testament priesthood to the New Testament church as follows:

....Israel was to be a holy priesthood, but it was so only in the particular priesthood introduced into the church; the Christian church is called to be a *ἱερατευμα ἐκκλησιαστικον* in this sense, that each individual in it is called upon to perform the office of priest. The sacrifices which the priests in Israel had to offer were beasts and the like; those of the Christians are, on the other hand, spiritual sacrifices, through Christ, well-pleasing to God. The idea of a universal priesthood, here expressed, is opposed not only to the Catholic doctrine of particular priesthood, but to all teaching with regard to the office of the administration of word and sacrament which in any way ascribes to its possessors an importance in the church, resting on divine mandate, and necessary for the communication of salvation (i.e., priestly importance).³

Peter referred to the New Testament priesthood thus:

ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.⁴

² B. C. Caffin, The First Epistle General of Peter (Vol. I, H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, editors, The Pulpit Commentary, 52 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., [n.d.]), pp. 69-70.

³ Joh. Ed. Huther, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude (vol. X, Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, 11 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1887), p. 249.

⁴ I Peter 2:5.

The Self-Interpreting Bible interprets the above verse:

and being quickened by virtue of your union to and influences from him, ye are more and more fitted to be a spiritual habitation for God, and made holy priests unto him, gratefully to offer up yourselves, your prayers, praises, alms-deeds, and other good works, to him, as acceptable and accepted only through the propitiatory sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ.⁵

The above passage was rich and revealing particularly in the light of the context. Each believer was to be a living stone in the spiritual house and this spiritual house, consisting of all the believers as living stones, was to be an holy priesthood for the purpose of offering up spiritual sacrifices.

Concerning an holy priesthood, 'Being living stones,' says Bengel, 'they can be priests as well.' They not only compose the Temple, but minister in it. By becoming Christians they are cut off from neither Temple nor hierarchy, nor sacrifice; all are at hand and they themselves are all. The old Temple, has 'had its day, and ceased to be.' Mark, though, that the Apostle is not dwelling on individual priesthood of each (though that is involved), but on the hierarchial order of the whole company of Christians: they are an organized body or college of priests, a new seed of Aaron or Levi. (See Isa. lxvi.21.) The very word implies that all Christians have not an equal degree of priesthood. And this new priesthood, like the old, is no profane intruding priesthood like that of Core (Jude 11), but 'holy' -- i.e., consecrated, validly admitted to its work. The way in which this new metaphor is suddenly introduced, -- 'to whom coming, be built up upon Him... to be an holy priesthood,' implies that Jesus Christ is the High Priest quite as much as it implies His being Corner Stone. The Incarnate Son heads the adoration

⁵ James W. Lee, et al., The Self-Interpreting Bible (Chicago: N. D. Thompson Publishing Company, 1896), IV, 489.

offered to the Father by creation, just as He binds creation into a palace for the Father's indwelling.

The new priesthood is not merely nominal; it is no sinecure. None is a priest who does not offer sacrifices (Heb. viii.3). But the sacrifices of the new hierarchy are 'spiritual,' --i.e., not material, not sacrifice of bulls and goats and lambs. What, then do the sacrifices consist of? If our priesthood is modelled on that of Jesus Christ, as is here implied, it consists merely (Calvin points this out) of the sacrifice of self, or the will; then, in a minor degree, of words and acts of worship, thanks and praise. (See Heb. xiii. 10--16.) But in order to constitute a true priesthood and true sacrifices after the model of Jesus Christ, these sacrifices are offered up on behalf of others. (See Heb. v. 1, and I John iii.16) The first notion of the priesthood of all believers is not that of a mediatorial system being extended: whereas, before only Aaron's sons were recognized as mediators and intercessors, now all Israel, all the spiritual Israel, all men everywhere are called to be mediators and intercessors between each other and God.⁶

Peter states in his first epistle:

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.⁷

This passage brought out the fact that believers were partakers with Christ in his offices. In this verse the word "royal" distinguished the New Testament believer from the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament. Believers of the New Testament were priests through adoption into the family of God as a "royal priesthood". The above verse

⁶ A. J. Mason, The First Epistle of Peter (Vol. III Charles John Ellicott, editor, A New Testament Commentary for English Readers, 3 vols; New York: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1884), p. 401.

⁷ I Peter 2:9

also suggested that this adoption was by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. An adoption that calls believers out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.⁸

Concerning entering the holy place with boldness in verse 19 Adam Clark said:

....This is an allusion to the case of the high priest going into the holy of holies. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the law, he could expect nothing but death. Genuine believers can come even to the throne of God with confidence as they carry into the Divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the great atonement; and, being justified through that blood, they have a right to all the blessings of the eternal kingdom.⁹

Before Christ died, God was reached through the priest but at the time of Christ's death the veil was rent. Clark

⁸ Hebrews 10:19-25.

⁹ Adam Clark, The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, (Vol. VI, Clark's Commentary, 6 vols.; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, [n.d.]), p. 755b.

said of this: "...His pierced side is the way to the holiest. Here the veil - his humanity, is rent, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers."¹⁰

The above verses and explanation by Clark gave somewhat of an explanation of the way by which believers actually became priests and thus had direct access to God.

Revelation 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6 all plainly designated saints as priests. At this time it is sufficient to show that these verses bring out the fact of the priesthood. A later study in this paper has been made as to the duties and privileges involved in this office.

Because of the danger that some might think that the priesthood of believers was some new doctrine or a manufactured office the above Biblical references have been sighted. To further clarify the thought the following was quoted from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

All worship is based on priesthood, for the priestly office is an essential part of salvation. Christianity itself has its glorious Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is through His one supreme offering that we are brought into saved relations with God and enjoy fellowship with Him. The priesthood of Christ and its mighty effects in sacrifice and intercession on behalf of the people of God are the chief and fundamental theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Priesthood is a real office, definite and specific. It is needful to insist on this fact, for the noble word 'Priest' has been misappropriated and misapplied, so

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 275

that its intrinsic import has been impaired. There is a certain literary slang indulged in by some who talk of the 'Priests of Science,' 'Priests of Art,' and similar absurdities. The idea of priesthood, if priesthood is to have any definite meaning, can have no place in literature or science or art or in any thing of the kind. For it belongs to the realm of grace, presupposing as it does sin and the Divine purpose to remove it. Hugh Martin writes that he 'would as soon think of transferring the language of geometry and of algebra to botany and talk of the hypotenuse of a flower and the square root of a tree, or the differential coefficient of a convolvulus, as to speak of the priesthood of nature or letters'. Priesthood is an office, embracing very specific duties and functions.¹¹

To some, a greater portion of the material found in this chapter might seem irrelevant to the actual title of the work. However, due to the lack of teaching and writing on the subject, it would be close to impossible to proceed intelligently without clarifying and justifying the use of the term. As a matter of fact, many Protestant writers rarely used the actual term around which this thesis has been built. However, they taught the truths it incorporated, in the major part of their works. The fact that some of them did not use the term extensively did not necessarily detract from the importance of the subject. The fact remained, they taught concerning what the term implied.

¹¹ William C. Moorehead, "Priesthood", International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, IV, 2444.

There were at least two distinct major divisions in a study of the priesthood of believers: first, as it applied to the individual; and second, as it applied to the church. The second phase took in the whole problem of church government which was very important but was not treated in this study. However, it was the purpose of this research to cover only the first phase of the subject because of its value in the edification of the believer.

To further clarify the nature of the study, the reader was reminded of the fact that there was a difference between the personality of a priest and the office of the same. The office of this priesthood, which was arrived at through faith, should be implication, produce the fullness of the personality of the priest. Nevertheless the nature of this study has made the official aspect stand out more clearly.

Another confirmation of the priesthood of believers was found in the fact that all believers were members of the body of Christ as was discovered in the Word of God. I Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof," and again in Ephesians 5:30 "because we are members of his body." In the light of the above quotations it stood to reason that believers, being

members of his body, were also partakers with him in his offices which were as prophet, priest, and king.

Surely there was a sense in which every believer was a prophet, the Hebrew word meant, "...one who announces or pours forth the declarations of God...."¹² The English word came from the Greek word which meant essentially, "An interpreter".¹³ The direct Bible quotations were not so numerous on the above subject but there was evidence to show that there was a sense in which it was true.

As the purpose of this chapter has been to bring out the grounds for the doctrine of believers as priests (priesthood of believers) reference was again made to the basic Scripture involved.

...ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.¹⁴

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood,...¹⁵

...but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.¹⁶

¹² A. B. Hackett, editor, Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1872), III, 534.

¹³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴ I Peter 2:5.

¹⁵ I Peter 2:9.

¹⁶ Revelation 20:6.

Revelation 1:6, 5:10; Hebrews 10:19-22; and Exodus 19:6 also further established the fact of believers as priests.

Scripture also taught that the third office of Christ was that of king. Among orthodox believers many believed that Christ would return as the king who would reign for a thousand years. This also involved the fact that the true believers would share in that reign. In support of this statement a few of the pertinent scriptures were quoted.

...and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.¹⁷

...but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.¹⁸

There were other verses to support the fact that Christ is to return as a king and that true believers are to have a part in His regal office but they need not be quoted here.

The preceding paragraphs of this chapter emphasize the fact that, believers as members of His body are also, in a measure, partakers in His offices. This being true, there was an added incentive to study into the

¹⁷ Revelation 5:10.

¹⁸ Revelation 20:6.

implications of this highly important subject of the priesthood of believers. A thorough Bible study of the subject would take one through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation with related material in nearly every book between. A complete Bible study was too extensive for this type of study, but as has been mentioned before, some emphasis was also placed on the teachings of some of the Protestant writers. This chapter was dedicated to the proposition of awakening the interest of the reader and showing that the subject was not only Scriptural but important in the attainment of a well-rounded practical theology. A more thorough knowledge of the subject was also invaluable for the edification of believers, in that it gave a systematic outline of the duties and obligations of Christians.

Prominent errors concerning the Priesthood of believers.

Perhaps the most prominent error in connection with the priesthood of believers was the one into which the Roman Catholic Church had fallen -- that being that the laity had access to God only through the church via the sacerdotal priest.

This error was the reason for Martin Luther's reform measures. In a recent article in the Shepherds magazine, William R. Cannon, Jr. said:

...Luther turned away from the canons of the Church and the instruction of theologians and entrusted his life to the keeping of God himself. He found in that new

and direct association the peace and confidence which no mediating agency had ever been able to give him. He saw that God desired him, a person, for His friend and companion, and that an indirect relationship between a child of earth and the Heavenly father was in reality no relationship at all. Luther went so far in the contrast he drew between the God he had known through the regulations and ceremonies of the Church and the God he now knew personally through his own experience as to call the former 'God hidden' and the latter 'God disclosed!...¹⁹

This principle which Luther discovered through his own personal experience (that each believing Christian has direct access to God) was revolutionary in its consequences. It set Europe free from the slavery of ecclesiasticism. It formed in the minds of many an entirely new conception of the Church and of the means salvation.²⁰

....Every man must act as his own priest, assume personally the responsibility as well as the privilege of dealing directly with God.²¹

A knowledge of history reminded the investigator that the Roman error was of such long standing and had gained such a firm hold upon the churchmen and laity alike, that only through tribulation, pain and torment was even a remnant freed. The hearts of many were hungry for the peace of God as Luther's later success proved, but the fetters were so strong that few dared to move or even complain. Luther was

¹⁹ William R. Cannon Jr., "The Priesthood of all Believers", Shepherds, 6:17, November, 1951.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

²¹ Ibid., p. 18.

only one of the many unsatisfied seekers after truth and freedom but it was through him that the truth of direct access to God again became known. Hartranfte said concerning him:

....Martin Luther felt within himself the ancient ferment, and struggled experimentally to meet the spiritual impulse and need of his day. Those primitive truths, the universal priesthood of believers, the right and responsibility of the individual to think and answer for himself, the immediacy of Divine authority, the direct union with God, the overshadowing superiority of the spiritual community of saints, were the themes which had been agitated all along; but which he discussed afresh, and sought to establish not only as concepts but as realities. He compelled their recognition for all time....²²

Another error that was prevalent down through the years was that ministers alone were priests. Many of the Ancient Fathers either overlooked the priesthood scriptures in I Peter and Revelation or neglected to give them proper emphasis as a book on The Ancient Fathers,²³ translated by Edward Male suggested.

To refute the above error Fausset said:

...all the elect saints (not ministers as such) from Jews and Gentiles are meantime called to be priests of God (I Peter 2:5,9)....²⁴

²² Chester D. Hartranfte, "Luther," Library of the World's Best Literature (Vol XVI, Charles Dudley Warner, editor, 30 vols.; New York: R. S. Peale & J. A. Hill), 1897), p. 9319.

²³ A Director of the Seminary, The Ancient Fathers on the Office and Work of the Priesthood in the Church of Christ. Edward Male, translator, (London: Skeffington & Son, 1891), pp.1ff.

²⁴ A. R. Fausset, Bible Cyclopaedia. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1892) p. 581.

He said further:

Christian ministers are never in the N. T. called by the name "priests" (hiereis), which is applied only to the Aaronic priests, and to Christ, and to all Christians; though it would have been the natural word for the sacred writers as Jews to have used; but the Holy Spirit restrained them from using it. They call ministers diaconoi, hupeeretai, presbuteroi (presbyters), and leitourgoi (public ministers) but never sacerdotal, sacrificing priests (hiereis).²⁵

The same author, concerning the rebellion of Korah, had this to say:

...not satisfied with the Levitical ministry, he usurped the sacerdotal priesthood (Num. xvi. 9, 10); his doom warns all Christian ministers who, not content with the ministry, usurp Christ's intransmissible priesthood (Heb. vii. 24). Unfortunately 'priest' is now an ambiguous term, representing presbyter (which the Christian minister is) and sacerdotal priest (which he is not). Priest, our only word for hiereus, comes from presbuteros, the word chosen because it excluded a sacerdotal character....²⁶

I Peter 2:5 and 9 distinctly showed that each believer was a priest and further scriptures showed that:

There is no separated order of priests in the Christian service: one is our Priest even Christ, and all we are priests through fellowship with Him, presenting through Him as our representative our spiritual sacrifice. The sacerdotal theory of the Christian ministry is a dishonour to our Lord, and is specially condemned by the tenour of the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have an altar: but that altar is the cross, and we all have it and minister before it.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., p. 581.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 581.

²⁷ W. B. Pope, A Compendium of Christian Theology (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1875), p. 682.

However, there was in the New Testament a separated ministry for the purpose of prophecy, teaching, etc.²⁸ However, this did not void the fact that each Christian was to be a priest and present his body a living sacrifice.

Thesis plan. The plan of the following chapters was to further discuss the priest as to whom he was in the Old Testament and what he did during that dispensation. However, the New Testament conception was often inserted in order to clarify the relationship in the mind of the reader. The section following the one on the treatment of the priest, was devoted to the believer in relation to whom he was and what he did plus other necessary duties. The purpose of the last and most important aspect of the study was to unite the idea of the priest and the believer under the authority of the New Testament conception of the priesthood of believers as revealed particularly in I Peter 2:5 and 9 although there were other supporting texts, some of which were quoted in the opening chapters of this study.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 682-683.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIEST

In this chapter an effort has been made to clarify the Old Testament priest in such a way that the New Testament Christian might more easily understand his significance in both the Old and New Testament order.

Who he was. There were many ways of dividing the characteristics of the priest within scriptural limits. Although each grouping placed a different emphasis or came from a different vantage point. One of the most important phases of the Old Testament priesthood was that he was to be a mediator. He was to be a reconciler, peacemaker, and intermediary between God and man. Why a mediator? An answer for all these questions was found in the first book of the Old Testament.¹ In the garden of Eden God walked and talked with man. Man was in the image of God and there was communion between the creator and the created. However, one disobedient act² caused God to soon withdraw His presence from man. Man's most precious gift had been forfeited. The intimacy had been lost. Man realized his error, was ashamed

¹ Genesis 3.

² Genesis 3:6.

and hid himself from God. Sin, guilt, and carnality all came with one devil prescribed dosage of knowledge. The story is well known and the results have been felt by all. The point of the whole array of words is that man has sinned and his guilt and shame have caused him to separate himself from God.³ In addition to this, the justice and holiness of God has caused Him to withdraw Himself because God cannot look on sin.

God had created man and His love would not permit Him to leave him without a hope and a way of escape. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was that Hope, that Way of Escape, but the time for His appearing had not yet come. God had to prepare the way. But what about the people between the fall and the incarnation?

For the people of the Old Testament, before Aaron, the head of the family acted as priest but at the time of Moses, God set up a priesthood and a system of sacrifices whereby the people might have access to God via the priests. The priests in themselves had no special virtue aside from the fact that they were to point the way to Christ. They were to mediate between God and man because man had sinned and God could not look upon sin.

³ Genesis 3:10

The priest was also to reconcile men to God. He was to propitiate for them. To show the connection between the Old Testament priest and the New Testament High Priest (Jesus Christ), the following verses are quoted concerning Christ: "...and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world...."⁴ and again in the same book we read: "...Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...."⁵ These verses, as they are considered, with the beginning of this paragraph serve to show that the priest was to act as propitiator while Christ actually became the propitiation.

The priests of the Old Testament were also to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. In accord with that, Christ actually became the sacrifice as well as the offerer, for the sin and sins of mankind. The verses preceding the following quotation mention the sacrifice according to Old Testament Law, to which they refer, in the first phrase of the following quotation.

....He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering

⁴ I John 2:2.

⁵ I John 4:10.

and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he had perfected for ever them that are sanctified.⁶

Aside from, yet close to, the above mentioned duties of the priest, he was to be an intercessor, a sort of an intermedium, the one to act between God and man in order that the man might be reconciled to God. This was connected to Christ as our high priest by the phrase in Hebrews which says, "...he ever liveth to make intercession for them."⁷ The above explanation of the priest as an intercessor and the phrase quoted show the relationship, in duties, of the priest and Christ the High Priest. A later section has shown the relation of the two above to the priesthood of believers.

In addition to the above, the priest was also responsible for a good portion of the religious knowledge of the Israelites.⁸ In the words used in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, "...the priest was the indispensable source of religious knowledge for the people, and the channel through which spiritual life was communicated."⁹

⁶ Hebrews 10:9-14.

⁷ Hebrews 7:25.

⁸ Exodus 19:20.

⁹ William G. Moorehead, "Priest", International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, IV, 2439.

As the above quotation brought out, he was also responsible for the spiritual tone and life of the people to whom he ministered.

Fausset gave four characteristics of a priest (cohen, Hebrew and hierous, Greek). They were that he was (1) chosen of God; (2) the property of God; (3) holy to God; and that he (4) offered gifts to God and took back gifts from God.¹⁰ The significant note concerning the above was that the priests were to be entirely God's and set aside for His use alone.

Fausset's theory was that the original plan of God for Israel was that each one should be a priest and that they should be a kingdom of priests. In the beginning of the nation's history this plan seemed to be carried out, in a measure at least, but it was not long until the people turned aside from this plan. Consequently God instituted the Aaronic priesthood which was later supplemented by the Levitical order. He says of this:

All Israel was originally chosen as a kingdom of 'priests' to the Gentile world (Exod. xix. 6); but Israel renounced the obligation through fear of too close nearness to God (xx. 16), and God accepted their renunciation (Deut. xviii. 16, 17, v. 24-28). Moses became the mediator with God for them. The Aaronic priesthood became the temporary depository of all Israel's priesthood, until Christ the antitypical High Priest came; and they shall hereafter resume it when they turn to the Lord and shall

¹⁰ A. R. Fausset, "Priest", Bible Cyclopaedia, p. 581b.

be 'the priests of Jehovah, the ministers of our God' to the Gentile nations in Christ's millennial kingdom (Isa. lxi. 6, lxvi. 21).¹¹

He further stated that the Israelites were not only to be individual priests in God's original plan for them, but they are to be priests again as the latter part of the above quotation points out. However, the priesthood is not for the Israelites alone but for all the saints, both Jews and Gentiles, for all are called to be priests as I Peter 2:5 and 9, and other scriptures show. He stated his view thus:

All the elect saints (not ministers as such) from Jews and Gentiles are meantime called to be priests unto God (I Pet. ii. 5, 9), and being transfigured shall reign with Christ as king priests (Rev. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6). Israel, the spiritual and the literal, shall resume the priesthood which God from the first designed for His people. Thus there will be a blessed and holy series; Christ the royal High Priest, the glorified saint king-priests, Israel in the flesh mediating as king-priest to the nations in the flesh.¹²

According to his view it seemed quite natural to assume that, from the fall of man to the rise of the New Heaven and the New Earth, the whole plan of God has been based upon the principle of a priesthood. Even concerning the very early history of the Hebrew Nation Fausset said:

At the exodus no priest cast as yet existed. Yet sacrifices continued, and therefore some kind of priest (Exod. v. 1-3, xix. 22). The head of the tribe, or

¹¹ Ibid., p. 581b.

¹² Ibid., p. 581c.

the firstborn as dedicated to Jehovah (Exod. xiii. 2; Num. iiii. 12, 13), had heretofore conducted worship and sacrifice....¹³

Even before the Hebrew nation was formed as such, in the time of Cain and Abel,¹⁴ offerings were expected of man. Although, no priest was mentioned, surely one was implied.

Attention has also been given to the outward bodily prescription of the Old Testament Priest, as even that has been an important factor in a proper understanding of their significance. (1) They were to have no bodily defects. Their bodies were to be complete and that completeness was to be to the body what, in the true religion, holiness was to the soul.¹⁵ (2) These priests were to avoid any bodily defilement,¹⁶ either of a temporary or permanent nature. This temporary defilement being produced, for example, by the touching of dead bodies (except those of near relatives). An example of permanent defilement would be in marrying a woman of ill fame, one who had been divorced, or the widow of any man except a priest.¹⁷ Of this prescription Fairbairn says:

¹³ Ibid., p. 582b.

¹⁴ Genesis 4:1-6.

¹⁵ Patrick Fairbairn, The Typology of Scripture (Philadelphia: Daniels & Smith, 1852), II, 199.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁷ Fausset, op. cit., p. 582c.

....Occupying the blessed region of life and purity, they must exhibit in their external relations and deportment the care and jealousy, with which it behooves every one to watch against all occasions of sin, who would live in fellowship with the righteous Jehovah.¹⁸

The next of these outward prescriptions was that (3) their clothing signified holiness, cleanliness (purity), wisdom, honor, dignity etc.¹⁹ Nearly every garment they wore signified something. Every garment was a reminder to priest and person alike that the priesthood was an holy office and that the individual, in order to communicate with God must be pure and clean. In the words of Fairbairn, the garments--

...were manifestly designed to express the elevated rank and dignity of those who are recognized by God as sons in his house, permitted to draw near with confidence to his presence, and to go in and out before him.²⁰

(4) The rites of consecration proclaimed the necessity of holiness,²¹ a holiness which was not their own but imputed to them by the grace of God. They were first brought to the door of the tabernacle and washed in water. This was the simplest element of cleansing. Their bodies being thereby purified, the pontifical garment was put on. After this the anointing oil was poured over them. This being the peculiar act of consecration, it symbolized the conferring upon them

¹⁸ Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 200.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 200.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

²¹ Ibid., p. 202.

of the Spirit's grace. This was to make them fit instruments to discharge the duties of God's service.²²

Fairbairn gave the characteristics of the priestly office as follows:²³ the priests were, in a peculiar sense, God's property; they were to be in possession of holiness; and they had a right to draw near to God. He uses, as a basis for the above three characteristics of the priestly office, the rebellion of Korah in the Old Testament. The first two speak for themselves quite well but the latter might be more adequately explained through the words of Fairbairn.

...this right of the priesthood, of themselves standing peculiarly near to God, and alone being permitted to bring near to him the gifts and offerings of the congregation, of necessity involved the idea of their occupying an intermediate position between God and the people, and gave to their entire work the character of a mediation. 'They were ordained for men in things pertaining to God,' charged to a certain extent with the interest of both parties, and having especially to transact with God in the behalf of those whom sin had removed to a distance from him....Through them Israel was blessed, as through Israel--the kingdom of priests--all the families of the earth were to be blessed....²⁴

Errors concerning the priesthood. Many errors have arisen around the whole idea of the priesthood. One of the most outstanding, no doubt, was the Roman Catholic error

²² Ibid., p. 202.

²³ Ibid., pp. 192-5.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 195.

which extended the Old Testament priesthood over into the New Testament era. No doubt one of the reasons for this mistake could be traced back to their erroneous conception of the relationship of Christ and the priesthood plus their misconception of Matthew 16:18. Another error that was often made was in mistaking Christ as the High Priest and Christian ministers as priests. Fausset explained the Scripture as follows:

The notion is contrary to Scripture that Christ is High Priest, and Christian ministers priests. For the other priests were but assistants to the high priest, because he could not do all. The Lord Jesus needed no assistant,²⁵ so is sole representative of both highpriest and priests.

He further stated that Aaron's priesthood had passed away, but "Christ's priesthood, which was after the order of Melchizedek, did 'not pass from one to another' (Heb. vii. 24)... for 'he ever liveth,'".²⁶ The above might seem to have excluded the priesthood of believers but the words of Peter, in I Peter 2:5 have been explained in a later chapter.

Just as an illustration could illuminate a point but not be carried out in every detail, so was the Old Testament priesthood a type of the higher things of Christ's New Testament kingdom. "...we find, indeed," says Fairbairn, "every where a shadow of these, but 'not the very image' of them...."²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., p. 581c.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 581c.

²⁷ Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 204.

Truly the Old Testament types were rich and revealing but unwise extensions of them may lead to gross error.

What he did. As was mentioned before, there has been some sort of a system of priests all through Biblical history. Yet the duties changed somewhat through the years.²⁸ An attempt has been made to give a general idea of their duties. Probably their most general duty was to bring and keep man in contact with God. Nevertheless they had many specific duties in the carrying out of the general duty.

Some of the more outstanding specific duties have been mentioned below. The priest was to keep the altar fire burning at all times²⁹ symbolizing Jehovah's never ceasing worship. They offered morning and evening sacrifices with a meat and drink offering at the door of the tabernacle.³⁰ They were ready at all times to do the priestly office for any worshipper. This fact is not mentioned in so many words but there are many scriptures³¹ which imply that the priest was to be on the job whenever a person

²⁸ James Hastings, editor, A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.) IV, p. 96a.

²⁹ Leviticus 6:12,13.

³⁰ Exodus 29:38-44, 27:20,21; Leviticus 24:2.

³¹ Leviticus 12:6; I Samuel 2:13.

might have occasion to come. He administered the water of jealousy in case of marital trouble and pronounced the curse in case of guilt.³² The priest declared a person clean or unclean and in cases where lepers had been made whole it was the priest who administered the purification ceremony.³³ He offered expiatory sacrifice for defilement and the sin of ignorance.³⁴ He was also the messenger of Jehovah, and as such he taught the law and it was through him that knowledge was to be imparted to the common people.³⁵ The priest also was the one who blew the trumpet announcing the marching orders. He announced the special days and was instrumental in nearly every aspect of the Old Testament life.

God used the priests to direct the nation and to regulate the lives of the individual members of the Hebrew nation. It was not because the priests in themselves were worthy to draw nigh unto God, because before they could carry out their duties toward the people they themselves had to be cleansed through a series of ceremonial sacrifices as was mentioned earlier.

³² Numbers 5:11-31.

³³ Leviticus 13, 14; Mark 1:44.

³⁴ Leviticus 15.

³⁵ Malachi 2:7; Leviticus 10:10,11; Deuteronomy 24:8; Jeremiah 18:18 ff.

All the duties of the priests were not in the tabernacle, in the early days, or in the temple at a later date. Where the people were, priests were there also. Even in times of military conflict the priests were to be present to encourage and comfort the people.

....And it shall be, when ye draw nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye draw nigh this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye affrighted at them;...³⁶

As has been mentioned above, and emphasized by Fairbairn,³⁷ an important duty of the priest was to teach. Jehovah told Aaron to, "...teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses."³⁸ There was another aspect of the teaching ministry of the priest which was even stronger than the above command. The priest was to be the messenger of Jehovah. In the words of Malachi: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts...."³⁹

³⁶ Deuteronomy 20:2,3.

³⁷ Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 196.

³⁸ Leviticus 10:11.

³⁹ Malachi 2:7.

As the priest was the mediator between God and man in the Old Testament dispensation, so, since the incarnation, man may approach God himself but only by the, once for all, sacrifice which Christ was and made. Because Christ was the sacrifice for the sins of men and gave himself freely as the sacrifice yet he was also the offerer of the sacrifice. Thus the Old Testament priesthood has been done away. Each believer may come directly to the High Priest, Christ Jesus, who sits at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for them. Consequently, every Christian is a priest as I Peter 2:5,9 have pointed out.

CHAPTER III

THE BELIEVER

The word "believer" itself meant very little as it stood alone. Everyone was a believer in something. It has been the purpose of this chapter to determine generally what was meant by the term as it has been used in this thesis.

Scriptural background. In the conversation between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch a statement of belief is found. The eunuch saw a pool of water and asked Philip if he could be baptized then and there. In the King James version, Acts 8:37, these words appear: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The eunuch went on his way a rejoicing believer. However, mere belief is not enough for in James we read, "...the demons also believe and shudder."¹

Perhaps one of the best explanations of a believer is found in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, which follows:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art

¹ James 2:19.

a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him, Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily verily I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be: Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness, If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things: And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.²

In the above verses the reader was reminded of the fact that the believer, with whom this chapter was concerned, had eternal life. The transition from death to eternal life had taken place in the believer. The following verses explain why and through whom this change comes. Without Christ, man was the enemy³ of God but through Him, man was reinstated as the heir of God. John 3 continues thus:

² John 3:1-16.

³ James 4:4.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life, For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.⁴

To further clarify the Biblical representation of the believer, the following quotation from Paul has been given:

...because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation....⁵

The above passage clearly showed that true belief in the Biblical sense was more than a mental assent. It was a vital whole hearted faith in Jesus Christ as prophet, priest, and king.

The Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed was perhaps the most concise, and yet complete, statement of faith of true Bible believers. It was formulated in the second century after Christ and has been popular as a rule of faith since that time. There were eight points in a simple

⁴ John 3:16-22.

⁵ Romans 10:9-11.

explanation of this statement of faith. These eight points⁶ are outlined as follows:

- (1). God the Father and creation.
- (2). Jesus Christ His Son and redemption.
- (3). The Holy Spirit and sanctification.
- (4). The Church.
- (5). The fellowship of believers.
- (6). Personal Salvation.
- (7). Resurrection.
- (8). Immortality.

No doubt there was an inter-relationship of all the above, and especially the first three. The breakdown was made that the points of the Christian belief might be more clearly seen. The text of the Apostles' Creed is repeated in full as follows:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Spirit), born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick (living) and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy general church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.⁷

⁶ Handbook of Religion (Cleveland: The Evangelical Publishing House, 1928), p. 9.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

The Apostles' Creed, although not formulated by the Apostles, was a statement of their teaching and belief. It was based upon the New Testament revelation and consequently has become the standard for true Bible believers.

The remainder of this chapter deals with the same general topic of the first part but from a slightly different angle. The following pages consider more fully what the later theologians and religious leaders had to say on the subject.

Later theologians. This section has been divided into two parts, (1) Who is a believer? (2) What does he do? In his sermon, "The first-fruits of the Spirit," Wesley treated Romans 8:1 which deals with those who walk after the Spirit rather than after the flesh. Wesley began thus, "By 'them which are in Christ Jesus,' St. Paul evidently means, those who truly believe in Him;"⁸ He went on to say:

First, I am to show, who those are that 'are in Christ Jesus.' And are they not those who believe in His name: those who are 'found in Him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith'? These, 'who have redemption through His blood,' are properly said to be in him; for they dwell in Christ, and Christ in them. They are ingrafted into Him as branches into the vine. They are united, as members to their head, in a manner which words cannot express, nor could it before enter into their hearts to conceive.⁹

⁸ John Wesley, Sermons On Several Occasions (London: The Epworth Press, 1944), p. 85.

⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

He stated further that those who abide in Christ walk not after the flesh, have crucified the flesh with its lusts, walk after the Spirit, their speech is always in grace, and they adorn the gospel at all times and give proof that they are actuated by the spirit.

The second major point of Wesley's sermon was found to be that "...to believers in Christ, walking thus, 'there is no condemnation'..."¹⁰ No condemnation on account of their past sins, because they are cast into the depth of the sea; no condemnation in their own breast, because they have the witness in their heart; there is no condemnation for inward sins; there is no condemnation for imperfection; there is no condemnation for infirmities and there is no condemnation for anything beyond their control--whether it be inward or outward.

In another sermon, "The Marks of the New Birth",¹¹ Wesley outlined these marks as he found them in the scripture. First and as a foundation he listed faith. Here he stated that this had to be more than notional or speculative. It had to be vital, living faith. The fruit of this faith, according to Wesley was that it gave power over sin and

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 162-174.

peace with God. The basis of this was found in I John 3:6 and Romans 5:1.

The second mark of the new birth was hope.¹² The basis for this mark was found in I Peter 1:3. Under this mark he has cited many promises through which hope is stimulated.

The third mark of the new birth was love.¹³ Romans 5:5 and I John 5:1 were two of the scriptures used to strengthen his conviction. He went on to state that the fruit of the love for God would be love for one's neighbors. Some scriptures used here were I John 3:14 and 16. Another fruit of this love, according to Wesley, was obedience and full conformity to His whole will.

Luther said:

As soon as thou believest in Christ, He comes to thee, a deliverer and Savior; and now the time of bondage is ended; as the apostle saith, the fulness thereof is come.¹⁴

Luther, in his sermon, "The Method and Fruit of Justification",¹⁵ went to great length to show that the believer was saved by faith rather than works. Along with many other arguments he gave the following:

¹² Ibid., p. 167.

¹³ Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁴ Grenville Kleiser, compiler, The World's Great Sermons (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1908), I, 138.

'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Here we see plainly that the Holy Ghost cometh to the saints, not by works, but by faith alone.¹⁶

The evidence was quite strong, throughout his works, that his emphasis for the believer was upon faith in Jesus Christ.

The second part of this section has considered, what the believer does. Wiley dealt with the duties of man¹⁷ in his Christian Theology. He divided the subject into three parts as follows: Duties to God; Duties to self; and Duties to others. He stated: "The three theistic virtues are faith, hope, and charity. These...occupy the first place in the Christian life. Upon these, all other virtues depend..."¹⁸ Wiley further gave Reverence as the fundamental duty to God.¹⁹ It is the sentiment from which worship springs. When reverence is expressed silently it is known as adoration. Praise is audible expression which extols the Divine Perfections. Thanksgiving is the expression of gratitude for the mercies of God. All three of the above are necessary in a well rounded reverence for God.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁷ H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1946), III, 36ff.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

The second duty of man to God is prayer.²⁰ He has divided prayer into four parts. Ejaculatory Prayers which are secret and frequent aspirations of the heart to God for general or particular blessings. Private prayers are for friendly and confiding communion with God. The basis for this type of prayer was found in Matthew 6:6. Next came family or social prayers which grew out of the social structure itself. The basis for this type of prayer was found in Matthew 18:19. The last of these prayer duties was public prayer. Public prayers date back to the Old Testament and have been a very important part of the Jewish worship. Hebrews 10:24-25 were strong verses in support of this type of worship.

The third duty of man to God was the supreme duty of worship.²¹ The act of worship constituted the union of all the offices of devotion. Lamentations 3:25 brought this idea out quite clearly.

Next came the duties to oneself.²² The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Therefore there must be development and preservation of the bodily powers. There must also

²⁰ Ibid., p. 40ff.

²¹ Ibid., p. 44.

²² Ibid., p. 47.

be care and culture of the body through rest, exercise, sleep and recreation. Further, the appetites of the body must be subjected to man's higher intellectual and spiritual interests. Paul gave the authority for the above statement in I Corinthians 9:27. The care of the body also demands proper clothing for decency as well as for protection and comfort. Also according to Wiley, "The body must be preserved holy."²³

The second duty to oneself was the development of the intellectual, emotional, moral, and aesthetic powers of the mind.²⁴ Mark 12:30 was a clear statement of the general truth of the above idea given by Wiley. The development of all these powers was essential in a well rounded believer's life. These faculties have been given by God for the use of man and man is not complete until his individual capacity has been attained along any of these lines. Without the development of these faculties the believer would be of very little value to either God or man.

The third duty to oneself was the development of the spiritual nature. The scripture is full of injunctions and exhortations to increase this aspect of man's nature.

²³ Ibid., p. 48.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

II Peter 1:5-8, 3:18 and Ephesians 3:18, 19 were classic passages in support of this aspect of man's duty to himself.

Under duties of men Wiley gave three points as follows:²⁵

- (1) Theistic Ethics: or Duties to God;
- (2) Individual Ethics: or Duties to One's Self; and
- (3) Social Ethics: or Duties to Others.

The first two have been briefly discussed above. A discussion of the third, the duties we owe to others,²⁶ follows. Christ summed up the whole of one's duty to his fellowman when he said, "...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...."²⁷ To be more specific, anger, jealousy, resentment, evil speaking, and revenge were prohibited toward one's neighbor. On the positive side, brotherly love had regard for the life, liberty and property of others. In other words a believer is careful not to infringe upon these basic rights of others.

Further the believer accepts marriage as primarily a divine institution and as a prerequisite to the family. The Bible believer also accepts the state as an order of creation and obedience to that state is rendered as a matter of conscience, as a part of his obedience to God.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

²⁷ Matthew 22:39.

²⁸ Wiley, op. cit., p. 98.

CHAPTER IV

THE BELIEVER AS A PRIEST

The idea of the universal priesthood of believers came into being very early in the history of the Israelites. However, the doctrine became perverted, through the years, and was often abused. The purpose of this chapter has been to give a brief history of the priesthood of believers.

A very clear statement of the plan of Jehovah for his people was found in the book of Exodus. About three months after the children of Israel left Egypt they came to the wilderness of Sinai. They set up camp at the foot of the mountain and Moses went up into the mount to commune with God. This is what God told him to tell the children of Israel:

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.¹

Jehovah reminded them of what he had accomplished for them and how he had preserved them for himself. He went on

¹ Exodus 19:4.

to state two conditions they would have to meet if they expected to continue to be his choice possession. Immediately he continued, by revealing the reward of obeying his voice and keeping his covenant, which was to follow shortly in the form of the ten commandments, found in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

The statement, "...and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."² was a very lucid explanation of Jehovah's plan for the Israelites. He wanted a priesthood of holy believers with whom to commune. But the people after seeing God manifest himself, were afraid and asked Moses to speak to them, the words of God. They said to Moses: "...Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."³ Fausset said:

All Israel was originally chosen as a kingdom of 'priests' to the Gentile world...but Israel renounced the obligation through fear of too close nearness to God...and God accepted their renunciation.⁴

Perhaps Fausset's statement that Israel renounced their obligation was too strong but it seemed to be true that they were fearful of the close communion and that God was

² Exodus 19:6

³ Exodus 20:19.

⁴ A. R. Fausset, "Priest," Bible Cyclopaedia, p. 581b.

merciful to them and accepted their suggestion which was recorded in Deuteronomy as follows:

Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desirest of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.⁵

When the hearts of the Israelites failed them for fear, God because of his great love, accepted their plea and gave them an intercessor in the person of Moses and through Moses to Aaron, his brother. From that time until the coming of Christ, the Mosaic priesthood prevailed. Fausset wrote:

Moses became the mediator with God for them. The Aaronic priesthood became the temporary depository of all Israel's priesthood, until Christ the anti-typical High Priest came; and they shall hereafter resume it when they turn to the Lord and shall be 'the priests of Jehovah, the ministers of our God' to the Gentile nations in Christ's millennial kingdom (Isa. lxi. 6, lxvi. 21).⁶

Israel, in the days of Moses, pleaded for release from the individual priesthood and God granted it. Israel in the time of Christ rejected the priesthood by spurning

⁵ Deuteronomy 18:15.

⁶ Fausset, op. cit. p. 581c.

Christ, and God put her in the background. Fausset contends that there is coming a time when Israel will again be a blessing and a joy to her Heavenly Father. He said:

Israel, the spiritual and the literal, shall resume the priesthood which God from the first designed for His people. Thus there will be a blessed and holy series; Christ the royal High Priest, the glorified saint king-priests, Israel in the flesh mediating as king-priest to the nations in the flesh.⁷

Some other errors, aside from the simple neglect of the doctrine, were discovered down through the years. Some said that Christ was the High Priest and professional ministers were the priests but that view was not according to Scripture. Fausset gave the following explanation:

...the other priests were but assistants to the high-priest, because he could not do all. The Lord Jesus needed no assistant, so ⁸is sole representative of both highpriest and priests.⁸

Christian ministers in the New Testament were never called "priests (hiereis). The term was applied only to Aaronic priests, Christ and to all Christians. Ministers were often called by other names indicating that they were presbyters or public ministers but they were never referred to as sacerdotal, sacrificing priests.⁹

⁷ Ibid., p. 581c.

⁸ Loc. cit.

⁹ Fausset, loc. cit.

Perhaps the most familiar errors of priestcraft were found in the Hebrew religion and in the Roman Catholic system. The Hebrew priests, in the days of Christ, held a legal position yet had submerged the spirit of the law beneath the letter of the law. They had become self-righteous and cold in spirit. For this they were rebuked.

Luther noted the same deficiency in the Roman priesthood that Christ found in the Jewish, but, no doubt much worse in moral lack. But even more important was the legitimate aspect. The Old Testament priests held a divinely instituted office but the Roman priesthood was presumptuous in that it was not authorized by the New Covenant.

It was against this erroneous doctrine of the priesthood that Luther and his contemporaries directed their revolt in the Protestant Reformation. Harry C. Munro said, in his recent book:

The first principle of the Protestant Reformation was 'the priesthood of all believers.' Christ as our great high priest bridged the distance between man and God and abolished the need for any intervening human priesthood. Every Christian is qualified to talk with God face to face. Every Christian is also his brother's priest, helping his fellow men to find their way to God.¹⁰

¹⁰ Harry C. Munro, Be Glad You're a Protestant (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1948), p. 30.

In the early church many types of church leaders and officers were named but no professional priests were accepted as a part of the scriptural system. In Acts the priests were referred to as follows: "...a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."¹¹ However, the context clearly showed that the priests referred to there were priests who had been converted from their sacerdotal priestly duties, and had become obedient to the faith. These priests went through a similar experience to that of Luther. "Having been professional priests," wrote Munro, "in the old (Jewish) order of things they came into an entirely new kind of 'Priesthood' in the Christian Church."¹²

There was no mention of anyone called a priest in the Christian church until the third century. When they did appear they did not come in succession to any leader named in the New Testament but rather in imitation of the contemporary pagan and Jewish religious groups.¹³

Several likenesses as well as several differences were found to exist in a comparison of the pastor and the

¹¹ Acts 6:7.

¹² Munro, op. cit. p. 32.

¹³ George Park Fisher, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), p. 54.

priest. Some of the likenesses¹⁴ have been given first. Both have been set apart for full time service. Both were to preach, teach, counsel and comfort the people. Both were to conduct religious services. Both stood as mediators between God and man, interpreting them to each other and helping them to find each other.

The differences¹⁵ in the sacerdotal priest, and the Roman pastor have been given as follows: The priest was considered to be an indispensable mediator between God and man. The pastor helped men into relationship with God and then stepped to one side. The pastor turned priest only in times of emergency when the individual could not quite reach God. The second difference was that the priest supposedly forgave sins by the authority transmitted to him by Peter. The pastor brought the penitent sinner before God for forgiveness, which was the gift of God to all who repented. In connection with the priest, his ordination was supposed to pass on to him, through Peter, the authority of Christ. The pastor was also ordained to Christian service but his ordination was an act of a certain church or group, indicating that they believed he had been called of God into the ministry and given the necessary authority, direct

¹⁴ Munro, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 39-43.

from God, to fulfill his function. In no way did this ordination set him up, in spiritual authority, over his fellow men.¹⁶

Munro mentioned that Peter, through whom the authority for a professional priesthood was supposed to have come, gave perhaps the strongest text for the support of a universal priesthood, (I Peter 2:4, 5, 9). Munro wrote further in explanation: "He is writing to a great host, 'the exiles of the dispersion.' He means that every Christian is a priest under Christ, the great high priest."¹⁷

The Biblical Encyclopaedia contained these words:

...the saints are a 'holy and royal priesthood;' a company of spiritual priests, washed in Jesus' blood, sanctified by his word and Spirit and all of them kings and priests to God (I Pet. ii: 5, 9).¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸ Samuel Fallows, et al., editors, The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1906), III, 1382a.

CHAPTER V

THE BASIC PRIVILEGE OF THE BELIEVER AS A PRIEST

The purpose of this chapter was to point out the privileges of the believer as a priest. No doubt the most outstanding privilege of the priest in the Old Testament was that he had access to God. The same privilege was extended to the believer in the New Testament by the blood of Jesus Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author has written:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope...¹

The above passage has plainly pointed out that the New Testament believer had the privilege of drawing near to God just as surely as the Old Testament priest. However where the Old Testament priest had to go through the ritual of sprinkling and washing his body as a symbol of body cleanliness, the New Testament believer has been exhorted to inward cleanliness as found in James 4:8 and Matthew 23:25-26.

¹ Hebrews 10:19-23.

Peter made the new priesthood a spiritual one when he said:

...ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ....²

Under the law, sacrifices were offered unto God but under grace spiritual sacrifices were to be made.

A brief explanation of spiritual sacrifices has been given in the following quotations from the New Testament. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he has implied that the believer's body was to be the spiritual sacrifice. He wrote:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.³

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the believer was exhorted to offer up the sacrifice of praise by confessing Christ. Also he was reminded to do good and testify,⁴ and even the latter two were classed as sacrifices. Again in Hebrews 12 the following words were found:

Wherefore receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe.⁵

² I Peter 2:5.

³ Romans 12:1.

⁴ Hebrews 13:15-16.

⁵ Hebrews 12:28.

In the above verse the word "offer" implied that even obedient service was considered as an offering of the believer.

Lumby said that each believer was made a living stone and joined together with Christ by the new birth. They were to be more and more like Him by a constant drawing near to Him. By that means the Spirit fit each Christian into his proper place in the spiritual building. It was by this means that the saints were united with one another and with Christ.⁶

He went on to say:

First, they are to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. From the day when God revealed His will on Sinai, such has been the ideal set before His chosen servants. "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6) stands in the preface of the Divinely given law. And God changes not. Hence the praise of the Lamb's finished work when He has purchased unto God men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation is sung before the throne in the self-same strain: "Thou madest them to be unto God a kingdom and priests" (Rev. v. 10).⁷

In those early Old Testament days God was preparing his people for the coming of the Messiah. He was leading them from material sacrifices to true spiritual worship. The Psalmist had received a glimpse of God's plan when he said,

⁶ Rawson J. Lumby, The Epistles of St. Peter. Vol. XXIV, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, The Expositor's Bible, 50 vols (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1905), p. 71.

⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

"Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in Jehovah."⁸ Hosea also sensed the true meaning of sacrifice when he said, "...Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips."⁹ Lumby went on to write:

But the Apostles could add to the exhortations of the prophets and psalmists a ground of blessed assurance, could promise how these living sacrifices, these offerings of praise, had gained a certainty of acceptance through Jesus Christ: 'Through Him we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him' (Eph. iii. 12); and in another place, 'Having Him as a great Priest over the house of God,' that spiritual house into which believers are builded, 'let us draw near with a true heart, in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water' (Heb. x. 22). Thus do believers become priests unto God, in every place lifting up holy hands in prayer, prayer which is made acceptable through their great High-priest.¹⁰

As is evident from the quotation above, the New Testament believer is expected to draw near to God, as James expressed it: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you."¹¹ Consequently each believer was found to be his own priest. Each one was found to be responsible for his own communion with God. This assertion does not, however eliminate the duty of the minister. The minister, by the very nature of

⁸ Psalms 4:5.

⁹ Hosea 14:2.

¹⁰ Lumby, op. cit. pp. 72-73.

¹¹ James 4:8.

his responsibility, was found to be the one who was to lead those of other callings into the way of eternal life. The minister was to be the spiritual leader and the one to make Christ known to the world. Likewise each saint had a responsibility to perform. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul likened each believer to a part of the physical human body. Each believer was to have his place and purpose. No one was to take the place of another because each had a duty to perform and each was to faithfully perform that duty. Paul wrote:

Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.¹²

Fausset said of the priesthood of believers:

....All the elect saints (not ministers as such) from Jews and Gentiles are meantime called to be priests unto God (I Pet. ii. 5,9), and being transfigured shall reign with Christ as king priests...¹³

He distinguished between the Old Testament and New Testament priest when he wrote concerning the Old Testament priest:

Cohen is from an Arabic root, 'draw near,' or else cahan 'to present' (Exod. xix. 22, xxx. 20, 21). The priest drew near when others stood far off; the priest representing the people before Jehovah, and preparing the way by propitiatory sacrifices for their approach to God, which

¹² I Corinthians 12:27-29.

¹³ A. R. Fausset, Bible Cyclopaedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1892), p. 581c.

transgressions debarred them from; 'keeping charge of the sanctuary for the charge of Israel' (Num. iii. 38). Mediation and greater nearness to God is the radical idea in a priest, he presenting the atonement for the congregation and the gifts of reconciled people (Num. xvi. 5, xvii. 5), and bringing back from God blessing and peace (Lev. ix. 22, 23; Num. vi. 22-27).¹⁴

In contrast to the above picture he went on to explain how the Old Testament priesthood was superseded through the atonement of Christ and how, following the Incarnation, the minister and laymen had equal access to God. He said:

In the N. T....the separating veil is rent, and the human priesthood superseded, and we have all alike, ministers and laymen, boldness of access by the new and living way, consecrated through Christ's once torn flesh (Heb. x. 19-22, Rom. v. 2). The high priest had access only once a year, on the day of atonement, into the holiest, and that after confessing his own sin as well as the people's (Heb. vii. 27), and laying aside his magnificent robes of office for plain linen.¹⁵

Jowett, in a sermon on Psalms 141:2-4 said:

....How priestly is the entire exercise! Incense! Sacrifice! Supplication! When I had read the verse I rejoiced that I, too, was a priest unto God, and that in Christ Jesus we all have access to the same incomparable privilege and glory....¹⁶

He went on to state that each believer had three responsibilities. These responsibilities might have been classed as duties but were listed as privileges when consideration

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 582a.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 582a.

¹⁶ J. H. Jowett, The Silver Lining (London: Andrew Melrose, 1907), p. 145.

was given to the fact that they were all parts of the access to God which has been accepted as a privilege. Very briefly, they were, (1) Incense or praise, (2) Sacrifice which was to be the sacrifice of the whole being, and (3) Supplication or asking.¹⁷ Of all the privileges of a believer it seemed that prayer was the most outstanding and far reaching. It has often been stated that prayer was a duty and no doubt, in a sense, that was true but it was also discovered to be a joyful privilege. Pike said, "Prayer is a sacred privilege."¹⁸ He considered it to be the means by which the individual believer maintained intercourse with his God and Saviour. To carry on a conversation with the glorious persons of the Trinity was noted as a most high privilege.

In I John the positive statement, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin,..."¹⁹ was found. The Old Testament priests were to be clean both outwardly and inwardly and a prescribed ritual was closely followed each time before the priest went into the presence of the Lord. In the New Testament dispensation it was found that it was possible to live above sin as John has stated. This purity was a privilege and also, in one sense a duty. Just as the Old Testament

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 145-153.

¹⁸ J. G. Pike, A Guide for Disciples (London: The Religious Tract Society, n. d.), p. 85.

¹⁹ I John 3:9.

priest could not approach God in impurity, it was not possible for the New Testament believer-priest to gain the ear of the Lord if sin was not confessed.

The discovery was made that thinking men were not satisfied with a form of godliness or with a second-hand religion. For example, Luther tried the ways of the state church, but discovered that they did not meet his needs. He lived as strictly as any other monk but none of his tangible deeds satisfied his longing. Luther was trained in the system of the Roman priests but he found no peace in that system. Even in his strict asceticism and obedience to the system, he never met God. In fact he went so far as to refer to the God he had known through the regulations and ceremonies as "God hidden".²⁰ However, in contrast to that term, he found "God disclosed"²¹ in his direct communion with him.

Just as the principle which Luther found through his personal experience "... (that each believing Christian has direct access to God) was revolutionary..."²² so would be the loss through neglect of the doctrine, a tragedy.

²⁰ William R. Cannon, "The Priesthood of All Believers," Shepherds, 6 (November, 1951), p. 17.

²¹ Loc. cit.

²² Cannon, loc. cit.

Luther contended that every individual had to deal directly with God.²³

The guilty conscience of man long ago realized that it was much more comfortable to deal with a displeased father through the medium of a less dogmatic mother. However, that direct, face to face contact accomplished something in the memory of the child, that was not soon forgotten.

Adam and Eve hid from God, the Israelites faltered at the thought of the mention of an individual priesthood but New Testament Christians have the privilege of direct communion with God through Christ who is God. However Christ, as a man, was tempted as man and consequently his victory over sin, death and hell through his atoning death and resurrection, made him the Highpriest to whom believers were to come as individual priests.

Through Christ the believer was given the blessed privilege stressed by Luther and stated by W. R. Cannon, Jr:

Each believer is a child of God. Rather than expose his needs and his hopes to a priest, he is privileged to enter boldly in his own person into God's presence and to talk as freely with his Heavenly Father as he would with his own earthly parent. We all gather at the altar of God to commune with Him, affirms Luther, and we kneel beside our minister, 'Young and old, master and servant, mistress and maid, all holy priests together, sanctified by the blood of Christ. We are there in our priestly dignity.'²⁴

²³ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴ Ibid., 18.

CHAPTER VI

THE DUTIES OF A BELIEVER AS A PRIEST

Many classifications of the duties of priests were found but most of them were very general and impractical for the ordinary priest-believer. Since it was discovered that very little, of a practical nature, had been written on the subject, it was the purpose of this chapter to make the practical association of the believer and the priest. It was discovered that the believer needed more emphasis on the priestly office of his state, in order that he might be a balanced and effective witness.

All of the duties which follow were found to apply to the priesthood of believers. A few of these obligations were not always listed from the priestly angle, yet all were either mentioned or implied in a careful analysis of the duties of a priest--even in the Old Testament.

Of the sources consulted, to find an adequate coverage of the duties of the believer-priest, none seemed to be as comprehensive for the New Testament believer, as the list treated by Hitchcock.¹

¹ Roswell D. Hitchcock, Hitchcock's New and Complete Analysis of the Holy Bible (New York: A. J. Johnson, 1875), pp. 166ff.

These duties were based in a rich wealth of Scripture; however, in most cases only one or two representative verses have been cited.

The first obligation to be considered was fear. In the Psalms, these words were read: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom..."² The book of Job brought the issue right down to man when these words were read: "And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."³ In addition to the command to fear, found in Deuteronomy, there is both the positive and negative explanation, in the words:

Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about...⁴

There has been much controversy concerning the attitude of fear toward God which has not been included here but the following verses have shown the blessed reward of a proper fear, which brings about obedience. "And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day."⁵

² Psalms 111:10.

³ Job 28:28.

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:13-14.

⁵ Deuteronomy 6:24.

In the New Testament the believer received encouragement from the words: "And his mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear him."⁶ In spite of the ordinary sense of the term, fear was found not only to be a duty, but a blessed duty to those who adhered to the admonitions of the Word. On the other hand, the lack of fear became a curse in the Proverbs. Those who did not choose fear and despised reproof were left to their own devices and warning was given that their backsliding should destroy them.⁷

The second duty was obedience to God. This requirement was found to be basic to all the rest in that obedience led to the others. It was stressed as absolutely necessary in the Old Testament priesthood and was found to be equally as important in the New Testament. There was also found a connection between obeying God and knowing him. John said: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."⁸ In the Psalms, obedience was presupposed when these words were recorded: "Thou hast commanded us thy precepts, that we should observe them diligently."⁹

⁶ Luke 1:50.

⁷ Proverbs 1:29-33.

⁸ I John 2:3.

⁹ Psalms 119:4.

Likewise, Paul expected obedience when he said: "For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus."¹⁰ Mahood cited I Samuel 15:22 as the outstanding verse on obedience. He said further:

More than fifty times it is said of Abraham that he obeyed God. God expects obedience. He is our Father. He knows best what we should do and be. That we may learn this lesson of obedience well, he has emphasized it again and again in his Word.¹¹

As was the case with each duty, there was a privilege and a reward. In the Pentateuch it was promised that things would go well for those who were obedient. The same was promised for their children and in addition to that they were promised long life on the earth.¹² "Jehovah," said Samuel, "rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me."¹³ Jesus renewed the emphasis upon obedience when he warned against an empty faith but he also implied a heavenly abode for the obedient. He said that not every one who outwardly confessed him would be entered into heaven. He named obedience to the will of the father as the final test.¹⁴

¹⁰ I Thessalonians 4:2.

¹¹ J. W. Mahood, The Victory Life (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1904), p. 54.

¹² Deuteronomy 4:40.

¹³ II Samuel 22:21.

¹⁴ Matthew 7:21.

The third duty of the believer was waiting on the Lord. This one was found to be very close to the function of prayer yet distinct from it. Several reasons for waiting upon the Lord were found in the Psalms. These Psalms¹⁵ disclosed the fact that the author waited upon the Lord because he was his help, shield, strength, defense, hope and, most of all, the author of his salvation.

The fourth essential duty of the Christian was found to be to trust in God. The Psalmist said that it was better to trust in the Lord than in princes.¹⁶ David, in his youth, learned the duty and privilege of trust. This fact was beautifully revealed when he expressed confidence that the Lord who delivered him out of the paw of the lion and the bear would also deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine.¹⁷ The reward of that kind of trust was victory, as the Word showed.

Communion with God was listed as the fifth obligation but it might just as easily have been designated as a privilege. This act was the outstanding feature of the Levitical priesthood, as has been discussed earlier. However, it was also found to be an outstanding mark of the universal priesthood of believers in the New Testament. The Psalms were

¹⁵ Psalms 33:20; 59:9; 62:5 and 62:1.

¹⁶ Psalms 118:9.

¹⁷ I Samuel 17:37.

found to be rich in expressions of communion. One clear testimony of that fact was found in Psalm 16 when the author praised the Lord for giving counsel and instruction.¹⁸

In the New Testament several rich passages were discovered. A verse in I John cast a shadow of the duty aspect of communion. It came in the form of a warning, when John said: "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth..."¹⁹ The privilege side of the communion was found in the book of Revelation, thus:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.²⁰

The next commission was hope. In the Roman Epistle Paul explained that hope was the medium through which salvation came and that hope was not something seeable but rather something intangible which caused a person to wait in expectation.²¹ The Psalmist said, "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, "All ye that hope in Jehovah."²² And again, "Thou art my hiding-place and my

¹⁸ Psalms 16:7.

¹⁹ I John 1:6.

²⁰ Revelation 3:20.

²¹ Romans 8:24-25.

²² Psalms 31:24.

shield: I hope in thy word."²³ Peter said:

Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ...²⁴

The Biblical Encyclopaedia stated that hope was the desire of some good, attended with the possibility of attaining it. It was also considered the most natural passion of man.²⁵ It was further specified as follows:

The hope of the Christian is an expectation of all necessary good both in time and eternity, founded on the promises, relations, and perfections of God, and on the offices, righteousness, and intercession of Christ. It is a compound of desire, expectation, patience, and joy.²⁶

The seventh allegiance was that of joy. The duty of rejoicing was perhaps the closest of all to being more of a privilege than a duty. Yet the Scripture commanded believers to be joyful. It seemed to strengthen the observation that even Christian people were often in danger of losing the vision of the joy of salvation. Both the Old and New Testament writers admonished the people to rejoice always. The hope of the Psalmist promised joy in these words:

²³ Psalms 119:114.

²⁴ I Peter 1:13.

²⁵ Samuel Fallows, et al., editors, The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia, 1906 edition, II 824.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

"The righteous shall be glad in Jehovah, and shall take refuge in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory."²⁷ Earlier in the book he made the following covenant with Jehovah: "I will be glad and exult in thee; I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High."²⁸ Again he advised the reader to serve the Lord with gladness and to come into his presence with singing.²⁹ Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, wrote: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord."³⁰

Next in the outline was the reverence of love. Hitchcock placed nearly all the emphasis upon the duty of loving God. However, the Scripture taught just as definite a love of one's fellowman. The words of Jesus found in Mark support this fact. Jesus said:

...and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.³¹

Some have held the erroneous view that love came only in the New Testament but that was not true because as far

²⁷ Psalms 64:10.

²⁸ Psalms 9:2.

²⁹ Psalms 100:2.

³⁰ Philippians 3:1.

³¹ Mark 12:30-32.

back as Moses, Jehovah spoke the following words: "...and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."³² God has demanded undivided love from the beginning. There is no other way to reach God except through love via Jesus Christ.

John in his first epistle said:

Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.³³

He went on to say that if a man said he loved God and hated his brother he was a liar. In the fifth chapter he also said that the test of whether one loved the children of God or not was by his love to God. If he loved God and kept his commandments he could be sure of his state in grace.³⁴ He stated further: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."³⁵ Fausset said, "Love to one another is the proof to the world of discipleship..."³⁶ He cited John 13 as the basis of his statement.

³² Deuteronomy 6:5.

³³ I John 4:17-20.

³⁴ I John 5:2.

³⁵ I John 5:3.

³⁶ A. R. Fausset, "Love" Bible Cyclopaedia, p. 439b.

The ninth duty to be listed was praise. It was discovered that praise to God was one of the outstanding responsibilities of the Old Testament priest. However, this function was not to be cast aside by the New Testament believer. Jowett said concerning Psalms 141:2-4:

The first thing we have to do when we come into the holy Presence is to swing our censer, and send the odour of our praise upwards to our Lord.³⁷

The above quotation would emphasize praise as a duty and a duty it has seemed to be, yet a happy and joyful duty. Both the Old and New Testaments are replete with praise and exhortations to praise the Lord. In the early days of the Israelites, Moses and the children sang a song of praise; a part of the song was: "Jehovah is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will praise him..."³⁸ The writings of the Psalmist were full of praise when he said that he would praise the Lord according to his righteousness.³⁹ Another representative verse which revealed the atmosphere of the Psalms was: "Sing praise to God, sing praise: Sing praises unto our King, sing praises."⁴⁰ Mahood said, "God would have us live

³⁷ J. H. Jowett, The Silver Lining (London: Andrew-Melrose, 1907), p. 146.

³⁸ Exodus 15:2.

³⁹ Psalms 7:17.

⁴⁰ Psalms 47:6.

lives of praise. The devil has very little chance to get into a heart that is resonant with holy song."⁴¹

Praise was found to be not only a personal thing but also a part of public worship. The Psalmist said to let the people exult the Lord in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders.⁴² The word "doxology" was found to mean, to speak praise. No attempt to quote or even list these doxologies was made but all who have any knowledge of the Bible remember that each one had a note of praise in it.

In the tenth place, God expected thanksgiving. Praise and thanksgiving were found to spring from the same spirit and were very much alike. No doubt the two went hand in hand. According to the Bible Encyclopaedia, the giving of thanks was a hearty and cheerful acknowledgment of favors, either spiritual, temporal or eternal, which had been bestowed upon an individual or his fellowman.⁴³ It was stated further that, "All thanksgiving is to be offered in Christ's name..."⁴⁴ In I Chronicles, men were exhorted to give thanks to the Lord, to call upon his name and to make his deeds known

⁴¹ Mahood, op. cit. p. 27.

⁴² Psalms 117:32.

⁴³ Fallows, op. cit. III, 1648b.

⁴⁴ Loc. cit.

among the people.⁴⁵ Paul wrote as follows: "...in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward."⁴⁶

Aside from the general exhortation to thanksgiving, quoted above, several specific reasons for thanksgiving have been added. Perhaps the greatest of all these was the thanksgiving due to Christ for his salvation. Zacharias said, "...Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people..."⁴⁷ Paul wrote, "...but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴⁸ Again in the Second Corinthian letter he wrote as follows: "But thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ..."⁴⁹ Peter expressed his gratitude when he wrote as follows:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...⁵⁰

In the Old Testament it was discovered that Isaiah prophesied that in that day men would thank God that his anger had

⁴⁵ I Chronicles 16:8.

⁴⁶ I Thessalonians 5:17.

⁴⁷ Luke 1:68.

⁴⁸ I Corinthians 15:57.

⁴⁹ II Corinthians 2:14.

⁵⁰ I Peter 1:3.

been turned away and that it had been replaced by comfort.⁵¹

Many times, in both the Old and New Testament, the writers thanked God for the fulfilment of the promises which he had made in times past. In I Kings these words were noted:

And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it...⁵²

Another aspect of God's care was acknowledged when the Psalmist was thankful for the preservation of his life.⁵³

Close to the above was the spirit of many of the Old Testament characters as they thanked God for deliverance from their enemies.⁵⁴ The Psalmist exhorted all to sing and

give thanks at the remembrance of the holiness of God.⁵⁵

Paul also thanked God for the faith of the believers when he said: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world."⁵⁶

Many other exhortations and patterns of thanksgiving were found in the Scriptures but lack of space caused them

⁵¹ Isaiah 12:1.

⁵² I Kings 8:15.

⁵³ Psalms 30:3.

⁵⁴ I Samuel 2:1, Psalms 44:7, and Jeremiah 20:13.

⁵⁵ Psalms 30:4.

⁵⁶ Romans 1:8.

to be omitted. Neverthe less quite a broad cross-section of the duties of the believer-priest were given.

The eleventh duty to be discussed was confession. This matter was found to be very popular, in some modern day cults, to gain a measure of release from a shady past. However, it was not a new thing for Jehovah, in the book of Numbers, this saying was quoted:

...When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, so as to trespass against Jehovah, and that soul shall be quilty; then he shall confess his sin which he hath done; and shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him in respect of whom he hath been quilty.⁵⁷

Confession was not found as easy as some of the duties mentioned, but there is little doubt that any brought more peace and blessedness. In the Proverbs man was warned that he that covered his sins would not prosper but that he who confessed his evil ways would have mercy.⁵⁸ David acknowledged his sin, he confessed it and God forgave his iniquity.⁵⁹ Many examples of confession were found in the Old Testament especially. Jacob confessed his sin of trickery.⁶⁰ David confessed the sin of numbering the people when he said:

⁵⁷ Numbers 5:5-8.

⁵⁸ Proverbs 28:13.

⁵⁹ Psalms 32:5.

⁶⁰ Genesis 32:9-10.

"...I have sinned greatly...but now, put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."⁶¹ Psalm 51 has been called a Psalm of penitence. It was written by David after his great sin and was found to be overflowing with sorrow for, and confession of, both sins and inbred sin. Isaiah also realized he was at the end of his own strength and confessed his need by acknowledging that he was undone because he was a man of unclean lips who dwelt in the midst of a people in like condition. How did he know? He realized it when he saw the King, the Lord of hosts.⁶² It was found in Hebrews 12:14 and II Thessalonians 5:23 and in other passages, that each believer was to have a like experience before God could use him fully.

Individual confession has been discussed above but there was also a place for collective or national confession, if a proper priesthood was to be maintained. Perhaps the best example of that type of confession was found among the Hebrew people.⁶³

Adam Clarke admonished thus:

'Confess your faults one to another.' This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavour to maintain among themselves the communion of saints.

⁶¹ I Chronicles 21:8.

⁶² Isaiah 6:5.

⁶³ Numbers 14:40; Nehemiah 1:6-7; Judges 10:10,15; I Samuel 12:10; and Daniel 9:5-15.

This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and to make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offences which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offences before God, or be obligated any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren.⁶⁴

He went on to say that the Bible did not say to confess faults to the elders that they might forgive them. The members of the church were to confess their faults to each other. He said of the sacerdotal system:

...auricular confession to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here, it would prove more than they wish; for it would require the priest to confess his sins to the people, as well as the people to confess theirs to the priest.⁶⁵

He stated further that the Bible said to pray one for another. And that there was no instance in auricular confession where the penitent and priest prayed together for pardon. The people were commanded to pray for each other in order that they might be healed. Finally he asked:

Without the communion of saints, who is likely to make a steady and consistent Christian, even though his conversion should have been the most sincere and the most remarkable?⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Adam Clarke, Christian Theology (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1856), p. 395.

⁶⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

The twelfth duty was the duty of prayer. Such a great amount of material was available on this subject that it seemed almost impossible to condense it for the purpose here intended. However, an attempt was made to cover the primary aspects of this obligation in little more than an outline form.

In the Old Testament these words were outstanding:

"Seek ye Jehovah and his strength; Seek his face evermore."⁶⁷
Isaiah said to seek the Lord while he could be found and to call upon him while he was near.⁶⁸

Thus far most of the references from which the duties were discovered were in the Old Testament but not so with prayer. Many rich references were discovered in the New Testament but only a few were cited. Jesus commanded the disciples to pray and gave them the reason for its necessity at Gethsemane, just before he was betrayed by Judas. "Watch and pray," Jesus warned, "that ye enter not into temptation..."⁶⁹ Paul told the Philippians to be careful for nothing, to be thankful and to let their requests be made known to God by prayer and supplication.⁷⁰ Peter warned that the end was

⁶⁷ I Chronicles 16:11.

⁶⁸ Isaiah 55:6.

⁶⁹ Matthew 26:41.

⁷⁰ Philippians 4:6.

close and exhorted the believer to be sober and to watch unto prayer.⁷¹

The conditions of acceptable prayer have been given but were not elaborated upon. First, all prayers were to be prayed in Christ's name. Jesus said that no man could come unto the Father except by him.⁷² He also said that whatsoever the believer asked the Father in his name, the Father would give.⁷³ Many other references could have been cited if time and space had permitted.

Faith was also found to be a prerequisite of acceptable prayer. One representative verse which characterized the confidence of the Old Testament men was read thus: "Then shall mine enemies turn back in the day that I call: This I know, that God is for me."⁷⁴ In the New Testament the writer of the Hebrew Letter made the necessity of faith known when he said that without faith it was impossible to please God for he that came to God had to believe that he was and that he would reward the diligent seeker.⁷⁵ James

⁷¹ I Peter 4:7.

⁷² John 14:6.

⁷³ John 16:23.

⁷⁴ Psalms 56:9.

⁷⁵ Hebrews 4:6.

said that the prayer of faith would save the sick and if he had sinned he would be forgiven.⁷⁶

Sincerity was considered to be of major importance in an acceptable prayer. In Deuteronomy it was promised that if God was sought with the whole heart and soul he would be found.⁷⁷ When Jehovah appeared to Solomon he said:

...if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.⁷⁸

Righteousness was also considered to be a factor in a proper prayer. The Psalmist said that the eyes of the Lord were upon the righteous and that his ears were open to his cry.⁷⁹ The prayers of the righteous would be answered but the call of the unrighteous would not be heeded as revealed by Peter when he said: "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon (against)⁸⁰ them that do evil."⁸¹

⁷⁶ James 5:15.

⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 4:29.

⁷⁸ II Chronicles 7:14.

⁷⁹ Psalms 34:15.

⁸⁰ King James Version.

⁸¹ I Peter 3:12.

In addition to the above conditions of acceptable prayer, three more were discovered. Humility was necessary as ascertained in Psalms 9:12 and 40:1. The need for confession and forgiveness were revealed by the words of Jesus in Mark 9:25.

Perseverance, as found in Romans 12:12 and Luke 11:5-9 was also cited as a condition of acceptable prayer.

The objects of prayer were also considered in order that the believer-priest might have a better understanding of the specific purposes of calling upon God. A need was found for guidance of the seeker and believer consequently the following subjects for prayer were included along with a short Biblical basis. (1) Conviction of sin: Job prayed that the Lord would make him to know his transgressions and his sin.⁸² (2) Regeneration: David prayed that God might wash him from his iniquity and create in him a clean heart.⁸³ (3) Pardon: The Psalmist also prayed that the Lord might pardon his iniquity and forgive his sins.⁸⁴ (4) Salvation: He prayed further that the Lord would have mercy upon him and save him.⁸⁵ (5) Knowledge of Divine

⁸² Job 13:23.

⁸³ Psalms 51:2.

⁸⁴ Psalms 25:7-14.

⁸⁵ Psalms 20:9; 54:1; 85:7; 86:16.

things: Moses asked that he might know Jehovah and his way. Along the same line, David prayed that the Lord would show him his way and lead him in righteousness.⁸⁶ (6)

Obedience: In the next place David prayed that the Lord would direct him in keeping the statutes of the Lord.⁸⁷

(7) Revival: This same man of God prayed that God would revive the people in order that they might rejoice in the Lord.⁸⁸

(8) Divine searching: Again the same man was referred to, this time he said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me and know my thoughts..."⁸⁹

(9) Sanctification: Reference was again made to David when he asked for cleansing from secret faults and when he asked to be kept from presumptuous sins.⁹⁰

(10) Blessing upon food: At the time of the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, Jesus set the example by giving thanks for and, blessing the food before distributing it among the people.⁹¹

(11) Help in trouble: Moses cried out for help when the people rose up against him.⁹² The Psalms were found to contain an

⁸⁶ Exodus 33:12-13; Psalms 5:8; 25:4-5.

⁸⁷ Psalms 119:5-133.

⁸⁸ Psalms 80:3-6; 119.

⁸⁹ Psalms 139:23.

⁹⁰ Psalms 19:12.

⁹¹ Luke 9:16; John 6:11.

⁹² Exodus 17:4.

abundance of petitions for help in time of trouble. (12) Deliverance from enemies: Again many examples of the above were discovered in the Psalms.⁹³ Daniel believed God and he was delivered according to Daniel 6. (13) Recovery from illness: It was noted that Hezekiah prayed when he was sick and he was healed.⁹⁴ David also pleaded, many times, for his physical health. (14) Success in business: In Genesis the servant of Abraham asked God to send him good speed,⁹⁵ and Nehemiah prayed that the Lord would prosper him.⁹⁶ (15) Favor in old age: The above was probably of minor importance but listed as a valuable guide in preparing for the future. David asked that he might not be cast off in his old age when his strength failed.⁹⁷ (16) Answer to prayer: Again, David was the outstanding author in shedding light on this subject. Many times he pleaded with God to hear his cry and he received the desire of his heart.

An attempt has been made above to give some of the areas where prayer was appropriate and to give a Scriptural example in most cases. It was interesting to notice that

⁹³ Psalms 7:1-7; 13:1-9; 35:1-3; 35:17-25.

⁹⁴ II Chronicles 32:24.

⁹⁵ Genesis 24:12.

⁹⁶ Nehemiah 1:11.

⁹⁷ Psalms 71:9.

David's experience came close to that of the New Testament believer as found in Psalms 51:16-17.

The thirteenth duty mentioned was that of pleading in prayer. Pleading for the need of the believer was illustrated by the Psalmist when he asked God to be near for trouble was close at hand.⁹⁸ Examples of pleading the promises were found in the first two books of the Law.⁹⁹ The other bases for pleading were by God's mercy, glory and justice; by faith in God; by past good works and by future good works.¹⁰⁰

The fourteenth duty was intercession. Paul exhorted that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all.¹⁰¹ It was found that intercession was desired in both the Old and New Testament.¹⁰² The objects of intercession were found to be individuals, cities, ministers, one's family, the poor, saints, country and the heathen.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Psalms 22:11.

⁹⁹ Genesis 32:12; Exodus 32:13.

¹⁰⁰ Hitchcock, op. cit., pp. 186-188.

¹⁰¹ I Timothy 2:8.

¹⁰² Malachi 1:9; Acts 8:24.

¹⁰³ Philemon 4; Genesis 19:18-22; Romans 15:30-32; Genesis 28:3-4; Psalms 74:21; I Thessalonians 1:2; 3:10-12; Exodus 32:30.

The last duty given was imprecations. A few individuals and groups upon whom curses were found to be in order were, one's self, persecutors of the poor, preachers of another gospel, those who love not Christ, and upon enemies and transgressors.¹⁰⁴

It was discovered that, in order to clarify the Protestant conception of the believer as a priest, it was also necessary to consider his mission. Just as the Old Testament priest had access to God and consequently certain duties that went with that office, so the New Testament believer-priest had access to God and he too was required to meet certain obligations in faith and practice.

As it was found that each believer was a priest it became necessary to, in a general way, include the duties connected with his office.

¹⁰⁴ II Samuel 24:17; Psalms 10:2; Galatians 1:8; I Corinthians 16:22; II Timothy 4:14.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I. SUMMARY

It was found that the Protestant conception of the priesthood of believers was that each individual believer was a priest in the sense that he had direct access to God through the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

The study revealed that sin, and the fact that God could not look upon sin, made it necessary that, during the Old Testament dispensation, a priest had to mediate between God and man.

To find of whom the priesthood consisted it was necessary to find who were considered as believers. It was discovered that the best and most concise standard by which to determine the Protestant conception of believers, was the Apostles' Creed. The principle privilege of the New Testament believer-priest was the fact that he had access to God without a human mediator.

In the Old Testament dispensation the priest was merely the assistant to the high priest. The Protestant conception of the New Testament priesthood was that Christ, the Great High Priest, needed no official assistants therefore the professional priesthood was not in harmony

with the New Testament and was consequently eliminated. The Protestants believed that each individual believer had equal access to God.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Some conclusions seemed warranted at the termination of this study.

1. A universal priesthood of all believers was found to be scriptural.
2. No basis for a professional sacerdotal priesthood was discovered for this present dispensation of grace.
3. An authentic argument for Christ as the High Priest and ministers exclusively, as professional priests was not found.
4. Every saint, and member of The True Church, was a member of the universal priesthood of believers.
5. Each believer, regardless of calling or position, was found to have equal privilege of access to the throne of God.
6. It was discovered that each believer-priest was governed by certain duties.
7. The idea of a universal priesthood was begun in the Old Testament and merely revived for the great

mass of the believers, in the New Testament Era, by the
sacrifice of Christ.

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