

corrupted. If the English reformers had rejected the theory of "a sacramental identification of the sign and the thing signified" and of "the bread and wine being in the supernatural sphere the Body and Blood of Christ," they would have acted, he held, *ultra vires*, because that was the teaching of the Universal Church, a point assumed, and not proved by a reference to the rhetorical, because extemporaneous, addresses of the Semi-Arian Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem, delivered when he was a young man. Lord Halifax declined to admit or discuss the possibility of abandonment of ritual "till the doctrinal question is cleared up"; that is, no doubt, settled in his favour, in which case the ritual that he advocates would be recognised as suitable.

In the final meeting it appeared that no agreement could be come to on the second, third and fourth subjects of discussion—that is, on the relation between the Divine gift and the consecrated elements, the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Communion and the expression in ritual of the doctrine of the Holy Communion. With respect to the first subject, which was the nature of the Divine gift in the Holy Communion, Canon Robinson took up a suggestion of Canon Gore's, and proposed that the conference should adopt some words of Hooker. But it was objected by Dr. Barlow and Dr. Moule that the words were highly rhetorical and technical, and would be misleading; which certainly would be the case unless at the same time Hooker's conclusion was stated, that a real presence of Christ was to be found nowhere except in the soul of the communicant, and that the bread and wine were not Christ's Body and Blood through change or co-existence, but "instrumentally a cause of mystical participation" on being received.

All that could be done, then, was to recite a statement by Dr. Moule, a statement by Lord Halifax, and a statement by Canon Gore, none of which had met with the Conference's assent.

F. MEYRICK.



ART. II.—MESSAGES FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

V.—*Hebrews viii.*

THE person and greatness of our High Priest are now full before the readers of the Epistle. The paragraph we now enter, after one more deliberate contemplation of His dignity and His qualifications, proceeds to expound His relation to the better and eternal Covenant. We shall find here also messages appropriate to our time.

The first step then is a review, a summing up, a "look again" upon the true King of Righteousness and peace (vers. 1, 2). "Such a High Priest *we have*." It is a wonderful affirmation, not only of His existence but of His relation to "us" His people. "*We have*" Him. He has taken His seat "at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens." But this great exaltation has not removed Him for a moment out of our possession; we have Him. He is now the great Minister, the supreme sacerdotal Functionary, of the heavenly sanctuary, "the true tabernacle," τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, the non-figurative reality of which the Mosaic structure was only the shadow; the true scene of eternal and unveiled Presence and immortal worship, "pitched" by Him whose face makes heaven, and makes it all one temple. But this sublimity of our Priest's place and power does not make Him in the least less ours; we have Him.

The words invite us to a new and deliberate look upward, and then to a recollection deeper than ever that He is held spiritually in our very hands; He is a possession nearer to us than any other.

Then (verses 3 and following) the thought moves towards the sacrificial and offertorial qualifications of this great and most sacred Person. He is what He is, our High Priest, our Minister of the sanctuary above, on perfectly valid grounds. For He is, what every sacerdotal minister must be, an Offerer. And this He is in a sense, in a way, congruous to His heavenly position. He has no blood of goats and calves to present, like the priests on earth. Indeed, were He "on earth" (ver. 4) this greatest of all High Priests "would not even be a priest" (οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς), an ordinary priest. For that function is already filled, "according to the law," by the Aaronic order, to which He never belonged, and never could belong (see vii. 13, 14). It is in charge of the sacred servants (λατρεύουσιν) of the earthly sanctuary, the God-given type and shadow (ver. 5) of the realities of heaven, but no more than their type and shadow, partial and transient. No, His sacerdotal qualification is of another sort, and a greater. What it is which "He hath to offer" in the celestial Holiest is not yet explicitly said; that is reserved for the ninth chapter, to which this is but the vestibule. But already the writer emphasizes the truth that "He *hath somewhat* to offer," that we may fully realize the completeness of His high-priestly power.

It may be well to pause here, and ask whether this passage reveals, as many have affirmed, that our Lord Jesus Christ is at this moment "offering" for us, in His heavenly life. We are all aware that this has been widely held and earnestly

pressed, sometimes into inferences which (as far as I can see) cannot at all be borne even by the doctrine that *He is offering* for us now. In particular it is said that, if *He is offering* for His Church, then His Church must, as in a counterpart, be in some sense offering here on earth, in union with Him. In short, there must still be priests on earth who are ministers of "the example and shadow of heavenly things." But surely if this Epistle makes anything clear it makes it clear that our great Priest is the superseding fulfilment of all such ministrations by "men having infirmity." It is His glory, and it is ours, that *He is known* by us as our one and all-sufficient Offerer and Mediator. It is precisely as such that "we have Him," in a way to distinguish our position and privilege in a magnificent sense from that of those who needed the priesthood of their mortal brethren.

But then further, does this passage at all really intimate that *He is offering now*? The thought appears to be decisively negatived by the grandeur of the terms of verse 1. Where, in the heavenly sanctuary, is our High Priest now? He has "taken His seat on the right hand of the throne of the majesty." But enthronement is a thought out of line with the act and attitude of oblation. The offerer stands before the Power he approaches. Our Priest is seated where Deity alone can sit.

Does not this tell us that the words (ver. 3), "It is necessary that *He too should have something to offer*," are not to be explained of a continuous historical procedure (to which idea, by the way, the aorist verb, *προσενέγκη*, would be quite unsuited), but of the statement of a principle in terms of time? The "necessity" is, not that *He should have something to offer now, and to-morrow, and always*, but that the matter and act of offering should belong to Him. And they do so belong, in principle and effect, for priestly purposes, by having once and for ever been handled and performed by Him. His "need" is, not to be always offering, but to be always an Offerer. He meets that need by being for ever the Priest who has had Himself to offer, and has offered Himself, and who now dispenses from His sacerdotal seat the benedictions based upon the sacrifice of which *He is for ever the once accepted offerer*.

Only thus viewed, I venture to say, can this phrase be read in its full harmony with the whole Epistle. "He hath somewhat to offer" in the sense that *He has for ever the grand sacerdotal qualification of being an offerer, who has executed that function, and now bears to all eternity its character*. But *He is not therefore always executing the function*. Otherwise, *He must descend from His throne*. But His

enthronement, His session, is a fact of His present position as important and characteristic as possible in this whole Epistle.

Aaron was not always offering. But he was always an offerer. On the morrow of the Atonement Day (am I hopelessly antiquated in believing that the Atonement Day was as old as Aaron's time?) he was as much an offerer as on the day itself. All through the year, till the next Atonement Day, he was still an offerer. He did all his priestly functions because, in principle, he "had somewhat to offer," in its proper time. Our High Priest has only one Atonement Day, and it is over for ever. And His Israel have it for their privilege and glory not to be "serving unto an example and shadow" of even His work and office, but to be going always, daily and hourly, direct to Him in His perfect Priesthood, in which they always "have" Him, and to be ever abiding, in virtue of Him, "boldly," "with confidence," in the very presence of the Lord.

Then the chapter moves forward (verses 6 and following) to consider the relation between our High Priest and *the Covenant* of which He is the Mediator. Here begins one of the great themes of the Epistle. It will recur again and again, till at last we read (xiii. 20) of "the blood of the eternal covenant."

This pregnant subject is introduced by a solemn reference to the "promises upon which is legislated," legally instituted, *νεομοθετήται*, this new compact between God and man. The reference is to the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah, from which an extract is here made at length. There the prophet, in the name of his God, explicitly foretells the advent of what we may reverently call a new departure in the revealed relations between Jehovah and His people. At Sinai he had engaged to bless them, yet under conditions which left them to discover the total inability of their own sin-stricken wills to meet His holy while benignant will. They failed, they broke the pact, and judgment followed of course. But now another order is to be taken. Their King and Lawgiver, without for a moment ceasing to be such, will also undertake another function, wholly new, as regards the method of covenant. He will place Himself so upon their side as Himself to readjust and empower their affections and their wills. He "will put His laws into their mind and write them upon their hearts," and "they shall all know Him," with the knowledge which is life eternal. And further, as the antecedent to all this, to open the path to it, to place them where this wonderful blessing can rightly reach and fill them, their King and Lawgiver pledges Himself to a previous pardon full and un-

reserved; "their sins and their iniquities He will remember no more." They shall be set before Him in an acceptance as full as if they had never fallen. And then, not as the condition to this but as the sequel to it, He will so deal with them, internally and spiritually, that they shall will His will and live His law. There shall be no mechanical compulsion; "their mind," "their hearts," full as ever of personality and volition, shall be the matter acted upon. But there shall be a gracious and prevailing influence, deciding their spiritual action along its one true line; "I will put," "I will write."

This is the new, the better, the everlasting covenant. It is placed here in the largest and most decisive contrast over against the old covenant, the compact of Sinai, "written and engraven in stones." That compact had done its mysterious work, in convincing man of his sinful incapacity to meet the will of God. Now emerges its wonderful antithesis, in which man is first entirely pardoned, with a pardon which means acceptance and peace, re-instatement into the home and family of God, and then and therefore is internally transfigured by his Father's power into a being who loves his Father's law.

And what the prophet foretold was claimed by the Lord Christ Himself as fulfilled in His person and His work, when He took the cup of blessing, at the feast of the new Passover for the new Israel, and said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." And what He so claimed His great apostle rejoiced in, when He wrote to Corinth (2 iii. 6, etc.) of the "ministry of the new covenant," the covenant of the Spirit, of life, of glory. And here it is stated again, and in strong connexion again with Him who is at once its Sacrifice, its Surety, its Mediator; the Cause, and Guardian, and Giver of all its blessings. He is such that it is such; "SO great salvation," because so great and wonderful a High Priest, the possessor indeed of "somewhat to offer," and now, with His hands full of the fruits of that offering, "seated (for us) on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens."

Here is a message for our times, in a sense which seems to me special, pressing, and deeply beneficent. For the terms of that new Covenant are just nothing less than the glorious essence, the divine *differentia*, of the Gospel of the grace of God. This forgiveness, this most sincere and entirely unearned amnesty, this oblivion of the sins of the people of God—do we hear very much about it now, even where, by tradition, it might be most expected? But do we not need it now? Was there ever a time when human hearts would be more settled and more energized than now, amidst their moral restlessness, by a wise, thoughtful, but perfectly unmistakable re-affirmation of the proposed fulness of divine forgiveness in Christ?

People may think that they can do without that message. They may bid us throw the weight of preaching upon self-sacrifice, and the like. But the fully wakeful soul knows that it is only then capacitated for self-sacrifice in the Lord's steps when it has received the warrant of forgiveness written large in His sacred blood, pardon and peace at the foot of His sacrificial cross. And then as to the second limb of the covenant, greater than the first, inasmuch as for it the first is provided and guaranteed. Do we hear too much about it now? Do our pulpits too frequently and too fully give out the affirmation that God in Christ stands pledged and covenanted to work the moral transfiguration of His believing Israel, to act so on "the first springs of thought and will" that our being shall freely respond to His free action upon it, and will His will, and live His law? But was there ever greater need for such an affirmation than in our time, so restless, so unsatisfied, and, deep below all its surface arrogance, so disappointed, so discouraged?

Let us return upon the rich treasures of this great compact of God in Christ. The covenant is ever new, for it is eternal. And it is in the safe ministering hands of Him who died to inaugurate and make it good, and lives to shower its blessings down. He is on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. And we have Him.

H. C. G. MOULE.



ART. III.—HOW WE INCREASED OUR ENDOWMENT.

THE late Archbishop Magee, speaking at a lunch which followed the opening of a restored church in Northamptonshire, used these striking words: "We are in danger of seeing our land studded with magnificently-restored churches served by a pauper clergy." The Church is waking up to see the truth of this statement. In the century which has just closed millions have been spent on bricks and mortar, while the men who are to make these fabrics centres of life, temples not tombs, were forgotten. Now it seems as if this mistake was likely to be rectified. It is recognised that the problem of the day is the better endowment of our poor parishes. As one laymen put it to the writer when sending a subscription: "It is a disgrace to a rich nation that any living should be worth less than £100 net per annum." Perhaps, therefore, some account of what has been done in a parish which can make no sensational appeals for assistance may be of help to other clergy.

Picture to yourself a long road leading northwards out of a