

have been for the best relatively to the conditions out of which they took their rise. The scientific investigator will see in this "survival of the fittest," —not "fittest" in the abstract but fittest under given circumstances—or the "instinct of self-preservation." But from the point of view of religion we may look behind the chain of secondary causes, by no means ignoring them or attenuating their force, but seeking to get at their higher significance, and in that higher significance we may see revealed the finger of God.

W. SANDAY.

POSTSCRIPT.—Since the above was in type an elaborate work has appeared, *The Church and the Ministry*, by Rev. C. Gore. This too deals specially with the early stages of the history, and is sure to demand careful consideration.

THE MELCHIZEDEK OR HEAVENLY HIGH
PRIESTHOOD OF OUR LORD.

PART II.

FROM the Person of our Heavenly High Priest, our Priest after the order of Melchizedek, we turn to His priestly work. It "fulfils" the priestly work of the older covenant in each of its three particulars, Offering, Intercession, and Benediction.

I. *Offering.* We have already seen that the priesthood of our Lord began with the moment spoken of in His own words, "And I, if I be lifted on high out of the earth, will draw all men unto Myself" (John xii. 32), and that that moment is fixed by the immediately following language of the Evangelist, "But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die" (ver. 33). In other words,

Christ's being "lifted on high" began with His crucifixion. Then He entered upon that peculiar glory which belonged to Him, and which marked Him out as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. If however the statement of our Lord, thus made in the immediate prospect of His death, possess more than usual importance owing to the distinctness with which it points to the time when His Melchizedek priesthood and His priestly offering began, it is not less important from the light which it throws upon the nature of His priestly offering itself. The words "out of," out of the region of, out of the sphere of, "the earth," cannot be overlooked, any more than the same form of expression may be overlooked in ver. 15 of chap. xvii. of the same Gospel, where the Redeemer prays, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them out of the evil one." In both cases the preposition used in the original, so far from being loosely used, is the very hinge upon which the meaning of the language turns. Hence, accordingly, it is the teaching of our Lord Himself that not only is His crucifixion the beginning of His priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, but that it is so, because it broke the bond by which He had been bound to earth, because it was the introduction of the full reign of spiritual and heavenly power.¹

Starting from this point therefore, our fundamental conception of the offering of Him who ascended the cross of Calvary to die must be, that it was an offering of *life*, not of death. If being "lifted on high out of the earth" was its deepest and most spiritual characteristic, it follows as a necessary consequence that the thought of it cannot be confined to the moment when He died. The death then endured may be a necessary part of the offering; yet it may be only a subordinate part of it. It may take its place in our conception of all that was then transacted by the

¹ Comp. THE EXPOSITOR, October, 1888, p. 290.

Lord, not so much because of what it is in itself, as because it lends a special colouring to the life yielded up to God ; because it makes the life offered one which passes through a special experience, a life of a special mode and habit, a life gained through death, and bearing the marks of death. The fact however will still remain, that that condition of being, described by the words lifted on high out of the sphere or region of the earth, must imply, as its main constituent, a higher state of existence to which He who thus dies is raised. This state of existence begins before the moment of death. The Redeemer of the world entered upon it not only when He bowed His head and died, but when He was nailed to the accursed tree, and when those hours of darkness came upon Him during which, in the extremity of mortal pain, He displayed all the completeness of His submission to His Father's will, and all the tenderness of His love and pity towards men. As it began too before He died, so also it continued after death had been endured, and when, as Priest in whom all priesthood, as Offering in which all offerings culminated, He presented Himself to His Heavenly Father in the free, joyful, uninterrupted service of that sonship which now belonged to Him, not in His Divine nature only, but also in His human nature, as the Firstborn among many brethren. Our fundamental conception of the offering of the Heavenly High Priest must thus be that it was an offering not of death but of life.

Upon the subject now before us our thoughts are apt to be confused by the circumstance that the associations of the present day with the word "blood" differ so widely from those with which that word was connected in the Hebrew mind. Every reader of the New Testament has observed that redemption is continually spoken of as due to the "blood" as well as to the "death" of Christ. Thus, to select only a few instances, it is said, "Take heed

unto yourselves, . . . to feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood"; "The Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"; "But now in Christ Jesus ye that were once far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ"; "And through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross"; "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ"; "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin"; "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 7, ii. 13; Col. i. 20; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9). Reading passages such as these, we almost inevitably understand the word "blood" to have the same meaning as the word "death"; and hence, not in popular only but in scientific theology, the whole great work of our atonement is supposed to have been consummated when the Saviour died for us on the cross. "Then," it is urged, "the only begotten and well beloved Son of God bore, as our Substitute, the penalty of our transgressions. Then He made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation for the sins of the whole world. Travel back in thought to Calvary: see the love that flows from His streaming wounds; believe that He there died in thy room and stead: and, from the remembrance of His finished work, draw those powerful considerations which will lead thee to live henceforward for One who died for thee."

This is no unfair or exaggerated representation of Christian sentiment widely entertained in every age of the Church's history. The minds of men have been directed

to the cross, and to the cross alone; and the word "blood" has been understood as if it were the equivalent of death. The whole sacrifice of Christ has thus been regarded by not a few who have earnestly embraced it as nothing more than the penalty of violated law, while men of little depth of spiritual emotion or tenderness of feeling have even spoken of the Christian system as if, when so presented, it shocked our natural susceptibilities and invited us to enter again into the shambles of heathenism. It is unnecessary to say anything of such a mode of speaking as this last mentioned. Justice to the view thus travestied would rather seem to demand the grateful admission that, partial and one-sided as it is, it has yet proved itself powerful for good in the hearts and lives of men. How has it deepened in many a follower of Christ that sense of sin without which there can be no true faith! To what sighs of contrition, to what tears of penitence, to what searchings of heart over faults and shortcomings, has it often led! What separation from the evil of the world, what saintly lives, what love and self-sacrifice, what deeds of heroic virtue, has it not unfrequently produced! We know but a small part of these things. They seldom come to view in the heat and bustle of our daily life; but every one who has opened his eyes has beheld enough to tell him of the innumerable quiet and gentle and loving spirits that, nourished by such aspects of the truth, have drawn as near as human frailty would allow, to Him who was meek and lowly of heart, and whose very presence, without our speculating regarding Him, gives rest to the soul. Notwithstanding this however, the view thus taken of the plan of our redemption is in a high degree imperfect; and, though in exceptional cases, it may not have hindered the manifestation of the Christian life in its most perfect beauty, it has unquestionably tended to divert the thoughts of the Church as a whole from the supreme importance of that sacrifice of

herself in which alone either her worship of God or her service of man can be accomplished.

The imperfection now referred to will become manifest, and the work of the Heavenly High Priest will be better understood, if for a moment we call to mind the ritual of the Jewish law. For, according to that law, the death of the animal selected for sacrifice did not atone for sin. Sin was not thereby "covered." The offerer had no doubt identified himself with his victim. Its life had been set before God as a representation of his life; and in the shedding of its blood, so that the victim died, the offerer had acknowledged in symbolic act that death was the meet reward of the transgressions with which he himself was chargeable. Another step however had to be taken before atonement was made. The blood obtained by slaughtering was given, either upon ordinary occasions to the priest, who smeared it upon the horns of the altar, or upon the great Day of Atonement to the high priest, who sprinkled it upon the Mercy-seat, that he might thus bring it into the closest contact with God; and only when this was done was the atonement complete, sin covered, and the broken covenant restored. Atonement, in short, was found not in death for sin, but in the use afterwards made of the blood thus shed in death.

Now in all this process it is to be kept steadily in view that the blood was the life. Even when it was shed it did not cease to be the life. It was indeed the life under a peculiar aspect, for it was life which had passed through that death which was the wages of sin. But it was still the life; and as life, not death, it was brought into fellowship with the living God, and made one with Him.

Such was, briefly, the ritual of the law: and when we turn to the manner in which that ritual was "accomplished" in Christ, the same ideas again meet us in the teaching of Scripture upon this point. Let the following

words of Dr. Westcott, to which more weight will be attached than to anything that the present writer can say, be attentively considered.¹ "Thus, in accordance with the typical teaching of the Levitical ordinances, the blood of Christ represents Christ's life (1) as rendered in free self-sacrifice to God for men; and (2) as brought into perfect fellowship with God, having been set free by death. The blood of Christ is, as shed, the life of Christ given for men, and, as offered, the life of Christ now given to men, the life which is the spring of their life (John xii. 24)." And again: "It will be evident from what has been said, that while the thought of Christ's blood (as shed) includes all that is involved in Christ's death, the death of Christ, on the other hand, expresses only a part, the initial part, of the whole conception of Christ's blood. The blood always includes the thought of the life preserved and active beyond death."²

In the light of what has been said, we are now prepared to form a scriptural and clear conception of what is to be understood by the Offering of our Heavenly High Priest. It *began* with the cross, with the moment when He was lifted on high out of the earth; and when, separated from all that was material, local, or limited, He was able to enter upon a spiritual, universal, and everlasting priesthood. Then, as One bearing the sins of all who had committed, or should afterwards commit, themselves to Him in faith, He yielded up His own life, and theirs in His, as the penalty due to sin. For Himself and for the members of His Body He accepted the sentence, "The soul that sinneth shall die"; while at the same time He bowed Himself in submission to the law so mysteriously linked with that sentence, that, as things are in a present world, it is only through

¹ While thus referring to Dr. Westcott, the writer hopes that he may also be permitted to refer to what he has said upon the point in a long note in his volume on *The Resurrection of our Lord*, note 56, pp. 274-304. The note will be found much fuller than what he has been able to say here.

² Additional note on 1 John i. 7.

death that we can conquer death and find the path to life. Thus He bore the sins of His people in His own body on the tree. He submitted to the punishment of a violated law, acknowledging that the law was holy and righteous and just and good. On the cross He gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust; so that when we think of Him as the Victim upon which our help is laid, and identify ourselves with Him by faith, we may see that in Him our sins are expiated, and that they no longer bar our admission to the Divine presence and favour.

All this however was no more than the first stage of the offering made for us by our Heavenly High Priest; and the mistake of many is to think that, as the offering was begun, so also it was finished on the cross. In reality, only the initial step was taken when Jesus died. As the blood, or in other words the life, of an animal sacrificed under the law was liberated in death, not merely that the offering might be completed, but that the true offering might be made by the sprinkling; so the blood, or in other words the life, of Christ was liberated on the cross, that His true offering might be made by the surrender of that life to God in a perpetual service of love, obedience, and praise. No doubt, as the eternal Son, He had always stood in this relation to the Father; and had the "Me" of John xvii. 5 expressed only the eternal sonship, the prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me," would have shown that He was about to return to that original relationship. Throughout the ages of eternity He had been before His incarnation the Father's delight, rejoicing always before Him; and human thought cannot enter fully into the nature of that blessed fellowship. It was the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, the glory with which in His High-priestly prayer He prayed that He might again be glorified. But there was this difference between the two glories, that He had now taken our humanity into union with His

divinity, and that the life which He carried with Him into the heavenly sanctuary was not simply the life of God, but of the Man Christ Jesus. This was His "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," in which as One who had "fulfilled all righteousness," He then presented Himself to Him who is all in all, and in union with whom, not merely in reconciliation to whom, Divine life is found.

As too Christ's people had been identified with Him in the earlier, so also they are identified with Him in the later steps of the offering which He thus made. In no part of His work does the Redeemer stand alone. He never ceases to be the Mediator between God and man, the Head of the body, the Representative of the whole line of His spiritual descendants. Even in heaven He presents Himself to the Father, saying, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me"; "In the midst of the congregation will I sing Thy praise" (Heb. ii. 12, 13). When all this is done our Lord's offering is complete. The end of the Christian covenant is obtained in Him, and in the members of His body it is ideally, if not yet actually, realized.

Had our space permitted, it might have been well to pause here for a moment, and to show how important to the theology of the Church is the view now taken of the sacrifice of Christ, by looking at some of the extraordinary questions that have been raised, in ages down even to our own, with regard to the disposal of the Redeemer's actual blood shed upon the cross. Let one short extract from the writings of Dr. Jackson suffice to indicate them.

"Though His blood," says that eminent writer, "whilst it was shed or poured out, did lose its physical or local union with His body, though one portion of it were divided from another, yet no drop of it was divided from His infinite person; and that which the Romish Church would transfer unto each several crumb of bread or drop of wine in the eucharist is originally and properly true of the several drops of divisibilities of Christ's blood which was shed for us; while

Christ was in every one of them, indivisibly in every one of them God was, the Godhead was and is personally united to all of them.

“Whether all and every portion of His blood which was then shed were, by the power of the Godhead, re-collected and reunited to His body, as His body was to His soul at the resurrection, we cannot tell : God knows. But this we know and believe, that the self-same blood which was then shed, whether it were gathered together again or remained dispersed, whether it were reunited to His glorified body or divided from it, is still united to the Fountain of Life, to the Godhead in the person of the Son.”¹

Questions such as those suggested in this extract most men, we imagine, will feel it to be very undesirable to raise. They deal with words rather than ideas. They invite us to the consideration of topics upon which it is utterly impossible for us to form a definite conception. The very statement of them is apt to grate upon our feelings of reverence and piety ; and at the best we must leave them, as we found them, unanswered. They spring from that grossly realistic conception of the blood of Christ against which, when rightly interpreted, the whole language of Scripture guards us. Guided by it, let us rather see in the “blood” the life of Christ, and in the presentation of that blood in heaven the presentation of His life as the completion of His offering. The instant that we do so these questions and all others like them disappear.

Nor is this the only benefit to be derived from the view which we have been taking of the Offering of Christ. Another and still greater is, that it brings the moral and religious element of obedience and submission to the heavenly Father into the essence of the Christian system, and into the very conception of Christian faith. The theology of the Reformation, dealing so much with legal relations, and used as it was never intended to be used, has obscured this great truth. Perhaps it may be almost said that there were two theologies of the Reformation. There

¹ *Works*, vol. ix., p. 597. Comp. also Alford *On Heb.* xii. 24.

was the theology of the controversy with Rome, of polemical tracts, of books, of creeds, of intellectual statements. But there was also the theology of the hearts of those by whom that controversy was carried on, as the fire of Divine life burned within them in zeal for God's glory and the good of man. They did not think of the latter. It was too real, too true, too much the very condition of all their life and action, to be thought of. It was *themselves*: and the existence of themselves had to be taken for granted in what they did. They thought therefore mainly, perhaps only, of the former; and the theology which they handed down to subsequent generations, highly valuable as it was *in its own place and for its own work*, became narrow and one-sided when those who followed them took it for the whole. A true systematic theology must always be the living expression of the age in which it appears. The Reformers wrote only half of what they were. They lived the other half without knowing and reading, and consequently without writing it. The effect appears to have been that the Church of later times, in devotion to what the Reformers taught, has not sufficiently considered what they would have taught had they foreseen that their teaching was to be the norm for times less earnest and for hearts less glowing than their own. She has too often dealt with Christianity as if its essence were a thing of legal forms, and as if its demands were a deduction from certain legal observances. She seems to need reviving here; and the first great truth to produce such a revival may be said to be, that the Offering to God on the part of the Lord, who is the Head of the Body, was not completed on the cross, but was after the cross, and is even now, made by Him who is our living High Priest in heaven.

Such then is the offering of our High Priest. Let us pursue the subject a little further, and we shall see that, in the light in which we have been regarding the Offering of

Christ, it most of all possesses those characteristics which make it the fulfilment of the whole sacrificial system of the older covenant. For

1. As an offering of life it "*accomplishes*" all the separate offerings of the law. The thought of this general accomplishment must obviously be included in any true conception of the Saviour's offering, for He came to accomplish not one part only but all the parts of the law which had expressed the will of God to Israel. If however we confine the offering of Christ to His death on Calvary, the highest and most important sacrificial rites of Israel have in Him no corresponding fulness. We may speak of Jesus as the true Sin- or Trespass-offering, but what of the burnt- and peace-offerings which belonged to a still more elevated region of the religious life? Those indeed who see Christ's priesthood in His earthly ministry have not this difficulty to contend with, and they may behold Him as the perfect Burnt-offering in the zeal for His Father's glory which was always flaming up within His soul, in His eagerness to work the work of Him that sent Him while it was day, and in that calm serenity of spirit with which He was able to exclaim, "I do always the things that please Him." In like manner they may behold the fulfilment of the peace-offering in that peace and joy which so filled the Redeemer's breast, even in the midst of the troubles by which He was surrounded, that He was able to speak of "My peace," "My joy," and of Him who had put the bitter cup of sorrow into His hands as "My Father." But this cannot avail us if we believe, in conformity with the whole tenour of Scripture, that the priestly work of Christ is mainly executed in heaven, and that the zeal for God, the eagerness for work, the never-failing obedience, the peace, the joy, the sense of filial relationship to His heavenly Father, which He exhibited on earth, were rather the preparation for the priesthood than the manifestation of its functions.

Principal Fairbairn, of Glasgow, not adopting this view, is constrained to say that "the service of the peace-offering bears respect more directly and properly to the people of Christ than to Christ Himself."¹ That cannot be. Whatever is fulfilled in the members of the body must first have been fulfilled in the Head. Besides which, the natural order of religious thought and act is overturned. The burnt- and peace-offerings must follow, not precede, the sin and trespass-offerings; and, if we are to seek for the fulfilment of the latter on the cross alone, there is no room for the fulfilment of the former. The conception of Christ's priesthood as a heavenly priesthood, and of the life that He now leads in heaven as the consummation of His offering, alone gives us the accomplishment, and that too in their appropriate order, of everything that was involved in the separate offerings of the law. In the life *now* offered to the Father and before the Father's throne we see, not only the perfected Sin and Trespass, but the perfected Burnt- and Peace-offerings. There the life won through death is surrendered into the Father's hands. There it burns in the never-ceasing devotion of love and praise. There it is passed in the enjoyment of a fellowship with God undisturbed and glorified. And thence it descends to all the members of the body, so that they find, in Him who gave and still gives Himself for them, reconciliation, union, nourishment for a heavenly service, and the comfort and joy of a heavenly feast.

2. As an offering of life Christ's offering is *complete, embracing in its efficacy the whole life of man*. In this respect the offerings of the law were necessarily incomplete, and so also must be the offering presented in any single act of the life of Christ. But when, as our High Priest and Representative, Jesus offers His life to God, that life covers every stage or department of our life. There is no part of our

¹ *Typology of Scripture*, vol. ii., p. 353.

life in which, by the very fact that He lived a human life, the Redeemer of the world did not share. Must we labour? He laboured. Must we suffer? He suffered. Must we be tempted? He was tempted. Must we have at one time solitary hours, at another move in social circles? He spent hours alone upon the mountain top, and He mingled with His disciples as companions and friends. Must we die? He died. Must we rise from the grave? He rose from it on the third morning. Must we appear before the Judge of all? He appeared before Him who sent Him with the record of all that He had accomplished. Must we enter into eternity? Eternity is now passing over Him. More even than this has to be said; for our High Priest not only moved in every one of these scenes, He has also consecrated them all, and made them all a part of His offering in heaven. In each He was a conqueror, and the fruits of His conquest in each are made ours. By that part of His offering which belongs to the cross He finished transgression and made an end of sin. In that part of it which belongs to His continued priesthood He presents His perfected human life, and ours in His, as the trophy of His victory to God.

3. As an offering of life Christ's Offering is *everlasting*. No aspect of it is more frequently insisted upon in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the only question respecting it is, In what sense are we to understand the statement? Does it simply mean that His sacrifice, once completed on the cross, avails for the everlasting salvation of all who cast themselves upon it; or that Christ Himself, having finished His priestly work on earth, is now enjoying an endless reward in heaven? The contrast dwelt upon in Hebrews x. leads to a thought still deeper and more important than either of these. It leads us to think of the Offering of Christ as going forward everlastingly. We appear to fall short of the full meaning of the statements of Scripture

when we say that Christ now executes His priestly office in heaven by intercession and benediction. If that be all, it could hardly be said that He is a priest, for Offering was and is the main function of the priesthood. In the fact that Christ's life is His Offering we have the explanation of that Offering's everlasting character. His life is presented continually to God; and in it the children of God, whose own it is made by faith, are kept consecrated for evermore. The efficacy of the legal offerings lasted for a time. This offering never ceases, and its efficacy never fails.

4. As an offering of life Christ's Offering *is made once for all, and cannot be repeated*. The offerings of the law needed to be constantly repeated. It lay in the very nature of the case that they could not be "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. x. 12). It is true that the blood of the victim represented life, and that as life it was sprinkled upon the Mercy-seat. But the victim in which the offerer was inclosed, with the blood, that is with the life, of which he was for the time clothed, did not really live, and its life-blood gradually disappeared. Hence the need of constant offerings. The blood, the life, had to be constantly renewed. But the life laid by our High Priest before God is that of One who, having died once, dieth no more, and who lives an everlasting, unchanging life in heaven. His offering therefore is one and once for all, not simply because of its excellency at the moment when first made, but because it never ceases, and never can cease, to be offered. It is simply impossible to repeat it, for we cannot repeat what has not been first brought to an end; and since the offering on the part of the eternal Son is His life, it follows that His offering must be as eternal as Himself.

That Offering of our Lord, then, which is the leading function of His priesthood was only begun, and not completed, on the cross. It is going on still, and it will go on for ever, as the Divine and perfect sacrifice in which our

great Representative and we in Him attain the end of all religion, whether natural or revealed, as that sacrifice in which we are made one with His Father and our Father, with His God and our God.

We proceed to the second part of our Lord's priestly work in heaven.

II. *Intercession.* We have already seen that the second function of a priest in Israel was intercession for the people ; and further, that by intercession we are to understand more than prayer in the usual acceptance of that word. The Greek word translated intercession implies a wider range, alike of thought and action, than is expressed by the word prayer. It includes transacting with God on man's behalf, so that every relation between the Creator and the creature may be perfected. This function then of the high priest of Israel is fulfilled in our Heavenly High Priest, of whom it is said that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25).

Of the intercession thus spoken of prayer is indeed the primary part, through which every other blessing is procured for us ; and it would seem as if in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John we had a striking illustration of what the prayers of our Heavenly High Priest are. That chapter constitutes the very centre of the fourth Gospel, the holy of holies of the sacred tabernacle which is formed by the gospel as a whole. With no feelings but those of even deeper than common reverence may its words be touched ; but on that very account they require also to be considered with the utmost possible faithfulness, and every turn of expression ought to have its due weight assigned to it. This faithfulness has been exhibited by the Revisers, and we need therefore have no scruple in using the Revised instead of the Authorized Version to illustrate the point before us.

Let the reader then weigh the import of the following

verses when, in conformity with the original, the past is substituted in them for the perfect tense. Ver. 2, "Even as Thou gavest (not, hast given) Him authority over all flesh." Ver. 3, "Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (not, Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent). Ver. 4, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work" (not, I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work). Ver. 6, "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" (not, I have manifested Thy name). Ver. 8, "And they received them, and knew of a truth that I come forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me" (not, And they have received them, and have known surely that I come out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me). Ver. 12, "And not one of them perished" (not, And none of them is lost). Ver. 14, "And the world hated them" (not, And the world hath hated them). Ver. 18, "As Thou didst send Me into the world" (not, As Thou hast sent Me). Ver. 21, "That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (not, That Thou hast sent Me). Ver. 23, "That the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them even as Thou lovest Me" (not, That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved Me). Ver. 25, "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee, and these knew that Thou didst send Me" (not, O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me). Ver. 26, "And I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them" (not, And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them). We have enumerated all the changes of the kind of which we speak, and the list is a remarkable one.

Considered even in itself, it is sufficient to show how deliberately the past tenses were chosen by our Lord. It is true that the Greek readings are occasionally uncertain. Scribes seem to have been confused by the frequent transitions from the perfect to the past, and from the past to the perfect, tense. But, after making all due allowance for this, the repetition of the past so frequently, in circumstances where we should expect the perfect, is sufficient to show that it was our Lord's design to bring out some aspect of the truth which would have failed to find utterance in any other method of expression. What that aspect is it may require time for the Church, under the influence of the new and more correct renderings now given, to discover. Meanwhile it is enough to say that this at least is evidently involved in them: that our Lord is before us, not in the position of one who, surrounded by the sufferings of earth and in the immediate prospect of death, is praying for His people, but in that of one who prays for them as if He were already at the right hand of the Father, in His heavenly abode. At the moment when He utters this prayer He is less the humbled and dying than the exalted and glorified Redeemer. He has passed onward in thought to the accomplishment of His work, and to the time when He shall be engaged in the application of it to those for whom He died. In the other parts of the fourth Gospel and in the earlier Gospels we follow Him amidst the sorrows of His earthly state, and see Him drinking the cup of trembling which had been put into His hand. Here we are permitted to follow Him within the veil; and these words of His are not so much words which He pours forth while the shadow of the cross is resting upon Himself and His disciples, as words which rise from Him to the Father when, no more in the world (ver. 11), He prays for those who are left in the world to carry on His work. How true is the instinct which has always led the Church to designate this prayer

the High-priestly prayer of Jesus! In heaven only is the perfect High Priest, and the words of the prayer belong, at least in spirit, to that upper sanctuary. They are the concentration of all the prayers of the heavenly Intercessor, as He bore on earth, as He bears now, and as He will bear for ever, the wants of His people before the throne of Him to whom He never prays in vain.

Not alone however in the chapter of St. John's Gospel now considered do we read of the intercession made for us by Christ in heaven. Elsewhere He says: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Advocate, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. I will not leave you orphans, I come unto you" (John xiv. 16, 18). He prays that the Spirit may be given us; and in the gift of the Spirit is included all that is needed by the Church (comp. Luke xi. 13 with Matt. vii. 11),—all fitness for duty, all strength to resist temptation, all knowledge and light and faith and love and hope and patience. Everything, in short, by which either the Church or the individual soul is prepared for the warfare and pilgrimage of this life and for the inheritance of the life to come is comprised in the grace bestowed through the intercession of the Heavenly High Priest, who is thus the fulfilment, the accomplishment, of every intercession offered under the older covenant by the priests of Israel.

III. *Benediction or Blessing.* We have seen that this function was discharged by the priests of Israel, and we may expect, after all that has been in other respects revealed of the work of the Heavenly High Priest, that this priestly function will also be fulfilled by Him. We cannot indeed enlarge upon it now. It opens up a subject as extensive as it is important, for we must regard the priestly blessing of our Lord as involving that communication of His Spirit, by which, having first consecrated His own human nature through the same Spirit, He then consecrates

the members of His body. To enter upon so wide a topic is here, for the present at least, impossible. We turn from this specific form of our Lord's blessing to His benediction or blessing in its more general character. Let it not be said that we can do without an authoritative and definite benediction from on high, because we know that, in providence and in grace, in our persons and our families, in our work and in our suffering, "to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). It is the Christian's strength indeed to be assured that "every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (Jas. i. 17). He believes that His Father in heaven would shower down blessings with a full hand upon all His creatures, "in the city and the field, in the fruit of the body and the fruit of the ground, in the fruit of their cattle, the increase of their kine, and the flocks of their sheep, in their basket and their store, in their coming in and going out" (Deut. xxviii. 3-6). But all this is not enough. In the weakness of our nature we need to see the channel opened by which the blessing is conveyed; and to behold, as it were, its streams actually conveyed to us. Thus it was that Joseph, assured as he was of his father's love to his children, brought them to Jacob that the aged patriarch might lay his hands upon their heads, and might bless them before he died; and thus it is that it never fails to be a source of precious consolation to the members of the family of some departing saint, when they can gather around his bed and, ere his lips close in death, are permitted to hear him bless them. In all this nature speaks in its deepest and holiest tones; and the faith of Christ sanctifies and elevates, instead of destroying, such feelings. The Apostolic Epistles, accordingly, almost invariably conclude

with a benediction; and the Church of Christ has never permitted any of her services to close without one.

Here again therefore the Heavenly High Priest recognises the needs and meets the longings of His people. From this point of view there is a peculiar force and tenderness in St. Luke's narrative of the Ascension, when he tells us that "Jesus led His disciples out until they were over against Bethany; and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (chap. xxiv. 50-53). May we not even be allowed to think that this was the attitude in which Stephen beheld that Lord who would strengthen by a special revelation of Himself the first martyr in his dying hour? Full of the Holy Ghost, "he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55, 56). Sitting, not standing, is the attitude which the Redeemer is described in Scripture as occupying at the right hand of God. It is the attitude of rest and victory gained. Standing is the attitude of one actually engaged in priestly service. Here therefore it indicates either prayer or blessing, most probably the latter; and the dying martyr may have been reminded of that scene upon Mount Olivet of which, if he did not witness it, he must certainly have often heard, when his Lord, in the act of blessing him, pointed out the way by which he was to follow.

Still further, we may recall to mind the words of priestly blessing in Israel, which our Lord fulfilled, not only in their general spirit, but almost in the very words in which they were wont to be spoken, "The Lord bless thee and keep

thee," when He prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in My name which Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 11). "The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee," when again He said, "Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace," in the words of His last discourse, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John xiv. 27).

Such then is the work of the Heavenly High Priest. It corresponds to what we have already seen of His qualifications for it; and the effect produced is not less worthy of our regard than His fulfilment, in every other particular, of the earlier economy.

On the great Day of Atonement it will be remembered that, after the High Priest had finished his offering in the tabernacle, there followed his remarkable proceedings with the scapegoat, when he laid his hands upon its head, confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, and then sent it away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness to perish there. This act closed the more peculiar services of the day. Sin was not only expiated but banished. The covenant was restored. The people were again united, however imperfectly and only for a time, to God; and were ready for that Feast of Tabernacles which commemorated the full tale of the blessings of the past; which as celebrated, at least in later times, gave promise of the most glorious blessings of the future; and of which, even more than of other festival seasons, it was said, that he who did not know its joy knew not what joy was. Yet this was

only the shadow of that more perfect blessedness which comes to the Christian Church through the work of her Heavenly High Priest: for in Him she has sin pardoned; she is loosed from sin; grace and peace are multiplied to her, as she enters upon and pursues her heavenward path, —“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. i. 2). That sprinkling seals for her an everlasting covenant. That festival season of highest and purest joy for which she has waited is come. The prophecy is fulfilled, that she shall keep her Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. xiv. 16); and, offering the firstfruits of all her increase, her oil and her wine as well as her corn, she leads a free, joyous, independent life, breathing that invigorating and quickening air, which though it be the air of the desert, is yet also the air of her journey home.

W. MILLIGAN.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

IV. THE GREAT SALVATION, WHEREIN IT CONSISTS, AND HOW IT HAS BEEN OBTAINED (CHAP. II. 5-18).

THIS section is one of the most important in the whole Epistle. It is full of great thoughts, and also of exegetical difficulties, through which it will be my endeavour to steer my way as judiciously as possible, setting forth the views which commend themselves to my mind, without too anxiously enumerating or controverting the views which I reject.

Two things above all are taught in this section: (1) Wherein the “great salvation” mentioned in ver. 3 consists, and (2) how it has been obtained for men. The sum of the