

Parliament, three-fourths of which are professing Churchmen, may provide; or we may engage in a long and arduous struggle, not over-confident in the issue, but determined to fight, as men fight who are in earnest. The third course we will not willingly adopt, and yet at the moment it seems the one most generally acceptable to our leaders. For our part, we shrink from the shame of drifting into Disestablishment and Disendowment, speaking much and doing little.

STANLEY LEIGHTON.

ART. III.—OUR LORD'S PRESENT WORK AS THE
HIGH PRIEST OF HIS CHURCH.

A VIEW of the Holy Communion is not unfrequently maintained in the present day, which the following quotation fairly represents:

Thus what the Christian priest does at the altar is, as it were, the earthly form and visible expression of our Lord's continual action as our High Priest in heaven. As the most holy Body and Blood of Christ, the alone acceptable Victim to make our peace with God, are offered, that is, continually presented and pleaded, by Jesus Himself in heaven, naturally, as we may say, and openly, so the same most holy Body and Blood are continually presented and pleaded before God by Christ's representatives, acting "in His name," and "by His commission and authority" (Article xxvi.) on earth.¹

The view thus stated rests on two assumptions, both of which must be substantiated before it can be accepted. It must be proved, first, that Christ is really doing as our High Priest in heaven what is here alleged, that He is offering, continually presenting and pleading, His most holy Body and Blood; and secondly, that He has delegated to His ministers on earth the power here claimed for them, to present and plead continually before God the same most holy Body and Blood, as His representatives.

Both these pillars must stand firm, or the arch which is constructed upon them will fall. Even if the first were clearly established, it would by no means follow that the second could be made good.

It is, however, with the first of these statements that we now intend to deal. We propose to inquire whether it accurately describes the present work of our Lord, as High Priest of His Church, so far as it is revealed to us in the Word of

¹ *The Church and the World*: "On the Eucharistic Sacrifice," p. 339. Edited by the Rev. Orby Shipley.

God. What, let us ask, do we learn, either in express terms, or by fair inference, from Holy Scripture as to the Priestly action of Christ, now in heaven? Do we find support there for the view to which we have referred? And if not, what becomes of the theory of priestly action on earth, which is based upon it?

In this first paper our object will be to show that Christ's present work is properly *sacerdotal*; that as the High Priest of His Church He is now in heaven.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states that to intercede for His Church is the aim and purpose of our Lord's life, now in heaven. "He ever liveth," he says, "to make intercession for them."¹ But intercession is not necessarily a priestly act. The word employed to describe it is not restricted either by derivation or by Biblical usage to priestly intervention.² There are, however, other considerations which undoubtedly give a priestly complexion and character to the intercession of our Lord, as it is now exercised on our behalf in heaven.

And first there is the fact, which in approaching a subject like this it is impossible to ignore, of the prevalent if not universal belief in the necessity of a sacrifice, and therefore of a priest, to secure the favour of God for man in his present condition. There is a barrier that must be broken down, a chasm that must be bridged over, an estrangement that must

¹ Heb. vii. 25.

² As regards derivation, the proper meaning of the word is "to light or chance upon," to "meet with." Then, through the idea of conversing or having intercourse with, it passes up to its secondary sense of interceding or pleading for another with the person met with. In New Testament usage it represents not only the pleading of Christ for us at the right hand of God (Rom. viii. 34), but also the pleading of the Holy Spirit for us in our hearts ("likewise the Spirit also maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered," Rom. viii. 26, *ὑπερευχόμενα*); as well as the pleading of men with God for (1 Tim. ii. 1) or even against (Rom. xi. 2; comp. Acts xxv. 24) one another, and the impetration of the blessing of Almighty God on the good creatures of His hand, when we are about to partake of them (1 Tim. iv. 5).

In the Old Testament these Greek words are not employed by the LXX. in any passage of canonical Scripture. They occur in some few places in the Apocrypha, of prayer of man for himself to God (Wisdom viii. 21), and of man to man against his fellow-man (1 Macc. viii. 32, x. 61). The words "intercede," "intercession," as they are found in the Old Testament in our English Bibles, are always, I believe, the translation of a Hebrew word which also means properly to light upon, or meet with. Their reference, like that of the Greek word in the New Testament, is quite general. Of our great Advocate with the Father we read, "He made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 12). Of Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah we are told that they "made intercession to the king, that he would not burn the roll" (Jer. xxxvi. 25).

be removed, a wrong that must be atoned for, before the two parties, whom sin has severed, can be brought together again. And only by the shedding of blood, only by the surrender of life, only by the intervention of a priest, can reconciliation be effected. The Intercessor who would not plead in vain, the Daysman who would lay his hand upon both must not come between them empty. With altar and with sacrifice, himself the ministering priest, he must stand in the middle space of separation and turn it into the meeting-ground of peace. It is this truth which is recognised more or less clearly by the rite of sacrifice and the institution of priesthood in almost all known religions of the world, and to which the universal conscience bears witness, not only by the religions which it frames, but by the ready response which it renders. It is this truth to which Holy Scripture bears consistent testimony in every part. Whether we regard it as the Word of God or not, whether we see in this fact an argument for receiving or a reason for rejecting it, it is impossible to deny that the fact is so.

In nothing is the unity of the Bible more conspicuous than in the perfect accord with which its many writers, ranging over 1,500 years, agree in representing all access of sinful man to God, all favour of God to fallen man, as conditioned absolutely by propitiatory sacrifice and a sacrificing priest. In the more excellent sacrifice of Abel, offered, it may be, in that first temple of the human race before the gate then closed, but not closed for ever, of the Paradise of God, in presence of the flaming sword of justice and the living cherubim of mercy, those august symbols in which it lay hid as in a parable, that by "mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other," the way of the Tree of Life, even then kept for man by the one, as it was kept from him by the other, should be restored to man again; in the burnt offering of Noah, of which the sweet savour went up to heaven, and by which, in a figure, he consecrated anew to God the human race born again by the waters of the Flood; in the altars reared on every memorable spot and on every great occasion in the lives of the Patriarchs, as they sojourned in the Land of Promise as in a strange country; in the solemn rite of the shedding and sprinkling of blood, by which the first covenant was inaugurated in the wilderness; in the costly and elaborate sacrificial system and sacerdotal institution, which was the corner-stone of the whole Jewish economy; above all, in the sacrifice of the Cross, by which the new and better covenant was introduced and ratified, and which, reaching forward in its all-prevailing efficacy to the end of time, reached backward also, gathering up into

itself and for ever satisfying every genuine type, every true idea of propitiatory sacrifice and atoning priest, whether of untutored heathen or divinely educated Jew; in each and all of these does the truth stand forth conspicuous, that except on the basis of sacrificial action and priestly intervention, no prevailing intercession can be made with God for man.

But when these premises are established, it does not follow as a necessary consequence that the intercession of Christ as now exercised in heaven is sacerdotal in its character. It is quite conceivable that the priestly functions which human conscience and Holy Scripture alike assign to Him might have been adequately discharged by His offering Himself here on earth at once Priest and Victim without spot to God, and then entering into heaven once for all with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. In these acts, done once and done for ever, His Priesthood might have been fulfilled and have determined. But in correction of this, which might have been, the teaching of Holy Scripture is explicit and consistent in representing His Priesthood as eternal and unchangeable. He is a Priest still; He is a Priest for ever. In some sense (in what sense we are to inquire hereafter, for it is the fact, not the nature, of His abiding Priesthood with which we are now concerned) He is exercising priestly functions on behalf of His Church now. It is in some sense sacerdotal intercession which He is now carrying on for us in heaven.

In the Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament the perpetuity of His Priesthood is clearly revealed. The 110th Psalm, though it employs human imagery, is a direct and exclusive prophecy of Christ. It admits of no primary human reference, and for that reason, perhaps, is quoted more frequently, and built upon more extensively, by our Lord and His Apostles than any passage of equal length in the Old Testament. The subject of the Psalm is the session of Christ at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and His victorious course, "conquering and to conquer," till all enemies are put under His feet. It commences with "the saying," the divine sentence or oracular utterance, "of Jehovah to [or, with reference to] my Lord," which stamps it with a directly prophetic character:

Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. But no sooner is He seated there, than His warfare commences and His victories begin:

"The sceptre of Thy might," O King Messiah, "shall Jehovah stretch forth from Zion" ("beginning from Jerusalem" was the law of develop-

ment of the Gospel kingdom): "rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies."

Yet not in person does He as yet make war.

"Thy people shall be willing;" not for gold or by constraint, but with the ready service of loyal love shall they willingly offer themselves,¹ and flock to Thy banner "in the day of Thy battle."

"In the beauties of holiness."—In holy attire, shall they come, as in Apocalyptic vision the armies of heaven are seen following their King, "clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Numberless, too, shall they be as the dewdrops, the children of the morning, the multitudinous offspring of her teeming womb.

"From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth" (young men).

Yet not for ever shall the session of the King at the right hand of God continue. Not always shall He fight by His servants only. The day of His grace shall at length be ended. The day of His wrath at last shall come. Then shall He rise from His throne and go forth in person to complete the subjugation of His foes:

"The Lord," the King Messiah, "at Thy right hand," O Jehovah (verse 1), "shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath," etc. (verse 6).

Nor shall He pause in His triumphant course till His victory is complete. "Of the brook in the way," snatching a hasty draught of the refreshing stream that springs beside His onward path—like Gideon's brave 300 who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, and bowed not down on their knees to drink—of the brook in the way "He shall drink;" "therefore," refreshed and invigorated for His yet unfinished work, "He shall lift up His head."

But in the midst of this description of the Victor and His armies, there is interposed abruptly a sentence which represents Him to us in another and far different character:

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

King upon Thy throne, Warrior in the heat of battle and of conquest, yet still a Priest Thou art. Neither crown nor helmet can displace the mitre from Thy brow. "For ever," and not least, assuredly, in this time between Thy session in glory and Thy return to judgment, to which the prophecy belongs, Thou art a Priest.²

¹ Compare Judges v. 2.

² It is worthy of notice that this is the only mention of Melchizedek between the time of Abraham and the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that on this one verse of the Psalm the argument of that Epistle largely rests.

Another passage of the Old Testament proclaims, by mingled type and prophecy, the same truth of the abiding nature of the Priesthood of our Lord. The rebuilding of the Temple promptly commenced by the liberated Jews on their return from Babylon, but soon interrupted and long abandoned through the obstacles raised by their enemies and by their own supineness and irreligion, had been actively resumed under the auspices of Zerubbabel the Jewish Governor and Joshua the high priest, instigated and encouraged by the prophetic utterances of Haggai and Zechariah. At this juncture there came to Jerusalem a deputation from the Jews who still remained in Babylon, bringing gifts and offerings for the completion and adorning of the house of God. From these persons Zechariah is directed by God to take some of the silver and gold which they had brought, and forming, as it should seem, a fillet of each metal, to intertwine them into a wreath or crown, and place it upon the head of Joshua the high priest. The act was in itself significant. It seemed to say that the high priest, shorn as he now was of much of the pristine glory of his office, should hereafter enjoy a dignity and receive an honour which had never attached to the priesthood in its earlier and more palmy days. Royal, as well as sacerdotal, should his office become. King, as well as priest, should he one day be. Not yet, indeed, should that combination be effected. Not on Joshua in his own person, but only in type and in prophecy should that distinction be conferred. The crown placed by Divine command upon his head, was by Divine command removed from it again. The prophet was instructed to hang it up in the Temple of the Lord as a memorial of His gracious acceptance of the votive offerings which had been brought, an earnest of the time when they that were far off, not Jews alone, but Gentiles also, should come and build in the Temple of the Lord; but also as a silent prophecy, hanging there, as it were, till He came to claim it, of One Whose of right it was, Who alone was worthy to wear the double crown, because He alone was indeed both Priest and King. To the significant act was added, as though to place its meaning beyond all doubt, the commentary of a Divine prediction:

Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.¹

¹ Zechariah vi. 12, 13.

"A Priest upon His throne." When, therefore, He had by Himself purged our sins, it was as Priest as well as King that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. It is as Priest as well as King that He sits there now. "Between them both," between the Priest and the King, the counsel of peace shall be. The counsel which the Priest and King, each in the unrestricted exercise of his office, shall mature and execute between them for the good of the Church and nation shall be a counsel of peace, of perfect accord and harmony, neither office infringing upon the other, each office helping and supplementing the other, because the two offices are combined in one and the same Person. Or, if by the counsel of peace we are rather to understand the counsel which has peace for its object and its end, the great plan of salvation by which peace with God and peace on earth are secured, still none the less does the prophecy insist upon the co-ordinate and simultaneous exercise of both offices in the one Person of Jesus Christ our Lord, in order that that counsel may be carried through to its accomplishment. A Priest upon His throne none the less He is. The later prophecy, like the earlier, goes back to the more august and ancient order, the royal priesthood of Melchizedek. King of righteousness, King of peace, but also priest of the Most High God, the subject of both prophecies shall be.

On passing to the New Testament we are met by the fact, which has been observed as noteworthy, that in only one of its books, the Epistle to the Hebrews, is our Lord called a Priest, and that to that one Epistle the sacerdotal aspect of his death and work is almost exclusively confined. References and allusions which connect Him with the sacrificial system of the earlier dispensation, and claim for it fulfilment in Him, are indeed scattered throughout the writings of the New Testament. In Him the Baptist sees the Lamb of God, prefigured through long ages in spotless innocence and in atoning death by the Paschal celebration and the daily sacrifice, doing in reality what they could only do in promise and in shadow, taking away the sin of the world.¹ Of Him St. Paul speaks as "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us."² By His "precious blood" St. Peter says we are redeemed "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."³ Him St. John sees in Apocalyptic vision as "a Lamb as it had been slain."⁴ He it is who is set forth by God as "a propitiation,"⁵ or, as some would render it, "the true Mercy Seat," the antitype of that mystic plate of gold which, resting on the ark of the Covenant and the tables

¹ John i. 29, 36. ² 1 Cor. v. 7. ³ 1 Peter i. 18, 19 ⁴ Rev. v. 6.
⁵ Romans iii. 25 ; comp. Heb. ix. 5.

of the law, the symbols of the awful justice of a Holy God, was at the same time the seat or throne of Jehovah, the God of Israel and of grace, who dwelt between the cherubim; on which in the highest act of propitiation the atoning blood was sprinkled, thus satisfying the requirements of the offended law and making way for the manifestation of unclouded grace: thus showing how God could be "just," and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

But though such references and allusions plainly set forth our Lord as a sacrifice, they do not, for the most part, go the length of even indirectly describing Him as a Priest. Once, indeed, St. Paul declares that He "gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;"¹ where, though the name of priest is not bestowed upon Him, the priestly function is clearly ascribed to Him. Once again St. Peter would seem to indicate that He is to be regarded as both priest and victim when using the sacrificial word "bare," and introducing the emphatic pronoun "Himself," he writes: "Who bare Himself our sins in His own body on the tree;"² like, and yet unlike, the Jewish high priest, who bore indeed, as is expressly stated, the sins of the people, yet not himself in his own body, but in the body of the animal which he offered on their behalf.

But besides these passages there do not appear to be any in the New Testament, except in the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which the priesthood of our Lord could be satisfactorily deduced. In that Epistle, however, in accordance with the method of Divine revelation in some other instances, the immediate requirements of one section of the Church in the Apostolic age have been made the occasion, in the manifold wisdom of God, of bringing out into bold relief a hitherto obscure aspect of the truth, for the benefit and instruction of the whole Church in all subsequent ages of her history. The imminent peril to which the Hebrew Christians of Jerusalem were exposed by the shock which awaited them, in the approaching overthrow of their Temple and worship, called forth from a writer who shall stand forth conspicuous in that day when no good thing shall remain of uncertain authorship, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own work, a treatise in which the Priesthood of Christ is shown to be the great ideal after which the sacerdotal types and prophecies of the Old Testament were framed, and in which it is emphatically declared that He is "a Priest for ever." Because He "continueth ever," "after the power of an endless life," therefore His Priesthood is like Himself, "unchangeable;" therefore "He is able to save to the uttermost

¹ Ephes. v. 2.

² 1 Peter ii. 24.

them that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth a Priest to make intercession for them."¹ This, then, is our conclusion so far. The work of Christ in heaven is properly sacerdotal. It satisfies in this respect the cravings of the universal conscience and the requirements of the whole revelation of God.

Of the things we are speaking this is the sum: "We have such an High Priest Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."²

T. T. PEROWNE.

ART. IV.—LAY WORK IN THE ARMY.

THERE are many good people who hold the opinion that Christian work in the army is a subject altogether too remote to be of interest to them, as they have no connection with military affairs. They attach no more importance to what is being done to promote the moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social welfare of our soldiers, than to any other good work which they approve of, but which does not personally affect them. I believe, however, that it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of paying attention to work done among soldiers, and for the following reasons.

In the *first* place there will, if the short-service system exists long enough, be upwards of one million³ men scattered all over the country, who have passed six years, more or less, of training as soldiers. It cannot be a matter of indifference to anyone who desires the welfare of his country, whether that training shall have a tendency to develop dissolute, lawless, drunken habits on the one hand, or to cultivate orderly, sober, industrious habits on the other. In the one case, the country would suffer considerably from the effects of the introduction of the new system of short service; in the other, it would be a considerable gainer. This will be all the more apparent when it is remembered that these young men will, in their turn, become husbands and heads of families. Out of the 30,000,000 inhabitants of England, when half are deducted for the female sex, and a large number are deducted for children and old

¹ Heb. vii. 24, 25, 28.

² Heb. viii. 1.

³ Roughly speaking, 30,000 men enlist annually, and as the army does not increase, that number, after deducting a small percentage for deaths, passes into the Reserve, and from thence into civil life. If the majority enlist at twenty years of age, and leave the army at twenty-six, according to the scale of the probabilities of life they will have thirty-five years to live. 30,000 multiplied by thirty-five makes a little over a million, not one of whom would be over sixty-one years of age.