

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS.

BY REV. SAMUEL ZANE BATTEN, DES MOINES, IOWA.

There are three great truths which may be called the Magna Charta of the Kingdom of God. The first the Fatherhood of God, was the inspiring impulse of Jesus' life, and the master thought of His teaching. This truth is a witness at once for the infinite love of God for all His children and the infinite value of the soul of every man. The second, Justification by Faith, was the central truth of Paul's life and the constitutive principle of the Apostolic Church. This truth sweeps away every obstacle between God and man and gives man an immediate access to the Most High God. The Third, the Priesthood of all Believers, implied in the other two, is the very spirit of Christianity itself. This brings with it two results which are most noteworthy: It guarantees the equality of all believers, and it places the work of man upon a true and Christian foundation. We are concerned with the third of these great ideas at this time, the universal priesthood of believers.

This truth has played a mighty part in the history of the Christian Church during the past nineteen hundred years. It was one of the great truths which inspired the early Church, that differentiated Christianity from Judaism and sent men out into the world to do the whole work of the Kingdom. And it was one of the mighty truths which inspired the great reformers and made the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Reformation, as history shows, was projected on two great lines and was motived by two great ideas. The one was somewhat doctrinal but the other was most intensely practical. The doctrine of Justification by Faith and the truth of the Priesthood of all Believers were the inspiring and impelling ideas of the whole reformation movement. By the one the salvation of the soul is made to

depend upon man's personal relations with the living God. By the other man's life is given a divine meaning, and he is sent out into the world to repeat and continue the life and work of the Lord Jesus.

According to the Christian Scriptures believers are a chosen generation and a royal priesthood; through Jesus Christ they have been made priests and kings unto God; and they are now called to fulfil a priestly office and to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. To Martin Luther the words, "Ye are a holy priesthood," were among the most precious and significant texts in the Scripture. To him these words were much more than rhetorical phrases merely intended to set forth the dignity of the Christian's calling with no literal meaning. He called these and similar texts "thunderbolts of God, against which neither long continued usage, nor all the world combined shall be able to prevail." Such texts were in his hands as great hammers with which he broke in pieces the false notions of his day. The Roman Catholic Church saw the significance of these texts as used by the Reformers, and at the Council of Trent it issued its anathema against them declaring them false and destructive. "Ye are all priests unto God," said Martin Luther; each believer is called to perform a priestly service; each believer has the priestly access to the very throne of God, with the priestly anointing and with a sacred ministry. This ecclesiastical priest who would come between you and God, said Luther in bold and confident words, is an impertinence and a sham, and you must not be misled by his claims. This honor have all the saints and not any special class within the Church.

This truth of the Universal Priesthood of Believers was one of the most characteristic ideas of the primitive Church, and it was one of the most effective ideas of the great Reformation. But for some reason or lack of reason in these latter times it has dropped almost wholly out of the current of Christian thought and life, and as a

consequence men have lost the inspiration of the mighty truth. It is a great truth and it has some vital relations to the thought and life of today. In this truth we find the divine key to some of the perplexing problems of our modern Christianity. As has been suggested this truth needs to be restored to its rightful place in Christian thought and life. This truth if rightly understood will once more become an epoch-making idea in our modern church life and work and will be the thesis of a new reformation.

I.

The Priestly Office of the Christian Believer. The idea of a priesthood is as universal as man himself; it is an expression of a need that lies deep in the very heart of the race. All men in all ages and in all lands have had the belief in some power above them to whom they held a certain relation of dependence and service; and all men in all ages and lands have had the conviction more or less defined that there was a wide gulf between them and God. In nearly all religions God is thought to be hostile to man, and hence he must be placated and worshiped. Men know themselves to be weak and imperfect, and so they feared to approach this deity lest they offend him by their sinfulness. So it came about that they selected a certain man to stand before the people and to be the medium of communication between themselves and God. They felt the need of some one who should convey their offerings to God and should bring back the gifts of God to men. The growth of a priestly class has been entirely natural and in one sense it has been a necessity. It was believed that the worship of God must be accompanied with every sign of reverence and submission; thus a ritual grew up that in many cases became very elaborate and complicated. This the common man was not expected to understand and to fulfill. By degrees a priestly class was formed whose great duty it was to perform all this work in behalf of the people.

In the history of the Jewish people we have a clear outline of the growth and development of this priestly idea. In the very dawn of history we see men building an altar and offering some precious gift unto God. As time goes by we find that this priestly office is placed in the hands of the head of the family who became the priest and king of the little household. When at last Israel becomes a nation provision is made for the creation of a special priestly class, and so one whole tribe, that of Levi, is set apart for this office and work. (Deut. 10:8.) As we study the Old Testament regulations concerning the priesthood several things become clear. This priestly class have charge of the sanctuary of Jehovah, and they are to see that the lamps are kept burning and that all the ordinances are properly observed. They also represent the people before Jehovah, and whoever has an offering to present unto God must bring it to the priest who will offer it on the altar in his stead. Thus he becomes the intermediary between God and man, presenting man's offering to God and conveying God's favor to man. Every day the victim was slain and every day the priest approached Jehovah holding up hands in prayer and intercession for the people.

All this, we have come to see, was symbolical and typical and transient. The law was a shadow of good things to come; but the body is of Christ. (Col. 2:17.) All this looks forward to the One Great High Priest who shall represent the people before God, offer up a sacrifice for sin and become the mediator between God and man. All the worship and ceremonies of Judaism were but shadows and prophecies of Jesus Christ, and in Him they find complete and final fulfillment. He is the Great High Priest who gathers up in Himself the needs of men and who enters within the veil there to appear before God for us. He is the Great High Priest who offers up a sacrifice more precious than that of bulls and goats, and once and forever perfects the idea of sacrifice. Augustine used to

say that Christianity is as old as creation; and Tertullian has ventured the bolder thought that in all previous history Christ was schooling Himself for the Incarnation. It is even so, for in Christ Jesus all things were created, whether in heaven or in earth. Every longing in the heart of man is a prophecy of His coming; in Him all revelation centers, and all history is the realization of His will. The Son of Man realizes and fulfils in Himself all the longings and hopes of men and all the prophecies and purposes of God. He is the Great High Priest who by one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

“I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” The Son of Man fulfills the priestly office, but He does not abolish it. The old charter of Israel’s life declared: Ye are a kingdom of priests unto Jehovah; ye are a holy nation. (Ex. 19:6.) ‘The Son of Man gathers up in Himself the whole meaning of Israel’s calling and illustrates in Himself the whole meaning of Israel’s life. He gathers up in Himself all the meanings of the priestly office and illustrates in His service the divine meaning of life. And then He returns this priestly office to His people with a larger meaning and a more urgent conscience than ever. He fulfills the law and thus He establishes it upon a newer and better foundation. Through Christ the original calling of the people becomes the ultimate destination of the Christian. All who become partakers in the benefits of Christ’s priestly office and work are called to assume the priestly character and to fulfill the priestly office. The external, individual priesthood is forever abolished by the work of the Great High Priest who shows us the real meaning and value of all sacrifices. But the inner, universal priesthood is established upon eternal foundations and is made more real and potent than ever. Most clearly do the New Testament writers bring out this great truth, that all believers are living stones, built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood,

to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:5, 9.) The beloved disciple on Patmos hears the song of the redeemed as they sing: Thou hast made us priests and a kingdom unto our God. (Rev. 1:6.) That was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. The great inner fact of the outer and visible priesthood is verified and fulfilled in the lives of all who truly believe on Jesus Christ. They have access to the throne of grace not only for themselves but for all men; they are chosen and appointed to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God not only for themselves but for others; they are called and consecrated that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. Let us look at this truth a little more in detail, for it is a most rich and precious truth, and it has most practical and timely applications.

II.

The Priestly Privileges of the Christian Believer. First of all the Christian possesses the priestly access to God. The priest by his very office has the authority to draw near unto God and to present unto Him the offerings of the people. But in Christ Jesus the way into the Holy of Holies has been laid open and every man may come boldly unto the very throne of grace. It is the hour of the evening sacrifice on the great Passover Day. The High Priest has washed himself and is now about to appear before God in behalf of the people. Outside the city upon a cross One is hanging in the last agonies of life. From His trembling lips at last comes the glad and triumphant shout: "Finished." In the temple the High Priest is approaching the Holy of Holies, when lo! the great curtain is torn from top to bottom as by the touch

of God, and the whole inner place is laid open to the view of all people. The Holy Spirit thus signifying that the way into the Holy of Holies which was once closed against the people is from henceforth accessible to all believers. We have boldness, all of us, to enter into the Holiest of all by the new and living way, there to appear before God and to offer up spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ. But remember this, that the Priest does not approach God for himself alone, but in behalf of his people. He bears the sins and needs of the people upon his heart and brings them before God. He hears the divine voice speaking of peace and forgiveness and he comes out to speak of forgiveness and peace to men. The world to-day needs priests who will take upon their hearts the burdens and sorrows of men and appear before God to intercede in their behalf. The world needs priests who can draw near unto God and by their sacrifices and prayers can bear away the blessings of God to lost men. This honor have all the saints.

2. The Christian possesses the priestly consecration. Before the priest exercised his priestly office he was expected to bathe himself in token of his personal purification. He was then clothed in white robes, at once a symbol of personal purity and a mark of distinction among the people. All this, I need not say, is fulfilled in the life of one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer has washed his robe and made it white in the blood of the Lamb; he has put off the garment spotted by the flesh and has put on the white robe of righteousness. After the washing of the priest there came the priestly anointing with oil. An ointment had been prepared, the oil of consecration, made from the richest and purest spices. The new priest bowed his head, and upon it was poured this sacred oil which was allowed to run down over his beard and outer garments. In outer form this ceremony has been abolished, only however that its inner meaning may be established. Paul tells the Corinthians

that they are anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit, and he has reference to this priestly consecration. John says that all Christians have received an anointing of the Holy One, and this anointing teaches them all things. This sacred anointing of the Holy Spirit is the privilege of every believer, and it is the source of all spiritual power. The men of the world may have their gifts of eloquence and learning and power, but unless they have received this anointing oil—the Holy Spirit—they are not ready for the priestly work and office. The Holy Spirit is given unto us without measure, that we may have wisdom and light in our work for God. Without this indwelling Spirit we shall be unprepared for our divine office. Do Christians appreciate the heights and depths of their calling and their privilege? They may have their names on the church books; they may stand among God's people in His house; they may bear the sacred name of Christ; but unless they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; unless they live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit; unless they walk in light and love, they have but a name to live and are dead.

3. The Christian has the priestly call to offer up sacrifices unto God. The idea of sacrifice is grounded deep in the nature of things. The man who stood before his altar and presented the firstlings of his flock, stood there in contrition for his sins and in token of his consecration. The visible animal that he offered stood for a spiritual inner fact. By that sacrifice the man declared that he offered unto God the most valuable thing in his possession. But the essential thing in every sacrifice was not the dying animal on the altar but the surrendered will of the man himself. God had no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats, and to stop with this is to miss the whole meaning of sacrifice. God had pleasure in these things just so far as they were the evidence and symbols of the heart's love and devotion. "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the

Most High? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings and calves of a year old?" No, no, you must not belittle the whole subject in this way. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:5-8.) The Psalmist cries:

"Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it;
Thou delightest not in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalm. 51:16, 17.)

In the sacrifice of Christ Himself the one essential thing was the devoted life, the surrendered will. The blood represents the life. Let us not miss the deeper truth, and let not our eyes be blinded by the show of things. Men dwell upon the physical sufferings of Christ, as if these in themselves had any special value. The thief beside the Master probably knew as much bodily pain as the dying Saviour. But the pain of the thief was a penalty for sin; the death of the Saviour was a sacrifice for men; and the difference is to be found in the will. The believer is one called to repeat the sacrifice of Christ; he is to be crucified with Christ; he is to fill up in his body the measure of the sufferings of Christ. This does not mean that we are to suffer torture or to undergo physical suffering for Christ's sake; nay, it means rather that we are to give up our whole life to do His will. The believer is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God; that is, he is to dedicate himself, his spirit, his mind, and body to Jesus Christ and His work. The sacrifices which we offer are most real; they are the surrender of our wills to the Lord of our life; they are the dedication of our lives to the work of God in the world; they are the services we render in behalf of the Kingdom of God on earth. There are many ways in which we may offer

spiritual sacrifices to God. We offer spiritual sacrifices when we renounce self for the sake of Christ; when we cheerfully accept the task that comes to us in life; when we are ready to endure loss, if need be, for the sake of Christ's name; when we make the burdens of others our own and travail in prayer for their removal. The priest as a priest lived not for himself but for others. The disciple has no more right to live for his own pleasure and profit than Christ had. Surely if anyone had the right to the palace and the feast, that one was the Lord of all worlds. "But even Christ pleased not himself."

4. And the Christian believer has also the priestly office of mediator. The priest was one who stood between God and man and sought to reconcile the two. In behalf of man he approached God; and in the name of God he spoke to man. With hands upraised in prayer he bore the sins and needs of the people before God; with hands extended in blessing and with lips full of peace he bore the pardon of God to the waiting people. After the priest had stood before the altar of the Lord he turned to the people and blessed them and pronounced over them the words of absolution and peace. This is the most important part of the priestly work and calling and it must never be overlooked. The Master has given to His people this priestly power of pronouncing over men the full forgiveness of their sins. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." The Roman Church has taken these great words and put upon them an impertinent and blasphemous meaning. Protestants have shrunk back from the clear meaning of the words because of this error and presumption of Rome. But the best way to meet error is to emphasize the underlying truth. The Christian believer is sent out into the world to beseech men to be reconciled unto God; he is authorized to pronounce and declare to the penitent the full forgiveness of their sins. He stands between God and man and in-

terprets the one to the other. He takes his wayward brother by the hand and tells him of the Father's house and the Father's love; he beseeches him to put away his sin and to be reconciled with the Father. Christians, this is a part of our work which we have not yet begun to appreciate in all its breadth and height. We are mediators between God and man, presenting men's needs before God and making intercession for them; we are mediators between God and man, beseeching men to be reconciled unto God and be at peace.

For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Not only so, but the Christian believer stands as the mediator between man and man. Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, has broken down the middle walls of partition, those between God and man and those between man and man; He has abolished in His death the enmity between them and has made all one. I would to God that the Christian discipleship might realize the greatness and sacredness of its calling in this direction. Men are peacemakers so far as they are Christians. They are here to stand between man and man, and class and class, nation and nation, as mediators and peacemakers; they are peacemakers to bring together men that are at enmity, to bid them put away all jealousies and suspicions and join hands in concord. They are peacemakers, and are to stand between all parties and factions and say: Men, my brothers, remember that ye are brethren; let there be no strife I pray you among brethren. They are peacemakers and are to stand among men and charge them to do justly and to love mercy and to be

at peace. The Church of Jesus Christ—if it has any calling in the world—has the calling of a peacemaker. What shall we think of a church that fomented strife and stirs up nation against nation? What shall we think of a ministry that sanctions war and glorifies the calling of the soldier? And what shall we think of a discipleship that is silent in the face of a war of aggression and conquest? We may differ on questions of policy and items of politics; but we are all agreed that the Christian disciple is a peacemaker so far as he is a Christian; and in every way he is to work for righteousness and peace. Our churches ought to know no man after the flesh; they ought to stand for brotherhood and love; here in the church all men ought to meet in perfect fellowship and equality. It is a great, divine thing to be a Christian; alas, that so many people make it mean so little.

III.

The Priestly Service of the Christian Priesthood.—I said at the beginning that this truth of the priesthood of all believers is at once a great doctrine and a practical principle. I am sure that we begin to see that it is one of the most practical and timely truths in the world; that it is a truth which needs special emphasis in our time. The full acceptance of this truth by the Church and the full application of this principle in the world would work a reformation more wide-spread and significant than the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. These texts are indeed “thunderbolts of God,” and they are able to break in pieces a hundred false customs and scatter a hundred false notions. In this truth lies the solution of many of the problems which make the peril and agony of our day.

1. In this truth of the priesthood of all believers we find the guarantee of equality within the Kingdom of God. According to the mediæval conception, the priest stood between God and man, able to shut away the grace

of God from man, and able to close heaven against the soul. The priest stood between the new-born babe and the grace of God bestowed in baptism, and opened the gate of life or closed it. He stood between the dying man and the divine forgiveness and determined whether the soul should have salvation or not; he stood between the young man and woman and made their marriage legal or illegal; the priest could refuse the grace of God to men, and could bar all access of men to God; he, in virtue of some special office or power, ruled heaven and earth, and controlled the destinies of men. Against all such blasphemies stood Martin Luther, proclaiming the Universal Priesthood of believers, and affirming the right of every soul to the free and unbounded grace of God. "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none. A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and servant to everyone." The throne of grace is accessible to all; one man may enjoy the same privileges as another; no one can lord it over his brothers. The truth of the Universal Priesthood of believers sweeps away at one stroke all spiritual privileges and guarantees the equality of all within the Kingdom of God. All are made priests of God; all have the same approach to the Father; all have the same divine calling to a life of loving service; there is no difference so far as sanctity is concerned between the minister at the altar and the carpenter at his bench.

We do not wonder that Popery should denounce this truth as a most dangerous and pernicious error. This truth lays the axe at the very root of the great tree of popish pretension and churchly arrogance. That Church claims that the man at the altar has a peculiar access to God, that at his word the bread on the plate is changed into the body of Christ, and that he offers up the body of Christ in perpetual sacrifice. This doctrine, the most fatal heresy and the most hideous blasphemy ever foisted upon the world, has been productive of untold wrong and

oppression and tyranny. According to the truth as it is in Christ, there is no class of men who stand in some peculiar relation to God, or who have special access to Him. Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, in one great sacrifice, has perfected forever them that are His; once and forever He has offered Himself for the sins of men; now we may all come boldly unto the throne of grace and may find help in time of need. Heaven has no pets and favorites; the man who claims that he stands in some special and peculiar relation to God is either a Pharisee or a fraud. We are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus; we all have the same full access to God through Jesus Christ; and so we all stand on a perfect equality before God and men. One day Alexander the Great visited the philosopher Diogenes, the man who lived in a tub and had few wants. "What can I do for you?" inquired the world conquerer. "Nothing," replied the philosopher, "except to stand out of my sunlight." There are men who claim that God's sunshine can only reach the world through them. "But God's sunlight is for all men," we say; "stand out of my sunlight."

2. In this principle of the priesthood of all believers we see that every man's work is a sacred service. Every believer who has become a partaker of the grace of Christ has a divine calling to a Christian ministry. As a matter of convenience and order it may be well to set apart a man in each congregation who shall exercise the function of a preacher or minister. But let it be understood also that this absolves no member from the same Christian ministry. We all stand before God on a perfect equality of privilege and call and service. "As every man hath received a gift so let him minister the same." Every believer has a divine call to a divine ministry in the Church and in the world. The manifestations of this call may differ; it is necessary that there be differences of ministration; but the call comes to every believer with equal urgency. The people are the Church and every member

should feel that he is called to a ministry that is sacred and divine. From every member according to his ability and opportunity; this is one meaning and application of this truth of the priesthood of the people. Whoever has received a gift whereby his fellows may be profited and the Kingdom may be advanced, has a divine calling for a holy ministry. This means that all believers are called with a high and holy calling; and all are sent to seek the Kingdom of God. The forms of service may differ, but the spirit is the same and the honor is equal. All believing laymen, Luther maintains, "are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, to teach each other mutually the things that are of God. * * * And as our heavenly Father has freely helped us in Christ, so we ought freely to help our neighbors by our body and our works, and each should become to the other a sort of Christ, so that we may be mutually Christs, and that the same Christ may be in all of us; that we may be truly Christians."

The work of the preacher I regard as the most glorious work that man can do, a privilege that any angel before the throne might covet. But this does not mean that every other man's work is common and insignificant. Every disciple according to his ability and opportunity has a divine moving and call to engage in Christ's work. One of the most fatal and dangerous errors of the world is the division of life into two parts, the sacred and the profane. Men have felt that in one part of their life they must serve God, while in the other part they may do pretty much as they please. Because of this unscriptural and pagan division, life has been lived in two spheres, and as a result a large part of life has been relegated to the region of the secular. But to the Christian there is no such thing as a secular interest in the whole universe of God. What right has any man to call himself a Christian at all unless he is trying to do God's will in every act of life? What right has any Christian to do any sort of work unless he believes he is obeying God in that work?

One kind of work is just as noble, just as necessary, and just as divine as any other. There is a difference in divine quality, but the difference is in the spirit of the doer, and not in the work alone. (1 Cor. 12:4-30.)

The apostle bids Christians remain in the calling wherein they are found. Here is a man, a lawyer, who becomes a Christian. What shall he do? Shall he give up his practice of law and enter the Gospel ministry? Probably not. Let him rather make his work a priestly service, and by means of it let him do what lies in his power to have justice done in the earth. Here is a business man with the talent for making money. He becomes a Christian and knows the impulse to do the Lord's work. What shall he do? Shall he give up his business and become a missionary? Not at all. Let him rather take the Lord Jesus into partnership and learn to make money for the glory of God. What is true of these two lines of work is true of every other kind of work that men can do. A man is a lawyer, a manufacturer, a doctor, a mechanic, a school teacher, an engineer, a farmer. All well so far. Now he need not seek to be something else in order to serve God and advance His Kingdom. Each is what he is by the appointment of God. In his work, whatever it is, he is to exercise the priestly office, and through this calling he is to serve his day and generation. The housewife who lives for her home circle and seeks to make life helpful to others is performing a holy ministry. The student who is pursuing his studies, whether writing his college essay or studying the processes of nature, is fulfilling a sacred task. The merchant who is diligent in business and is making his trade a means of benefit to others, is offering up spiritual sacrifices to God. The public official who is seeking to uphold the right and to take up the stumbling block out of the way of men, is the minister of God unto men for good. The mechanic who is building a house, or making a shoe, or guiding an engine, is serving the common good, and is fulfilling a sacred service. Each

of the various functions which we are called to fulfill in the world is a priesthood; the service which we render from day to day is a holy sacrifice; the things we employ in our work are the signs and symbols of our spiritual life. The particular kind of work is a small matter; the spirit in which we do it is the all important thing. For the work of the world and the perfection of life it is just as necessary that some men be merchants as that other men be preachers; it is quite as important that there be farmers and mechanics as Sunday-school teachers and missionaries. I am ready to affirm on the authority of this great Christian truth that it is just as Christly a thing to be a good lawyer as to be a foreign missionary; it is just as noble a thing to be a good mechanic as to be a teacher of the Bible. Aye, and it is just as sacrilegious a thing, just as much a blasphemy against God, for one to pervert his store into a place of selfish gain as to turn the church into a place of trade; it is just as wicked a thing to be dishonest as a mechanic as to huckster the Gospel; it is just as un-Christian a thing to misuse the law as to sell the truth of God.

3. In this truth we see also that believers are called to live the sacrificial life. Ye are a holy priesthood, all ye who have taken the Lord Jesus as your High Priest, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. There is no truth more important in these times; there is no truth which needs to be burned into the hearts and consciences of men more deeply than this. Remember that the essential idea of sacrifice is the surrendered will, the obedient heart, the consecrated affection. We are all ready to admit that the missionary should live a self-denying life; we are ready to say that the pastor should be willing to sacrifice himself for the Kingdom of God. But most people stop right here, and so miss the great truth of God for their lives. They do not see that there is an equal responsibility upon all believers to live this self-denying, priestly life. Every man's life is a priestly and sacrificial work,

or should be. "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Every man's work furnishes him the opportunity for doing this sacrificial work in the world. The moment we see this the whole duty of life becomes plain, and life takes on a new meaning. All men who have entered the Kingdom of God are called to live and work and pray for that Kingdom. Through all their work must run the self-denying, sacrificial spirit like a thread of gold, making the whole life sacred unto God. We are not our own, we are bought with a price; therefore we are called to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which are His. This means that whatever our work may be, whether driving the plow, or sweeping the room, or weighing sugar, or teaching a little child, we bear a divine commission and honor the will of God, whose we are. The merchant has no more right to use his talent of money-making for his own glory, than the missionary. The citizen is no more free to vote his likes and dislikes than the preacher to preach only the truths he prefers. The lawyer has the same calling to seek the Kingdom of God and its justice in his profession as the city missionary, who labors among the outcasts of the street. Every believer is called to be a priest, and to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God; the particular form of the sacrifice depends upon the kind of work he does in the world. But his daily work is his priestly work. Would God that our men of affairs might remember that they are bought with a price; that they are not henceforth to live unto themselves, but unto Him whose name they bear. This truth is needed to-day to save men from engrossment in material things. The passion for money seems almost to be the ruling passion in our day and land. And money is prized for its own sake, for the advantage it gives, for the pleasure it will buy, and the ease it affords. A pastor of large experience said that he had seen men reclaimed from all sorts of passions and vices, except one—avarice; that when once

this passion gets enthroned in the human heart, it is almost never eradicated. The Church needs to proclaim this truth—that whatever a man does, he is to do as unto the Lord, that his work in the world is a priestly service—till it finds recognition and acceptance with all who profess and call themselves Christians.

The frank and full recognition of this truth will work a change in the life of the Church and will inspire men to make sacrifices for the sake of the Kingdom. The fact of sacrifice is almost a lost art in the modern Church. Look at the Church to-day, made up of well-dressed, and self-satisfied men and women, cherishing the hope of heaven, grateful for the blessings they enjoy, but wholly unwilling to make any real sacrifice for the sake of men. No wonder the Church is so weak; no wonder the progress of the Kingdom is so slow. There is a bitter truth in the word of a brilliant socialist that, "It is the uncrucified Christianity that sits in the church pews and speaks in the modern pulpit that is driving the passion for humanity into other channels than the Church." This is certain that nothing but a crucified Christianity can ever win the world unto a crucified Christ. Let this truth once more have its central place in the Christian system, and once more we shall have a generation of Christians holding their lives in service for men, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God and willing to spend and be spent in His Kingdom.

4. Last of all, in this principle we find a most urgent impulse to holiness of life. "Ye are a holy priesthood." The truth is plain without another word. Men tell us that the Christianity of our day lacks moral intensity. It seems so. So much of the religion of our time is nothing more than an easy-going good nature. There is no flaming passion for righteousness; no moral intensity and blood earnestness, no hungering and thirsting after righteousness in much of the current religion. We are called to a holy priesthood. Ye see your calling, breth-

ren. The holy is the devoted, the consecrated, the set apart. How many of us are thus set apart to do the will of God in the earth? Jesus was the Lamb of God, holy, harmless, and undefiled, who for us men and our salvation gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Many people stop right here, and so they turn this great truth of God into a fatal and dangerous error. They suppose that the holiness of Christ is a substitute for holiness in themselves; they accept His sacrifice as a substitute for any sacrifice on their part. To do this is to miss utterly the whole meaning of Christ's life and the whole power of Christ's cross.

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn.
The cross on Golgotha
Can never save thy soul;
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

The great need of the Church to-day is a universal consciousness of our common responsibility, a common priestly consecration to the great work of Christ, a full-hearted self-sacrifice in behalf of the Kingdom of God. This consciousness filling the minds and hearts of a few fishermen and peasants in the early days of the Church sent them forth to live and to sacrifice in behalf of the coming of God's Kingdom. We need this priestly consciousness to save our men of business from the love of money and the selfish use of their powers. We need this priestly consciousness to inspire our public officials to braver living and more heroic service. We need this priestly consciousness to send us all to our common tasks in a more loving and self-sacrificing spirit. We need this priestly consciousness that we may all see the sacredness

of common things and may offer up sacrifices that are acceptable to God. The great need of our age is this spiritual conception of our common life. The great need of the world is a generation of Christians who regard all life as a spiritual ministry. The great need of the world to-day is priests who shall take upon themselves the burdens and woes of men and shall bear them upon their hearts before God. The world to-day needs intercessors, like Abraham over Sodom, who shall stand between God and the world, and shall plead for doomed men. The world needs priests who shall stand between man and man and class and class and bid them be at peace. The world to-day needs priests who shall look upon every duty in life as a sacred service and shall offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. The world to-day needs priests who shall put on the Lord Jesus Christ and shall walk before men in robes of purity and joy.