

THE
ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

THE BAIRD LECTURE 1891

THE ASCENSION
AND
HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD
OF
OUR LORD

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TO

MY SISTER

JEANIE H. PATTERSON

PREFACE

THE following Lectures are intended to be a sequel to those on the Resurrection of our Lord published by the same writer a few years ago. He need not hesitate to say that he has felt his present subject to be as difficult as it is important; and he can only therefore hope that, though he has endeavoured to express himself as clearly as possible, there will be found in his language no trace of dogmatism. Such a spirit would be peculiarly unsuitable to the treatment of the Theme with which he deals,—the Ascension of the Redeemer and His heavenly Priesthood. In those parts of the volume, more especially, which have occasioned the author most anxiety, when he has to speak of the Offering of our Lord, of the Gift of the Spirit, and of the essentially superearthly or heavenly nature of the whole Christian dispensation, his aim has rather been to stimulate inquiry, and to encourage students of theology to prosecute the subject. Good which he has himself been unable to effect may thus be done by others. Few will deny that fresh

investigation into the fundamental truths of the Christian system, to be in all probability followed by a restatement of many of them, is needed in our day.

At the time when the volume on the Resurrection of our Lord appeared, the writer had no thought of again turning to a subject so much akin to it as that with which the following Lectures are occupied. He has accordingly found it difficult to avoid a repetition of some things that had been previously said. Should it be thought that he has been only partially successful in this, he can assure his readers that the failure has not resulted from want of effort to effect his end. It will be seen, too, as in the discussion regarding the Offering of our Lord in heaven, that, even when a view taken in his former work recurs, it is stated in a different relation and for a different purpose. In these circumstances he ventures to hope that there may be little ground for complaint upon this point. Of what he had written in occasional papers in Theological Journals he has felt entitled to make freer use. Such papers are for the most part unconnected with each other, and are often forgotten as soon as read. He regrets that the fear of unduly increasing the size of the volume has made it necessary to suppress, at least in the meantime, many Notes which he should have wished to add to the Lectures.

In conclusion, the author acknowledges the kindness

of the Rev. James Cooper, East Church, Aberdeen, in supplying him with several valuable hints for the Lectures. He desires also to take this opportunity of recording his gratitude to his old and venerated friend, now gone to his rest, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Anderson of the Gymnasium, Old Aberdeen, a conversation with whom first led him into one of the most important lines of inquiry connected with the Offering of Christ, and whose warm-hearted encouragement, while he pursued the subject, he will never be able to forget.

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CONTENTS

LECTURE I

The Ascension of our Lord

	PAGES
Our Lord's Glorification not completed by His Resurrection	1—2
Nature of our Lord's manifestations of Himself during the forty days	3—4
Object of these manifestations	4—5
The question as to the time of the Ascension	5
I.—THE FACT OF THE ASCENSION.	
The evidence of the Gospels, of the Epistles, and of the Church	6—11
Insolubleness of the Christian problem without the Ascension	11—12
The Ascension a corollary from the Resurrection	12—13
Results of modern critical inquiry	13—14
Relation of the general fact to its details	14—15
Two difficulties as to the Ascension—	
1. That a tangible body is not adapted to a super-terrestrial abode	15—20
2. That it supposes heaven to be a locality circumscribed by definite boundaries	20—26
Unnecessary to attempt to fix the first moment of the Ascension	26—27
Different aspects of the Ascension—	
1. It was the completion of all that is involved in the Incarnation	27—35
2. It was our Lord's entrance upon His reward	35—36
(1.) In relation to Himself	37—40

	PAGES
(2.) In relation to the members of His Body	40—46
(3.) In relation to His enemies	46—55
Importance of our Lord's solemn inauguration to this reward	55—57
3. It was our Lord's entrance upon a new sphere of exertion for the good of man	57—59
The Church's expression of her joy in the Ascension .	59—60

LECTURE II

The Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord,—in Heaven

THE HEAVENLY HIGH-PRIEST.

Pre-eminence of our Lord's priestly office	61—67
From reason of the case	61—63
As taught in Scripture	63—67
Preliminary Remarks—	
1. Relation of high-priest and priest	67—68
2. Our Lord never a Priest after the order of Aaron	69—72
3. When did the Priesthood of our Lord begin?	72—75
Proposed solutions of the difficulty	75—77
Another solution suggested	77—83
Priesthood of Melchizedek	83—96
Scripture statements	83—85
1. Object of this priesthood	86—87
2. The age to which it belonged	87—89
3. Its freedom from relations connected with this world	89—91
4. Its spiritual nature	91—93
5. Its more general characteristics	93—95
6. Its superiority to the Levitical priesthood	95—96
The Melchizedek or heavenly Priesthood of our Lord in general	97—112
1. Its foundation is in the Person of our Lord	97—101
2. Its sphere of action is heavenly	101—103
3. It fulfils the idea of all priesthood, inasmuch—	
(1.) As it is marked by Divine appointment and human sympathy	103—104
(2.) As it elevates the carnal into the spiritual	104—105

(3.) As its service is inward, unchangeable, universal, and everlasting	[PAGES 105—111
4. Its end is that of all priesthood	111—112

LECTURE III

The Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord,—in Heaven

THE WORK OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH-PRIEST.

I.—His Offering	114—116
1. The true idea of offering	116—119
2. The offering of our Lord as associated with His first presentation of Himself in heaven	120—125
3. The offering of our Lord as associated with His never-ending life in heaven	125—127
4. Yet the offering cannot be repeated	127
Inquiry as to what our Lord's offering really was—	
Its fundamental conception is not death but life	128—133
It is not confined to His sacrificial death	133—134
Teaching of Scripture upon this point	134—136
The bearing upon it of the constitution of our Lord's Person	136—137
And of the relation between the glorified Lord and His glorified saints	137—138
The offering of our Lord, viewed in the light of these considerations, fulfils the sacrificial system of the older covenant	138—142
(a) It is a present offering	142—143
(b) It possesses unity and completeness	143—146
(c) It fulfils the various offerings of the law	146—148
(d) It embraces in its efficacy the whole life of man	148—149
II.—Our Lord's Intercession—	
Meaning of the term not to be limited to prayer	149—152
Though prayer included	153—156
Embraces the whole application of redemption	156—158
The two Advocates	158—160

	PAGES
Connexion between our Lord's Intercession and His offering	160—161
III.—Our Lord's Benediction—	
Man's need of Benediction	161—163
The priestly Benediction of the older Covenant fulfilled in Christ	163—165

LECTURE IV

The Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord,—in Heaven The Gift of the Spirit

The Spirit the great gift of the New Testament dispensation	166—170
Importance attached in the Old Testament to the coming gift	170—172
I.—The special nature of the gift	172
1. Our Lord possessed during His life on earth the fulness of the Spirit	173—179
2. The Spirit bestowed by our Lord is <i>His own Spirit</i> ; the Procession of the Spirit	179—183
3. When the Spirit is bestowed on us it must be inwardly not outwardly	183—188
Conclusion to be drawn	189
Difficulty as to incarnating the Spirit met	189—191
Importance of the Western dogma on the Procession of the Spirit	191—192
Summary of what has been said on this point	193—194
II.—The Function or Work of the Spirit in man	194—195
The teaching of our Lord and His Apostles	195—199
The Spirit not an independent authority	200—202
He reveals the glorified Lord	202—204
III.—Time when "Holy Spirit" was bestowed—	
Distinction between "The Holy Spirit" and "Holy Spirit"	204—205
Gift of "Holy Spirit" connected with the glorification of Christ	205—206
The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament	206—207
Distinction between the gift then and under New Testament dispensation	208—209

	PAGES
Reasons for this distinction—	
1. Before the Incarnation the Spirit had not assumed His special form	209—211
2. Before the Ascension our Lord was not in a position to bestow "Holy Spirit"	211—212
With that moment the glory of the New Testament dispensation begins	212—218
Illustrated by the imperfections of the Old Testament saints	218—218
And by the language of the New Testament as to the redemption of the body	215—216
IV.—Persons on whom "Holy Spirit" is bestowed	216—223
Responsibility of the Church	223
Importance of awakened attention to the subject	223—224
Value of the human element in the gift of "Holy Spirit"	224—226

LECTURE V

The Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord,—on Earth

Our Lord comes to His people upon earth	227—228
And, animating them by His Spirit, calls them to occupy His place	228—230
Argument of the fourth Evangelist, which holds good now	230—233
Confirmed by Nature and the Providence of God	234—236
What our Lord is in heaven must thus appear in His Church on earth	236—237
The Church is therefore priestly	237
The same conclusion deduced from the relation of the Old Testament to the New	237—238
Manner in which the Old Testament is accomplished in the New	238—243
The priestly idea thus fulfilled in Christ	243
And in His Church	243—244
The priestliness of the Church as taught in the New Testament	244—247
The Church's commission to appear—	
I.—IN HER LIFE	247—250
More particularly in—	
1. The Divine element in her life	250—254
Importance of this element	254—258

	PAGES
2. In the human element	258—259
Importance of this element	259—263
3. In self-sacrifice	263—264
The Church's offering of herself	264—265
Relation to Eucharistic Service	265—266
The Church's offering for others	266—274
The Church's weakness in not sufficiently recognising her priestliness	274—277

LECTURE VI

The Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord,—on Earth

The Church's Commission to appear—

II.—IN HER WORK	273
1. The Church's work for herself	279—280
Teaching of New Testament	280—282
Teaching of Old Testament	282—283
Of the Primitive Church	283
Importance of this part of the Church's work	284—285
2. The Church's work for the world	285—286
(1.) As to its matter	286—289
Application to the mission field	289—291
(2.) As to its manner	291—294

The Church's Commission to appear—

III.—IN HER WORSHIP	294
Principles of her Worship—	
1. It is a common worship	295—298
Principle of liturgical worship	298—299
2. It is designed to promote the glory of God	299
As in Old and New Testaments and in history	299—301
3. It is intended for the edification of the Church rather than the conversion of the world	302—304
4. It must express itself in form	304—307
More particularly the Worship of the Church a repetition of our Lord's presentation of Himself in heaven	307—309
This illustrated by the place always held by the Sacra- ment of the Supper	309—310

	PAGES
And by language of "Common Prayer"	311
Light thus thrown also on the accessories of Public Worship	312—318
The Church's Commission to appear—	
IV.—IN HER CONFESSION—	
Our Lord confessing His Father	313
The Church also to confess	314—315
1. A Confession must be that of the whole Church	315—316
2. Must spring from the Church as a whole	316—317
3. Must be accepted as a whole	317
4. No help given by the distinction drawn between theology and religion	317—318
5. Or between our Lord's own words and more elabor- ate statements of later times	319
Another question to be asked, How distinguish be- tween the conclusions of theology and the extent to which these to be regarded as a Test?	320
1. The Church must have a Creed	320
2. Many doctrinal statements in Creeds on which no agreement can be looked for	320—322
Yet this not to prevent the fellowship with one another of those who differ	322—324
3. Question as to right of churches to limit their com- munion	324—326
4. Need of distinguishing what is essential and what non-essential to the unity of the Head and members	326—329
Conclusion—to distinguish between Creeds and state- ments of the whole theology which a church adopts	329
Relation of the question of Creed to subject of the lectures	330
Teaching of Scripture	330—332
Closing observations	332—336
—	
NOTES	339—367