

### LECTURE III

'It is witnessed of Him, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'—Heb. vii. 17.

WE have considered the more general characteristics of the Priesthood of our Lord. We have seen that He never was a priest after the order of Aaron; that from His first entrance upon His Priesthood He belonged to a heavenly order typified by Melchizedek; and that His inauguration into His priestly office dates from the moment when, "lifted up on high out of the earth," He virtually bade farewell to the objects of sense and time, and felt that His reign of "Eternal Spirit" had begun. In His person our Lord was thus a new Priest, not a priest of an old order of things ripened, matured, and brought to perfection, but a new Priest of a new Order, a Priest of Heaven, in Heaven, and for Heaven. The consequences of all this, more especially as they affect our conception of the Christian system and our own relation to it, cannot fail to be of a very momentous kind. But we are not yet ready to consider them.

Before doing so we have to turn our thoughts to the Work of the heavenly High-priest, or to

the different functions which He discharges in that capacity.

I. The first of these is that of Offering. It was the chief duty of the high-priest in Israel to offer, upon the great Day of Atonement, the appointed sacrifice for the sins of the people, and that offering is fulfilled in Christ. If, too, the representation given in the last lecture be correct, it was fulfilled in Him as the super-earthly, that is, as the heavenly High-priest, His High-priesthood having begun with the time when He was lifted up out of this lower world, and before He died. Whether, however, this representation be accepted or not, there can be no doubt upon one point, that the death of the Redeemer upon Calvary was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. In this light it is always and everywhere presented to us in Scripture. In this light, with comparatively little exception, it has always been acknowledged and believed in by the Church. No other explanation of it has obtained more than partial acceptance. No other has been able to give peace to the troubled conscience, or to convey to us the assurance that a new and living way of access to the loving Father of their spirits had been opened for sinful creatures. The death upon the cross was no mere testimony to the faithfulness of an obedience which would not waver even in the utmost extremity of human suffering. It was no mere illustration of a heroic faith in God remaining steadfast even unto death. It was no mere surrender to wicked men, in the spirit of a glorious martyrdom, of a life which had been lived for

God, and which from its earliest to its latest moment had been spent in the conviction that, not outward honour but truth, uttered, maintained, and vindicated, makes men kings. It was a sacrifice, an offering for sin. Christ "bore our sins in His own body on the tree"; "He gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God;" He died that we might live.

Again, not only was our Lord's death in its initial stage an offering. That offering was still further carried on towards its completion when, after His Resurrection and Ascension, our Lord entered into the Holiest of all, in order that He might be our Forerunner into that blessed communion and fellowship with God which was the great end and purpose of redemption.

Upon these two points it seems unnecessary to enlarge, so generally is the one, so widely at least is the other, admitted by Christian men.<sup>1</sup> It may be well, therefore, to devote the time at our command to another and more difficult question. Does the ascended and glorified Lord even now present to His Father in heaven anything that may with propriety be called an offering? Or are His heavenly functions summed up in the idea of Intercession? The latter view is that generally taken. Our Lord's work of offering is supposed to have been finished when He died. In the shedding of His precious blood it was accomplished;

<sup>1</sup> The author may be permitted to refer to his work on *The Resurrection of our Lord*, parti-

cularly to note 56 in the later editions.

and, after His Ascension, He had only to present that sacrifice to the Father that, on the ground of its acceptance, He might thenceforward be an all-prevailing Intercessor on our behalf. It is not indeed denied upon this view that, after our Lord ascended, one thing remained for Him to do in order to complete His sacrifice. He had to place before the Father either the very blood which He had shed, or the ideas involved in that sacrificial act. But this is supposed to have been done only once and for ever. Having done this, the glorified Redeemer entered upon an entirely different part of His priestly work; and Intercession, not offering, is the function in which He always has been and still is engaged in the Heavenly Sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> Is the view thus taken to be accepted as complete? Are we to confine the thought of "offering" on the part of our Lord to His sacrificial death? Or are we so to extend the thought as to include in it a present and eternal offering to God of His life in heaven? The question is one in which there is no small danger of being misled by the ambiguity of words. But, if this danger can be avoided, it is a question of the utmost practical importance for our whole conception of Christianity, and for our own Christian faith and life. The following considerations may prepare the way for the answer to it:—

1. The true idea of offering is not to be sought in death. It is a mistake to imagine that in the act of offering there is always and necessarily involved the

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Wardlaw, *Systematic Theology*, ii. 632, and the dogma-

tic theologians generally. Comp. also Westcott on Hebrews viii. 3.

death of what is offered. So far is this from being the case that in the highest conception of offering death has no place.<sup>1</sup> Had man never fallen it would still have been his duty to offer himself, together with all that he possessed, to the God in whom he lived, and moved, and had his being; and the highest conception of a redeemed life, when sin has been pardoned and "the mercies of God," appropriated in faith, have become its ruling principle, is set before us by the Apostle in the words, "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (or spiritual) service."<sup>2</sup> The relation which the Almighty intended to exist between Himself and His intelligent creatures was that of constant and loving fellowship; no obstacle to the full outpouring of love upon His side, or to the confident and free return of love upon theirs. Communion of this kind, however, cannot be maintained between parties of whom the one is absolutely dependent on the other, unless the dependence be acknowledged and the obligations implied in it fulfilled. Offering, therefore, on the part of the creature to his

<sup>1</sup> "The idea of sacrifice does not necessarily involve the shedding of blood."—Bishop Wobb's *Priesthood of the Laity*, p. 12. Compare *Lux Mundi*, p. 279. "Sacrifice, in fact, in the most general form belongs to the life of man, and in the truest sense expresses the life of man. It is essentially the response of love to love, of the Son to the Father, the rendering to God in grateful

use of that which has been received from Him. Language cannot offer a more expressive example of moral degeneration in words than the popular connexion of thoughts of loss and suffering with that which is a Divine Service."—Westcott on Hebrews, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii. 1. Compare prayer after Communion in Book of Common Prayer.

Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor is the law of man's nature; but not necessarily the offering of death. The slaughter of a victim is not always needed. Man may offer the fruits of his field or his other substance in token that he is offering himself to God while he may yet continue to live. The presentation of an offering without death was even familiar to the Jews in the ritual of their own law. The *Mincha* or Meat offering, which consisted simply of vegetable produce prepared according to special directions, was not less than the sacrifices of blood an "offering," and it is known in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament by the same term.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed the offering spoken of by the prophet as that which shall be made in the glorious kingdom of the future, "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same;"<sup>2</sup> and already in the "Teaching of the twelve Apostles," to say nothing of the early Christian fathers, that passage is quoted as prophetic of the Christian Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> No doubt without previous sacrifices of blood the *Mincha* could not have been accepted; but the simple fact that an offering without blood, without death, was in certain circumstances well-pleasing to God, is enough to show that to the idea of offering death is not essential. That which in the case of man, as he is, makes death enter into any sacrifice, is sin. Not by arbitrary appointment, but by the eternal necessities of right and righteousness, "the wages

<sup>1</sup> *Thwila*. Comp. Kurz, *Sacri-  
ficial Worship of the Old Testa-  
ment*, Clark's Translation, p. 281.  
On an apparent, but only appa-

rent, exception, comp. Kurz, p:  
125.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. i. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Didache, xiv.

of sin is death." It is not less, therefore, an eternal law that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission."<sup>1</sup> When, on the other hand, sin has not been committed, or when the covenant with God has not been broken, there is in the thought of "offering" no place for death. Even when there has been sin, and when in consequence there must be death, that death, however imperatively required, cannot fill up the whole thought of offering. It is only a part of it, a transition step to another stage not less important or imperative than itself. How indeed is it possible to imagine the Almighty satisfied with death? If one thing was more impressed upon the Old Testament economy than another, it was the gulf between God and death. God was made known to Israel as The Living God, and not only as living Himself, but as desirous that all His creatures should live also.<sup>2</sup> Were death the essence of sacrifice it ought to be permanent; and the simple circumstance that in sacrifice, an animal could be substituted for man, shows that the aim of sacrifice was not to destroy man's life but to preserve it, bringing it at the same time into a new relation with God, so that man might be, more or less thereafter, "a living sacrifice." Sacrifice thus implies as its main end not death, but life; and, however in a sacrifice of blood death may first strike the eye, it is not the thing chiefly contemplated either by Him who receives or by him who makes the offering. Within, if we may so speak, or beyond the death there is the thought of life.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ix. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. x. 10 ; Ezek. xviii. 23.

2. The idea of offering is associated in Scripture with our Lord's work in heaven. To refer only to one, but that perhaps the leading passage on the point, we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "For every high-priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high-priest should have somewhat also to offer."<sup>1</sup> It is, indeed, contended that the past tense of the verb "offer," here used by the sacred writer,<sup>2</sup> is a proof that he is dealing with the past alone, and that his mind is occupied with the thought of our Lord's one sufficient offering made upon the cross. Were this idea to be accepted, the words could certainly not refer to any offering of our Lord in heaven. The shedding of His blood on Calvary would be the one act contemplated by the writer, and in no strict acceptance of the term could that blood be said to be "offered" now. It could be thought of only as the means by which our Lord entered into the Divine presence, and purified the heavenly things and the people.<sup>3</sup> Is this view then correct?

One thing at least is evident,—that the person spoken of as "this High-priest" is the person described in the immediately preceding verses as "such an High-priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holy things and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man," so that the reference of the passage to the Lord as ascended and glorified cannot be mistaken. The only question is, Do the words "that He also have

<sup>1</sup> Heb. viii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> προσενέγκη.

<sup>3</sup> Westcott on Hebrews viii. 3.

somewhat to offer" take us back to the cross, and to the cross alone? Or are they applicable to our Lord at the moment when they were written? And, on the supposition that they are so, do they describe Him as ministering continuously with the presentation of Himself as an offering in heaven?

The tense of the verb used in the original is insufficient to determine this, and both here and in many similar circumstances the appeal of the interpreter must be to the context in which the tense occurs, and to the scope of the passage as a whole.<sup>1</sup> When such an appeal is made in the case before us, it would seem to be impossible to understand the "somewhat" to be offered of anything only done by our Lord when He was on earth, in the power of which He had now entered heaven. The purpose of the writer is to describe present not past priestly acts, a ministry at that moment going on, and not even in the particular referred to finished. He desires to illustrate the glory and fitness of the High-priest of the Christian faith by showing, not what He had done in the days of His flesh alone, but what He continued to do after He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Nor can it be said that that glory and fitness are sufficiently brought out by the Intercession of the heavenly High-priest. Intercession is not enough. The comparison made between the functionaries of the old and the new Covenants has relation not simply to intercession, but

<sup>1</sup> Compare Westcott on Hebrews x. 5, p. 310; comp. also ix. 24, *v. v.*

to the whole work which they severally discharged. The Jewish high-priest is seen entering the most sacred part of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. What is he about? Intercession is not the sole work in which he engages there; he offers the gifts and sacrifices upon which either his intercession rests, or in which it is involved. "This High-priest," the High-priest of the Christian dispensation, has in like manner entered into the heavenly Tabernacle. What is He about? He is not simply interceding on the strength of a past gift or sacrifice. He is presenting an offering on which His intercession is based, and in which it is involved. The idea of offering, therefore, cannot be separated from the action of our Lord after His Ascension, unless we also separate the thought of offering from what was done by the high-priest of Israel in the innermost sanctuary of his people. Such a separation the ceremonial of the law does not permit. The Jewish high-priest ministered in that sanctuary with more than the recollection or the merit of an offering already made. He had to sprinkle on the mercy-seat and before the veil the blood which he carried in along with him; he had to complete the reconciliation of Israel to God; he had to lay his people upon God's altar that they might thenceforward be a holy nation in union with Him who claimed them for Himself. And all this was a part of the offering, not merely something done after the offering was ended. Had it been otherwise, we should be compelled to conclude that, in the supreme moment of his ministry, the high-priest did not engage in that

“offering of both gifts and sacrifices,” which was his most characteristic act; and we should certainly have expected that intercession for Israel, rather than continued procedure with the blood, would have been distinctly spoken of as his chief function in the most holy place. As, therefore, the Jewish priest continued his work of offering after he had gone within the veil, so, in similar circumstances, we must connect with Him in whom the economy of Judaism is fulfilled the idea of offering. Our Lord, even in His exalted and glorified state, must have “somewhat to offer.”

The force of what has now been said will indeed be greatly weakened if we accept the opinion recently expressed by one whose conclusions on any such point can be spoken of with nothing but the utmost deference. According to that opinion, “The blood was not properly ‘offered’ in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. It was used as the means of entrance and purification. Even so Christ entered into the Divine Presence ‘through’ (*διὰ*) His own Blood. . . but we do not read that He ‘offered’ it”; and again, “This sprinkling of the blood is regarded in a wider sense as an ‘offering.’”<sup>1</sup> But the meaning of the preposition thus referred to, so far from excluding the idea of offering, implies it. The preposition is used in no local sense, as if the Lord had passed into the inmost sanctuary through His own blood. It is used rather to introduce the mention of the circumstances and relations under which the thing spoken of was done,<sup>2</sup> and it thus leads directly to the

<sup>1</sup> Westcott on Hebrews viii. 2; ix. 7.      <sup>2</sup> Moulton's *Winer*, p. 474.

thought of an offering with which, as well as in the power of which, the great High-priest entered heaven. Nor can it be said that the blood was not strictly offered by the Jewish high-priest when he went into the Holy of Holies, but was only used to purify the sanctuary. The words of another passage in the same Epistle, where we are told that the copies of the things in the heavens were to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,<sup>1</sup> prove clearly, when we note the following context, that the blood cleansed because it was offered,<sup>2</sup> and that had it not been an offering when taken within the veil it would not have possessed its purifying power. In addition to this, it is also to be observed that the distinction drawn in the words quoted between a strict and a "wider" or "not proper" meaning of the word "offering" is unknown to the law, and that it really eliminates altogether from the advanced stage of which it speaks the idea of offering. It brings us into contact at that stage with the presentation of an offering already made, and not with an offering itself. This, however, is contrary to the ritual of the law, in which the sprinkling of the blood was the culminating point of the high-priest's action. Not till he reached this point was his offering, in its strictest and most proper sense, complete. The action of the high-priest, moreover, upon the great Day of Atonement—his action both without and within the Tabernacle—is surely to be regarded as a unity. But if a complex act, which

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ix. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. ver. 25.

supposes a longer or shorter space of time for its accomplishment, is to be looked at in this light, the ideas belonging to the initial must be found in the final stage, or we shall have no common thought binding the two stages into one.

Returning, therefore, to the words of the sacred writer, "Wherefore it is necessary that this High-priest also have somewhat to offer," it would seem that we are not entitled either to limit the offering spoken of to the offering on the cross, or to understand the word "offer" in a loose rather than a strict sense, because we may be compelled to connect it with a point of time after our Lord's entrance into heaven. When our Lord died on Calvary He presents to us the idea of offering. When He entered heaven the same idea penetrates and pervades His first presentation of Himself to the Father there.

3. It is impossible, however, to pause at the point that we have reached, and the further question arises, Whether the idea of offering is to be connected not only with the moment when our Lord presented Himself to His Father, but with His continued, His never-ending life in Heaven? The thought of much that accompanied His offering on the cross must indeed be here laid aside. There is no more the humiliation, the sorrow, or the pain in which He submitted to the curse of the law. There is no more a valley of the shadow of death to be passed through in which every step taken forces from Him the prayer, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." He is no more surrounded by an out-

ward darkness, the symbol of the awful mystery which had, in that "hour," been brought about by "the power of darkness."<sup>1</sup> There is no more death. But it is *behind* these things, and not *in* them, that the true conception of the offering on the cross is to be sought. It is in the willing acceptance of them, in the voluntary submission to them, that its essence is to be found. And this essence, we appear to be taught, is continuous and unceasing. At the moment when the sacred writer says that "This High-priest must also have somewhat to offer," he is speaking of a time long subsequent to our Lord's entrance into Heaven; and yet, as we have seen, he speaks of the "somewhat" as a present thing. If it was then present, no one will deny that it must be always present. What our Lord was after He sat down at the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty He can never cease to be. The idea of a continuous application of redemption, resting upon what had been done in the past, cannot exhaust the work of the unchangeable and everlasting High-priest. What He had done must penetrate what He always does; and the thought of Offering cannot give place to that of Intercession. The first is the foundation of the second, but the second is pervaded by the conception and spirit of the first. If we rightly interpret the words, Offering and Intercession imply one another. There is even a sense in which Intercession is Offering, and Offering Intercession. Let it also be allowed (and no other conclusion seems possible) that, as our High-priest is Himself "heavenly," His

<sup>1</sup> Luko xxii. 53.

work must be of the same character, and it will necessarily follow that the idea of His Offering is likewise heavenly and, as heavenly, eternal.

4. One other point must be noticed. It is a fundamental lesson of the New Testament that our Lord's offering of Himself for sinful men cannot be repeated. No truth is more distinctly impressed upon us by the sacred writers than that, in contrast with the offerings of the law, Christ's offering was made not once only but "once for all." The legal victims died; their life-blood ebbed away; their efficacy was only for the moment; the offering of them needed to be constantly renewed. Not so with the death endured for us by Him who is Victim as well as Priest. The distinguishing feature of His sacrifice is, that it is "one sacrifice for sins for ever."<sup>1</sup> "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him."<sup>2</sup>

In these circumstances it is natural to ask whether there is any view of our Lord's sacrificial work, which shall combine in one the ideas of the different stages of that work,—His death upon the cross and a continued offering by Him as the risen and living Redeemer. If this question can be answered in the affirmative we shall be compelled to allow that our High-priest not only offered Himself in the moment of His death, but that, when after His Resurrection He passed within the veil, He had still "somewhat to offer"; and we shall be prepared for a further unfolding of the nature of that "somewhat."

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vi. 9.

Turning, therefore, to this part of our inquiry, it would appear as if the fundamental conception of that offering of our Lord by which the breach of the broken covenant is healed, and man is restored to the Divine favour, is not death but life. The place held by death in the process of restoration will have to be spoken of immediately. In the meantime it is enough to say that life, not death, is the essence of atonement, is that by which sin is covered.

Our thoughts upon this subject are apt to be confused by the fact that the associations of the present day with the word "blood" are so widely different from those with which that word was connected in the Hebrew mind.<sup>1</sup> Every reader of the New Testament has observed that redemption is continually spoken of by its various writers as due to the "blood" as well as to the "death" of Christ: "Take heed unto yourselves, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood;" "The Beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood;" "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, with silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ;" "The blood of

<sup>1</sup> The writer must again refer to the much fuller discussion of this subject in his book on *The Resurrection of our Lord*, p. 140,

with note 56 and its appendix. It is introduced here with the view of establishing a different point.

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."<sup>1</sup>

Reading passages such as these, we almost inevitably understand the word "blood" to have the same meaning as the word "death"; and hence, not only in popular but in scientific theology, the whole work of our atonement is supposed to have been consummated in the death which the Saviour died upon the cross. There, it is urged, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of God bore, as our Substitute, the penalty of our transgressions. There 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 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 to 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. The sacrifice of Christ has been regarded as nothing more than the penalty of violated law; while some have even spoken of it as if, when presented in this light, it

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 7, ii. 13; Col. i. 20; 1 Peter i. 18, 19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9.

shocked our natural susceptibilities and invited us to enter again into "the shambles of heathenism." Of such a mode of speaking as this last little need be said. Justice to the view so travestied demands rather 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 before us in the heat and bustle of our daily life. But every one who has opened his eyes has beheld enough to let him know how innumerable are the quiet and gentle and loving spirits that, nourished by such aspects of Christ's atonement, have drawn as near as human frailty would permit to Him who was lowly of heart, and whose very presence, without our speculating regarding Him, gives rest to the soul. And these aspects of Christ's work have effected this by means of the truth, not the error, which they contained. They have answered the cry of the awakened conscience. They have dispelled the alarm of the troubled heart. Let the Church cease to proclaim them, and her strength to execute her mission will be gone. 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 fairest forms of Christian living, 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 recall to mind more fully than we have yet done 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. Not till this was done was the atonement perfected, 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.<sup>1</sup>

In all this process it is to be kept steadily in view that the blood was the life. Even when shed it did not cease to be so. It was indeed the life under a peculiar aspect, for it was life which had passed through that death which is the wages of sin. But it was still the life; and as life, not as death, it was brought into fellowship with the living God, and made one with Him. Such was, briefly, the ritual of the law; and the law, designed as it was to shadow forth the fundamental ideas of the Gospel, may often help us to understand the more spiritual form in which the Gospel states them.

When accordingly we turn to the manner in which the ritual now spoken of was "fulfilled" in our Lord, this conception of the meaning of the word "blood" must be retained. As "the blood always includes the thought of the life preserved and active beyond death,"<sup>2</sup> so the blood of Christ is the life of Christ. When it was shed for us on Calvary it was His life

<sup>1</sup> On the point here spoken of Professor Robertson Smith's lectures on *The Religion of the Semites* are highly instructive. The conclusion is there established by a wide induction of particulars that among the Semites the blood was the life, and that the main idea in the application of the blood to the altar and the worshipper was to make a life-bond between the god and

men. The deepest thought involved in sacrifice was not the expiation of sin by death, but the establishing of an act of communion in which the god and his worshippers partook together of a sacred victim, and which acted as an atonement by wiping out all memory of previous estrangement.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, additional note on 1 John i. 7.

given for us in another and a deeper sense than that in which we use the expression "to give one's life," that is, to die. His life was what He gave to God *as life*, although it was a life which then and there, as demanded by eternal considerations connected with the relations between God and man, passed through death. The same blood then, or, in other words, the same life, is next presented to the Father within the sanctuary; and the only difference between what it was before Christ died and what it was after He died is this, that it has now its new character fully impressed upon it,—the character given it by that death which has been freely accepted in obedience to the Father's will, and in love to the Father and to men. Thus we obtain a view of our Lord's work by which its two great stages, that of His dying upon the cross and that of His presenting Himself to His heavenly Father in the Most Holy Place, are united under one conception—the conception of offering.

In the considerations now adduced we have the answer to the question with which we started. The thought of "offering" on the part of our Lord is not to be confined to His sacrificial death: it is so to be extended as to include in it a present and eternal offering to God of Himself in heaven. What He offered on the cross, what He offers now, is His life, a life unchangeable not only in its general character as life, but in the particular character given it by the experience through which it passed. The difference between these two views of offering, as death or life, is important.

Death is an act accomplished in a moment. If any claim is to be founded upon it, it must be recalled as a past act in order that the claim may be allowed. Life is a condition or state. At every instant of its course it may bear the stamp imprinted upon it at its beginning, and it will be judged of by what it is, not by what it was. We may offer ourselves to death in a manner pleasing to God; and, rising again, we may entreat Him to remember the manner in which we died. But if, instead of death, we offer Him in the moment of death life passing through death, and to which that transition gives a special colouring, then our life, when it has passed through death, cannot fail to retain that element of offering which led to its surrender. It was thus with Christ. In dying He did not merely perform an act. He did not offer to the Father a life extinguished in death and afterwards to be recalled in thought. "He offered Himself as living in death,"<sup>1</sup> and as possessed of the life which never ends. How can we separate the idea of "living" from that of "offering"? As the life is imperishable, and that too in its new capacity, so also the thought of offering connected with it lasts and must last for ever.

Other considerations lead directly to the same conclusion. To refer in the first place to one or two passages of Scripture, our Lord Himself, in words already quoted for another purpose, connects the thought of offering in the closest manner with that of His future triumphant life. "And I, if I be lifted up on high out

<sup>1</sup> Westcott on Hebrews vii. 10.

of the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.”<sup>1</sup> The use of the preposition “out of” here demands special notice, if we would enter into all that is embraced in these remarkable words. The same preposition meets us in our Lord’s High-priestly prayer, when He says, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them out of the evil one.”<sup>2</sup> In both cases the force of the preposition is to be particularly marked. In both it is the very hinge upon which the meaning of the language turns. When therefore, as immediately afterwards interpreted by the Evangelist,<sup>3</sup> our Lord speaks of His crucifixion as a being lifted up on high “out of the earth,” and as the means by which He will draw all men to Him (not to His memory, but to Himself, to the ever-living “Me”), He shows us that the element of offering undeniably involved in it is to be taken forward to His future glory. What when lifted up upon the cross He will be in His redeeming power, He will always be.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is hardly less instructive when it describes our Lord as saying in words of the Psalmist, “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God. . . . He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.”<sup>4</sup> These words cannot be understood to mean no more

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> John xii. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. x. 5-9.

than this, that our Lord came to do God's will by consenting to die. Such submission was but a part, although it may have been the most striking part, of the manifestation of the spirit which exclaims, "I am come to do Thy will, O God." Yet that spirit includes more than submission to death. The perfect and continuous fulfilling of God's will, including death, is substituted by the Priest and Victim of the New Covenant for the offerings of the Old. In other words, the spirit which does God's will in everything is the essential element of what Christ was as the one great offering for man. The spirit of so doing was immanent in Him and in His redeeming work; and, because it was so, it belongs to His heavenly not less than to His earthly life.

Once more, that vision of the glorified Lord in the Revelation of St. John, which may in one sense be said to be the leading vision of the book, teaches the same lesson. When the glorified Lord is beheld in it as the Lamb that had, or rather that hath, been slaughtered, it is obvious that the marks of His wounds are still upon Him. It is with the tokens of His offering telling not of the past only, but of the present, that the Lord reigns.

In the second place, we have to remember the bearing upon the point now before us of the constitution of our Lord's Person. In heaven He is not less truly than He was on earth, Son of man as well as Son of God. He possesses there not only the Divinity which belongs to Him as the Eternal Word, but the humanity by which He is fitted to represent the children whom God has given Him. His continued life in heaven, therefore,

being still the life of humanity though glorified, must be brought under the conception of offering. Not only at first, but always, it must ascend before God as the "savour of a sweet smell." In the very nature of things it must be a life of obedience, submission, and dependence, a life finding its highest satisfaction in occupying this relation to the Father. In other words, it must be an offering.

In the third place, the same conclusion follows from the thought of that relation in which the glorified Lord and His glorified saints stand to one another. It will at once be admitted that, whatever may be said of Christ in glory, the redeemed in glory have always to present themselves to the Father as an offering. In no other way, however, can they do this than in Him who is their life. Whatever they are must be first in Him; whatever they do must be first done by Him. According to His own teaching their relation to Him corresponds exactly to His relation to the Father: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me."<sup>1</sup> Thus, whatever idea is fulfilled in them must first exist in Him. They do not live simply in the power of something which He bestows on them as a gift, apart from what He is. They live "because of" Himself in them. Their life is His life, and the spirit in which they serve is the spirit which, existing in Him, is transferred to them. If they therefore present themselves as an offering to the Father, He in whom they do so must

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 57.

Himself be an offering to the Father. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;"<sup>1</sup> or, in other words, He hath perfected "all who from time to time realise progressively in fact that which has been potentially obtained for them."<sup>2</sup> Do saints in heaven realise this in a past or in a present Lord? Not "by," let it be observed, but "in"<sup>3</sup> the will of the Son, as He perfectly does the will of the Father, and is thus an offering to the Father, have they been sanctified, and that will must be for ever operative if they are for ever to experience its effects. It must for ever supply the sphere in which their sanctification is accomplished.

In the light of what has been said we are now prepared to form a distinct idea of what is to be understood by the "offering" of our heavenly High-priest. That offering began with the cross, with the moment when, separated from all that was material, local, or limited, the Lord who died was able to enter upon a spiritual, universal, and everlasting priesthood, and to present to the God against whom His people had sinned, His spiritual, universal, and everlasting offering. 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 to the law so mysteriously

<sup>1</sup> ἁγιαζομένων: note the tense.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott on Hebrews x. 14.      <sup>3</sup> Heb. x. 10; comp. R. V., margin.

linked with that sentence, that, as things are in a present world, it is only through death that we can conquer death and find the path to life. Thus 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 identify ourselves with Him as the Victim upon which our help is laid, we behold in Him the law vindicated, our sins expiated, and our admission to the Divine presence and favour secured.

This, however, is no more than the first part of the one great step taken for us by our heavenly High-priest. A second part followed. As the blood, or, in other words, the life, of an animal was liberated in death in order that by the sprinkling a union might be effected between the offerer and God, so the blood, or, in other words, the life, of Christ was liberated on the cross in order that our life in His might be united to the Father in the closest communion and fellowship, and that the broken covenant might be replaced by one that should last for ever.

A third part still remained, depending upon these two, naturally resulting from them, and necessary to the completion of the issue to which they were designed to lead. The life thus united to God was actually surrendered to Him in a perpetual service of love and praise. It may indeed be said that our Lord had always occupied this latter relation to His Father. True, but not in the midst of the same conditions as those

in which He occupied it after He had accomplished His Mediatorial work. Before His Incarnation He had been only the Eternal Son who in the beginning was with God and was God; and had the word "Me" in His High-priestly prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me,"<sup>1</sup> expressed only the Eternal Sonship, it would have shown that He was about to return to that original state. But it expressed more, and the "glory" for which He prayed, though essentially the same as ever, was also different, in so far as He was different. He had taken our humanity into union with His Divinity, and the life which He carried with Him into the heavenly Sanctuary was the life, not simply of God, but of the man Christ Jesus. This was the "living sacrifice" which, with His people in Him, He presented to the Father, in union with whom not only reconciliation but Divine life is found.

As, too, Christ retains His humanity for ever, so His people are for ever in Him. As they were identified with Him in the earlier, they are also identified with Him in the later steps of His offering. 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."<sup>2</sup> When all this is done our Lord's offering is complete. The end

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 12, 13.

of the Christian Covenant is attained, and in the members of His Body it is ideally, if not yet actually, realised.

Such then is the offering of our heavenly High-priest; and if the view now taken of it be correct, it follows that we are not to confine it to the death upon the cross, but that we are to include in it a present and eternal offering of His life in heaven.

The important truth only stated before may now also be more fully and clearly seen,—that the offering of our Lord cannot be repeated, and that, not only according to the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews but of St. Paul, His death was “once for all”—“For in that He died, He died unto sin once for all.”<sup>1</sup> That only which comes to an end can be repeated, not that which is in its own nature continuous, unchangeable, and everlasting. Its repetition is then impossible, not simply because of the excellency of the offering when first made, but because it never ceases, or can cease, to be before God in the very same light as that in which upon the cross it was acceptable to Him. Its one perfect sufficiency, so far from being disparaged, is thus enhanced, and we obtain a foundation of increased security upon which to rest that truth. An act may be repeated, and, if not in a real, it may (as in the Roman Catholic Church) be repeated in an unreal form. A state, a condition which knows no end, cannot be repeated. That is the case here. In surrendering His life for man our Lord fulfilled the highest conception of a perfect

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 10.

and everlasting offering which cannot in the nature of things be followed by any other sacrifice for sin. The penalty for sin once completely paid cannot be paid again. Its stamp remains imperishably on the life now lived by the Ascended Lord. In the presence of His Father He is for ever the Lamb that was slain, and no repetition of His offering can take place.

Before passing on it may be well, in a few sentences, to consider that, in the light in which we have now regarded the offering of our Lord, it most of all possesses those characteristics which make it the fulfilment of the whole sacrificial system of the older covenant and a perfect offering.

*a.* As an offering of life it possesses the power of a present offering, not merely of an offering made and accepted for us nineteen centuries ago, but of one which ascends even now for us before God, as much an offering as it ever was. It is this thought that seems to give to the Roman Mass its powerful hold over so many minds. The Redeemer to whom the partakers in that mysterious solemnity are to cling is there, there on the altar before their eyes, there as He is, a Victim dying for their sakes. How shall they not cling to Him and hold Him fast? The same strength and consolation may be ours without the Mass, when we feel that one of the great elements of Christ's sacrifice is, that it was not made only at a special moment of the past, a sacrifice to be ever afterwards remembered and pleaded; but that, as an offering continually presented to the Father, it has a present sacrificial efficacy as powerful always as it was

at the very first. The present becomes as the past in vividness. The Mount on which the Redeemer died can never be removed, and we are ourselves on Calvary. St. Paul could say to the Galatian Christians, notwithstanding their distance from Jerusalem, that "before their eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified."<sup>1</sup> In like manner the Cross is before our eyes. We occupy in reality the same position as that of those who stood beside it on the day when it was raised. By faith we behold the life there surrendered in death, and in which the hope and life of every believer are wrapped up, still ascending before God, who is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. We ascend in it, and there is given to the peace bestowed by it all the increased intensity belonging to an offering on our behalf which we see, as compared with one of which we are only told that it was executed in the past. Everything connected with the Christian dispensation then assumes at once its Scriptural characteristic of being a present thing. The offering is present, and the faith which casts itself upon it, the love which it awakens, the hope which it inspires, are also present.

b. As an offering of life, the offering of our Lord most of all possesses its true unity and completeness. On any other view it divides itself into two entirely distinct and separate parts. These parts are not always indeed conceived of in the same way. With some they are our Lord's death upon the cross, together with the presentation of His blood to God, by which He atoned for sin

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 1.

and "cleansed the heavenly archetypes of the earthly sanctuary,"<sup>1</sup> followed by the imparting of a new life. With others they are "the presentation of a past death," followed by "that of the elevation and energies of a present Life, which includes the life of His people, who have their life hid with Him, because they are in Him as the members of His Body."<sup>2</sup> Whichever of these statements we adopt, our Lord's work, as a whole, is considered to be twofold—partly an offering of death, partly one of life; partly an offering made on earth, partly one made in heaven. Both statements, too, make the relation of the believer to His Lord in the first stage of His work different from what it is in the second. On the cross Christ dies, and dies alone. Alone He offers Himself as a Victim for His people. In heaven He lives, but His people are now in Him, enjoying a share in His heavenly life, implanted in them though not yet perfectly developed. There is thus a want of unity in the conception we are invited to form of the most momentous portion of the Redeemer's work; and we are even in danger of so separating its parts as to imagine that the offering up of ourselves to God is a consequence, instead of an integral constituent, of redemption.

On the other hand, let us look at our Lord's offering as one of life, of life passing through death upon the cross, and afterwards "perfected" in heaven, and His whole offering becomes one, and our part with Him also one. One with Him, we die in Him, rise in Him, reign in Him. We are *in* Him from the beginning to the end

<sup>1</sup> Westcott on Hebrews, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Sadler, *The One Offering*, p. 47.

of our spiritual experience. Our repentance, our cry for pardon, our acceptance of the penalty of sin, our new and higher life, are all *in* Him—involved in the very idea of receiving Him as He is—and not conclusions to which we are led by reasoning.

But the view now taken of our Lord's offering gives it completeness as well as unity. On any other view our death with Christ upon the cross appears to want that moral and religious element which, according to the sacred writers, is more than intimately associated with it, which is even wrought into its very texture. So far as concerns us it becomes a merely outward act, to be applied for our benefit in no other way than any Divine gift. It sets us free from the guilt and punishment of sin. It does not in itself involve deliverance from the power of sin. That deliverance follows only as a necessary result. There is incompleteness in this way of considering the matter. Pardon of sin and deliverance from its bondage—or, at all events, pardon of sin and the impartation of the principle which, as it acquires strength in the soul, will and must in ever-increasing measure deliver us—cannot be separated except in thought. The redemption which touches our legal position before God touches at the same moment our life and character. The necessities of the Protestant controversy with Rome have obscured this truth, but it does not cease on that account to be one of the most important truths of the New Testament. In Christ's death the believer beholds more than the ground upon which he is forgiven. In it he also dies to sin, as truly

and really and inwardly as in Christ's life he lives to righteousness. All this, however, loses its immediateness of application to ourselves unless we think of our Lord's offering as an offering of life, of life in death. Then every step taken in carrying it out comes home to our life, and has there its corresponding answer. Union on our part to Christ in all His fortunes penetrates the whole process of redemption; and our Lord's offering, while He takes us into it and along with it from the first, is complete as well as one.

c. As an offering of life our Lord's offering most of all "fulfils" those various offerings of the law by which it was foreshadowed. A general fulfilment or accomplishment of this kind must find a place in any true conception of the Saviour's offering, for He came to accomplish not one part only, but every part 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 later and 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 filled the Redeemer's breast, even in the midst of the troubles by which He was surrounded. But this cannot avail us if we believe, in conformity with the whole tenor 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. Able theologians accordingly have been 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."<sup>1</sup> That cannot be. Whatever is to be fulfilled in the members of the Body must first be 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 appropriate order, of everything that was involved in the separate offerings of the law. In the life *now* offered to the

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, *Typology of Scripture*, ii. p. 353.

Father 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 submission to the Father's will. 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.

d. As an offering of life our Lord's offering embraces in its efficacy the whole life of man. When as our High-priest and Representative Jesus offers His life to God, that life touches not only individual acts of our life, it covers it in every one of its departments. There is no portion of the life lived by us in which, by the fact that He had lived a human life, the Redeemer of the world had not shared. Must we labour? He had laboured. Must we suffer? He had suffered. Must we be tempted? He had been tempted. Must we at one time have solitary hours, at another move in social circles? He had spent hours alone upon the mountain top, and He had mingled with His disciples as companions and friends. Must we die? He had died. Must we rise from the grave? He had risen from it on the third morning. Must we appear before the Almighty as our Judge? He had appeared before Him who "sent" Him with the record of all that He had accomplished. Must we enter into eternity? He has entered it before us, and eternity is now passing

over Him. More even than this has to be said. For our High-priest had not only moved in every one of the scenes in which we move. In each He had been a conqueror, and that for us; so that, when He presents His life to the Father, the conquest which He had gained in each is included in His offering, and we may be of good cheer because He has overcome. As the offering which He makes is His perfected human life, our whole human life is brought in Him within the scope of His consecrating power, and every part of it is presented to God as a trophy of His victory.<sup>1</sup>

II. The second part of our Lord's High-priestly work in heaven is His Intercession. This is generally supposed to refer to petitions which He offers up to His Father for those members of His Body who are still amidst the trials and temptations of their earthly pilgrimage. Having made His own complete and everlasting offering of Himself upon the cross, and having in the power of His blood there shed entered into the immediate presence of God, and presented His offering to Him as an atonement for sin, He now pleads the cause of His people with all-prevailing intercession on their behalf. He applies to them the work which He accomplished upon earth; and, as One whom the Father heareth always, He obtains for them the measure of grace which they require, until at last they are perfected in glory. It was not indeed imagined by the fathers of the Church,<sup>2</sup> nor has the idea been enter-

<sup>1</sup> Comp. further on, the Offering of our Lord, Note B.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Petavius, lib. xii. cap. 8, § 8.

tained by later theologians,<sup>1</sup> that this intercession necessarily takes the form of spoken words. In heaven our Lord appears as "a Lamb standing as though it hath been slaughtered";<sup>2</sup> and whether this means (a point upon which opinions differ) that the marks of His sufferings are still to be seen in His glorified body, or that the thought only of His past offering is before the Father's mind, the conclusion is, that His very presence in His humanity is enough to secure the hearing and answering of His prayers. This view is accompanied by the admission that, unlike His offering on the cross or its completion in its presentation to the Father, the prayers of our Lord are continuous and unceasing. His offering was made once and for ever. His Intercession continues so long as the humblest believer needs His aid. Such is the view commonly entertained upon this point; and it appears to be mainly founded upon the impression that the proper and literal meaning of the term used in the original to describe this part of our Lord's work<sup>3</sup> is "to pray."

Such, however, is not the case. That expression occurs only six times in the New Testament (one of the six even being a compound form);<sup>4</sup> while a substantive derived from it occurs only twice.<sup>5</sup> It is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament canonical books, although it is met with several times in the Old Testament Apocrypha and in the early fathers. There

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Davidson and Westcott on Hebrews vii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. v. 6.

<sup>3</sup> ἐπιπροχάειν.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxv. 24; Rom. viii. 27, 34; xi. 2; Heb. vii. 25; Rom. viii. 26.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1; iv. 5.

is some want, therefore, of the information we might wish in order to reach a definite conclusion upon the meaning of the phrase; but there is enough. By examining it in its different contexts it will at once be seen that the verb does not mean simply to pray. It means to deal or transact with one person in reference to another, either making a statement "concerning" him upon which certain proceedings ought to follow, or asking something "for" him or "against" him. Petition is indeed the general result of such action, and hence the phrase passes easily into this meaning when there is anything in the connexion to give it that particular force. When, however, it stands alone, without anything to limit the interpretation, it ought to be understood in a much wider sense, as including the whole series of transactions in which one person may engage with another on behalf of a third.

The disposition to limit the Intercession of our Lord too exclusively to prayer has been in all probability strengthened by the supposition that when, on the great Day of Atonement, the high-priest went within the veil it was to intercede for Israel, and this again has seemed to derive support from what we are told of the vision of Zacharias in the temple, when the angel announced to him that he should have a son. But the prayer spoken of in connexion with Zacharias is that of "the whole multitude of the people, who were praying without at the hour of incense," while of himself it is only said that "according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of

the Lord and burn incense.”<sup>1</sup> The idea, indeed, that the high-priest went within the veil to pray has no clear foundation in Scripture. The incense which he carried within the veil was not so much to symbolise his prayers as to be a cloud between him and that glory of the Divine Presence upon which it was impossible for any one to look and live. There is no evidence that he there prayed. He simply completed the offering which he had begun immediately before; and, when the offering was complete, he came out to perform the ceremony of the two goats, in which the results of His offering were set forth.

In these circumstances it may be a matter of regret that the English language seems to possess no better word than “intercession” to express the action of our High-priest in heaven after He had presented His offering to the Father.<sup>2</sup> For this, however, there is no help, and all that can be done is to impress upon the inquirer the fact that “Intercession” is a much wider word than prayer. That prayer is included under the term is not for a moment to be denied, but we are not to limit it to prayer. We are to understand it of every act by which the Son, in dependence on the Father, in the Father’s name, and with the perfect concurrence of the Father, takes His own with Him into the Father’s presence, in order that whatever He Himself enjoys in the communications of His Father’s love may become also theirs.

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> The gain would be great could we speak of “interacting”

and “interaction,” but it is impossible to do so.

From this Intercession of the heavenly Lord, indeed, there is no reason why prayer—why even prayer in words—should be excluded. One thing only has to be remembered, that the glorified Redeemer does not pray to the Father in the sense in which the creature prays to the Creator. The fact has been often before, but cannot be too frequently noticed, that in the fourth Gospel our Lord never uses of His own approach to the Father the word expressive of the manner in which the creature approaches God. He goes to Him not as one between whom and God a gulf has to be bridged, or as if He were asking aid from an external source. He goes to Him in the full consciousness of mutual love; in that Divine fellowship in which He knows that the will of the Father is His will; and in which, therefore, He has only to utter the thoughts that belong in common to the ineffable unity of Their common life. But, so going, He prays.

The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John may cast light on the point now spoken of. 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 in the Revised translation of the New Testament, and we need, therefore, have no scruple in

using the Revised instead of the Authorised Version to illustrate the point before us.

Let us weigh, then, the import of the following verses when, in conformity with the original, the past is substituted in them for the perfect tense. "Even as thou gavest (not, hast given) Him authority over all flesh." "Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (not, Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent). "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work" (not, I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work). "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" (not, I have manifested Thy name). "And they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me" (not, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me). "And not one of them perished" (not, and none of them is lost). "And the world hated them" (not, and the world hath hated them). "As Thou didst send Me into the world" (not, as Thou hast sent Me). "That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (not, that Thou hast sent Me). "That the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me" (not, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, even as Thou hast loved Me). "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). "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).<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26.

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,<sup>1</sup> 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 He 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 will bear for ever, the wants of His people before the Father, who is both able and willing to supply them.

It is not, however, in prayer alone that the Intercession of the Church's High-priest in heaven is exercised. We have seen that the word has a much wider meaning. "I know thy works" is the language in which the exalted Redeemer addresses each of the seven churches

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 11.

of Asia, as they successively represent one or other of the conditions in which believers shall be found from the beginning to the end of their struggle with the world, and He "knows" them in order that He may furnish them with the supplies of strength and guidance which their ever-varying circumstances require. Each church has its own promise, and each promise is adapted to the church's need. He that walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks keeps them, and trims them, and pours fresh oil into them, that they may burn with undimmed brightness in the sanctuary.

Many other passages of Scripture, by directing us to a constant activity of the glorified Lord on behalf of the members of His body, teach us the same lesson. Thus it is that He watches over every manifestation of love, however trifling, made by the believer in His name. No gift of meat to the hungry, or water to the thirsty, or hospitality to the stranger, or clothing to the naked, and no visit paid to the prisoner or the sick, is unnoticed by Him. Each is rather marked in His book of remembrance, and it shall not be forgotten in the Judgment.<sup>1</sup> Thus also it is that to whatever lands His disciples travel in the discharge of their commission, or whatever labour or trials they have to face, He conveys to them the assurance, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me," "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the age."<sup>2</sup> Thus it is that He sees their shortcomings and falls, and obtains for them ever new applications of the pardoning efficacy of His

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 40 ; xxviii. 20.

blood.<sup>1</sup> And, yet again, it is thus that He gives us the consolation of words spoken at the moment when His departure was at hand, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>2</sup>

Rightly conceived, the work of Intercession on the part of our heavenly High-priest seems to be that, having restored the broken covenant and brought His Israel into the most intimate union and communion with God, He would now, amidst all their remaining weaknesses, and the innumerable temptations that surround them, preserve them in it. And He would do this by keeping them in Himself; so that in Him they shall stand in such unity of love to the Father that the Father will love them as His own sons, will need no one to remind Him that they are so, and will directly pour out upon them, as very members of the Body of the Eternal Son, every blessing first poured out upon the Head.

In the light of what has now been said, a clear line of distinction may be drawn between the Intercession of our Lord and that ascribed in the New Testament to the Holy Spirit. Of the latter, we read in the promise of Christ to His disciples, "And I will make request of the Father, and He shall give you another Advocate, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of the truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 3.

Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you";<sup>1</sup> while the same truth is undoubtedly referred to by St. Paul when he says, in writing to the Romans, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."<sup>2</sup> There are thus two "Advocates" mentioned in the New Testament—the one by St. John, when he says that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;"<sup>3</sup> the other by our Lord when, in His last discourse to His disciples, He promises "another Advocate, that He may be with them for ever."<sup>4</sup> It is in the idea of representation that the two designations meet. Jesus glorified represents us before the Father's throne; the Holy Spirit abiding with us represents in us Jesus gone to the Father. The first Advocate is external, the second internal. The first takes all our necessities to the Father, that, as Himself one with the Father, He may so "make request"<sup>5</sup> on our behalf that, out of the common love of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father, these necessities may be supplied. The second brings the Redeemer in such a manner home into our hearts<sup>6</sup> that, in the innermost depths of our nature, we see and judge and feel with

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 26, 27.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 16.

<sup>5</sup> The proper rendering of *ἐρωτήσω* in John xiv. 16.

<sup>6</sup> "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth."—Rom. viii. 27.

Him; that His requests for us become our prayers for ourselves; and that the unity of Father, Son, and redeemed humanity is in Him completely realised.

Finally, it may be observed that the blessings of redemption thus applied to us through the Intercession of our Lord, in the wide sense in which we have been led to understand that word, are blessings that flow from His own continued offering. The Intercession and the Offering cannot be separated from each other. The offering is itself a continuous intercession; the continuous intercession implies the offering as a present thing. What the Redeemer gives us, in giving all, is Himself, and therefore Himself as He is now. This is the meaning of every promise made "to him that overcometh" in the seven Epistles addressed to the universal Church in the Revelation of St. John. The glorified Lord is the tree of life that is in the paradise of God. He is the victory over the second death. He is the hidden manna, and the white stone inscribed with the new name which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. He is the morning star. His is the white raiment in which they who have not defiled their garments shall be clothed. His is the new name written upon those who are pillars in a house of God from which they go no more out. And, lastly, His is the throne upon which they sit down with Him, even as He sat down with the Father upon His throne.<sup>1</sup> The members of the mystical Body have nothing except what is given them in that Head who is the Alpha and the Omega,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 28 (comp. xxii. 16); iii. 5, 12, 21.

the beginning and the ending, the Author and the Finisher of their faith. If we ask for one conception that, more than any other, shall combine all the characteristics of a life to which such blessings belong, there is none so appropriate as that expressed by the words offering, oblation, sacrifice—a life yielded up to the Father of our Spirits in order to carry out the purposes of His love, and filled with Him. But such a life comes always and immediately from Christ as a living Lord. Without this thought Christ's unity with His people would not be so intimate or real or interpenetrating as it is, and His life in heaven must therefore embrace in it that idea of a continuous offering in which alone the members of His body can offer themselves continually, and experience all the blessings of an accepted sacrifice.

III. The third part of our Lord's High-priestly work in heaven is 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 it will also be fulfilled by Him. 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."<sup>1</sup> It is the Christian's strength, indeed, to be assured that

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 28.

“every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.”<sup>1</sup> He believes that His Father in heaven desires to shower down blessings with a full hand upon all His creatures. But 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, the streams which actually convey it. Thus it was that Joseph, assured as he was of his father’s love to his children, brought his sons 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 are permitted to gather around his bed, and, ere his lips close in death, to hear him bless them. In all this nature speaks with her 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 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,

<sup>1</sup> James i. 17.

and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

Nay, what is the whole New Testament dispensation but, in one respect at least, the fulfilling of the words of that priestly Blessing which was wont of old to raise the fallen and to comfort the mourner in Israel? —“The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” “The Lord bless thee and keep thee,”—and how many are the words of blessing which during His life on earth fell, which now during His life in heaven fall, from the lips of Him of whom it had been prophesied by the Psalmist, “The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion,”<sup>2</sup>—the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount, the blessing on them that hear the Word of God, the blessing on them that have not seen and yet have believed;<sup>3</sup> while it was part of His High-priestly prayer on their behalf, “Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me.”<sup>4</sup> “The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee,”—and is it not one of the privileges of the New Jerusalem of which all saints are citizens, that “they see their Lord’s face, and that His name is on their foreheads”?<sup>5</sup> while the beloved disciple tells us that “grace,” as well as truth, “came by Jesus Christ,” and that “out of His

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxviii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 1-11; Luke xi. 28; John xx. 29.

<sup>4</sup> John xvii. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xxii. 4.

fulness we all received, and grace for grace.”<sup>1</sup> “The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace,”—and is not our Lord the Prince of peace? Was not His legacy to His disciples, as He felt that the end was near, given in the words, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you”?<sup>2</sup> while “Peace be unto you” was His first salutation to them when, on the day of the Resurrection, He showed Himself out of His glory.<sup>3</sup> Above all, though this must be reserved for the next Lecture, the Benediction of the heavenly High-priest is to be found in the gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed first upon His people, and then through them upon all who will receive it.

Such, then, is the work of the heavenly High-priest. It corresponds to what we saw in a previous Lecture to be His qualifications for it; and its effect is the restoration of His Israel to God, in joyful confidence and holy devotion to His service.

After the High-priest of old, on the Great Day of Atonement, had finished his offering in the Tabernacle, there followed his procedure 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 a fit man into the wilderness to perish there. That act closed the more particular services of the day. Sin was not only expiated, but banished. The covenant was restored. The people were again united, however im-

<sup>1</sup> John i. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 27.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 21.

perfectly, and only for a time, to God, and were ready for that feast of Tabernacles which commemorated the most signal deliverance of the past, which, as celebrated at least in later times, gave promise of the noblest blessings of the future, and of which, even more than of the other festival seasons of the Jewish year, 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 heavenly path—"elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus' Christ."<sup>1</sup> The sprinkling seals for her an everlasting covenant. Her festival of highest and purest joy has come. The voice of ancient prophecy, as it foretold that she should "keep her feast of Tabernacles,"<sup>2</sup> is fulfilled. And, having offered the first-fruits of her increase, she enters upon a free, joyous, independent life, breathing that invigorating and quickening air of the wilderness which strengthens her amidst all the trials of her homeward march.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. xiv. 16.