

The Priesthood of Christ

by James Arminius

The sermon explores the concept of the priesthood of Christ, its origin, duties, and significance in the context of the Old and New Testaments.

Scripture: Romans 13:12

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Living"

Description

The preacher delves into the meaning of 'hoplon,' originally referring to tools or implements for various purposes but later specialized to denote weapons of warfare. In the New Testament, 'hoplon' is used to describe the Christian's body as weapons in the spiritual battle against evil, emphasizing the need to offer our members to God for righteousness. The sermon highlights the importance of not allowing sin to reign in our lives and the power believers have in Christ to resist presenting themselves to sin. The fear of the Lord is presented as a key element in turning away from evil and living a life that honors God.

Transcript

ORATION IV

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

The Noble the Lord Rector -- the Very Famous, Reverend, Skillful, Intelligent, and Learned Men, who are the Fathers of this Most Celebrated University -- the Rest of You, Most Worthy Strangers of Every Degree -- and You, Most Noble and Studious Young Men, who are the Nursery of the Republic and the Church, and who are Increasing Every Day in Bloom and vigour:

If there be any order of men in whom it is utterly unbecoming to aspire after the honours of this world, especially after those honours which are accompanied by pomp and applause, that, without doubt, is the order ecclesiastical -- a body of men who ought to be entirely occupied with a zeal for God, and for the attainment of that glory which is at his disposal. Yet, since, according to the laudable institutions of our ancestors, the usage has obtained in all well regulated Universities, to admit no man to the office of instructor in them, who has not previously signalized himself by some public and solemn testimony of probity and scientific ability -- this sacred order of men have not refused a compliance with such public modes of decision, provided they be conducted in a way that is holy, decorous, and according to godliness. So far, indeed, are those who have been set apart to the pastoral office from being averse to public proceedings of this kind, that they exceedingly covet and desire them alone, because they conceive

them to be of the first necessity to the Church of Christ. For they are mindful of this apostolical charge, "Lay hands suddenly on no man ;" (1 Tim. v, 29,) and of the other, which directs that a Bishop and a Teacher of the Church be "apt to teach, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." (Tit. i, 9.) I do not, therefore, suppose one person, in this numerous assembly, can be so ignorant of the public ceremonies of this University, or can hold them in such little estimation, as either to evince surprise at the undertaking in which we are now engaged, or wish to give it an unfavourable interpretation. But since it has always been a part of the custom of our ancestors, in academic festivities of this description, to choose some subject of discourse, the investigation of which in the fear of the Lord might promote the Divine glory and the profit of the hearers, and might excite them to pious and importunate supplication, I also can perceive no cause why I ought not conscientiously to comply with this custom. And although at the sight of this very respectable, numerous and learned assembly, I feel strongly affected with a sense of my defective eloquence and tremble not a little, yet I have selected a certain theme for my discourse which agrees well with my profession, and is full of grandeur, sublimity and adorable majesty. In making choice of it, I have not been overawed by the edict of Horace, which says,

"Select, all ye who write, a subject fit, A subject not too mighty for your wit! And ere you lay your shoulders to the wheel, Weigh well their strength, and all their wetness feel!"

For this declaration is not applicable in the least to theological subjects, all of which by their dignity and importance exceed the capacity and mental energy of every human being, and of angels themselves. A view of them so affected the Apostle Paul, (who, rapt up into the third heaven, had heard words ineffable,) that they compelled him to break forth into this exclamation: "Who is sufficient for these things," (2 Cor. ii, 16.) If, therefore, I be not permitted to disregard the provisions of this Horatian statute, I must either transgress the boundaries of my profession, or be content to remain silent. But I am permitted to disregard the terms of this statute; and to do so, is perfectly lawful.

For whatever things tend to the glory of God and to the salvation of men, ought to be celebrated in a devout spirit in the congregations of the saints, and to be proclaimed with a grateful voice. I therefore propose to speak on THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST: Not because I have persuaded myself of my capability to declare anything concerning it, which is demanded either by the dignity of my subject, or by the respectability of this numerous assembly; for it will be quite sufficient, and I shall consider that I have abundantly discharged my duty, if according to the necessity of the case I shall utter something that will contribute to the general edification: But I choose this theme that I may obtain, in behalf of my oration, such grace and favour from the excellence of its subject, as I cannot possibly confer on it by any eloquence in the mode of my address. Since, however, it is impossible for us either to form in our minds just and holy conceptions about such a sublime mystery, or to give utterance to them with our lips, unless the power of God influence our mental faculties and our tongues, let us by prayer and supplication implore his present aid, in the name of Jesus Christ our great High Priest. "Do thou, therefore, O holy and merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fountain of all grace and truth, vouchsafe to grant thy favourable presence to us who are a great congregation assembled together in thy holy name. Sprinkle thou our spirits, souls, and bodies, with the most gracious dew of thy immeasurable holiness, that the converse of thy saints with each other may be pleasing to thee. Assist us by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, who may yet more and more illuminate our minds -- imbued with the true knowledge of Thyself and thy Son; may He also inflame our hearts with a sincere zeal for thy glory; may He open my mouth and guide my tongue, that I may be enabled to declare concerning the Priesthood of thy Son those things which are

true and just and holy, to the glory of thy name and to the gathering of all of us together in the Lord. Amen."

Having now in an appropriate manner offered up those vows which will become the commencement of our undertaking, we will, by the help of God, proceed to the subject posed, after I have intreated all of you, who have been pleased to grace this solemn act of ours with your noble, learned and most gratifying presence, to give me that undivided attention which the subject deserves, while I speak on a matter of the most serious importance, and, according to your accustomed kindness, to shew me that favour and benevolence which are to me of the greatest necessity. That I may not abuse your patience, I engage to consult brevity as much as our theme will allow. But we must begin with the very first principles of Priesthood, that from thence the discourse may appropriately be brought down to the Priesthood of Christ, on which we profess to treat.

First. The first of those relations which subsist between God and men, has respect to something given and something received. The latter requires another relation supplementary to itself -- a relation which taking its commencement from men, may terminate in God; and that is, an acknowledgment of a benefit received, to the honour of the munificent Donor. It is also a debt, due on account of a benefit already conferred, but which is not to be paid except on the demand and according to the regulation of the Giver; whose intention it has always been, that the will of a creature should not be the measure of his honour. His benignity likewise is so immense, that he never requires from those who are under obligations to him, the grateful acknowledgment of the benefit communicated in the first instance, except when he has bound them to himself by the larger, and far superior benefit, of a mutual covenant. But the extreme trait in that goodness, is, that he has bound himself to bestow on the same persons favours of yet greater excellence by infinite degrees. This is the order which he adopts; he wishes himself first to be engaged to them, before they are considered to be engaged to Him. For every covenant; that is concluded between God and men, consists of two parts: (1.) The preceding promise of God, by which he obliges himself to some duty and to acts correspondent with that duty: and (2.) The subsequent definition and appointment of the duty, which, it is stipulated, shall in return be required of men, and according to which a mutual correspondence subsists between men and God. He promises, that he will be to them a king and a God, and that he will discharge towards them all the offices of a good King; while he stipulates, as a counter obligation, that they become his people, that in this relation they live according to his commands and that they ask and expect all blessings from his goodness. These two acts -- a life according to his commands, and an expectation of all blessings from his goodness -- comprise the duty of men towards God, according to the covenant into which he first entered with them.

On the whole, therefore, the duties of two functions are to be performed between God and men who have entered into covenant with him: First, a regal one, which is of supreme authority: Secondly, a religious one, of devoted submission.

(1.) The use of the former is in the communication of every needful good, and in the imposing of laws or the act of legislation. Under it we likewise comprehend the gift of prophecy, which is nothing more than the annunciation of the royal pleasure, whether it be communicated by God himself, or by some one of his deputies or ambassadors as a kind of internuncio to the covenant. That no one may think the prophetic office, of which the scriptures make such frequent mention, is a matter of little solicitude to us, we assign it the place of a substitute under the Chief Architect.

(2.) But the further consideration of the regal duty being at present omitted, we shall proceed to a nearer inspection of that which is religious.. We have already deduced its origin from the act of covenanting; we have propounded it, in the exercise of the regal office, as something that is due; and we place its proper action in thanksgiving and intreaty. This action is required to be religiously performed, according to their common vocation, by every one of the great body of those who are in covenant; and to this end they have been sanctified by the word of the covenant, and have all been constituted priests to God, that they might offer gifts and prayers to The Most High. But since God loves order, he who is himself the only instance of order in its perfection, willed that, out of the number of those who were sanctified, some one should in a peculiar manner be separated to him; that he who was thus set apart should, by a special and extraordinary vocation, be qualified for the office of the priesthood; and that, approaching more intimately and with greater freedom to the throne of God, he should, in the place of his associates in the same covenant and religion, take the charge and management of whatever affairs were to be transacted before God on their account.

From this circumstance is to be traced the existence of the office of the priesthood, the duties of which were to be discharged before God in behalf of others -- an office undoubtedly of vast dignity and of special honour among mankind. Although the priest must be taken from among men, and must be appointed in their behalf, yet it does not appertain to men themselves, to designate whom they will to sustain that office; neither does it belong to any one to arrogate that honour to himself.

But as the office itself is an act of the divine pleasure, so likewise the choice of the person who must discharge its duties, rests with God himself: and it was his will, that the office should be fulfilled by him who for some just reason held precedence among his kindred by consanguinity. This was the father and master of the family, and his successor was the first born. We have examples of this in the holy patriarchs, both before and after the deluge. We behold this expressly in Noah, Abraham, and Job.

There are also those, (not occupying the lowest seats in judgment,) who say that Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices to Adam their father, that he might offer them to the Lord; and they derive this opinion from the word aykh used in the same passage. Though these examples are selected from the description of that period when sin had made its entrance into the world, yet a confirmation of their truth is obtained in this primitive institution of the human race, of which we are now treating.

For it is peculiar to that period, that all the duties of the priesthood were confined within the act of offering only an eucharistic sacrifice and supplications. Having therefore in due form executed these functions, the priest, in the name of his compeers, was by the appeased Deity admitted to a familiar intercourse with Him, and obtained from Him a charge to execute among his kindred, in the name of God himself, and as "the messenger, or angel, of the Lord of Hosts." For the Lord revealed to him the Divine will and pleasure; that, on returning from his intercourse with God, he might declare it to the people.

This will of God consisted of two parts: (1.) That which he required to be performed by his covenant people; and (2.) That which it was his wish to perform for their benefit. In this charge, which was committed to the priest, to be executed by him, the administration of prophecy was also included; on which account it is said, "They should seek the LAW at the mouth of the priest, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." (Mal. ii, 7.) And since that second part of the Divine will was to be proclaimed from an assured trust and confidence in the truth of the Divine promises, and with a holy and affectionate feeling toward his own species -- in that view, he was invested with a commission to dispense benedictions.

In this manner, discharging the duties of a double embassy, (that of men to God, and that of God to men,) he acted, on both sides, the part of a Mediator of the covenant into which the parties had mutually entered. Nevertheless, not content with having conferred this honour on him whom he had sanctified, our God, all-bountiful, elevated him likewise to the delegated or vicarious dignity of the regal office, that he, bearing the image of God among his brethren, might then be able to administer justice to them in His Name, and might manage, for their common benefit, those affairs with which he was entrusted.

From this source arose what may be considered the native union of the Priestly and the Kingly offices, which also obtained among the holy patriarchs after the entrance of sin, and of which express mention is made in the person of Melchizedec. This was signified in a general manner by the patriarch Jacob, when he declared Reuben, his first born son, to be "the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power," which were his due on account of the right of primogeniture. For certain reasons, however, the kingly functions were afterwards separated from the priestly, by the will of God, who, dividing them into two parts among his people the children of Israel, transferred the kingly office to Judah and the priestly to Levi.

But it was proper, that this approach to God, through the oblation of an eucharistic sacrifice and prayers, should be made with a pure mind, holy affections, and with hands, as well as the other members of the body, free from defilement. This was required, even before the first transgression. "Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. xix, 2, &c.) "God heareth not sinners." (John ix, 31.) "Bring no more vain oblations, for your hands are full of blood." (Isa. i, 15). The will of God respecting this is constant and perpetual. But Adam, who was the first man and the first priest, did not long administer his office in a becoming manner; for, refusing to obey God, he tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree; and, by that foul crime of disobedience and revolt, he at once defiled his soul which had been sanctified to God, and his body. By this wicked deed he both lost all right to the priesthood, and was in reality deprived of it by the Divine sentence, which was clearly signified by his expulsion from Paradise, where he had appeared before God in that which was a type of His own dwelling-place. This was in accordance with the invariable rule of Divine Justice: "Be it far from me, [that thou shouldst any longer discharge before me the duties of the priesthood:] for them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii, 30.) But he did not fall alone: All whose persons he at that time represented and whose cause he pleaded, (although they had not then come into existence,) were with him cast down from the elevated summit of such a high dignity. Neither did they fall from the priesthood only, but likewise from the covenant, of which the priest was both the Mediator and the Internuncio; and God ceased to be the King and God of men, and men were no longer recognized as his people. The existence of the priesthood itself was at an end; for there was no one capable of fulfilling its duties according to the design of that covenant. The eucharistic sacrifice, the invocation of the name of God, and the gracious communication between God and men, all ceased together.

Most miserable, and deserving of the deepest commiseration, was the condition of mankind in that state of their affairs, if this declaration be a true one, "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord !" (Psalm cxliv, 15.) And this inevitable misery would have rested upon Adam and his race for ever, had not Jehovah, full of mercy and commiseration, deigned to receive them into favour, and resolved to enter into another covenant with the same parties; not according to that which they had transgressed, and which was then become obsolete and had been abolished; but into a new covenant of grace. But the Divine justice and truth could not permit this to be done, except through the agency of an umpire and surety, who might undertake the part of a Mediator between the offended God and sinners. Such a Mediator could not then approach to God with an eucharistic sacrifice for benefits conferred upon the human race, or with prayers

which might intreat only for a continuance and an increase of them: But he had to approach into the Divine presence to offer sacrifice for the act of hostility which they had committed against God by transgressing his commandment, and to offer prayers for obtaining the remission of their transgressions. Hence arose the necessity of an Expiatory Sacrifice; and, on that account, a new priesthood was to be instituted, by the operation of which the sin that had been committed might be expiated, and access to the throne of God's grace might be granted to man through a sinner: this is the priesthood which belongs to our Christ, the Anointed One, alone.

But God, who is the Supremely Wise Disposer of times and seasons, would not permit the discharge of the functions appertaining to this priesthood to commence immediately after the formation of the world, and the introduction of sin. It was his pleasure, that the necessity of it should be first correctly understood and appreciated, by a conviction on men's consciences of the multitude, heinousness and aggravated nature of their sins. It was also his will, that the minds of men should be affected with a serious and earnest desire for it, yet so that they might in the mean time be supported against despair, arising from a consciousness of their sins, which could not be removed except by means of that Divine priesthood, the future commencement of which inspired them with hope and confidence.

All these purposes God effected by the temporary institution of that typical priesthood, the duties of which infirm and sinful men "after the law of a carnal commandment" could perform, by the immolation of beasts sanctified for that service; which priesthood was at first established in different parts of the world, and afterwards among the Israelites, who were specially elected to be a sacerdotal nation. When the blood of beasts was shed, in which was their life, (Lev. xvii, 14) the people contemplated, in the death of the animals, their own demerits, for the beasts had not sinned that they by death should be punished as victims for transgression.

After investigating this subject with greater diligence, and deliberately weighing it in the equal balances of their judgment, they plainly perceived and understood that their sins could not possibly be expiated by those sacrifices, which were of a species different from their own, and more despicable and mean than human beings. From these premises they must of necessity have concluded, that, notwithstanding they offered those animals, they in such an act delivered to God nothing less than their own bond, sealing it in his presence with an acknowledgment of their personal sins, and confessing the debt which they had incurred.

Yet, because these sacrifices were of Divine Institution, and because God received them at the hands of men as incense whose odour was fragrant and agreeable, from these circumstances the offenders conceived the hope of obtaining favour and pardon, reasoning thus within themselves, as did Sampson's mother: "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands." (Judges xiii, 23.) With such a hope they strengthened their spirits that were ready to faint, and, confiding in the Divine promise, they expected in all the ardour of desire the dispensation of a priesthood which was prefigured under the typical one; "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i, 11.)

But, since the mind pants after the very delightful consideration of this priesthood, our oration hastens towards it; and, having some regard to the lateness of the hour, and wishing not to encroach on your comfort, we shall omit any further allusion to that branch of the priesthood which has hitherto occupied our attention.

Secondly. In discoursing on the Priesthood of Christ, we will confine our observations to three points; and, on condition that you receive the succeeding part of my oration with that kindness and attention which you have hitherto manifested, and which I still hope and desire to receive, we will describe: First. The Imposing of the Office. Secondly. Its Execution and Administration. And Thirdly. The Fruits of the Office thus Administered, and the Utility Which We Derive From It.

I. In respect to the Imposing of the Office, the subject itself presents us with three topics to be discussed in order. (1.) The person who imposes it. (2.) The person on whom it is imposed, or to whom it is entrusted. And (3.) The manner of his appointment, and of his undertaking this charge.

1. The person imposing it is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since this act of imposing belongs to the economy and dispensation of our salvation, the persons who are comprised under this one Divine Monarchy are to be distinctly considered according to the rule of the scriptures, which ought to have the precedence in this inquiry, and according to the rules and guidance of the orthodox Fathers that agree with those scriptures. It is J EHOVAH who imposes this office, and who, while the princes of darkness fret themselves and rage in vain, says to his Messiah, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm ii, 8.) He it is who, when he commanded Messiah to sit at his right hand, repeated his holy and revered word with an oath, saying, "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedec." (Psalm cx, 4.) This is He who imposes the office, and that by a right the most just and deserved. For "with him we have to do, who, dwelling in the light unto which no man can approach," remains continually in the seat of his Majesty. He preserves his own authority safe and unimpaired to himself, "without any abasement or lessening of his person," as the voice of antiquity expresses it; and retains entire, within himself, the right of demanding satisfaction from the sinner for the injuries which He has sustained. From this right he has not thought fit to recede, or to resign any part of it, on account of the rigid inflexibility of his justice, according to which he hates iniquity and does not permit a wicked person to dwell in his presence. This, therefore, is the Divine Person in whose hands rest both the right and the power of imposition; the fact of his having also the will, is decided by the very act of imposition.

But an inquiry must be made into the Cause of this imposition which we shall not find, except, first, in the conflict between justice and gracious mercy; and, afterwards, in their amicable agreement, or rather their junction by means of wisdom's conciliating assistance.

(1.) Justice demanded, on her part, the punishment due to her from a sinful creature; and this demand she the more rigidly enforced, by the greater equity with which she had threatened it, and the greater truth with which it had been openly foretold and declared.

Gracious Mercy, like a pious mother, moving with bowels of commiseration, desired to avert that punishment in which was placed the extreme misery of the creature. For she thought that, though the remission of that punishment was not due to the cause of it, yet such a favour ought to be granted to her by a right of the greatest equity; because it is one of her chief properties to "rejoice against judgment." (James ii, 13.)

Justice, tenacious of her purpose, rejoined, that the throne of grace, she must confess, was sublimely elevated above the tribunal of justice: but she could not bear with patient indifference that no regard should be paid to her, and her suit not to be admitted, while the authority of managing the whole affair was to be transferred to mercy. Since, however, it was a part of the oath administered to justice when she

entered into office, "that she should render to every one his own," she would yield entirely to mercy, provided a method could be devised by which her own inflexibility could be declared, as well as the excess of her hatred to sin.

(2.) But to find out that method, was not the province of Mercy. It was necessary, therefore, to call in the aid of Wisdom to adjust the mighty difference, and to reconcile by an amicable union those two combatants that were, in God, the supreme protectresses of all equity and goodness. Being called upon, she came, and at once discovered a method, and affirmed that it was possible to render to each of them that which belonged to her; for if the punishment due to sin appeared desirable to Justice and odious to Mercy, it might be transmuted into an expiatory sacrifice, the oblation of which, on account of the voluntary suffering of death, (which is the punishment adjudged to sin,) might appease Justice, and open such a way for Mercy as she had desired. Both of them instantly assented to this proposal, and made a decree according to the terms of agreement settled by Wisdom, their common arbitrator.

2. But, that we may come to the Second Point, a priest was next to be sought, to offer the sacrifice: For that was a function of the priesthood. A sacrifice was likewise to be sought; and with this condition annexed to it, that the same person should be both priest and sacrifice. This was required by the plan of the true priesthood and sacrifice, from which the typical and symbolical greatly differs. But in the different orders of creatures neither sacrifice nor priest could be found.

It was not possible for an angel to become a priest; because "he was to be taken from among men and to be ordained from men in things pertaining to God." (Heb. v, 1.) Neither could an angel be a sacrifice; because it was not just that the death of an angel should be an expiation for a crime which a man had perpetrated: And if this had even been most proper, yet man could never have been induced to believe that an angelical sacrifice had been offered by an angel for him, or, if it had been so offered, that it was of the least avail. Application was then to be made to men themselves. But, among them, not one could be found in whom it would have been a becoming act to execute the office of the priesthood, and who had either ability or inclination for the undertaking. For all men were sinners; all were terrified with a consciousness of their delinquency; and all were detained captive under the tyranny of sin and Satan. It was not lawful for a sinner to approach to God, who is pure Light, for the purpose of offering sacrifice; because, being affrighted by his own internal perception of his crime, he could not support a sight of the countenance of an incensed God, before whom it was still necessary that he should appear. Being placed under the dominion of sin and Satan, he was neither willing, nor had he the power to will, to execute an office, the duties of which were to be discharged for the benefit of others, out of love to them. The same consideration likewise tends to the rejection of every human sacrifice. Yet the priest was to be taken from among men, and the oblation to God was to consist of a human victim.

In this state of affairs, the assistance of Wisdom was again required in the Divine Council. She declared that a man must be born from among men, who might have a nature in common with the rest of his brethren, that, being in all things tempted as they were, he might be able to sympathize with others in their sufferings; and yet, that he should neither be reckoned in the order of the rest, nor should be made man according to the law of the primitive creation and benediction; that he should not be under dominion of sin; that he should be one in whom Satan could find nothing worthy of condemnation, who should not be tormented by a consciousness of sin, and who should not even know sin, that is, one who should be "born in the likeness of sinful flesh, and yet without sin. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. vii, 26.) But, that he might have a community of nature with men, he ought to be born of a human being; and, that he might have no participation in crime with them,

but might be holy, he ought to be conceived by the Holy Ghost, because sanctification is his proper work. By the Holy Spirit, the nativity which was above and yet according to nature, might through the virtue of the mystery, restore nature, as it surpassed her in the transcendent excellence of the miracle. But the dignity of this priesthood was greater, and its functions more weighty and important, than man even in his pure state was competent to sustain or discharge. The benefits also to be obtained by it, infinitely exceeded the value of man when in his greatest state of purity. Therefore, the Word of God, who from the beginning was with God, and by whom the worlds, and all things visible and invisible, were created, ought himself to be made flesh, to undertake the office of the priesthood, and to offer his own flesh to God as a sacrifice for the life of the world. We now have the person who was entrusted with the priesthood, and to whom the province was assigned of atoning for the common offense: It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and of man, a high priest of such great excellence, that the transgression whose demerits have obtained this mighty Redeemer, might almost seem to have been a happy circumstance.

3. Let us proceed to the mode of its being imposed or undertaken. This mode is according to covenant, which, on God's part, received an oath for its confirmation. As it is according to covenant, it becomes a solemnity appointed by God, with whom rests the appointment to the priesthood. For the Levitical priesthood was conferred on Levi according to covenant, as the Lord declares by the prophet Malachi: "My covenant was with him of life and peace." (ii, 5.) It is, however, peculiar to this priesthood of Christ, that the covenant on which it is founded, was confirmed by an oath. Let us briefly consider each of them.

The covenant into which God entered with our High Priest, Jesus Christ, consisted, on the part of God, of the demand of an action to be performed, and of the promise of an immense remuneration. On the part of Christ, our High Priest, it consisted of an accepting of the Promise, and a voluntary engagement to Perform the Action. First, God required of him, that he should lay down his soul as a victim in sacrifice for sin, (Isa. liii, 11,) that he should give his flesh for the light of the world, (John vi, 51,) and that he should pay the price of redemption for the sins and the captivity of the human race. God "promised" that, if he performed all this, "he should see a seed whose days should be prolonged," (Isa. liii, 11,) and that he should be himself "an everlasting Priest after the order of Melchizedec," (cx, 4,) that is, he should, by the discharge of his priestly functions, be elevated to the regal dignity. Secondly, Christ, our High Priest, accepted of these conditions, and permitted the province to be assigned to him of atoning for our transgressions, exclaiming "Lo, I come that I may do thy will, O my God." (Psalm xl, 8.) But he accepted them under a stipulation, that, on completing his great undertaking, he should forever enjoy the honour of a priesthood similar to that of Melchizedec, and that, being placed on his royal throne, he might, as King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace, rule in righteousness the people subject to his sway, and might dispense peace to his people. He, therefore, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame," (Heb. xii, 2,) that, "being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," (Psalm xlv, 7,) he might sit forever in the throne of equity at the right hand of the throne of God.

Great, indeed, was the condescension of the all-powerful God in being willing to treat with our High Priest rather in the way of covenant, than by a display of his authority. And strong were the pious affections of our High Priest, who did not refuse to take upon himself, on our account, the discharge of those difficult and arduous duties which were full of pain, trouble, and misery. Most glorious act, performed by thee, O Christ, who art infinite in goodness! Thou great High Priest, accept of the honours due to thy pious affection, and continue in that way to proceed to glory, to the complete consecration of our salvation! For it was the will of God, that the duties of the office should be administered from a voluntary and disinterested zeal and affection for his glory and the salvation of sinners; and it was a deed worthy of his abundant

benignity, to recompense with a large reward the voluntary promptitude which Christ exhibited.

God added an oath to the covenant, both for the purpose of confirming it, and as a demonstration of the dignity and unchangeable nature of that priesthood. Though the constant and unvarying veracity of God's nature might very properly set aside the necessity of an oath, yet as he had conformed to the customs of men in their method of solemnizing agreements, it was his pleasure by an oath to confirm his covenant; that our High Priest, relying in assured hope on the two-fold and immovable anchor of the promise and of the oath, "might despise the shame and endure the cross." The immutability and perpetuity of this priesthood have been pointed out by the oath which was added to the covenant. For whatever that be which God confirms by an oath, it is something eternal and immutable.

But it may be asked, "Are not all the words which God speaks, all the promises which he makes, and all the covenants into which he enters, of the same nature, even when they are unaccompanied by the sanctity of an oath," Let me be permitted to describe the difference between the two cases here stated, and to prove it by an important example. There are two methods or plans by which it might be possible for man to arrive at a state of righteousness before God, and to obtain life from him.

The one is according to righteousness through the law, by works and "of debt;" the other is according to mercy through the gospel, "by grace, and through faith." These two methods are so constituted as not to allow both of them to be in a course of operation at the same time; but they proceed on the principle, that when the first of them is made void, a vacancy may be created for the second. In the beginning, therefore, it was the will of God to prescribe to man the first of these methods; which arrangement was required by his righteousness and the primitive institution of mankind.

But it was not his pleasure to deal strictly with man according to the process of that legal covenant, and peremptorily to pronounce a destructive sentence against him in conformity with the rigor of the law. Wherefore, he did not subjoin an oath to that covenant, lest such an addition should have served to point out its immutability, a quality which God would not permit it to possess. The necessary consequence of this was, that when the first covenant was made void through sin, a vacancy was created by the good pleasure of God for another and a better covenant, in the manifestation of which he employed an oath, because it was to be the last and peremptory one respecting the method of obtaining righteousness and life.

"By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii, 18.) "As I live, saith the Lord, have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live" (Ezek. xviii, 23.) "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. iii, 11, 18.)

For the same reason, it is said, "The wrath of God, [from which it is possible for sinners to be liberated by faith in Christ,] abides on those who are unbelievers." (John iii, 36.) A similar process is observed in relation to the priesthood. For he did not confirm with an oath the Levitical priesthood, which had been imposed until the time of reformation." (Heb. ix, 10.) But because it was his will that the priesthood of Christ should be everlasting, he ratified it by an oath.

The apostle to the Hebrews demonstrates the whole of this subject in the most nervous style, by quotations from the 110th Psalm. Blessed are we in whose behalf God was willing to swear! but most miserable shall we be, if we do not believe on him who swears. The greatest dignity is likewise obtained to

this priesthood, and imparted to it, by the addition of an oath, which elevates it far above the honour to which that of Levi attained. "For the law of a carnal commandment maketh men priests who have infirmities, and are sinners, to offer both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him perfect who did the service, as pertaining to the conscience;" (Heb. ix, 9) neither could they abolish sin, or procure heavenly blessings.

"But the words of the oath, which was since the law, constituteth the Son a High Priest consecrated forevermore, who, after the power of an endless life and through the Eternal Spirit, offers himself without spot to God, and by that one offering, he perfects forever them that are sanctified, their consciences being purified to serve the living God: by how much also it was a more excellent covenant, by so much the more ought it to be confirmed, since it was established upon better promises: (Heb. 7-10,) and that which God hath deigned to honour with the sanctity of an oath, should be viewed as an object of the most momentous importance.

II. We have spoken to the act of Imposing the priesthood, as long as our circumscribed time will allow us. Let us contemplate its Execution, in which we have to consider the duties to be performed, and in them the feeling and condition of who performs them. The functions to be executed were two: (1.) The Oblation of an expiatory sacrifice, and (2.) Prayer.

1. The Oblation was preceded by a preparation through the deepest privation and abasement, the most devoted obedience, vehement supplications, and the most exquisitely painful experience of human infirmities, on each of which it is not now necessary to speak. The oblation consists of two parts succeeding each other: The First is the immolation or sacrifice of the body of Christ, by the shedding of his blood on the altar of the cross, which was succeeded by death -- thus paying the price of redemption for sins by suffering the punishment due to them.

The Other Part consists of the offering of his body re-animated and sprinkled with the blood which he shed -- a symbol of the price which he has paid, and of the redemption which he has obtained. The First Part of this oblation was to be performed without the Holy of Holies, that is, on earth, because no effusion of blood can take place in heaven, since it is necessarily succeeded by death For death has no more sway in heaven, in the presence and sight of the majesty of the true God, than sin itself has, which contains within it the deserts of death, and as death contains within itself the punishment of sin.

For thus says the scriptures, "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx, 28.) "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi, 28.) "Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii, 6). But the Second Part of this offering was to be accomplished in heaven, in the Holy of Holies. For that body which had suffered the punishment of death and had been recalled to life, was entitled to appear before the Divine Majesty besprinkled with its own blood, that, remaining thus before God as a continual memorial, it might also be a perpetual expiation for transgressions.

On this subject, the Apostle says: "Into the second tabernacle went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. But Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come, not by the blood of goat, and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" (Heb. ix, 11) that is, by his own blood already poured out and sprinkled upon him, that he might appear with it in the presence of God.

That act, being once performed, was never repeated; "for in that he died, he died unto sin once." But this is a perpetual act; "for in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Rom. vi, 10.) "This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." (Heb. vii, 24) The former was the act of the Lamb to be slain, the latter, that of the Lamb already slain and raised again from death to life. The one was completed in a state of the deepest humiliation, the other in a state of glory; and both of them out of a consummate affection for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Sanctified by the anointing of the Spirit, he completed the former act; and the latter was likewise his work, when he had been further consecrated by his sufferings and sprinkled with his own blood. By the former, therefore, he sanctified himself, and made a kind of preparation on earth that he might be qualified to discharge the functions of the latter in heaven.

2. The Second of the two functions to be discharged, was the act of prayer and intercession, the latter of which depends upon the former. Prayer is that which Christ offers for himself, and intercession is what he offers for believers; each of which is most luminously described to us by John, in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel, which contains a perpetual rule and exact canon of the prayers and intercessions which Christ offers in heaven to his Father. For although that prayer was recited by Christ while he remained upon earth, yet it properly belongs to his sublime state of exaltation in heaven: and it was his will that it should be described in his word, that we on earth, might derive from it perpetual consolation.

Christ offers up a prayer to the Father for himself, according to the Father's command and promise combined, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." (Psalm ii, 8.) Christ had regard to this promise, when he said, "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." This sort of intreaty must be distinguished from those "supplications which Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up to the Father, with strong cries and tears;" (Heb. v, 7,) for by them he intreated to be delivered from anguish, while by the other he asks, "to see his seed whose days should be prolonged, and to behold the pleasure of the Lord which should prosper in his hands." (Isa. liii, 10.)

But, for the faithful, intercession is made, of which the apostle thus speaks, "Who is he that condemneth, It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii, 34) And, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (vii, 25.) But Christ is said to intercede for believers, to the exclusion of the world, because, after he had offered a sacrifice sufficient to take away the sins of all mankind, he was consecrated a great "High Priest to preside over the house of God," (Heb. x, 21,) "which house those are who hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (iii, 6.)

Christ discharges the whole of this part of his function in heaven, before the face of the Divine Majesty; for there, also, is the royal seat and the throne of God, to which, when we are about to pray, we are commanded to lift up our eyes and our minds. But he executes this part of his office, not in anguish of spirit, or in a posture of humble genuflection, as though fallen down before the knees of the Father, but in the confidence of the shedding of his own blood, which, sprinkled as it is on his sacred body, he continually presents, as an object of sight before his Father, always turning it towards his sacred countenance.

The entire efficacy of this function depends on the dignity and value of the blood effused and sprinkled over the body; for, by his blood-shedding, he opened a passage for himself "into the holiest, within the veil." From which circumstance we may with the greatest certainty conclude, that his prayers will never be rejected, and that whatever we shall ask in his name, will, in virtue of that intercession, be both heard and answered.

The sacerdotal functions being thus executed, God, the Father, mindful of his covenant and sacred oath, not only continued the priesthood with Christ forever, but elevated him likewise to the regal dignity, "all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth, (Matt. xxviii, 18,) also power over all flesh: (John xvii, 2,) a name being conferred on him which is far above all principality, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, (Ephes. i, 21,) angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him," (1 Pet. iii, 22,) that he might be the Christ and the Lord of his whole Israel, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. By this admirable covenant, therefore, God hath united those two supreme functions in one, even in Christ Jesus, and has thus performed his promise, by which he had sworn that this Priest should be forever after the order of Melchizedec, "who was at once a King and a Priest; and is to the present time without beginning of days or end of life," because his genealogy is not described in the Scriptures, which in this case are subservient to the figure. This conjunction of the sacerdotal and regal functions is the highest point and the extreme limit of all the divine work, a never ending token of the justice and the mercy of God attempered together for the economy of our salvation, a very luminous and clear evidence of the most excellent glory of God, and an immovable foundation for the certainty of obtaining salvation through this royal Priest. If man is properly styled "the extreme Colophon of the creation," "a microcosm," on account of the union of his body and soul, "an epitome of the whole world," and "the marriage of the Universe," what judgment shall we form of this conjunction, which consists of a most intimate and inseparable union of the whole church of believers and of God himself, "who dwells in the light unto which no man can approach," and by what amplitude of title shall we point out its divinity. This union hath a name above every name that can be named. It is ineffable, inconceivable, and incomprehensible. If, chiefly in respect to this I shall say, that Christ is styled "the brightness of the Father's glory," "the express image of his person" and "the image of the invisible God," I shall have expressed its excellency as fully as it is possible to do.

What can be a more illustrious instance of the admixture of justice with mercy than that even the Son of God, when he had "made himself of no reputation and assumed the form of a servant," could not be constituted a King except through a discharge of the sacerdotal functions; and that all those blessings which he had to bestow as a King on his subjects, could not be asked except through the priesthood, and which, when obtained from God, could not, (except through the intervention of this royal Mediator,) be communicated by his vicarious distribution under God? What can be a stronger and a better proof of the certainty of obtaining salvation through Christ, than that he has, by the discharge of his sacerdotal functions in behalf of men, asked and procured it for men, and that, being constituted a King through the priesthood, he has received salvation from the Father to be dispensed to them? In these particulars consists the perfection of the divine glory.

III. But this consideration, I perceive, introduces us, almost imperceptibly, to the third and last portion of our subject, in which we have engaged to treat on THE FRUITS OF THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE in its administration by Christ. We will reduce all these fruits, though they are innumerable, to four chief particulars; and, since we hasten to the end of this discourse, we bind ourselves down to extreme brevity. These benefits are, (1.) The concluding and the confirmation of a New Covenant; (2.) The asking,

obtaining, and application of all the blessings necessary for the salvation of the human race; (3.) The institution of a new priesthood, both eucharistic and royal; and (4.) lastly, The extreme and final bringing to God of all his covenant people.

1. The FIRST UTILITY is the contracting and the confirmation of a New Covenant, in which is the direct way to solid felicity.

We rejoice and glory, that this has been obtained by the priesthood of Christ. For since the first covenant had been made weak through sin and the flesh, and was not capable of bringing righteousness and life, it was necessary, either to enter into another, or that we should be forever expelled from God's presence. Such a covenant could not be contracted between a just God and sinful men, except in consequence of a reconciliation, which it pleased God, the offended party, should be perfected by the blood of our High Priest, to be poured out on the altar of the cross.

He who was at once the officiating priest and the Lamb for sacrifice, poured out his sacred blood, and thus asked and obtained for us a reconciliation with God. When this great offering was completed, it was possible for the reconciled parties to enter into an agreement. Hence, it pleased God, that the same High Priest who had acted as Mediator and Umpire in this reconciliation, should, with the very blood by which he had effected their union, go between the two parties, as a middle-man, or, in the capacity of an ambassador, and as a herald to bear tidings of war or peace, with the same blood as that by which the consciences of those who were included in the provisions of the covenant, being sprinkled, might be purged from dead works and sanctified; with the very blood, which, sprinkled upon himself, might always appear in the sight of God; and with the same blood as that by which all things in the heavens might be sprinkled and purified.

Through the intervention, therefore, of this blood, another covenant was contracted, not one of works, but of faith, not of the law, but of grace, not an old, but a new one -- and new, not because it was later than the first, but because it was never to be abrogated or repealed; and because its force and vigour should perpetually endure. "For that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." (Heb. viii, 13). If such a covenant as is described in this quotation should be again contracted, in the several ages which succeed each other, changes ought frequently to occur in it; and, all former covenants being rendered obsolete, others more recent ought to succeed.

But it was necessary, at length, that a pause should occur in one of them, and that such a covenant should at once be made as might endure forever. It was also to be ratified with blood. But how was it possible to be confirmed with blood of greater value than that of the High Priest, who was the Son, both of God and man. But the covenant of which we are now treating, was ratified with that blood; it was, therefore, a new one, and never to be annulled. For the perpetual presence and sight of such a great High Priest, sprinkled with his own blood, will not suffer the mind of his Father to be regardless of the covenant ratified by it, or his sacred breast to be moved with repentance.

With what other blood will it be possible for the consciences of those in covenant to be cleansed and sanctified to God, if, after having become parties to the covenant of grace, they pollute themselves with any crime, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, if any man have trodden under foot this High Priest, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." (Heb. x, 29). The covenant, therefore, which has been concluded by the intervention of this blood and this High Priest, is a new one, and will endure forever.

2. The SECOND FRUIT is the asking, obtaining, and application, of all the blessings necessary to those who are in covenant for the salvation both of soul and body. For, since every covenant must be confirmed by certain promises, it was necessary that this also should have its blessings, by which it might be sanctioned, and those in covenant rendered happy.

(1.) Among those blessings, the remission of sins first offers itself; according to the tenor of the New Covenant, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. viii, 12). But the scripture testifies, that Christ has asked this blessing by his blood, when it says, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi, 28). The scripture also proves his having obtained such a blessing by the discharge of the same office, in these words: "By his own blood Christ entered in once into the holy place, HAVING OBTAINED eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix, 12.) It adds its testimony to the application, saying, "In Christ WE HAVE REDEMPTION through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephes. i, 7.)

(2.) This necessary blessing is succeeded by adoption into sons and by a right to the heavenly inheritance: And we owe it to the Priesthood of Christ, that this blessing was asked and obtained for us, as well as communicated to us. For he being the proper and only begotten Son of the Father, and the sole heir of all his Father's blessings, was unwilling to enjoy such transcendent benefits alone, and desired to have co-heirs and partners, whom he might anoint with the oil of his gladness, and might receive into a participation of that inheritance. He made an offering, therefore, of his soul for sin, that, the travail of his soul being finished, he might see his seed prolonged in their days -- the seed of God which might come into a participation with him both of name and inheritance. "He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive THE ADOPTION OF SONS." (Gal. iv, 5). According to the command of the Father, he asked, that the Heathen might be given to him for an inheritance. By these acts, therefore, which are peculiar to his priesthood, he asked for this right of adoption in behalf of his believing people, and obtained it for the purpose of its being communicated to them, nay, in fact, he himself became the donor. "For to as many as believed on his name Christ gave power to become the sons of God." (John i, 12). Through him and in regard to him, God has adopted us for sons, who are beloved in him the Son of his love. He, therefore, is the sole heir, by whose death the inheritance comes to others; which circumstance was predicted by the perfidious husbandmen, (Mark xii, 7,) who, being Scribes and Pharisees, uttered at that time a remarkable truth, although they were ignorant of such a great mystery.

(3.) But because it is impossible to obtain benefits of this magnitude except in union with the High Priest himself, it was expected of him that he should ask and obtain the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT, the bond of that union, and should pour it out on his own people. But since the spirit of grace is the token as well as the testimony of the love of God towards us, and the earnest of our inheritance, Christ could not ask this great gift till a reconciliation had taken place, and to effect this was the duty of the priest. When, therefore, this reconciliation was effected, he asked of his Father another Comforter for his people, and his request was granted. Being elevated to the right hand of God, he obtained this Paraclete promised in the terms of the sacerdotal covenant; and, when he had procured this Spirit, he poured it out in a most copious manner on his followers, as the scripture says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii, 33.)

That the asking, the obtaining, and the communication of all these blessings, have flowed from the functions of the priesthood, God has testified by a certain seal of the greatest sanctity, when he constituted Christ the Testator of these very blessings, which office embraces conjointly both the full possession of the good things devised as legacies in the Will, and absolute authority over their distribution.

3. The THIRD FRUIT of Christ's administration is the institution of a new priesthood both eucharistic and regal, and our sanctification for the purpose of performing its duties; for when a New Covenant was concluded, it was needful to institute a new eucharistic priesthood, (because the old one had fallen into disuse,) and to sanctify priests to fulfill its duties.

(1.) Christ, by his own priesthood, completed such an institution; and he sanctified us by a discharge of its functions. This was the order in which he instituted it: First, he constituted us his debtors, and as bound to thanksgiving on account of the immense benefits procured for us and bestowed upon us by his priesthood. Then he instructed us how to offer sacrifices to God, our souls and bodies being sanctified and consecrated by the sprinkling of his blood and by the unction of the Holy Spirit, that, if they were offered as sacrifices to God, they might meet with acceptance. It was also his care to have an altar erected in heaven before the throne of grace, which being sprinkled with his own blood he consecrated to God, that the sacrifices of his faithful people, being placed upon it, might continually appear before the face of the Majesty of heaven and in presence of his throne. Lastly, he placed on that altar an eternal and never-ceasing fire -- the immeasurable favour of God, with which the sacrifices on that altar might be kindled and reduced to ashes.

(2.) But it was also necessary that priests should be consecrated: the act of consecration, therefore, was performed by Christ, as the Great High Priest, by his own blood. St. John says, in the Apocalypse, "He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." (i, 6.) "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." (v, 10.)

Not content to have us joint-heirs in the participation of his inheritance, he willed that we should likewise partake of the same dignity as that which he enjoyed. But he made us partners with him of that dignity in such a manner, as in the mean time always to retain within himself the first place, "as Head of his body the Church, the first-born among many brethren and the Great High Priest who presides over the whole of the House of God." To Him, we, who are "born again," ought to deliver our sacrifices, that by him they may be further offered to God, sprinkled and perfumed with the grateful odour of his own expiatory sacrifice, and may thus through him be rendered acceptable to the Father.

For this cause, the Apostle says, "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. xiii, 15). We are indeed, by his favour "a holy priesthood," to offer up spiritual sacrifices; but those sacrifices are rendered "acceptable to God, only by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii, 5.) Not only was it his pleasure that we should be partakers of this sacerdotal dignity, but likewise of the eternity attached to it, that we also might execute the office of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedec, which by a sacred oath was consecrated to immortality.

For though, at the close of these ages of time, Christ will not any longer perform the expiatory part of the priesthood, yet he will forever discharge its eucharistic duties in our favour. These eucharistic duties we shall also execute in him and through him, unless, in the midst of the enjoyment of the benefits received by us from him, we should desire our memories no longer to retain the recollection, that through him we

obtained those blessings, and through him we have been created priests to render due thanksgiving to God the chief Donor of all.

But, since we are not able to offer to God, so long as we remain in this mortal body, the sacrifices due to him, except by the strenuous resistance which we offer to Satan, the world, sin, and our own flesh, and through the victory which we obtain over them, (both of which are royal acts,) and since, after this life, we shall execute the sacerdotal office, being elevated with him on the throne of his Father, and having all our enemies subdued under us, he hath therefore made us both kings and priests, yea "a royal priesthood" to our God, that nothing might be found in the typical priesthood of Melchizedec, in the enjoyment of which we should not equally participate.

4. The FOURTH, and last FRUIT of the Priesthood of Christ, proposed to be noticed by us, is the act of bringing to God all the church of the faithful; which is the end and completion of the three preceding effects. For with this intent the covenant was contracted between God and men; with this intent the remission of sins, the adoption of sons, and the Spirit of grace were conferred on the church; for this purpose the new eucharistic and royal priesthood was instituted; that, being made priests and kings, all the covenant people might be brought to their God. In most expressive language the Apostle Peter ascribes this effect to the priesthood of Christ, in these words: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD." (1 Pet. iii, 18.) The following are also the words of an Apostle concerning the same act of bringing them to God: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." (1 Cor. xv, 24). In Isaiah's prophecy it is said, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath giv

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