

# The Atonement

In Its Relations To

The Covenant,

The Priesthood,

The Intercession

Of Our Lord

(Volume 3)

by

Hugh Martin

**THE ATONEMENT**

**IN ITS RELATION TO**

**THE COVENANT,**

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**OF OUR LORD**

**(VOLUME 3)**

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ever become platitudes? Baptize them evermore afresh in the light of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and bring them back afresh to your people with somewhat of the rhythm ringing through them of the ceaseless song of the angels and of the elders,—of the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands:—  
 “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

### CHAPTER III.

#### ATONEMENT AND CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

THE doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is an impregnable wall of circumvallation round the scriptural theory of the Atonement. So, likewise, is the doctrine of Christ's Priesthood. And to her divinely constructed defences Zion's attention is divinely called.

“Let Mount Zion rejoice. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Set your heart to her bulwarks” (Ps. xlviii. 11-13, *margin*.) Carry not her interests and crown jewels outside these bulwarks, but let your defence be carried on *within*. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God” (ver. 1). Those who praise Him there—within the city, within the bulwarks—need not be afraid, whosoever may “assemble;” for lo! they shall “pass by together.” Show them Zion's bulwarks, till they “marvel and are troubled and haste away.” And adventure not the ark down amongst the Philistines outside.

It is on this principle that, in explaining and defending the doctrine of the Atonement, we would affirm and maintain a proposition bearing on the Priesthood of

Christ analogous to that which we have already illustrated in reference to the Covenant of Grace, namely,—

*That the Doctrine of the Atonement ought on no account to be discussed apart from, or outside the category of, Christ's Priestly Office.*

Men may discuss, as long as they please, arbitrary philosophies of the abstract idea of atonement; but if it be professed to investigate the scriptural doctrine of the Atonement of Christ—of the death of the Son of God—we must demand, as essential to the *status questionis*, that it be set forth as embraced within the category of His Priesthood. So clearly does Holy Scripture, on the very face of it, bear out the reasonableness of this demand, that no conceivable objection can be taken to it, save such as would resolve into a refusal to make Scripture the supreme arbiter in the discussion: and with those who should take that position, we have of course in this matter nothing to do,—except, indeed, to move the previous question.

Now, in handling the topic of Christ's Priesthood, with the view of showing what light it casts on the *status questionis*, and on the argument concerning the Atonement, there are, in the *first* place, some preliminary considerations to be attended to. In the *second* place, the intrinsic idea of the nature of the office has to be kept in view. And in the *third* place, the immediate and inevitable characteristics which the very nature of

being crucified—the Power of God. And He is the Power of God, because He is the Priest of God. It is His priestly duty to die—a duty unparalleled and unapproachable. He falters not in the discharge of it. Official agency is in His sacrificial priestly death. “He offered Himself.” “He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.”

Ah! these are views of Christ's glorious priestly work—very simple, yea, on the very surface of it—which will not consist with even a hearing to those many representations which really evacuate His office altogether. We commend them to the students and younger ministers and preachers among our readers. We would not presume to instruct brethren of our own or of longer standing in the ministry. But those lately entered, or entering, on the duty of preaching the gospel of a veritable Sacrifice for sins, may perhaps kindly accept a word of exhortation. Probe deep into the simplest elemental principles of Christ's priestly office. They are capable of being preached in continually fresh variety of combination, such as may often give them, in your people's view, the aspect almost of startling but safe originality. Shall it ever be said that you forsook them as old-fashioned? That you gave them up, as having at last become platitudes in your hands? What! Instinct with the power of the eternal purpose of the Father; beautiful in the hands and in the love of Messiah; and shining in the light of the Eternal Spirit; how can they

Cross. He suffers death. He dies a sufferer. So much the more wondrous is the truth that He dies a conquering agent in dying. He trembles; but He does not faint. He does not swoon, but agonize. And "*agony*" is *action* to the uttermost. This is the glory of His triumph. Leave this out of view,—put aside His priestly agency and priestly action in His death,—suppose His agency and action to have been, ere death, exhausted, leaving room for passive sufferance and patience merely; and you cannot "glory in the Cross," nor teach the Church of God to glory in it. You leave the glory of Christ's triumph, and the evidence of Christ's love, deep buried in the shame of Calvary, and in the grave of Golgotha. And it is not any glory in the resurrection that can in that case reflect back upon the Cross, and light it up with a glory not originally and intrinsically there. If He died a mere passive victim, He did not die a victor: and no subsequent glory can in that case redeem what in that case was defeat. But He died a triumphant agent. He prevailed against death to live until He said, "'Tis finished," and then to die, not merely voluntarily, but by positive priestly action, giving Himself to God. The Cross itself is glorious; not from the subsequent resurrection and enthronement, but glorious from itself. It is itself a chariot of triumph. There is more agency and power in Christ's cross, than in all His work as Creator of the universe. There is as much spiritual glory in the cross of Calvary, as in the throne of the Lamb in heaven. Christ crucified is—not after, but *in*

the office must impart to Christ's death will be seen to be such as greatly to relieve the argument on the Atonement from the necessity of dealing at any great length, —or indeed with any very great degree of respectfulness, —with the false views and objections which are being paraded in opposition to it.

#### Part First.

##### *Preliminaries concerning Priesthood.*

As to what is merely preliminary, we lay it down,—  
I. In the first place, that the Priesthood is a *real* office—a real office, definite and specific. This is of some importance,—more so, indeed, than may at first appear. For the noble word "Priesthood" has been misappropriated and misapplied, even so as greatly to deface it of its intrinsic and peculiar import. There is a certain literary slang abroad—we must be pardoned for our inability to find any better designation for it—which talks of the "priests of literature;" of the "priests of science;" of man as the "interpreter and priest of nature:" and we have even some recollection of hearing those who meant no harm talking in the pulpit concerning Adam, in his unfallen state, as the "priest of Eden." If men, for the purpose of giving factitious force and grandeur to their language, will persist in translating words from a region of thought in which they are in their proper place, into another into which they cannot be imported without being thereby stripped of all their specific and intrinsic meaning, it

may be difficult to hinder them. But it becomes necessary at least to see to it that these abused and misappropriated symbols of exact, and definite, and important thought be not in their own native realm attenuated into the meaninglessness to which they degenerate when made to figure in a region of themes altogether alien to their import. The idea of priesthood—if priesthood is to have any real and definite meaning at all—can have no place whatever in science, or literature, or nature, or any such realm. It belongs to the realm of grace, presupposing sin and the Divine design to overcome and remove sin. And for my part, I would as soon think of transferring the language of Geometry and Algebra to Botany, and talk of the hypotenuse of a flower, or the *square root* of a tree, or the differential coefficient of a convolvulus, as speak of the priesthood of nature or of letters.

Nor is it merely on the score of incongruity and paradoxism that this ought to be avoided. The great evil is, that it tends to reduce the idea of priesthood to the utmost vagueness, and to impress men with the notion that they have some intelligent apprehension of what they are talking of, while they have none. The word becomes a mere figure of speech, a free and easy use of which is to be made without any definite inquiry into what, even *as a figure of speech*, it means. Accordingly, there are those who affirm that, though Christ is no doubt in Scripture called a priest, yet it is only figuratively. Among the many memorable utterances of the

I refuse to believe in the cross of Christ as a mere passive endurance. And I refuse to discuss the doctrine of His death under any such restriction of its marvellous, peculiar, and transcendent glory. I deny that His God-glorifying agency was overborne before He died, leaving Him a mere victim to causes and means of death, aside from His own active will and power offering Him to God. I deny that ~~of~~ His cross all His duty turned at last into patience, and became negation. It was His duty to die: and He discharged His duty. It never was any other man's duty to die: therefore, do not rob Him of a glory all His own. "It is appointed unto all men once to die;" appointed as a destiny,—never, save to Him, as a duty. It is indeed our duty to endure death with faith and patience. But it is the patience, the faith, that is in our case the duty; not death. Death cannot be our duty. We do not act in dying; we are acted on, and we endure it. Christ acted in dying. It was His duty to die—His official duty. Official action was in it—priestly agency. He "dismissed His spirit." He "gave Himself." Herein is His love: herein also is His power: herein the triumph and transcendent glory of His victory over death. He is an unquelled, unconquered, conquering agent in offering Himself up to God. It is true He suffers—suffers the just for the unjust. Men are killing Him; and Satan tempting and tormenting Him. The Father bruises Him:—"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," and to say, "Awake, O sword, against Him." He endures the

perhaps not so patently, upon all the false theories which have passed under our review. For these theories, if probed, will be found to have no room in them for the idea of *action* in the death of Christ. Their advocates contemplate Christ's death, not as action, but exclusively as suffering. It is a providential event, to which Christ is subjected; not a priestly action which Christ achieves. They recognise His passive endurance; not His priestly agency. They see that He suffered: they see not that He "offered."

I maintain that on this single ground alone they are fatally incapacitated from discussing the doctrine of Christ's atoning death, and rightfully precluded even from a hearing in the discussion. Did Christ merely *suffer* in His death? Was His own *agency* not concerned in it? Then, was He not a Priest on Calvary, but merely a Lamb? And if so, the question at once arises, Who offered up this Lamb of God, the eternal Son of God, a sacrifice upon the cross? Either the Father, or the Spirit, was the priest; neither of whom was ever "taken from among men," or "ordained for men, to offer." Or, there was no Priest. For assuredly no creature could be admitted to the honour of offering up the Only-begotten of the Father.\* And in any case, in this view, Christ's death occurs outside His Priesthood; and if that be true, His death can be nothing to us.

\* I find that in this sentence I have unconsciously quoted Calvin almost *verbatim*, from a passage with which a good many years ago I was familiar. See *INSTRUMENTS*, Book II., Chap xv. 6.

elder Marcus Dods, few are more memorable than the answer which he gives to this absurd affirmation. "If the great 'High Priest of our profession' was only figuratively a priest, assuredly those priests who only exercised those delegated powers which they received from Him could be no more; and consequently, there never was a real priest in existence. The very word, upon this supposition, stands in the unprecedented situation of having a figurative application without ever having had a real literal meaning."

Priesthood is an office—a real office, very definite and peculiar. It is an office embracing very definite and specific duties, demanding special and peculiar qualifications, and not to be entered on save at the special call and appointment of God. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Even so Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but He [glorified him] who said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. v. 4-6).

II. But, secondly: It is not enough to maintain that Christ's Priesthood is a real and veritable office; it must be regarded and set forth as pre-eminently *the* office—the foundation office—which Christ as a Redeemer executes. Besides being a Priest, our Lord is a Prophet and a King; and He is both these, not incidentally, occasionally, or by the way, but by office. He is officially

the Prophet, and officially the King, of Zion. Nevertheless, His Priesthood is a more fundamental office than these—its necessity, its duties, and the discharge of these duties lying closer to the heart of His interposition for our salvation than aught that pertains to either of the other offices which He fulfils. The Divine Spirit does not affirm that His appointment either to His prophetic or His kingly office “glorified” Him. But the affirmation is expressly made of His appointment to the sacerdotal office: “God glorified Him to be made an high priest” (Heb. v. 5). To inaugurate Him into the office of prophet or of king, we read not that the dread solemnity of the Divine oath was had recourse to. “But the Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec” (Ps. cx. 4). Four times is this remarkable oracle quoted in terms in the New Testament (Heb. v. 6, xi. 20, vii. 17, vii. 21). And four times is the unique peculiarity of the interposal of the oath commented and reasoned on, and made a fountain of precious and irrefragable inference. It is with great emphasis, and with strong argument of consolation to the heirs of promise that Paul avers how “God interposed Himself by an oath” (Heb. vi. 17, *margin*.) And it is with great frequency, and with resistanceless demonstration of the perpetuity, the intransferableness, and the perfection of Christ’s Priesthood, that he points to the oath as conferring unparalleled and unapproachable glory upon that blessed office of our Mediator. “Not without an oath was He made priest” (Heb. vii.

Christ, and all the secondary results—fitting otherwise as mere shades in dream-land, vainly claiming the reality of fact—become real and true, and are secured. But when *they* claim to be of the essence of atonement, they fight against their own realisation. It is the same with all secondaries in relation to their primary. Happiness, followed as a primary object of pursuit, is unattainable. Duty, followed as a primary, brings happiness in its train. And in like manner, all good in these theories—all good conception or idea in them—remains ideal and unattainable, until based on the doctrine of substitution and satisfaction which to their own ruin they would supplant. They are like the second intended row of stones for a building which is never suffered to have a first row or foundation; like the second month of a year, that shall have no first month or beginning. In the hands of those who plead them as explanations of the cross, they are at the best but “airy nothings;” “their local habitation,” and only home of life—their source of truth, reality, and power—is just that same old doctrine which they malign and would subvert. As if sunbeams should revile the sun!

III. But now, *thirdly*: Is the action of Priesthood *real* action; not mere suffering or endurance, but real action; and that action, *offering*? Then, without bringing out the nature of this action more fully,—without even asking what the exact and intrinsic nature of this action is,—we may see that it bears very powerfully, though

salem's priestly services, by offering Himself without spot to God a curse-bearing sacrifice for sin, that He denied Himself and took up His cross, and commended "Self-denial" to His followers.

(4.) It was when He proffered Himself to the sword of offended justice, awakened against Him, according to His own covenant arrangement, by the Father, that He illustrated "Self-surrender."

(5.) With Him, "Self-sacrifice" was specifically sacrifice for sin, a satisfaction and a reconciliation.

(6.) There is indeed in His cross a "Governmental Display." It declares the righteousness of God for the remission of sins; but only because Christ is there "set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25). And it declares, manifests, displays the love of God; but only in that God "sent forth His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).

(7.) A "Moral Influence," also, undoubtedly flows from the cross of Jesus. But it is a fountain of moral influence;—and moral influence without spiritual power were needlessly exerted on men dead in trespasses and sins;—it is a fountain both of Moral Influence and of regenerating energy to turn us unto righteousness, *only* because He there gave Himself in justice-satisfying substitution, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

Secure the intrinsic and essential nature, and the primary and direct design, of the atoning death of

20). "Those priests without an oath, but *this* with an oath" (ver. 21). "The law made them; but the word of the oath maketh the Son" (ver. 28). Surely we may well "conclude," with Calvin, "that the Priesthood of Christ is invested with great importance, seeing that it is ratified by the oath of God. And in fact it is the very turning-point on which our salvation depends."

To assign the position of primacy among Christ's offices to His Priesthood, is not to disparage the other offices. On the contrary, it is to honour them, and to prepare the way for the display of their real import and bearings.

For, as a Prophet, it is Christ's duty and office to reveal to the Church precisely the import and glory of His Priesthood—to reveal His Priesthood in its presuppositions, its actings, and its fruits. The character of God, His sovereignty, His holiness and justice, His law, His claims—these on the one hand: and on the other hand, man's sin, his guilt, his liability to eternal death, and his utter impotence under the sentence thereof, and under the bondage of spiritual death: such are the presuppositions of the Priesthood. God's long-suffering; His grace, and love, and loving purpose, and loving choice of an elect number as His own; His reconcilableness: a true and proper propitiation achieved; sin expiated; an actual reconciliation effected; free access to God's throne opened up: these are partly the immediate causes, and partly the direct actings, of the Priesthood. Pardon of sin; justification in righteousness; peace with God; the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of regen-



eration and of adoption, with every gift and grace of love Divine, even all spiritual blessings in heavenly places: these are the fruits of Priesthood. But all that is contained in these various enumerations, it is Christ's duty as a Prophet to unfold by His word and Spirit to the Church. They are, however, as we have said, just the presuppositions, causes, actings, and fruits of His Priesthood. The Priesthood, therefore, is at once the foundation, and provides the subject-matter of Christ's office as a Prophet.

It holds the same place of priority and importance relatively to the kingly office. The sceptre which He wields as a King, He earned as a Priest. The throne on which He now sits is the reward of His so acceptable discharge of His priestly office. And He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne (Zech. vi. 13). It is the throne of God and of the "Lamb."

If, then, Christ's interposition for our salvation is accomplished in the way of *office*; if the office which rules and determines all else connected with His interposition be the Priestly office; and if, moreover, the core and culmination of this interposition of Christ be His death on Calvary; could any course be imagined more extraordinary and suicidal than that, in expounding and defending the doctrine of Christ's death, we should consent to isolate it, and to discuss it apart from the doctrine of His Priesthood? Even the most distant preliminary observations that can be made upon the

are acknowledged as not of the essence and constituting idea of atonement, but *only* as the secondary and subordinate outcome thereof. The fundamental notion and essence of atonement, as embodied in the priestly work of Christ, is the offering of Himself unto God a sacrifice and a reconciliation for the sins of His people. It is His substitutive oblation of Himself, bearing the curse and bringing in righteousness, thereby satisfying Divine justice, and reconciling us unto God. It is from such atonement as *this*—atonement in its unique and specific meaning, in its peculiar and essential idea, and in its complete achievement by Christ, acting herein as an high priest "for men," offering "for sins"—it is from, and *only* from, such atonement as this, that these theories derive into them that measure of truth which they themselves, by attempting to supplant their own parent thought, turn into falsehood and deadly error. And this might be shown, to edification, in full detail. We can do little more than hint the line of thought.

(1.) It was by the atonement of a substitutionary sacrifice for sin, satisfying Divine justice, that Christ had scope for that un murmuring patience by which He left us an "Example" that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. ii. 21-24).

(2.) It was by dying a substitutionary and atoning death that He underwent "Martyrdom" as a witness for the truth (John xviii. 37).

(3.) It was in setting His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem, there to fill up with antitypical reality all Jeru-

possibility of doubt, each of them "another gospel;" and as such, though proclaimed by the angels of heaven, they are liable to the Anathema of Inspiration.

In the *second* place; there is no measure of truth in them, even though they should be put forth as *partial* answers to the question which they profess to solve. They have no right to stand as even a *portion* of the truth concerning the doctrine of the intrinsic nature and immediate object and design of the Atonement. There is not even an element of truth in them that will co-ordinate with that doctrine as maintained by the whole Catholic Church of God. That doctrine is itself either *the* truth, or it is a baseless fabric. Assuredly it has in it no room for these theories, as forming with it parts of one whole. Claiming to rank with it in any such light,—which in point of fact they never do,—they would be seen immediately to be false.

And in the *third* place: regarded as secondary and subordinate results of the Atonement,—not entering into its intrinsic nature and explanatory of its immediate design, but as mere secondary and subordinate results,—even in this light, the contents of these theories are not truth and fact, but merely unrealised and unrealisable ideas, mere conceptions which the theories themselves can never embody as realities. And in this sense also, as in every other, there is no measure of truth in them. They never can be translated into truth and fact; they never can emerge from dream-land, from the region of the ideal and of mere conception; till they

topic, if only relevant, must be conclusive on the question that has now been put.

This will become still more manifest when we make closer advance upon the topic, and consider the real nature and design of the priestly office.

## Part Second.

### *The Intrinsic Nature of Priesthood.*

Let us consider the intrinsic nature of the office of Priesthood.

And here we have scriptural definition to guide us, as nearly mathematically exact as the nature of the topic admits of. "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1). What success can we have in discussing any theme if we neglect our definitions? And if the theme be scriptural, where shall we find reliable definitions if we neglect those which Scripture expressly provides? Looking, then, to the very full description of priesthood given in the inspired deliverance just quoted;—besides the two considerations, *first*, That the priest must possess the nature and be related to the race for whose welfare he interposes,—he must be "taken from among men;" and *secondly*, That he must possess the call and ordination of God,—"every high priest is ordained;"—there are the three following things implied in it:—

I. Priesthood rests on personal relation. He is "ordained for men."

That is a law of the office; fundamental, indeed, and essential to the nature and constituting idea of it. "Every high priest is ordained for men." His office is absolutely groundless, meaningless, and void, save as he is related to and acts "for men." He is an ordained agent on behalf of men—instead and on behalf of individual persons. For it cannot be a general and indefinite relation to mankind, to the race—to humanity in the mass, as some speak—that is intended. No doubt the priest must be related to humanity—to human nature generally. But whatever demand arises from the nature and design of his office in that direction, is met by the prior portion of this definition, which says that he is "taken from among men." That exhausts all that has to be said of his general relation to the race. Something far more express and definite—something thoroughly distinct and additional—is indicated in the affirmation that he is "ordained for men." Most obviously individual men, particular persons, are here indicated; and special personal relation to them. He is ordained expressly for them. He takes office for them; and he will take action for them. And his action will be complete and effectual; for, though taken from among men, the last Adam is "the Lord from heaven," and His work is perfect.

II. The action which he takes has God for its object.

men. Self-denial has not God for its object, but ungodliness and worldly lust. And Moral Influence—shall it be exerted upon God? Or shall a Display of the Principles of His own Government be given to the Almighty himself? It requires not profound study to refute theories like these. The student who has learned the first clause of his first definition, will find it a sword to cleave them lifeless, and a spade to bury their remains.

But it is often said,—You ought to deal gently with these views, erroneous though they be, seeing that there is, more or less, a measure of truth in them all.

Let us adjust this matter, or at least indicate how it ought to be adjusted. For we must take occasion, from this very common plea in mitigation, additionally to glorify the truth of God, and additionally to strip these "other gospels" of men of their plausibilities. We lay down the following positions:—

In the *first* place; there is not only no measure of truth in these theories, but they are wholly false and deadly, *when* presented, as they *are* presented, as adequate expositions of the doctrine of Atonement, explanations of the reason and design of the death of Jesus. It must not be forgotten that they are given forth, severally and all of them, as satisfactory solutions of the question, What is the intrinsic nature, the constituting conception, of Christ's sacrifice on the cross? They profess to exhibit the fundamental idea and the primary design of Atonement. And in this light they are, beyond the

the *first* place, in this most offensive result, That Christ's Priesthood is relatively inferior to that of Levi; and, in the *second* place, in this prodigious paralogism also,—that is, if the Levitical priesthood was typical of Christ's,—namely, That uniform and complete success in the one is, by Divine wisdom, erected into a type and symbol of extensive failure in the other! \* The moment we take up with the theory of a “general reference” of the Atonement—the moment we abandon the elemental principle of individual personal relations—we close against ourselves the very gate of entrance into the scriptural doctrine of priesthood, and the glorious realm of truth into which it leads.

II. Is the action of priesthood directly and immediately towards God? Has it God for its immediate object? Then this again effectually and at once precludes even a hearing for the vast majority of false theories of the Atonement; for they do not ever pretend to present God as the object of what action they acknowledge in the death of Christ. And very obviously Example, and Martyrdom, and Self-denial, and Governmental Display, and Moral Influence, are not “towards God.” Martyrdom may be *from* God; but it is towards, and upon, the sufferer. Example surely is not offered to God, but to

\* For the directly converse but equally effective application of this same argument, as against the views of Ullmann, see CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE GOSPEL HISTORY, *second edition*, p. 335. “It is not the way of the Divine wisdom to set up failure as typical of success!”

Priesthood and all its direct and immediate actings are directly and immediately towards God. He is ordained “in things pertaining to God”—τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν—things towards God. The whole aspects and bearing of priesthood are towards God. It looks and it acts Godward. Its immediate object is God. While it deals with the things of God, it deals with them, not in their aspects towards men, but in their bearings on God himself,—on God's sovereignty, and character, and claims, and law. Its object, we repeat, is God. It propitiates God; it intercedes to God. It satisfies God's justice; it pacifies God's wrath; it secures God's favour; it seals God's covenant love; and gives effect to God's eternal purpose and grace. Herein it is conspicuously distinguished from the prophetic and kingly offices of our Lord. These, in their several actings, have not God for their immediate object, but mainly the souls of His people. Christ executes the office of a Prophet by revealing *to us*, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. Christ executes the office of a King in subduing *us* to Himself, in ruling and defending *us*; and when the kingly office takes wider action, it is in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies. There is no possible excuse, therefore, for confounding the sacerdotal office with either the prophetic or the kingly.

III. While priesthood thus acts in personal relation, in relation to and on behalf of individual persons; and while it acts directly towards God as its object; its

primary and immediate acting is *offering*. To act as a priest is to offer. "He is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, *that he may offer*" (Heb. v. 1). And again: "He ought to *offer*" (Heb. v. 3). And again: "Every high priest is ordained to *offer* gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is *of necessity* that this man have somewhat also to *offer*" (Heb. viii. 3).

This, then, is *the* action which Christ has to take, when He takes action as a Priest. He has to "offer." He has to offer "to God;" for all priestly action is Godward. He has to offer "for men"—in personal relation to, and on behalf of, individual men personally and individually. Moreover, the offering is "for sins:" "He ought to offer for sins" (Heb. v. 2). Not for sin; but "sins:" not sin in the abstract, impersonally, unrelatedly, and in the general; but "sins," actual and individual sins. What sins? What sins, but those of the persons for whom He acts as having been ordained for them?

Combine these positions,—adding the ideas of Christ's spotless personal holiness, and of His perpetual intercession,—and we have the full doctrine of the Priesthood, and *in and under it*, the full doctrine of the Atonement, which cannot be separated from it without being shorn of its glory and left almost defenceless:—"Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering Himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of His people; and in making continual intercession for them."

ever. It is true of "every" priest that is taken from among men. Any "general reference" contradictory to this, or in addition to this—except simply community of nature, secured by his being taken from among men—violates the very first principle of the office. We see the presence and action of this principle most clearly in the Levitical priestthød. The priests of Levi were chosen *for*, of in lieu of, the first-born; and they were ordained *for*, or in room and on behalf of men, even for the Israel of God collectively and individually. They acted for individuals; and besides such action, they had no priestly action whatsoever, no official duty to discharge. The introduction of a "general reference" into the theory of their office is an absurdity. The success of their priestly actings was complete, and also cognisable, just because it was for particular persons. Indefiniteness, generality, vagueness, unlimitedness, universality, are ideas with which no theory of their office can possibly cohere. To admit any such idea, is to render the action of their office impalpable, and the result of it untraceable. But its action is most palpable, and its results can be most easily traced, while they are seen to have been in every instance complete, and absolutely successful. For whomsoever a Levitical priest sacerdotally officiated, he was completely successful—completely successful in averting the evil, or procuring the privilege, which his official action contemplated. And if the same thing is not admitted concerning the priesthood of Christ, then we are logically landed, in

tion, it pre-requires personal relation; and the same must be true of the Atonement, unless the Atonement transpires outside the limits and acting and conditions of the priesthood. The priesthood is "for men," and for "sins." Not for mankind in the general, but "for men,"—particular men. And not for *sins* in the general, but "for sins,"—particular sins. The personal relation of the priest is a relation to particular persons, with especial reference to their particular sins; or, more briefly, it is a relation to these persons considered as sinners. A general reference or relation is out of the question. When indefinite and general relation is contended for, then the antithesis must be brought out between the two phrases—antithetical precisely in order to the expiscation of this very point—the two phrases, "Taken from among men," and, "Ordnained for men." Whatever of general relation to humanity can be legitimately predicated, is affirmed in the first of these phrases. The fact of Christ's own humanity exhausts what is true in respect of general relation or general reference. The Priest is the man Christ Jesus: taken from among men; raised up out of the people. His office is special, not general, unlimited, and indefinite. It is "for men,"—for persons, for particular individual persons: and for every individual person on whose behalf it is not effectual unto actual and complete salvation, for him it was either not undertaken, or for him it has failed.

The pre-requisite of personal relation to particular persons is indispensable in all real priesthood whatsoever,

### Part Third.

#### *Pointing the Argument from Priesthood.*

Without expanding these elements of thought on the fundamental ideas and intrinsic nature and immediate action of the Priesthood, let us now consider what immediate and inevitable characteristics they impart to the death of Christ—our *Aljeeff* being to show how they relieve the argument on the Atonement from the necessity of dealing at any length with the various false doctrines that are in vogue. For if it be true, in the *first* place, that Priesthood rests on personal relation; in the *second* place, that its whole action is immediately towards God; and in the *third* place, that its immediate action is *real* action, not mere *suffering*, but real action, and that action *offering*: then we are prepared to take preliminary and effectual protest against a whole host of heretical ideas, to the effect that they are not even entitled to a hearing,—far less to be permitted to obstruct, or to be acknowledged as able so much as even to touch, the argument of orthodox evangelical doctrine on the Atonement.

I. Does Priesthood rest on personal relation—insomuch that apart from this idea we have formed no scriptural notion of the office? Then immediately all Socinian ideas of Example and Martyrdom; all Neo-Socinian, Maurician ideas of Self-denial, Self-sacrifice, Self-sur-

render, and so forth; YOUNG'S notion of Moral Influence; and BUSHNELL'S theory of a Governmental Display;—all these motley attempts at explanation of the death of Christ must disappear immediately. None of them, nor all of them put together, come within sight of the doctrine, or even the idea, of Priesthood. Let them see real priesthood, and like the “assembled kings” of the Psalmist, when they “see it, they pass by together; they are troubled and haste them away.” In none of them can we descry the element of *office*. In none of them still less the office of *priesthood*. For in none of them is there room for personal relation, without which, to the constituting notion of priesthood there is not even an approach.

No doubt Example, Martyrdom, Moral Influence, Governmental Display, may all have bearings on persons. Personal *results* may in the end be accomplished. And hence personal relations may be said in the end to be established towards those whom Example, Influence, &c., may have beneficially affected. But it is not personal relations ultimately as the result, but personal relations *ab initio* to start with, that are the postulate of Priesthood. Moreover, such beneficial relations, as a final result, however splendidly accomplished, could not generate *office*,—*office*, which is desiderated not as an end but as a means, a means without whose provision and presence from the outset the end is unattainable. Far less could they generate *priestly office*. But indeed it is not requisite to insist on the specific office of priesthood in order

to put the heterogeneous phalanx of heresies to flight. The barest and vaguest idea of *office* in the general is enough. Is Example an office? Is Martyrdom an office? Is Self-denial an office? Is Moral Influence an office? Is a man an office-bearer because he is exemplary, self-denying, morally influential? How the question covers these theories with confusion! “Are all apostles?” said Paul. Are all office-bearers? may we also say. Yea, truly; all at least are bound to be so, if self-sacrifice and self-denial be *ex officio*. There can be no “taking from among men” in that case. There can be no inaugurating of representatives to act “for men” in these things. Christ's office of Priesthood proposes to relieve men of the obligation to eternal death. It is an insult to a man's moral nature to propose to relieve him of the duty of being morally exemplary, or morally influential. Obligations of that nature are incumbent upon all men; and they are intransferable. In the nature of things they cannot be delegated to representatives. They carry in them nothing official, and it is impossible that their obligations or actings could be framed into an office.

But it is not only this motley crowd of miserable substitutes for the Atonement of the Lord Jesus that the first principle of priesthood is fitted to expose and overthrow. It is equally effective in setting aside the theory of universal or indefinite atonement. If the Atonement of Christ falls under the category of His Priesthood, it is impossible it can be impersonal, indefinite, unlimited; for the priesthood is not. In order to its very constitu-