

The Difference Between The Old Covenant Priesthood And Christ's Priesthood

It is a most helpful thing for a writer to state clearly the main object of his composition. This the author of the epistle to the Hebrews has done. He tells us so in his eighth chapter.

"Now in the things which we are saying, **the chief point is this:** We have such a High Priest, Who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." Verses 1 and 2 R.V.

In this tersely stated "chief point," three natural divisions stand out prominently:

1. The kind of high priest Christians now have,—“We have such a high priest”;

2. The place of his ministry,—“On the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens”; and

3. The nature of his work,—“A minister of the sanctuary.”

Let us take these three divisions of the thought in the order in which they are given, and examine in the same order the teachings of this epistle, and of the other related scriptures.

I.

THE KIND OF HIGH-PRIEST CHRISTIANS HAVE

The epistle ranges the whole universe in search of comparisons to illustrate the greatness of this High-Priest of ours, Jesus Christ.

Compared with Angels:

Christ is far greater than the angels (1:4-9, 13, 14); greater than all created things (1:10-12); "higher than the heavens" (7:26).

Compared with Men:

As compared with men, Christ is greater than Adam (2:6-9); greater than Abraham (7:4-7); greater than Levi (7:9, 10); greater than Moses (3:3-6); and greater than Joshua (4:8-11 margin).

Compared with Aaron:

As concerning priests, Christ is greater than Aaron, inasmuch as He has offered "better sacrifices" (9:23); has "obtained a more excellent ministry" (8:6), having become both "surety" and "mediator of a better covenant" (7:22; 8:6), and "a minister . . . of the true tabernacle," which is "a greater and more perfect tabernacle" than that in which Aaron served (9:11; 8:2). Furthermore, whereas the law administered by the Aaronic priesthood "made nothing perfect" (7:19), Christ's ministry has "perfected forever them that are sanctified" (10:14).

Points of Similarity:

There are points of similarity, in which Aaron was a type of Christ as

priest. First, Christ was "called of God, as was Aaron" (5:4-6).

Then those earthly high-priests were "taken from among men" (5:1), that is from among their fellow-men; and so also Jesus Christ "Himself likewise took part of the same" ("flesh and blood"), and "was made like unto His brethren" (2:14, 17).

The high-priest of old could "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself [was] compassed with infirmities" (5:2). So also Jesus Christ, through His humanity, was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (4:15).

Then again, just as "every high-priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high-priest [Jesus Christ] also have somewhat to offer" (8:3).

Points of Contrast:

There are, however, numerous points of contrast between Aaron as priest, and Christ as Priest.

"For those [Aaronic] priests were made without an oath; but this [priest] with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever . . ." (7:20, 21).

The sons of Aaron were made priests "after the law of a carnal commandment"; but Christ is priest "after the power of an endless life."

The appointment of Christ as priest involved "a disannulling of the commandment going before [making men high-priests] for the weakness and un-

profitableness thereof" and "the bringing in of better hope . . . by the which we draw nigh unto God." (7:16-19).

Then again, "they indeed have been made priests many in number [one succeeding the other], because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but **this man** [A.V.], because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood unchangeable" (7:23, 24 R.V.).

Christ is not like the sons of Aaron, in that He "needeth not daily, like those high-priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself (7:27 R.V.).

Again, "the law appointeth men high-priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore" (v. 28 R.V.).

The earthly priests ministered in a sanctuary built by human hands; but Christ is "a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (8:2).

Aaron and his sons ministered daily in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary; "but into the second went the high-priest alone, once every year." In contrast with this, Jesus Christ "entered in once for all into the holy place," "within the veil" (9:6, 7, 11, 12 R.V. 6:19:20).

The typical high-priest "entereth into the holy place year by year with blood **not his own**;" but Christ "entered in once for all," "through **His own blood**" (9:25, 12 R.V.).

Aaron thus entered in "with blood not his own, but Christ entered in "by [or **through**] His own blood," another important distinction.

What those priests did year by year, Christ does once for all (9:25, 26).

Through the Levitical sacrifices, "sins are recalled to memory year after year" (Weymouth), in the annual Day of Atonement services; but through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God promises to believers,—“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (10:3,17).

Those priests stood, daily, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices; "but this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (10:11, 12).

In all these important respects, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews proves that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is immeasurably superior to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons.

"The Order of Melchizedek"

The epistle expressly states that Christ is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek, and not . . . after the order of Aaron" (7:12).

The writer proves that Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, greater than Levi, and therefore greater than Aaron.

"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils . . . And, as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him." (7:4, 9, 10).

Christ greater than Melchizedek:

But Jesus Christ is greater than Melchizedek. "The Son of God" is not said to be made like Melchizedek, but Melchizedek to be made like unto the Son of God." Fausset.

"It must be borne in mind that the epistle argues from Christ to Melchizedek, and not from Melchizedek to Christ. The real priesthood is seen in Christ, not in Melchizedek; it is only foreshadowed in Melchizedek, but even that 'shadow' reveals an ideal of priesthood older, wider, higher than that of the Levitical order." **Oldway.**

When the writer of the epistle states (no less than seven times) that Christ is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 15, 17, 21), he does not mean that Christ is one of a line of priests of which Melchizedek was the head. The Greek word (**taxis**) translated **order** in these passages, is defined by Dr. Young to signify primarily **arrangement**. See the same Greek word translated **order** in Luke 1:8; 1 Cor. 14:40; and Col. 2:5.

Melchizedek is introduced in scripture as a priest **without predecessor and without successor**. In that respect he was an appropriate foreshadowing of Christ.

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God . . . first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy (R.V.), having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." (7:1-3).

Melchizedek is here spoken of as being "without genealogy." The meaning evidently is, that in a book of genealogies (Genesis), which traces the lineage of its principal characters, and frequently tells of their birth, length of life, and death, with the name of the father, and sometimes of the mother, Melchizedek is introduced and dismissed without any mention of these things. He was thus a

more complete and perfect type of Christ than Aaron and his sons could be. Conybeare and Howson make the following comment on the above-quoted passage:

"Without table of descent.' This explains the two preceding words (without father, without mother); the meaning is, that the priesthood of Melchizedek was not, like the Levitical priesthood, dependent on his descent, through his parents, from a particular family, but was a personal office.

"Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.' Here, as in the previous 'without father' and 'without mother,' the silence of scripture is interpreted allegorically. Scripture mentions neither the father nor mother, neither the birth nor death of Melchizedek."

Dr. Albert Barnes says that "the Syriac has the correct view of the meaning of the apostle. In that version it is, 'Of whom neither the father nor mother are recorded in the genealogies.'"

"As we see Melchizedek in that picture of him which is the prophetic copy of another, he is a priest continually. Like a portrait, he is always the same; he follows us about with his eyes, a king and a priest, always alone, with no ancestry of priesthood before him, and none succeeding to his priesthood after him, always living — so scriptures shows him, and so continually in its pages we behold him." **A. B. Davidson.**

It is "**SUCH AN HIGH-PRIEST**" as **this** who is spoken of in the "Chief Point" of the epistle to the Hebrews. See again Heb. 8:1, 2.

II THE POSITION OCCUPIED BY OUR HIGH-PRIEST

"Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (8:1). The truth thus stated may be

described as one of the keynotes of this epistle. It is sounded in the opening paragraph. Ch. 1:3. It is sounded again in the closing chapters. Ch. 12:2. It is heard also in the tenth chapter. Verse 12.

The same fundamental truth is many times repeated in similarly clear language in other places in the New Testament. See Matt. 22:44; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33, 34; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 3:21.

Now in this feature also there is a marked contrast between Christ's ministry and that of Aaron and his sons.

In the Levitical arrangements there was a long series of restrictions placed upon both priests and people, in drawing nigh to God.

1. Upon the Gentiles, who were in some cases excluded for generations from the congregation;

2. Upon the children of Israel, who were not permitted to come nigh the sanctuary;

3. Upon the Levites, who, although authorised to assist the priests, were not permitted to minister at the altar, or to enter the sanctuary;

4. Upon the priests, who while authorised to minister within the sanctuary, were not permitted to enter the most holy place;

5. Upon the high-priest, who, while authorised to enter the most holy place, might do so only under great restraint as to time and circumstances.

Not Binding upon Christ

Let the reader take due note of the fact that not one of these restrictions

is binding upon Jesus Christ. Christ is "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek," and "not . . . after the order of Aaron."

How mistaken, then, to select one of the restrictions of the Levitical system (limiting the priests to the first apartment) and fasten it upon Jesus Christ, while ignoring the others! We would have just as much reason to keep Him out of the sanctuary altogether, as to limit His access for any portion of time to the first apartment.*

The Most Holy Place.

The inner apartment of the earthly sanctuary was called the Most Holy because it was the place of God's presence.

"Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." Lev. 16:2.

It is stated as the "chief point" in the epistle to the Hebrews, that at the time of His ascension, Jesus Christ entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24 cp. 8:1.

It cannot be denied that the unveiled presence of God is the most holy place of the sanctuary, whether in heaven or on earth. Even Mrs. E. G. White, the leading exponent of the Adventist sanctuary teachings recognises this, so far as it relates to the earthly sanctu-

*The present writer is endeavouring to set forth the main principles at issue, as understood by those from among Seventh-day-Adventists who have come to take a different view of the sanctuary teaching.

ary. Here is a paragraph from her writings that is right to the point:

"In the sanctuary and the temple, that were the earthly symbols of God's dwelling-place, one apartment was sacred to His presence. The veil inwrought with cherubim at its entrance was not to be lifted by any hand save one. To lift that veil, and intrude unbidden into the sacred mystery of the most holy place was death. For above the mercy-seat and the bowed, worshipping angels, dwelt the glory of the Holiest,—glory upon which no man could look and live. On the one day of the year appointed for ministry in the most holy place, the high priest with trembling entered God's presence, while clouds of incense veiled the glory from his sight." Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 284.

Now if it be true of the earthly sanctuary (as it most certainly is) that the most holy place was the apartment "sacred to God's presence," it must follow that in the heavenly sanctuary the place of God's presence is also "the holiest of all."

The entry of the high priest into the presence of God in the most holy place (brief as was his stay there) was the "chief point" in the typical services. The writer of Hebrews claims that the exaltation of Christ to a permanent place at God's right hand is "the chief point" in his description of the antitype. The contrast between the brevity of the one entry and the permanency of the other is explained by the fact that the regulations that kept a restraint upon the earthly priests have no restraining authority at all upon the "great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Heb. 4:14. R.V.

What makes one place more holy than another? Undoubtedly it is the pres-

ence of God. Someone will perhaps say, God is present everywhere, therefore every place is holy. There is a measure of truth in this.

Jesus, where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

But this does not tell all the truth. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God"? It would be idle to pretend that there is not a more immediate presence of God than may be enjoyed here on earth. It is declared that Christ has ascended "into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us." Heb. 9:24. R.V.

Other beings are in heaven, and in the presence of God. "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God," said the angel to Zacharias. Luke 1:19. But Jesus Christ has passed beyond them all, into a more intimate access to God than that enjoyed by any created being.

When God raised Christ from the dead, He "set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named." Eph. 1:20, 21. Christ went past the angels that surround the throne, past authorities and dominions and principalities and powers (cp. 1 Pet. 3:22), past Gabriel, past cherubim and seraphim, into the highest and holiest place in all the universe, the unveiled presence of the thrice holy and adorable God.

The prophet Isaiah describes the seraphim, who with tireless wing and cease-

less cry compass the throne of the Eternal.

"Each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." Ch. 6:2, 3.

Why do the seraphim veil their faces? The words of their neverending anthem furnish us with the answer. It is not simply because of the glory of God, but because of **His infinite holiness**. His glory is His holiness. He is "**glorious in holiness**" Ex. 15:11. The cry of the seraphim is impelled by a sense of the infinite holiness of God, overwhelmingly impressed upon them by their awful nearness to the divine presence.

But Jesus, the Son of God, penetrated to the uttermost the infinite reaches of holiness, **beyond the circle of the seraphim**, "now to appear before the face of God for us."

Even in heaven there are degrees of approach to the presence of God. But Christ has never been required to minister in any intermediate position. There is no more intimate or secluded apartment in "the heavenly places" than is to be found at God's "own right hand."

And this fact, that the position occupied by Christ in His ministry in heaven is at God's right hand, emphasised so much in other scriptures, is said by the writer of Hebrews to be "the chief point" in his epistle.

'Who is set on the right hand of the throne.' This is what the apostle states to be the chief or **most important point** of all that he had yet discussed. His sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God proves . . . That He is higher than all the high priests that ever ex-

isted . . . That the sacrifice which He offered for the sins of the world was sufficient and effectual, and as such accepted by God . . . That He did not, like the Jewish high priest, depart out of the holy of holies, after having offered the atonement . . . It is no wonder the apostle should call this sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the Divine Majesty, the chief or head of all that he had before spoken."—Adam Clarke on Heb. 8:1.

"It is not in one of the lower heavens that our high-priest is tarrying. He has passed through all the outer courts, into the heavenly Holy of Holies, the very presence of God (7:26; 9:24)."—"The Century Bible" on Heb. 4:14.

The Adventist teaching is that Christ did not enter the most holy place in heaven until A.D. 1844. Mrs. E. G. White speaking of the time "when the door was opened in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary," says that "this door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place and opened the door into the most holy The enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door of the holy place, that Jesus has shut, and to close the door of the most holy place, which He opened in 1844."—"Early Writings," pp. 42, 44.

Still speaking of a supposed transfer of ministration from one apartment in heaven to another in 1844, Mrs. White writes:—

"I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down . . . Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot, and was borne into the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father."—*Ib.*, p. 55.

"Instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary."—"The Great Controversy," p. 422.

MISTAKEN VIEWS INTERCEPT THE LIGHT

Adventists have been prevented from grasping the full force of this oft-repeated and simply stated truth by the theory of a ministration carried on successively in two separate apartments in heaven; based on the fact that there were two apartments in the earthly sanctuary. There has been a mistaken view of the meaning of the type. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary represented the presence of God, "heaven itself" in the highest sense. All the expressions in the book of the Hebrews describing the place of Christ's ministry in heaven agree with this conception. He is said to have entered "into heaven itself," in direct contrast with the holy places of the earthly sanctuary. Heb. 9:24. In another passage He is said to have "passed through the heavens" (Ch. 4:14 R.V.), clearly implying that He had passed to the heaven of heavens. This agrees with Paul's statement in another epistle, that Christ has been exalted "far above all the heavens." Eph. 4:10 R.V.

If the high priest were said to have gone "through" the earthly tabernacle, we could not but understand him to have reached the holy of holies. It must be even so with the tabernacle not made with hands. For Christ to have gone "through the heavens" must of necess-

ity have taken Him to the most holy place.

In the ninth chapter of Hebrews the holy of holies is four times described as "the holy place," or "a holy place." See Ch. 9:8, 12, 24, 25 in the R.V. Let not the reader conclude from this that the writer here has in mind the first apartment of the sanctuary. Such a conclusion would be entirely unwarranted. We have the clearest evidence that in these passages he has in mind the most holy place.

In referring to the inner apartment of the earthly sanctuary the Bible writers make no rigid adherence to the terms "most holy place," or "holy of holies." The inner apartment is even in Leviticus much more frequently described as the "holy place." In proof of this, see the 16th chapter, verses 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27 and 33, where that apartment is seven times spoken of as the "holy place" and once as "the holy sanctuary," but never once as the "most holy place," or the "holy of holies." The writer of Hebrews follows the same practice. Just as the "holy place" of Leviticus 16 is said to be "within the veil" (verse 2), so also in Hebrews the "holy place" in heaven into which Christ is said to have entered is declared to be "that within the veil." Ch. 6:19, 20.

We conclude, then, that the position of our great High-Priest from the time of His ascension is "higher than the heavens" (7:26) so that as there could be **no priest greater than He**, so also there could be **no place in heaven higher**

or more holy than that to which the Father once for all exalted the Son.*

III THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

We now come to the third division of our subject. Christ is declared to be "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle." Of what does the ministry of our great High Priest consist? We are told in the next verse that "it is necessary that this High Priest also have somewhat to offer. Ch. 8:3, R. V. He ministers, then, **the merits of a sacrifice offered.** That sacrifice is essential to His ministry. What is the object of the sacrifice? He "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and then "sat down on the right hand of God." Ch. 10:12. When did He offer that sacrifice? "This He did once for all, **when He offered up Himself.**" Ch. 7:27, R.V. What did the sacrifice accomplish? Christ "**put away sin** by the sacrifice of Himself." It was "**when He had** by Himself purged our sins," that He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." Ch. 9:26; 1:3.

The epistle to the Hebrews teaches throughout that a certain work already accomplished is the basis of Christ's ministry in heaven. It was "when He had" and "after He had" offered the atoning sacrifice, that He "sat down on the right hand of God." Ch. 1:3; 10:12. The very act of sitting down at God's

right hand implies a finished work. Men do not sit down in the midst of a difficult task, but after the task is accomplished.

The work that Christ finished before he sat down at God's right hand was the making of the atonement. This is very evident when we compare the teaching of Hebrews with what is recorded in Leviticus about the typical day of atonement.

IN HEBREWS:

"Who . . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

—Ch. 1:3.

IN LEVITICUS:

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."—Ch. 16:30.

Christ does not make the atonement after sitting down at God's right hand. He made the atonement first, and then sat down.

Christ's ministry before the Father's face does not have as its object the **obtaining** of salvation for us, for that salvation **has already been obtained.** "By his own blood He entered in once for all (R.V.) into the holy place, **having obtained** eternal redemption for us." Ch. 9:12.

Why, then, does Christ need to minister there, if our salvation has already been obtained? The answer is plain enough. **He has obtained salvation for us, and now He ministers at God's right hand that men may obtain from Him** (and from God through Him) **the salvation already purchased for them.**

"For God hath not appointed us to

*For the significance of the two apartments of the sanctuary see the tract, "The Heavenly Significance of the Earthly Sanctuary."

wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:9.

The apostle who suffered so greatly in the preaching of the gospel, tells us the motive that sustained Him in all his trials.

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." 2 Tim. 2:10.

After Christ had obtained salvation for us, God ordained that that salvation should be offered to us through the preaching of the gospel. And He appointed Christ to minister at His right hand because He is (by virtue of the work already accomplished) "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near to God through Him." Heb. 7:25, R.V. Christ is "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Ch. 5:9.

NOT "BESEECHING" GOD

It is a mistake to think of Christ's ministry as though He were **beseeking** God, and **seeking to persuade** Him to receive the returning sinner. This misconception arises perhaps from the frequent use of such terms as "pleading" and "interceding" in speaking of that ministry. These expressions are applicable enough if used in a legal sense; but not in the sense of beseeching.

To plead, in the legal sense, is "to argue in support of a claim, or in defense against the claim of another; to urge reasons for or against." The counsel does not stand before the judge and clasp his hands **beseeking** him to have

mercy upon the prisoner. Instead of that, he makes out the best case he can in his client's behalf, and asks the judge on such and such grounds to acquit him.

This is the kind of pleading Christ does in heaven. What argument does He present to the Father, in order to secure the acquittal of the repentant returning sinner? He presents the argument of Calvary. That is an argument that is bound to prevail, for not only did "the Father send the Son to be the Saviour of the world"; He also set the Son at His own right hand as a mark of His full and final acceptance of the work accomplished on the cross.

To intercede is not necessarily to beseech. The English word is derived from the Latin, *inter*, between, and *cedo*, to go. An intercessor is a go-between. The scriptural term is **Mediator**. Christ is described as the "one Mediator between God and Man." 1 Tim. 2:5. To mediate is "to interpose between parties as the equal friend of each."

Men often feel the need of a go-between in approaching their fellow-men. In choosing a go-between one would naturally desire to secure the help of someone who would be most likely to have influence with the person to be approached. If a man wished to be received at the court of a King who would be more likely to obtain his request than the Crown Prince? And who could present one to the king more acceptably than he?

AN ACCEPTABLE INTERCESSOR

How great, then, is the blessing that

God has conferred upon us, in appointing His own dear Son to minister at His right hand on our behalf. His intercession is bound to be acceptable. It must not be forgotten, however, that the ground on which Christ asks God to accept us is the ground of the work already completed on Calvary's cross. Christ does not ask that we be accepted in view of some work He will undertake for us in the future; but because of the atoning sacrifice already offered.

The apostle John, speaking of Christ's ministry, says: "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. **Advocate**, in this passage, is translated from the Greek, **paraclete**, which also means Comforter, or Helper. See R.V. margin. The word occurs only five times in the New Testament. Once it is used by John, as quoted above, and it is four times applied to the Holy Spirit by Christ. See John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. Christ promised to send us "another Comforter," or Helper. That is, He Himself was our Comforter while with us; but in view of his departure He would send Another to take His place. We thus have two Helpers, One sent to "abide with" us, and the Other to be our Advocate, or Helper, "with the Father."

Dr. Strong defines **paraclete** to mean "one called alongside." There is "one called alongside" the Christian, to guide and help him in his walk on earth; and "one called alongside" the Father, as our Helper in heaven. The Holy Spirit speaks to us for God, on earth, while

our great High Priest speaks to God for us, in heaven.

While recognising that Christ's work as our Advocate, Mediator, and Intercessor is not characterised by "beseeching" the Father, let us not fail to see that there is a beseeching side to our Saviour's ministry. The beseeching, however, is not directed Godward, but manward. It is indeed a prominent feature of the earthward side of the ministry. This is a marvellous thing. Christ does not need to beseech God, but it is necessary for Him to beseech man! He does this through the preaching of the gospel.

"On Christ's behalf therefore we come as ambassadors, God, as it were, making entreaty through our lips; we, on Christ's behalf beseech men to be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20.
Weymouth's translation.

If the reader has not already responded to Christ's appeal, let him respond now, and be reconciled to God without further delay.

In concluding this section, let it be emphasised again, that our great High Priest, in his service in the true tabernacle, **ministers the benefits of an atonement already made.**

CONCLUSION

The "chief point" of the epistle to the Hebrews (Jesus as Priest—at God's right hand—our minister) is made the basis of some very moving exhortations.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Ch. 4:14.

If the reader is already a Christian, let him hold fast his faith. Such an

High Priest as we have, set in such a position as He occupies, with the merits of such a sacrifice as he has offered, warrants the believer's confidence. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." "Having an High Priest over the house of God . . . let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." Ch. 10:35, 21, 23.

We may have confidence despite the keenest realisation of our own weakness and unworthiness, for this Priest is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He is One "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." "He is able to succour them that are tempted," "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted." Ch. 4:15; 5:2; 2:18.

In days of old, the priests had to be separated from the people and their defilements by certain ceremonial purifications, before they could minister acceptably on behalf of others. But this Priest of ours needs no such purification. "Such an High Priest [as He is] became us [i.e., suited us, sinners as we are] who is holy; harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and yet "made higher than the heavens." Ch. 7:26. He suits us, or meets our needs, in being touched with the feeling of our infirmities, while yet being separate from our sins, and undefiled by them. He meets our needs also in another respect. The priests of old, after all their meticulous cleansings, were scarce able to enter the holy of holies in behalf of the people;

but this Priest of ours, without such cleansings, is made permanently "higher than the heavens."

We are invited to "consider Him," and to "look unto" Him, set down as He is "at the right hand of the throne of God." He is said to have entered "within the veil," as our "forerunner." We are to follow Him eventually there in person; but we follow Him now by faith. "Let us," therefore, "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Ch. 12:2, 3; 6:20; 10:22.

What is the purpose of this drawing near? It is "that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

What is the means of drawing nigh? The shed blood of Christ is the means. We "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

Emphasis is placed upon the **boldness** with which the believer may draw nigh.

"Let us therefore draw near with **boldness** unto the throne of grace." R.V.

"Having therefore . . . **boldness** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Ch. 10:19; 4:16.

"In whom we have **boldness** and **access with confidence** by the faith of Him." Eph. 3:12.

The Jews of old, with varying degrees of nearness, one and all drew near with trembling, even the high priest in his annual approach to the mercy-seat. But now all Christians, both Jews and Gentiles are invited to come boldly even to the throne of grace. What is the reason for this difference? Answer: The completed work of Jesus Christ, in his atoning sacrifice, offered on Calvary's

cross, accepted and approved before the face of God on behalf of every believer. If the atonement were not yet complete, there would not yet be warrant for boldness. In that case, the reader, and the writer, would still need to wait in a certain degree of suspense of mind for the completion of the work. But, thank God, no such need now exists. The all-atoning sacrifice has been offered, and the all-prevailing ministry is in session. Let us then, dear reader, respond to the call of the Spirit. **Let us draw near.**

W. W. FLETCHER.

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