

*THE LAY PRIESTHOOD.*

Under the Old Testament Dispensation it was ordered by Almighty God that the setting apart of special agents for His work should be accompanied by certain outward and visible signs significant of the special grace and help, inward and invisible, which He would bestow concurrently with the outward sign on worthy recipients, and without which their subsequent duties could not be acceptably fulfilled. Ceremonial washing with water, anointing with consecrated oil, and the laying-on-of-hands were the principal among those outward signs,—the first signifying repentance and faith, with the accompanying cleansing of body, soul and spirit,—the second representing the anointing by the Holy Spirit, with its teaching and strengthening gifts, and the third marking the bestowal of those seven-fold gifts by the hand of God.

Prophets, priests and kings were thus religiously and ceremonially set apart from the world around them as God's chosen servants to fulfil His work for the salvation of His chosen people, themselves and others, and the subduing of the kingdoms of the earth. The people of Israel were in those days called of God to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood. Through them was to come a Light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of His people Israel; for the promises given through God's an-

cient Dispensation were to extend—not only to His people of Israel, but to those afar off, even as many as the Lord our God should call, and His call was to be to all nations.

This in-gathering of the Gentiles began with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. All were called to become "members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones." All thus becoming His members were to be partakers of His nature and of His work, namely that of a prophet, a priest and a king. In his nature there was to be no distinction—as in the Old Dispensation—between male and female, bond or free, but all were to be one Body. In this Body, fulfilling His work, every member should partake of His rest.

Admission, or being "born again" into His Body, was to be of water and of the Spirit, from which—as in the Old Dispensation, infancy was to be no bar. Next, even as the young Israelite at twelve years of age was brought before the doctors of the Law and, after careful examination, admitted to be "sons of the precept" by the Laying-on-of-hands, even so in the Primitive Church, and thenceforward even to our day and to the end of the world, in the fulfilment of the earlier type, is found in the setting apart for their holy work as prophets, priests and kings, as the members of Christ's Body, the solemn Laying-on-of-hands of the Apostles and their regularly-ordained successors on the heads of the candi-