

## Messenger and Visitor

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### The High-Priesthood of Christ.

There is nothing more vitally important in Christian teaching than the doctrine of the High-Priesthood of Christ. In it is embodied and revealed the hope of sin-defiled and guilt-stricken humanity. Everywhere in its nobler religious aspirations the world's cry has been for a priest who could take away the sense of guilt from the human breast and make a way for men into the holy presence of God. The heart and the flesh of humanity has cried out after God. Religious charlatans and shadow priests innumerable there have been, deluding men with mummeries and false hopes, or at best presenting some dimly significant type and symbol of a true priesthood and a real priestly work. But the only real High Priest, able to take away guilt and to bring men near to God, is He who has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and "who, through His own blood, entered once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

It is well for us to get a strong grip on this truth that real priesthood involves the offering up of self and the pouring out of the priest's own life-blood upon the altar. Under the Mosaic dispensation there was a priesthood—a shadowy prophecy of that which was to come—there were priests who ministered offering at earthly altars the flesh and blood of beasts; and in certain forms of Christianity there are those who are called priests and who pretend to offer under the forms of bread and of wine the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. But in all this there is no real priesthood, no real sacrifice. The only real priest is he who offers himself, and in order that the offering shall be effective for the cleansing of sin, it must be without spot or blemish. There has been only one such sacrifice. Is there, then, no Christian priesthood apart from the Supreme High-priesthood of Christ? There is, but restricted and imperfect in its character. There is a priestly element in all true Christian life. For the spirit of self-sacrifice is an essential of Christianity. Whatever life is, in the name and fellowship of Christ and "though the Eternal Spirit," giving itself for others partakes of the true priestly character. The Christian mother who, in the spirit of love and self-sacrifice, gives herself to her family, the Christian pastor in like manner giving himself for his people, the missionary facing martyrdom for love of his Lord and the perishing, every disciple indeed who truly takes up his cross daily and follows Jesus, is in a real sense a priest of the Most High and exercises a priesthood which is at least some faint and imperfect reflection of the glory and the power of the supreme and perfect priesthood of the Christ. It is not any churchly training or clothing in peculiar vestments or laying on of holy hands or baptisms or anointings or any ecclesiastical gifts or callings that constitute one a priest, but the surrender to the call of the Eternal Spirit, to take up one's cross and follow in faith and love in the path of Him who has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Between the high priest of the old dispensation and the greater High Priest of the new there are certain differences which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes very clear. There is the difference as to CHARACTER. The Levitical high priest was of the earth and earthly. He stood as a man, among his brethren, a sinner among sinful men. His approach to the most holy place, where the Divine Presence was symbolized, was with fear and trembling, and not without blood poured out in symbolical atonement for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people whose representative he was. But the High Priest of the new dispensation has his home in the most holy place. He dwells with God, he speaks the language of heaven. For him atonement were an impertinence. His presence radiates

light. He lifts his eyes to Him who sits upon the eternal throne and calls Him 'Father.' All his being moves in harmony with the holy and the perfect will of God.

Again there is a difference between the old and the new in respect to CONTINUITY. The Levitical high priest, whose ministry was "according to the law of a carnal commandment," was mortal. There must come a Day of Atonement when the high priest who for many years had offered sacrifices for himself and for Israel, and had gone as the representative of his people into the most holy place, would be no longer there. He had not finished his work, the people were there as needy as ever, the worshippers had not been made perfect. But the priest—death had claimed him, and another must take up the unfinished work, and, like him, exercise the shadowy and prophetic function of a priesthood which could bring nothing to perfection. But in the new and greater dispensation of grace, the ministry of the High Priest is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but "after the power of an endless life." He comes to abide. He is a High Priest forever, without beginning of days or end of life, yesterday, today and forever the same, and his ministry is unto the utmost limits of time and the utmost needs of humanity.

Then again because of the difference as to character and as to continuity, there is the difference as to RESULT. The Levitical priesthood brought nothing to perfection. Incompleteness was written over all its work. It was a thing of types and shadows, of twilight prophecy, moving in a circle of endless repetitions, never able to offer a real and sufficient sacrifice that should make the worshipper perfect, by furnishing him with a ground for his faith and cleansing his conscience from dead works. But the real High Priest, coming in the power of a divine and sinless personality, moves straight to the goal which all the priests and the sacrifices of the old dispensation had but dimly indicated. Those sacrifices offered by Levitical priests had but pointed impotently to the need of a sacrifice which no human priest could offer, they had pointed to the perpetual shame and tragedy of a broken holy law which none could ever fulfil. Then came the great High Priest to put an end to this long and bootless slaughter of "goats and calves," by the offering of one true and worthy sacrifice, and to make honorable the broken law by doing perfectly the will of God. That doing of the will of God involved the sacrifice. The pathway of the human Son of God inevitably led to Calvary. In that sacrifice a highway of eternal redemption is established for the people of Christ, and in his doing of the will of God they are sanctified. For they who through faith and love follow in the footsteps of their divine Redeemer are moved by the same Eternal Spirit to offer themselves to God. Their fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. And therefore the worshipper is no longer, as in the symbolic tabernacle of old, shut out from the most holy place, for it is the prayer of our Great High Priest that where He is there also shall His people be, that they may behold His glory, and that they may be one with Him even as He is one with the Father.

### Editorial Notes.

—We give this week a first instalment of Dr. MacLaren's presidential address on preaching. It will be continued in the next two issues of the paper. We should have preferred, of course, to give the address all in one issue, but it was too much for our space, and as Dr. MacLaren dealt with the subject under the three heads, THE MINISTER AS EVANGELIST, AS TEACHER and AS PROPHET, it seemed best to publish it in three parts. Some may prefer to lay the papers by and read the address as a whole when it is all in hand. A better way perhaps will be to read each instalment as it comes and then read it all over when the last is received.

—The Rev. Charles Williams, who holds a highly honorable place among the Baptist ministers of England, on May 5th closed his ministry at Accrington after fifty years of service, the church at Cannon St., of which he was pastor, presenting him with an address and a purse of six hundred guineas. Mr. Williams was to sail for New York on the 18th inst., and is probably now in the United States. He will go to San Francisco, visiting Montreal, Toronto and other cities on his way, and thence will go to New Zealand by way of the South Sea Islands. After visiting Australia Mr. Williams will return to England by way of India, Egypt, Palestine and the Mediterranean.

—The Baptists of Great Britain are making substantial progress in their great undertaking of raising a "Century Fund" of £250,000. At the first of the present month, according to the statement of the 'London Baptist Times,' about £178,600 had been subscribed, and of this £101,208—about a half million dollars—had been actually received by the secretary. Several of the associations and unions have subscribed at the rate of more than a pound per member. But this includes in most cases some large subscriptions given by persons of wealth. The largest individual subscription reported is £2,000. Several have given £1,000 and several others between £1,000 and £2,000.

—Judging by the Casket's display of what it is pleased to call its "journalistic muscle"—which, by the way, would seem to be a demonstration that its strength does not consist in sweet reasonableness—that journal must have been touched in a tender spot by our gentle protest against its indecent reference to the late Dr. Justin D. Fulton. It may of course serve the purpose of the Casket to make the name of Justin Fulton a stench in the nostrils of its readers by persistently representing him as a man of low and beastly instincts, who revelled in moral filth and obscenities. But these representations—as false as they are malicious—could have no weight with those who knew Dr. Fulton personally and who know of the honorable position which he held among the ministers of a great Christian denomination. It is a poor answer to any criticism to heap abuse upon the critic. Whatever may be said of Dr. Fulton's arraignment of Roman Catholicism, on its merits, it is not to be answered to the minds of unprejudiced men by applying to a man whose Christian character and personal purity were unquestioned by those who knew him best every vile and scurrilous epithet which a copious vocabulary of vituperation can supply. Such a course is unworthy of honorable journalism, and claims notice at our hands only as indicating the peculiar line of procedure which in this case the Casket thinks it necessary to adopt.

—The death of Mr. John H. Harding, which occurred on Wednesday of last week, removes from St. John a citizen of long standing and honorable record, and from the Germain St. Baptist church its senior deacon. Mr. Harding had lived an active life, and though he had reached the very advanced age of 83 years, his natural vigor, his hopeful spirit and the serenity and confidence of his religious faith had upheld him in the enjoyment of a remarkable measure of health and strength until a few months ago. Since about the first of the year he has been confined to his house and much of the time to his bed, and as his disease developed it became apparent that his recovery could not be expected. During his illness Mr. Harding suffered comparatively little and his mind was calm and peaceful in anticipation of the blessed inheritance which he felt assured was laid up for him in heaven. In his business affairs Mr. Harding had shown much enterprise and ability and had been rewarded with a good measure of success. He was for many years connected with the Marine Department of the Civil Service, and was known as a careful and very competent officer. As a member and a deacon of the Germain St. church Mr. Harding had manifested a warm and constant interest in all that pertained to its welfare. He had become a member of the church when a lad, and was connected with it through a large part of its history. His presence and helpful ministry will be sadly missed and gratefully remembered. In Deacon Harding the pastor ever had a friend who was wont to express his appreciation in kindly words and generous deeds. For the family, and especially for Mrs. Harding, deprived, after so many years of happy wedded life, of the companionship which was so much to her, there will be much sympathy. May the evening of life for her be cheered with happy memories and brightened with assurance of a blessed reunion in the life beyond.

—If the men who supply their fellowmen with intoxicating drink were held responsible under the law in terms of money for any damage which the families of the latter might sustain as a result of their drinking, it would be likely to induce in the liquor-seller some measure of caution as to how he put the bottle to his neighbor's lips and made him drunk. That, under the laws of Indiana, liquor-sellers are thus responsible, is the decision of a judge of the Supreme Court of that State. Thus, if a man under the influence of liquor, commits a crime for which he is sent to prison, the wife of the imprisoned man can bring suit against the man who supplied her husband with liquor, and if she can prove to the satisfaction of a jury that the liquor was so obtained, and that the crime resulted from the drinking of it, she can recover damages for the loss sustained on account of being deprived of her husband's support. It would be an excellent thing to have some of that Indiana law imported into this latitude. Here in St. John a man is licensed to sell liquor, he sells to his neighbor and the latter becomes drunk, and in consequence commits some crime or misdemeanor, is apprehended, convicted, and fined five, ten, twenty, fifty dollars, according to the offence. On whom is the fine assessed? Virtually on the man's