

Devotional Service.

BY REV. T. J. PARR, M.A.

MARCH 17.—"CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST."

Heb. 7: 24-28.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Mar. 11. The type. . . . Gen. 14: 17-20; Heb. 7: 17
Tues., Mar. 12. Man's need. . . . Lev. 1: 1-4; Heb. 4: 14-16
Wed., Mar. 13. Christ's sufferings. . . . Heb. 2: 17-18
Thu., Mar. 14. What Christ accomplished. . . . Rom. 5: 1-11
Fri., Mar. 15. Our offering. . . . Ps. 40: 6; 51: 14-19
Sat., Mar. 16. The sign of acceptance. . . . Acts 19: 35-43

We receive some important light on New Testament doctrine from Old Testament religion, for many of the rites and ceremonies of the old dispensation were typical of things to come. The priestly office of former days foreshadowed the priesthood of the human soul, and pointed to the fact that all true believers are priests in their own right. The high priest of the Old Testament, making atonement for the people, pointed forward to Christ, the high priest of humanity, who having made atonement once for all, and for all mankind, has passed into the heavens and ever lives to make intercession for us.

WHO WAS MELCHISEDEC?

As the priesthood of Christ is explained by reference to Melchisedec, we may well ask the question, who was he? He was king of Salem or Jerusalem, and was as real a person as Abraham. The name means "King of Righteousness," which suggests king of morals, or king of religion, or righteous king, so-called because of his character. The name at least intimates that he was a king of the spiritual things of character, and so a high priest, and foreshadowing of the priesthood of him who was to follow. Three things may be said in reference to this ancient king:

1. *His Kingship.*—His rule may have been over a particular town, but more probably was a sort of government over the whole land. That kingship was exercised for righteousness, and, therefore, Melchisedec was a peacemaker.
2. *His Priesthood.*—It is true that in early ages the heads of tribes were also priests of the tribes; but it is also true that the good man always is a priest to his fellows, a minister of heavenly blessings to them, and an intercessor with God for them. The good man is always both kingly and priestly.
3. *His Religion.*—He no doubt had the genuine religion of humanity, the worship of the one God. His pure and holy faith in the Most High God was doubtless a relic of the anciently universal recognition of the one Creator. God has at no time left himself without a witness, even in lands secluded from the direct privileges of his people.

QUALITIES OF PRIESTHOOD.

The Order of Melchisedec had all the permanent essentials of priesthood. And these are three:

1. *The Power of Intercession.*—Too readily we assume that the essential thing in priesthood is presidency over a religious ceremony, such as a sacrifice. But this is an incidental duty; the essential thing is his acting as medium of communication between God and man. Melchisedec was an intercessor. He stood for Abraham to present to God the tokens of thanksgiving. He stood for God to present to Abraham acceptance and blessing.
2. *The Power of Character.*—This is absolutely essential to priesthood. It is the secret of acceptance with God, and the secret of influence with men. It is the basis of reverence and trust. It was found in Melchisedec, as indicated in the respect shown him, which Abraham recognized and responded to.
3. *The Power of Continuity.*—A priesthood

which is really efficient cannot be thought of as stopped or changed. If there is need for change in it or in its work. The priesthood of Melchisedec was never changed while he lived. The ideal priesthood of man, which he represented, God established forever.

APPLICATION TO CHRIST.

The priesthood of Christ represents the permanent ideas of priesthood. Therefore it is said to be after the Order of Melchisedec, and not after the Order of Aaron, for the Order of Aaron was in many respects temporary. Christ as priest has also a threefold relation.

1. *He is Our Intercessor.*—This is the essential side of priestliness. In the case of Melchisedec, it cannot be said in the same sense, for he presented no sacrifice, but the fact is that the interceding element of his priesthood is the one set forth prominently.

Christ is our intercessor:
"He ever lives above
For me to intercede
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead."

2. *His Power Lies in His Personal Character.*—"Such a high priest became us, holy, guiltless, undefiled, separate from sin." He on this ground stands in acceptance with God—"He offered himself without spot to God." He on this ground also gains influence with men, who respond with their confidence to ideal goodness.

3. *His Relation is a Continuous One.*—He has an unchangeable priesthood, in the power of an endless life. What he is to us, he is forever.

HUMAN OFFICIAL PRIESTS ABOLISHED.

Wherever human priests are now found, whether in the heathen world or in Christendom, they exist not by divine authority, but by human ignorance and superstition. The idea is not scriptural, that Christ is high priest, and Christian ministers priests. The other priests were but assistants to the high priest, because he could not do all. The Lord Jesus needs no assistant, and so is sole representative of both high priest and priest. Aaron's priesthood has passed away. Christ's priesthood does not pass from one to another. In the New Testament, the separating veil is rent, the human priesthood is superseded, and we have all alike boldness of access by the new and living way consecrated by the death of Christ upon the cross. We need confess sins to no one, but to him against whom we have sinned, through Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

SIDE-LIGHTS.

1. The high priest alone could enter the Holy of Holies. There he made intercession.
2. The high priest, while pure himself, must bear before God the sins of the people. "He hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin."
3. The veil of the temple was rent at Christ's death. Our high priest discloses as much of God as mortal eyes can behold.
4. Such expressions as "worm of the dust" seem an insult to humanity—until one has tried to conquer some besetting sin; then they are known to be none too strong.
5. How many times I have sinned! And how thankful I am that it was Christ who counselled Peter to forgive "till seventy times seven."
6. You lie in your steamer berth in the midst of a storm and instinctively grasp the sides of the boat, yet you know that you are safe, not because of your hold on the ship, but because you are in the ship. So it is not your hold on Christ that saves you, but Christ's hold on you.—Wells.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

This topic is not so easy to unfold as some others; still it is of great importance. We can

understand Jesus Christ as our high priest by studying the character and duties of the ancient high priest. Ask your pastor to attend this meeting and give an address of five or ten minutes on "The High Priest of the Old Testament in His Relation to Christ." Or, if this is not practicable, have two brief papers prepared: (1) "The High Priest of the Old Testament," (2) "Christ as the High Priest of Humanity." 'Tis of great moment that we understand the atonement as the ground work of our salvation.

MARCH 24.—"WHAT I OWE TO CHRIST."

2 Cor. 8: 9; 1 Peter 3: 21-25.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Mar. 15. The cost of redemption. . . . Matt. 27: 29-35; Titus 2: 13, 14
Tues., Mar. 16. For what was the price paid? . . . John 3: 16; 10: 10-18
Wed., Mar. 20. With what are we redeemed? . . . Peter 1: 18-23
Thu., Mar. 21. The obligation of love. . . . John 14: 15-24
Fri., Mar. 22. Cancelling the debt. . . . Matt. 23: 23-25
Sat., Mar. 23. Offering our all. . . . 2 Cor. 8: 1-5

It may be correctly said that we owe all we have and all we are to Christ. We read that "all things were made by him." Hence all material things had their source in him. We also read that "In him was life." Hence our lives emanated from him. Again we read that "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Hence the sustaining power of our lives and all pertaining thereto, as well as the maintaining power of the material universe, is found in him. We are his by creation, his by providence, his by redemption. Wise are we if we recognize our indebtedness, and magnify his name for his creative power; praise him for his providential care; and harmonize ourselves with his plan of redemption.

Let us stand for it in Nicholson, what we believe in his wonderful plan of salvation—his great crowning work for us and for the human race.

THE GREAT SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

When all power, wealth, and greatness, earthly and divine, were Christ's, he consented to lead a life of poverty, not merely for the world in general, but for you. In the incarnation Christ laid aside the riches which he had with the Father, subjected himself to human limitations, became conscious of human dependence and need, underwent suffering and want, and allowed himself to be tested in all points like as we are (Read Heb. 2: 14-18; 5: 7-9). He did not "take hold upon the nature of angels," because it was men he came to redeem. In spite of all man's weakness and sin he was not ashamed to call him brother. Meditate upon the greatness of this sacrifice and see if you can grasp it. What does it mean? Think how hard it is for one to live in poverty. Imagine Florence Nightingale leaving a comfortable home, where ease and luxury abounded, to follow the exposures of a campaign; to live amid the carnage of war; to spend her life picking up the mutilated bodies of men; to undergo all the dangers of disease, pestilence, hunger, and cold; to dwell in an atmosphere surcharged with miasm, and see if you can comprehend the sacrifice. Have you ever really appreciated the heroism of David Livingstone, the noble, the cultured, the man who might have made a fortune for himself, plunging into the heart of Africa, surrounded by savages, in perils by land, perils by sea, perils by hunger and thirst and exposure, perils from wicked and designing white men, perils unmanly; dying friendless and alone, only crying to humanity to redeem this "open sore of the world"? Sweet upon these, and when you have comprehended them turn to that infinitely greater sacrifice