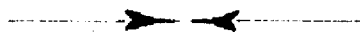


# *Melchizedec* *the* *Crowned* *Priest*

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And He lifted up His hands and blessed them and . . . as He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him.”—Lu. xxiv. 50-52.



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## Melchizedec the Crowned Priest.

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We desire, as God may enable us, to enter a little into the rich provision He has made for His people in His Son, as set forth in the Melchizedec Priesthood. In this way we may more intelligently avail ourselves of our privileges and answer more to the heart of God and His desires for us, as His own, in these days.

The subject is brought before us in one of the earliest types of the Old Testament. Three verses (Gen. xiv. 18-20) presenting it in a stringently typical scene, describing all that is necessary to give the mind of God as to the final and complete character of the Kingly Priesthood of the Son. Like other early types it is couched in language that leaves it open to the Spirit to fill in details in later references to the same subject, and to give a heavenly application to what, at first, looks simply like an earthly scene.

This first picture is drawn in strong lines; it is shorn of all extraneous matter unnecessary to the object in view. Like a small Vignette of a marvelous scene, it contains nothing superfluous, while it brings everything necessary into a very strong light.

It is recorded thus early that it may take possession of the mind of those who valued the oracles of God, that is the Jews. It is, moreover, reserved as a weapon for the Spirit to use in due course, to the overthrow of all objections in those same minds, to what they might consider an infringement upon their privileges, or an overthrow of their system. God always thus leaves Himself free to act according to His own heart of love and His own counsels of

Grace and Glory; and while removing difficulties from the minds of those who create them, He blesses even such, with a blessing infinitely superior to that which they might have expected. Such is the God of the Scriptures!

Melchizedec is not again mentioned until we come to Psalm cx., where verse 4 mentions this mysterious personage; this time in a way that throws increased light upon the whole subject and lifts the thought from earth to heaven. It shews the suitability of that Priest to every character of calling in which God's saints should be called. Whether for blessing on earth, or in heaven, or for a people who while on earth are constituted worshippers of God, with access into heaven.

These are the only verses in the Old Testament which mention Melchizedec! One who typifies Christ, in the marvellous position He occupies, in the **present** and future dealings of God with man.

Upon these verses the writer of Hebrews reasons in Ch. vii., bringing out the suitability of this Priesthood as sustained by the Son of God, to meet all the requirements of a people in this last-named mixed condition. That is, a people who being upon earth actually, but with access to God in heaven, need the **functions** of both orders of Priesthood. Compassed with infirmities in themselves, but made competent to approach God in the holy places, they need a Priest who can sympathize with and succour them in the wilderness. One also Who can administer power to overcome, as well as furnish them with gifts acceptable to God; the fruit of His own work; and of His ministry in appreciative hearts. Such is our Melchizedec to-day! Christ delights to bear all burdens, meet all needs, and to fill all hearts with that which constitutes true consecration. Thus filling God's heart with the praise He delights in.

Hebrews viii. 1-2 presents Jesus, the Son of God, perfected for ever, seated upon the Throne of

the Majesty in the heavens, where He is saluted of God a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. Trained in suffering to know what obedience means, that He may be able to sympathize with and support those who are in need, He sits there the Minister of the Holy places and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.

His ever-living intercession is a continual stream of incense to God, based as it is upon His work and mingled with all the value of His own spotless offering of Himself to God, so that in this way the service is always complete. But still He awaits in another way, the completion of this liturgical circle, that is, in the effect this ministry has upon the recipients of His grace and the voluntary Gifts, which the many sons whom He is bringing to glory, present to Him to offer to God.

Let us now look a little more in detail at those Scriptures which either mention or refer to, this Melchizedec Priesthood.

#### GENESIS XIV. 18-20.

This first notice has to do more with what is future and earthly, though there is an indication of a relationship with the heavenly, inasmuch as The Most High GOD is Possessor of the **heavens** and earth and Melchizedec is **His** Priest. Psalm cx. presents Messiah seated in heaven, upon the Throne of God, where He is saluted of God a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. He thus **begins** that Priesthood officially in heaven.

There are three wonderful persons in Gen. xiv. 18-20. (1) The Most High God Possessor of the heavens and earth. (2) Melchizedec, His Priest, assimilated to the Son of God. (3) Abram, conqueror of the Kings and the depository of the promises of God. A brief notice of these three personages may help in what follows.

1. The Most High God takes here, for the first time, this His Millennial Name. A Name which indicates that He is above all gods, or the Only God; though there be many that are **called** gods, as under Satan's hand and man's. This title will be vindicated when all that is called god shall have been overturned, including the man of sin, who sits in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, and who shall be cast into the lake of fire. Then will this One, Only, Blessed God be known as Possessor of the heavens and earth evermore.

2. Melchizedec, Priest of the Most High God. Here it is of all importance to understand the One Whom Melchizedec sets forth. It is not necessary to fix his own personality in any other way than that he is King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who is brought in here as a type. But it is well to be perfectly clear that he is **not** the Son of God in any manifestation of Himself previous to Incarnation. If this were so he could not be said to be **made like** to the Son of God. He was a man then existent upon earth, who is used of God as a type of Christ as Priest. In the same way Nebuchadnezzar is made a type of Christ in His universal empire over man and the earth; but the type goes no further than that. Melchizedec then was King of Salem, and in that was like other kings in his day. But he is brought suddenly upon the scene as the Priest of the Most High God, refreshing Abram with bread and wine and blessing him of the God Whose Priest he was, Possessor of the heavens and earth. On the part of Abram also, he blessed the God Who had delivered his enemies into his hands. And Abram gave him the tenth of all.

This is all we know about him, and all that is necessary to know for the Holy Spirit's purpose. We can only think of him as a living Priest engaged in blessing Abram the conqueror and in returning

praise from Abram to God. What strongly marks this Priest is that he is a King in **power** upon his Throne and in relationship to God as Priest. As such, he administers blessing from Him Who is the Possessor of the heavens and earth, with its resultant praise to that same blessed God. Now while this was earthly blessing, Ps. cx. shews that it cannot be supposed that **heavenly** blessing was **excluded** from this type in the mind of the Spirit.

3. But we have to consider who it is that is thus blessed. It is said of Abram during this period that he was sojourning by faith in the land of promise as in a strange country, satisfied with God and obtaining testimony from Him of heavenly things in communion. He looked for the city which hath foundations whose Builder and Maker is God; seeking with Isaac and Jacob a better country, that is a heavenly. Therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, and had prepared for them a city (Heb. xi. 9-16). At what particular moment these communications of the mind of God to Abram began we cannot say; possibly previous to the time here indicated, though this is the first announcement of God's title as Possessor of the **heavens** and earth.

But Abram had the promises of God as Heb. vii. 6. tells us. These are both earthly and heavenly. The promise that all the earthly families should be blessed in him (Gen. xii.) is enlarged in Ch. xv., where he is invited to lift up his eyes to heaven. Both are confirmed with an oath in Ch. xxii. 15-18, where a heavenly as well as an earthly Seed is promised upon the basis of resurrection, because he had not withheld his son, his only son from Jehovah. This heavenly Seed (ver. 18) is Christ, and includes all who are His, who being of faith are blessed with faithful Abram. Now, a heavenly people must have **heavenly** blessings and a heavenly inheritance. Tithes are brought in here thus early. They set forth God's portion from His people and are given

to the Priest who serves Him.

Abram then, thus strengthened and refreshed with bread and wine of Salem, food of the mighty (well-known symbols), after the toil of the conquest, becomes the blessed and blessing man. Then as enjoying the blessing of the Possessor of the heavens and earth, he refuses the offers of the King of Sodom, having lifted up his hand to the Most High God. Nothing will he possess himself of, until God's time came, whether in the land which was his by promise, or from the King of Sodom, from a thread to a shoe latchet.

The whole of Ch. xiv. is a well-known type of the last days, when the Assyrian shall be destroyed as the last great enemy of Jehovah, with his allies, the Kings of the north-east. Then shall Messiah Himself sit upon His own Throne and administer blessing to His conquering people, from Him Who is universally owned as The Most High God, Possessor of the heavens and earth, all in heaven and earth being, in that happy day, subject to Him. But this aspect of things, although the final object of the whole type, is not what is in view in the mind of the writer of Hebrews, as will be seen.

The fact that Abram was returning from the slaughter of the Kings when Melchizedec met him, is referred to in Heb. vii., to shew that it was as an **overcomer** he was blessed.

Here, as already noticed, everything not required for the purpose of the type is cut off; while every necessary line is strongly drawn, especially in connection with Melchizedec himself, who is brought upon the scene in this way,—made like unto The Son of God.

## PSALM CX.

This portion certainly opens out the **heavenly** part of the Melchizedec Priesthood and is used in



Hebrews to shew that Christ is such a Priest **now** for us. It gives the official inauguration of Messiah, the Son of God as Priest after the Melchizedec order. The citations of ver. 1 in the New Testament shew that it is upon the rejection of the Messiah by the heads of the nation, who refuse Him His own Throne, that He is taken up to heaven and seated upon the Throne of God; which thus becomes the Throne of God and the Lamb, there to sit until these wicked men, now reckoned among His enemies, be made the footstool of His feet.

But there He is in the place of supreme power upon God's Throne in heaven. Thence He administers **power**, the first characteristic of the Melchizedec functions. The second is true also, for from that place He **blesses** His people. In ver. 2 the promise is given Him that Jehovah will send the rod of His strength out of Zion; in other words, He shall sit upon His own Throne in due course. He shall smite through Kings in the day of His anger; He shall judge among the nations and smite the Head of a great country. But in ver. 4 He is saluted while upon God's Throne as Priest, and inaugurated with an oath, "Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent, Thou **art** a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec." Now while the preceding and following verses are in the future, this is present and indicates a perpetual Priesthood, already commenced and lasting for ever. This surely compasses a heavenly Priesthood in power and blessing, in **exercise** from that moment onward. The very character of Priesthood which becomes us now.

Verse 7 bears also upon this Priesthood as well as upon His rule. "He shall drink of the brook in the way therefore shall he lift up the head." This last verse of the Psalm, seems to refer to the circumstances which lead to the first, according to a frequent arrangement in Scripture. It is seemly that the One who is to rule should learn obedience, and

this is indicated as a reason of the exaltation of the blessed Lord to the place of power and the Throne of God. But seemly as this may be, it is **imperative** that He Who is to be **Priest** for a people compassed with infirmities, should know how to sympathize. For this He, being Son and without infirmities Himself, came into this world in lowliness and dependence. He drank of the brook in the way, as Elijah; He became the lowly One; the Man of sorrows, of Gethsemane, of Calvary; He was heard for His piety and saved out of death. Thence He draws His ability to sympathize with and succour those who tread the desert path and to exercise Aaronic functions, though the order of His Priesthood is that of Melchizedec. But he exercises also **now** the **functions** of Melchizedec in a **heavenly** way, from the place of power He occupies in heaven. To that Throne we, who are perfected as worshippers by His own Sacrifice, now draw near, needing the double ministry of just such a Priest in heaven, to meet us in our mixed condition.

Thus the rejected Messiah is constituted by the oath of God, a Priest in perpetuity after the order of Melchizedec; that is, from the time of the oath, on without intermission. He takes His seat on the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens, fully equipped to take up **all** the functions of the office into which He is here inducted, Aaronic or Melchizedec, but with a special view to the **heavenly** people.

Now the functions of the Aaronic Priesthood are chiefly these:—(1) Atonement, (2) Intercession, with all its accompanying sympathy and succour on behalf of a weak people. Those of Melchizedec are:

(1) Power, with the refreshment it brings to the overcomer; (2) Blessing, both toward man and toward God. Atonement having been accomplished once for all, and its efficacy abiding, it is evident **that** is done with for ever. Blessed be God! **all** the other functions **continue**; Intercession, together with

Power and Blessing after a heavenly character and all are **needed** by a people such as we are. At one moment in our experience we tread the desert sands; at the next we enter the Holies with Gifts for our God. Both these experiences are right for the present condition of things, though they cannot be known at the same moment.

We need both a Wilderness Priest and a Sanctuary Priest and these are combined in Him, in Whom is fulfilled both types. The Son, perfected evermore. He, Blessed be His Name! though not yet upon His own Throne which is connected with earth and its blessings, is now seated upon the Throne of God in heaven. And while truly a King, "For it is evident our Lord sprung out of Judah" He is never now called King of Saints. But having drunk of the brook in the way, He is suited to exercise all the power of the Throne on which he sits, in a way divinely suited to carry out His purposes,—the blessing of His saints, for the Glory of God.

Very little is said as to Melchizedec, either in the Old Testament or the New. The four verses in the Old Testament which we have glanced at, being those only which directly mention his name, but this little is pregnant with blessing for us. There are, however, other portions which **refer** to him whether in an earthly or a heavenly way. In the New Testament, the epistle to the Hebrews is the only epistle which comments upon these verses, and there the writer applies it to the **present** time and the peculiar **heavenly** character of worship of a people actually upon earth. We propose to look at these Scriptures more in detail, though we have anticipated parts of them to clear the way.

### LEVITICUS IX. 22-24.

In these verses we find a type of this Melchizedec blessing, as well heavenly, as earthly.

After the sacrifices for sin for Aaron and for the people have been slain, the blood put upon the Altar and the bodies burnt outside the camp; then the Burnt Offerings and Thank Offerings are slain, and their parts, with the Meal Offering, are laid in order on the Altar. At this point, Aaron, before going into the Tabernacle with the blood, lifts up his hands and blesses the people. This is before the acceptance of the sacrifices is manifested openly, but based upon it. Afterwards Moses and Aaron both go into the Tent of Meeting, and coming out, the sacrifices having been accepted, both lift up their hands and bless the people again. The glory of Jehovah now appears to all the people and there went out fire from before Him and consumed on the Altar the Burnt Offerings and the fat. All then saw their own acceptance, in the manifestation of the acceptance of the sacrifices.

The blessing of Aaron sets forth in figure, that which the Lord, as Priest, pronounces upon His people now, before the public manifestation of His accepted Sacrifice. This blessing is to be known **to-day**. The Lord being raised from the dead and knowing Himself the acceptance of His Sacrifice, lifts up His hands in blessing. He enters heaven in this very act. He then sends down the Holy Spirit, that we, too, may know the acceptance of the Sacrifice and enter into the joy of this **heavenly** Priestly blessing.

On the other hand, the blessing of Moses (King in Jeshurun) and Aaron, when coming out from the Tabernacle, sets forth that of the Lord, as King and Priest, when He comes again to those who look for Him to establish the blessing upon His earthly people. Then shall He sit and rule upon His own Throne and He shall be a Priest upon His Throne. Then shall the government be upon his shoulders and the blessings from His heart, **throughout** the

Millennial age, the full acceptance of His Sacrifice being manifested openly.

### LUKE XXIV. 50-53.

If we now look at this passage of the New Testament, we shall see the fulfilment of the blessing wherewith Aaron blessed the people before going into the Tabernacle.

Christ having presented **Himself**, as an Offering without spot to God, through the eternal Spirit, His One, once for all Sacrifice having been accepted, He is raised from among the dead. For forty days He remains with His own gathering their scattered affections again around Himself, that He may carry their hearts with Him into heaven. He declines to answer their questions as to the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, other matters pressing more immediately upon Him. On the very eve of entering Heaven for them by His own blood, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Thus only could His full heart express itself toward them. "And it came to pass that **as** He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

In this way He Who drank of the brook in the way entered heaven. Blessing His own he took His seat upon the Throne of God, nor has He ceased to bless them thence! Not surely with the blessings of earth, for He has not yet restored the Kingdom to Israel, but with heavenly spiritual blessings from the central seat of power. This answers to the Melchizedec functions of Power and blessing though altogether of a heavenly character.

The effect of this blessing upon His disciples was, that they worshipped Him and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. So that the circle of the Melchizedec blessing is at once completed, manward and Godward. True it is in a **spiritual, heavenly** way, but this is a sample of the

character of the Melchizedec blessing, which continues throughout the present, **heavenly** calling.

We have noticed that the blessing promised to Abraham and to His Seed, was both of an earthly and of a heavenly character. First, that which is earthly and afterwards that which is heavenly. Israel therefore, having undertaken to fulfil the law, as the basis of their entering upon the earthly part of the blessing, were allowed provisionally to do so and necessarily signally failed. Then Christ came and died and rose again. All the promises of God are fulfilled in Him and He, by the communication of a new nature and the Gift of the Holy Spirit, constitutes a people upon earth suitable to appreciate and to partake of the heavenly blessings and to enter heaven in spirit as worshippers. Thus coming actually first into the heavenly blessing, which shall soon be fully enjoyed in heaven itself. When this occurs He will return to His earthly people and make them, upon the ground of promise, experience all the good things which are, for them, as yet, to come.

Then shall the mystery of God's will be fulfilled, which He has already made known to us in all wisdom and prudence, when He shall have Headed up in One, all things in heaven and on earth, even in Him, in Whom we recognise now our Great Melchizedec Priest.

#### ZECHARIAH VI. 9-14.

Returning now to the Old Testament again, it is easy to see that the Melchizedec Priesthood of Christ is unmistakably referred to in this passage though His name is not mentioned. Remarkably enough, however, the name Joshua, which is the Hebrew form of Jesus is mentioned. Joshua is indeed the subject of this typical scene which is enacted for the comfort of the returned remnant of the Jews, and to encourage them in the work of building the house of Jehovah. Already in Ch. iii.

Joshua and his companions are said to be men of sign or portent.

They are told to take silver and gold from them of the captivity; to make crowns and to set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jozadak (Jesus, Son of the great Jah); to whom they are directed as follows, viz.: "Behold a man whose name is the Branch (or Sprout), and He shall grow (or spring) up from His own place, and He shall build the temple of Jehovah; even He shall build the temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon His Throne and He shall be a Priest upon His Throne. And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Thus shall the house be builded, and thus shall peace for earth be secured, between this King-Priest and Jehovah. Never till the King is Priest, being both Man and God, shall this stricken earth enjoy the peace, the rest of God. He alone can secure it, for the interests of both man and God are one in Him.

Then the crowns are given (there are at least four of them) to men of the captivity, whose names indicate that the strength (Helem), and grace (Hen) of the good Jehovah (Tobiah), are combined in a union of Jah (Jedaiah). May it not be that the double Kingly Crown, righteousness and peace, indicated by strength (Helem); and the double Priestly Mitre, Aaronic and Melchizedec, indicated by grace (Hen), are thus set forth as combined in Him who is the Son, perfected for evermore. The crowns were to be for a memorial in the Temple of Jehovah. All shall yet be fulfilled and those of the captivity become the companions of Joshua (Jesus).

But a greater house than shall be built for earth, is behind in this figure also. The heavenly house of which Christ said "Upon this rock I will build my Church" (house), of which he shall be the glory and in which He shall rule and exercise Priestly func-

tions. In which also peace, the peace of God shall reign.

We shall find references to this typical scene in the New Testament.

## HEBREWS VII.

This is the only epistle in the New Testament which mentions Melchizedec, and the name appears in it nine times. It first occurs in Ch. v. 6, where it is shown that Christ's title to the Priesthood is that God called Him as Son (ver 5). He is consequently a Priest for ever (ver. 6). The word here indicates there can be no succession of priests in the order in which He is called, as was necessary in the Aaronic order.

Secondly, having learned obedience in suffering, and being thus perfected for the Aaronic functions of His office He became the Author of **eternal** salvation to all them that obey Him. Saluted of God when upon His Throne, a Priest after the order of Melchizedec (ver. 10).

Here for the moment he leaves this subject because these Hebrew Christians had **become** dull of hearing. The heart of the Apostle yearned to tell them of the **heavenly** side of the Melchizedec Priesthood which is far better and higher than the **earthly** side. But this had been crowded out of hearts that could with difficulty rise above earth, though in the better part of it,—its religion and blessings. They had dropped back to Jewish elements, or to earthly Millennial blessings at best. Such as will be the good things of the Jews, in the world to come. But the heavenly things are better and these things Melchizedec administers to-day. He therefore, first of all sets himself to lift them above the beginning of the oracles of God and to guard them from the danger they were in, of falling away after they had been companions with those who had partaken of the



external elements of Christianity. Then he seeks to lead them on again to occupation of heart with that perfected Priest in the glory, who has entered as their **Forerunner** (they are to be there themselves), within the Veil, a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec (Ch. vi. 18-20). What earthly Priest could hold a place in the glory of heaven for them?

Having thus brought them up to the contemplation of that glorious Object he returns to speak of the "many things" he has to say about Melchizedec who was:—

### MADE LIKE TO THE SON OF GOD.

Now he allows his heart to bubble over with the good matter and enters pretty fully into all that the Son of God is, as Priest for ever after this order, which although to them new, is to God the primary and oldest of Priestly orders; as it is also the final one.

In the first three verses of Ch. vii., all the details of the three verses in Gen. xiv., necessary to bring out the features of the type, as made like to the Son of God, are given. For it is evident that another Priest has arisen after the similitude of Melchizedec. These three verses are statements and all the rest of the chapter describes from these the superiority of Him who fills the Melchizedec Priesthood,—the Son of God.

Brought upon the page of inspiration to set forth the Son of God, he is shorn of everything which, though true of himself as a man, is not necessary to the order of Priesthood he represents. Some of these are not even true of Christ as a Man, but are true of Him as Priest. On the other hand, all that sets forth the glories which scintillate from the Person of the Son are brought together in this beau-

tiful Vignette of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ as Priest of the Melchizedec order.

First He is crowned with a double crown as King. His name shewed him King of righteousness, and in his place and office he was King of Salem, which is King of peace. As far as earth is concerned, this sets forth the governmental peace in which Christ shall reign here. But it is the result of a work which has already brought about peace in heaven, and which is judicial; and here our Melchizedec lives as the result of a double Kingly glory. The foundation is laid deep upon the rock of eternal Righteousness; He is Sovereign here! The peace, which is the result of this is spiritual and divine. Jesus the Son of God is Sovereign here also, in heavenly bliss! When He was born angelic hosts proclaimed peace on earth (Lu. ii. 14). Afterwards, consequent upon His rejection, His disciples spoke of Peace in heaven (Lu. xix. 38). It is there the Spirit views Him now. Everything having been righteously accomplished upon which peace reigns in heaven, the Priest of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven, can before the time of earthly blessing, give of heaven's treasures to those who are the objects of the heavenly ministry of this blessing Priest.

This Priest met Abraham returning from smiting the Kings, and refreshes and blesses him. He brings forth bread and wine from Salem to refresh the overcomer. This is a well-known symbol, long after appropriated by the Lord Himself to set forth His own body and blood, in that work of infinite love by which he made peace and entered officially upon His heavenly Priestly office. This is food of the mighty, refreshment for the overcomer! Strength is exhausted in the conflict and one needs to see how He overcame; how it was by dying He slew death! Then, his need met and his spirit refreshed, Melchizedec blesses him with the blessings of the Most

High God, Possessor of heaven and earth! It is this which draws from Abraham blessing and praise in return which Melchizedec takes up and presents to God on his behalf, saying, 'Blessed be the Most High God, which delivered thine enemies into thy hand!' Here is the recognition that it is God Himself, Who, by the administration of power through the Priest upon His Throne, makes His own overcomers in the deadly strife of this scene, though at times in the heat of conflict they may be unconscious of this. This blessing of God renders the man of promise, who had previously left his choice with God, superior to the overtures of the King of Sodom, from a thread to a shoe-latchet.

All this is applied in a spiritual and heavenly way to us who are not only linked with Christ within the Veil and await the glory, but are associated with Him now. In order that we may carry on under Him the present spiritual, heavenly worship of God, of a higher kind than that which in coming days shall ascend from earth, He fills our hands with spiritual gifts, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

It is further noticed that Abraham gave to Melchizedec a tenth part of all. This is God's portion and is given to the Priest as His representative. It is used later on as shewing the superiority of the Melchizedec to the Aaronic order.

Having noticed who and what Melchizedec was, we have now the way in which he was **made** like unto the Son of God in what he was not. It is impossible to conceive that we are called upon to believe that these things "without father, without mother, without genealogy," were true of Melchizedec **as a man**. Were they even true of our Lord, as a Man? As Son of God they were true of Him! As Priest, He had no predecessor, nor successor, and it was to shew this that Melchizedec, in the picture, is shorn of these things as made like Him. The blessed Lord Jesus as a Man had a mother; but as Priest he had

no priestly genealogy that could give Him that place in Aaron's order. Beside this there were no specified ages, within which He might begin and finish His ministry; coming in duly and passing it on to others if He lived, or at any rate at death. There was no **succession** of priests in this order of Priesthood. All that we know of Melchizedec is that he lives and that he is a blessing Priest. All we can want to know of the Son of God to whom Melchizedec was assimilated, is that He lives and that He abides a blessing Priest for ever. Moreover, there are no **courses** of Priests in this Priesthood as in the Aaronic Priesthood, where each course served two weeks in the year, but He abideth a Priest continually.

It seems impossible that the Spirit of God should enter so minutely into detail in this epistle to Christian Jews, about One, Who meantime, until peace and blessing shall reign on earth, should **cease His functions** of power and blessing suitable to this order. Nay! but being saluted of God, High Priest for ever after the Melchizedec order as He sat upon the Throne in heaven to which he ascended in the very act of blessing His people, He **continues** this heavenly blessing through all this period of the heavenly calling. Presently He will sit upon His own Throne and fill earth also with the fruits of His victory.

We have then in these verses that which is necessary to set forth Christ, the Son of God in His highest character of Priesthood. We think of Him as living ever. We think of Him also as the blessing Priest. We have already remarked that the recipient of the blessing, Abraham, was not one who was wearied and distressed by the wilderness journey. Wearied indeed he was, but it was after the strenuous exertion of overcoming, in God's strength, those who would possess themselves of the God-given heritage of His people.

It is true we have for the wilderness the same blessed Priest, whose session upon God's Throne constitutes it the Throne of Grace and that thence He administers Mercy and Grace to succour those encompassed by infirmities and tempted. But to enable them to overcome the spiritual foes they meet so constantly, He administers power. Availing themselves of this they come out conquerors. There is then a further administration toward those who approach God. From the same place of power, and from the same blessed hands, is ministered the food of the mighty for refreshing. Then comes the heavenly blessings into which He has entered, to fill the soul to overflowing, that blessing and praise may ascend through Him to the God who delights in His own praise! May the Lord make it to be so with us!

“Lord, receive the overflowing,  
Which through us Thy Spirit pours,  
And accept the faint outgoing,  
Of these willing hearts of ours.”

Blessed Son of God, invested with a double Kingly Glory combined with all the holy halo that surrounds the Priest—what glories radiate from Thy Person there in heaven! All the attributes of God are seen to blend in Thee and constitute Thy glory. Thyself on high in peace upon the basis of Thy work in righteousness, Thou stoopest to the lowly! Thou supportest those who tread the desert path, relieving them of their burdens! Thou empowerest them to overcome their foes! Thou meetest the weary world conquerors with the bread of peace, the wine of joy! Thou blessest them with heavenly blessings from God! Thou leadest them into the Holy places! Thou presentest the resultant praise to that same God, an acceptable Gift from such hands in all the savour of Thine own glorious Person and work!

From the above statements we have now certain Spirit-drawn conclusions, which pass over to Christ as descriptive of Him. Melchizedec is in verses 4-10 shewn to be

## GREATER THAN ABRAHAM OR LEVI.

He is greater in person for He received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. In the Mosaic economy the Priesthood was the first link that was formed between the people and God. The priests, the sons of Levi, stood in the place of God to the people. This was recognised by the tithes (God's portion) being paid to them. But he who had no genealogy from Levi received tithes of him through Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. Now without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. On the other hand God, blessed be His name, delights to receive blessing in the form of praise, which is His due, from the recipients of **His** blessing. Moreover, here dying men receive tithes, but there, in that picture of our Lord, all that is witnessed of Him is that **He liveth.**

How much greater still is our Priest, the Son of God, of whom Melchizedec is only the figure. His title as Son, at once settles the question of the supremacy of His Person. His having taken in grace the place of the Seed of Abraham vests all the promises in Him. While as ascended and sitting at the right hand of God, the swearing of the oath declares Him **there** a Priest after the order of Melchizedec. There He ever lives to make intercession for and to bless those who inherit the promises in Him; enabling them thus to refuse the world and its God and to praise and bless the God of heaven.

Three points come out in these verses: (1) He is greater in Person than Abraham; (2) He exercises a better Priesthood than Aaron; (3) He lives! Yes!

JESUS LIVES! Then is **His** Priesthood an eternal one, He, in the highest sense, is a **blessing** Priest.

In verses 11, 12, we learn that what is necessary for those who approach God is—

## PERFECTION.

All the above shews that there was **no** perfection in the Levitical Priesthood, or there would be no further need of another Priest. This being so, there is of necessity a change also of the law; for the Priesthood and the law are inseparably bound up together. A glance at Exodus and Leviticus will shew this.

The law is **first** proposed verbally to the people and accepted (Ex. xix). It is recounted in their ears (xx-xxiii). Moses goes up to receive it engraved upon tables of stone (xxiv). But **before** the law God gives a description of the **Tabernacle** and all its vessels; also instruction for the consecration of the **priests**; then, at the close, the copy of the law upon stones (xxv-xxxi). Instead of perfection, the very man who was to be priest yields at once to the people and makes them a god, thus breaking the **first** commandment before they receive the written law! (xxxii.). Whereupon Moses breaks the two tables of stone, and speaks of going up again to make atonement. God thereupon shews him that **he** cannot do this; but hears his prayer; forgives the people, and shews him at the same time **His** glory. He gives him also a second copy of the law (xxxiii-xxxiv.) Then the people under Moses make and erect the Tabernacle (xxxv-xl).

In Leviticus, the sacrifices are first ordained, from the Tabernacle now inhabited (i-vii); then Aaron and his sons are consecrated (viii), and the Tabernacle blessed (ix). We have already seen that the blessing of the people by Aaron alone, before entering the Tabernacle (answering to Luke

xxiv. 50-52) sets forth the present heavenly Melchizedec blessing. The Priesthood then becomes the link between the people and God; so that the **Tabernacle**, the **Covenant**, everything, stands or falls with the **Priesthood**. Hence if this is changed there is of necessity a **change** also of the **covenant**. This is the argument of Hebrews viii., while Ch. ix. shews there must be a better **Tabernacle** also. Now the law did not perfect the people; it could not help them because of what they were. And already it had been shewn that there should arise another **Priest** after the **order of Melchizedec**. He should bring in the perfection required! But the law must be changed.

Verses 13 and 14 shew now that though not of Levi's tribe yet is **He** truly a **Priest**. At the same time it proves that

### THIS PRIEST IS KING ALSO.

We may first notice how absolutely these verses shew that the type is **made like** the Antitype. Up to this point Melchizedec is spoken of; but here it says "For **He** of Whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe . . . for it is evident that **Our Lord** sprung out of Judah." Blessed proof that the Scriptures cannot be broken, even in their typical import.

The law must be changed then because another Priest ariseth from a tribe of which no man has been attached to the service of the Altar. It is well to have this reference to the fact that Christ is of Judah's line, a born **King**. It needed little, however, to convince a Jew of the royalty of his Messiah; the point was to prove the **Royalty** of the **Priest**. He was born a **Priest** also; the One who exercises **now** His Priestly functions in heaven.

There is a beautiful allusion here to the crowned Priest, Joshua, of Zechariah vi. 9-14. It is said



there, after Joshua is crowned, "Behold a man whose name is the Branch and He shall grow up from His own place." Here the Hebrew word translated "Branch" is strictly "Sprout," and is from the same root as "grow," or "spring" in the same verse. In the Septuagint, also, the Greek word for "Branch" and "Spring" is from the same root.\* It is this last word which is used in Hebrews vii. 14. Our Lord "Sprung" from Judah, His own tribe or place; but destined to fill a Throne as Priest as well as King, He was always a Priest in Spirit, the only true Priest on earth then, as many experienced to their joy. The merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.

It is not a little remarkable how all the terms used of Joshua in the above passage of Zechariah, are applied one by one to our Lord in this epistle to the Hebrews. Only not as having respect to the earthly but the present heavenly side. It is at least interesting to trace them. 1. He springs from Judah, His own tribe, but is to be Priest after the order of Melchizedec (vii. 14, 15). 2. He is enthroned in heaven and rules thence (Ch. i. 3). 3. He is crowned as Priest (Ch. ii. 9). 4. He shall build the house—the Church (Ch. iii. 3-6). 5. He sits a Priest upon a throne,—the throne of grace (Ch. iv. 14, 16). 6. He bears (as He is) the glory (Ch. ii. 9; iii. 3). 7. He is King of Peace, the counsel of peace being between Himself and God (Ch. vii. 2).

This, however, is the heavenly side of the truth as Zechariah vi. is the earthly, though the heavenly underlies it even there in a deeper figure. When He comes forth from heaven it will be with uplifted hands in earthly blessing. Now He blesses His own with all that heaven has to give, sending the Holy Spirit to testify of it all. Presently both shall be true in their best and fullest sense.

\*Note.—Anatello.

The Spirit now turns (vers. 15-17) to Psalm cx., applying the truth contained there to our blessed Lord. The first thing is He is made—

## PRIEST IN THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

Seated upon God's Throne in resurrection life, He is **there** saluted a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. From this Psalm the Jews expected such a Priest. Attention is drawn to the fact that He was constituted Priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. No law limited the time of entrance upon, or the cessation of this ministry. In ascension He is hailed as Priest. His risen life is indissoluble; His Priesthood will never end. Of Melchizedec it is testified that He **liveth!** No account of his death being given in that picture. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more. He liveth a High Priest in things pertaining to God, merciful and faithful, to all who approach Him. Blessing them with the blessing at His hand, and all heaven's treasure is at His command.

The next two verses (18 and 19) refer again to the **hope of glory** through which—

## WE DRAW NIGH TO GOD.

The commandment going before is set aside, with the Priesthood as weak and unprofitable; it perfected nothing. A **better hope** is introduced. Not the hope of earthly Messianic glory, with life and the land on the ground of obedience, which could never be thus attained. Our hope under the new covenant is to share His glory, where we now by faith see Him crowned with glory and beauty. This is the portion assigned to believers to-day in the counsels of God! But seeing this must have a righteous basis, He did not hesitate to make the

Captain of Salvation perfect through suffering. This conduct **became Him!** Marvellous thought! It was suitable that the **Creator** Who made all things for His own glory, should not allow the enemy to involve wholly the ruined creature in destruction; so He comes forward to bring many sons to a glory above all they were created for! Glory which could only be attained for them by the blood of Him, Who, thus became the Author of eternal salvation to them. Now as their Captain He leads them on into it.

Again the old commandment spite of its priesthood and hope drove the people away from God. Set bounds about the mount! Let nothing come nigh! Our hope of glory on the contrary gives us access so that we may come nigh to God as the only place suitable even now while on earth. How right that they who are to be in the Glory with Christ for ever should get as near where God is to-day as possible! Rejoicing in the fact of being there.

Then, again, (vers. 20-22) we see from Psalm cx. that Christ was constituted—

### PRIEST BY THE SWEARING OF AN OATH.

And inasmuch as it was thus, by so much Jesus became **Surety** of a better covenant. For they became priests without the oath-swearing, but He with the oath-swearing, by Him who said to Him, when upon heaven's Throne,—“Jehovah has sworn (and will not repent; Thou art Priest for ever.”

Now, God has sworn at three particular times to three distinct persons, and each time some better thing was pledged than had been previously promised.

1. To Abraham God pledged Himself by an oath (Gen. xxii.), as referred to in Hebrews vi. It brought in a better inheritance, while securing the earthly one promised in Genesis xii., even a heavenly

inheritance. It compassed also the Seed that should possess both.

2. To David God swore that of the fruit of his loins, he would raise up Christ to sit upon the Throne,—a better than Solomon was here in view. David's faith went out on this, and he saw it involved resurrection. He spake of Christ, that **His** soul should not be left in Hades, nor **His** body see corruption. This was fulfilled when Christ was raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand in heaven, according to Psalm cx. when David called Him Lord.

3. When Christ as David's Seed is thus seated at God's right hand, then God swears to **Him** also. He confirms to **Him** the better Priesthood as set forth in Melchizedec and in Joshua the Crowned Priest. (Zech. vi).

By **how** much the oath-swearing constituted Him a better Priest, by **so** much was He the surety of a better Covenant. Because He is Priest for ever, the Covenant is everlasting. All the "I wills" of God can be righteously fulfilled upon this basis.

Jesus, by reason of the glory of His Person, the swearing of the oath and all connected with fitting the sons for glory, must be Surety of a better Covenant. Now a surety is a hostage, substitute; the one upon whom falls all debts and damages. So all pains and penalties fell upon the blessed Head of Him who is our **Surety**, to secure to us all the blessings of this better, this New and Everlasting Covenant.

He of Whom all these things are spoken is now presented as an—

## EVERLIVING INTERCESSORY PRIEST.

Those priests were many (verses 23-25), because death necessitated a line of priests to whom

the Priesthood could be transmitted; but Christ because He continueth ever, has an intransmissible Priesthood. He is always the same, blessed, gracious Priest; having learned obedience by the things He suffered. In coming to Him we have never to begin our case over again; no detail is forgotten; no fresh difficulty refused. He is able, therefore, to save them to the uttermost, who **approach** by Him to God, always living to intercede for them. Thus far we have the Aaronic functions; the wilderness and necessary support being in view. Access and deliverance from all that would hinder approach is secured and all that is demanded by our need is abundantly supplied, that we may be free to approach. But for this we need more.

We who by our calling have access to God, must have, if we would approach Him,—

### A PRIEST FOR THE HOLY PLACES.

One who can lead us in; filling, at the same time, our hands with Gifts acceptable to God. Hence (vers. 26-28) such a High Priest **became** us also, who is holy, guileless, absolutely undefiled. This he was ever upon earth. Holy, with that holy mercy, which, because incontaminate, could mingle with the wretched needy; and full of compassion delighting to supply every true outgoing of heart. Harmless, being absolutely without evil in thought, word or deed. Undefiled by all His contact with sinners, whose contradiction against Himself, He bore continually. Perfect in **Person** and **Practise**, a true Nazarite! This He was on earth.

But those who draw nigh to God in heaven must have One as Priest, who is **there**. Hence, Jesus has now become higher than the heavens, and takes His seat upon the Throne of God Himself; a true Nazarite there, perfect in **position** also.

In Ch. ii. we find what **became God** in bringing:

many sons to glory. A divine thought! Here we have what became those sons who are being brought to glory. A thought equally divine! Having title to draw near to God, a High Priest became them who can conduct them into that place, with their hands filled (that is, consecrated), with all that which constitutes Gifts to God, being the result of His offering Himself! Having thus done once and for ever with Sacrifice for sin.

He comes into that place, without infirmity, Personally and having settled for ever the question of the sins of those whom He leads in when He offered Himself once for all, a perfect Sacrifice for sins. Moreover, the oath-swearing, which is since the law maketh Him High Priest who is Son, perfected for evermore. In this way another Priest **has arisen** according to the similitude of Melchizedec, but infinitely superior to him Personally, even as his order of Priesthood is to that of Aaron. The Son of God! An inconceivable thought!

He is now presented as—

## THE PRIEST READY TO OFFER GIFTS.

Ch. viii. commences to sum up. The chief point of all that has been said is: We have such a One High Priest, who in the dignity of His Person has sat down on the **Throne** of the Majesty in the heavens. He who takes His seat **there** is God. The perfected Son! No creature can ever sit there! The man Melchizedec himself will never be there! Christ, the Son, to Whom Melchizedec was likened **is** there and He is our High Priest. He is there as the **Blessing Priest** and exercises His functions as such in administering heavenly blessing.

He is called a **Great** High Priest in Ch. iv., Who, seated upon the Throne of God, makes it a Throne of Grace. Thence He administers all needed mercy

and that grace which brings seasonable help. This is the character of His administration to a needy wilderness people, but whose strength is in God, in whose hearts are the ways to His house. To such He is a Great wilderness Priest. Oh! how He **delights** in mercy! How our hearts also delight in **Him** in His gracious administration of it!

But in our chapter, He from the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens, administers **blessing**. This is what His people need as they approach God in the Sanctuary. Here, then, He is the **Sanctuary Priest**. The Minister of the Holy places and of the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. Deeply is His heart involved in the administration of the blessing which our God delights to scatter. More deeply still in thus securing the praise of God. Here, again, our hearts delight in Him in the exercise of this, His higher, heavenly functions. He fills our hearts with blessing! An easy thing is it then, with the heart bubbling over with its good matter administered by the Priest, to put back into that same Priest's hands the things which we have made touching Himself, the Son; and touching the God Who sent Him to become to us the Author of eternal salvation. This ministry of blessing produces immediate response, a true spiritual, liturgical service.

So far we have had the character of the Priesthood and the glory of the Person of Him Who alone can fill it, The Son! There is but **One** such Priest! He sits upon the Throne of God in **sole** glory. But he is there and being there He must have somewhat to offer; some **Gift** to bring to God from worshipping hearts. It is evident from the fact of His being on the Throne upon the basis of His own perfect finished Sacrifice for sin, that what He offers further can be no repetition of that finished work. It is plain also that if He were on earth He should not be a Priest, seeing there are priests who offer **gifts**,

**according to the law.** It is therefore neither a Sin offering He looks for, nor is it a gift of an earthly material character. But other things are needed before these Gifts are defined, therefore, for the moment, the Spirit leaves Him there, the Son inaugurated High Priest in heaven after the order of Melchizedec, **ready to offer spiritual Gifts.** Meantime, it is shewn that—

## HE PREPARES THE PEOPLE TO OFFER GIFTS.

Not only is He the Minister of the Holy places: He is also **Mediator** of the **New Covenant.** This is now taken up to show that in this ministry, He Himself prepares the hearts of those who bring Gifts to Him to offer to God. The new Covenant as such is not with us but with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, the earthly descendants of Abraham. But God hath blessed the Christian, the heavenly Seed of Abraham, with all **spiritual** blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Every heavenly, spiritual blessing, therefore, under either Old or New Covenant is ours, as having to do with the **Mediator** of the New Covenant. Now the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant are these:—I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and I will never remember their sins any more. This is how it is put to the Jewish Christians, the heavenly Seed of Abraham. But to the Gentile branch of the same Seed (2 Cor. iii.), it is **Christ**, Who is written in the fleshy table of the heart. With this is administered life, righteousness and the Spirit; with the glory of the unveiled face of the Lord as an Object! The law then, or Christ (who is the end of the law for righteousness) being understood and loved, the affections are ready to burst forth from a full heart in praise of its glorious Object. To this point we are led in the end of



Chapter viii. So that continuing the summary of what has preceded we have now: **The people are made ready to offer Gifts.** (Ch. viii. 6-13).

Something further is, however, yet necessary—

## THE PLACE OF WORSHIP MUST BE PREPARED:

We have seen in the Old Testament that not only the Covenant but the Tabernacle also is bound up with the Priest. The Priesthood being changed we have therefore not only a change of the law, but a change also of the place in which God displays Himself and is worshipped. Of old, this was the Tabernacle, but now it is **Heaven**. Therefore, in Chapter ix. we have the fact of Christ's having come in the power of a greater and more perfect Tabernacle **not** made with hands, that is not of **this creation**. Further, that He has not entered into Holy places, made with hands, the figures of the true, but into **heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us. The blood of the true Sin offering, by which Christ entered on His Priesthood, upon which also the New Covenant shall be established and by which the worshippers are already purged once for all and prepared to offer Gifts, is the blood of that **better** sacrifice by which the **Heavenly** Tabernacle is purified and into which our High Priest has gone.

The Priest, therefore, the people, and the Tabernacle itself, each is prepared and made ready for the worship of God by the same precious Sacrifice. Moreover, the way into the **Sanctuary** is opened and we have liberty of approach to God, enthroned in glory; who showeth there, in the glory of the Son, the brightness of His face.

**Blessed be God! this place of worship is prepared.**

Chapter x. brings the whole subject of Melchizedec to a climax. It shows—

## THE GIFTS ALSO ARE PREPARED.

Summarizing briefly a second time, it sets forth that the worshippers once purged, fear no more imputation of sin, being perfected as to the conscience. Also that Christ's presentation of Himself takes the place not only of the sacrifice for sin, but of the full list of the typical aspects of His work, including the **Gifts**; and that these last remain for faith to offer as voluntary Gifts. Further, the will of God is accomplished in the death of Christ and by that death the worshippers are **sanctified** as the priests were of old by blood. Only in this case they are perfected in perpetuity by that one offering and the **Sacrificing Priest** has seated Himself in perpetuity at the right hand of God, having nothing more to do with that question.

But the will of God has not been **fully** accomplished by the perfecting of the **sanctified** priests, this is a means to an end. It needs also their **consecration**; that is, having their hands filled with what God can accept. The work of Christ having taken the place of all the offerings, **Gifts** as well as Sin offering, the former remain to fill the hearts of the worshippers and thus God's ear with praise. The sin offering, however, is demanded no more for ever! Blessed be God!

The Holy Spirit now comes down as the Witness to the heart that God will never remember their sin any more. A blessed testimony to hearts where Christ as the end of the law for righteousness has been already written, known and understood. This consecrates the Priests, filling them up with Christ as a whole Burnt Offering with its Meal Offering and Thank Offering, and they stand ready to answer to the exhortation which brings the whole liturgy to

its completion. God's will, which is never less in Object than Himself, is thus accomplished, and the worshippers are ready to approach **with full hearts, consecrated.**

Then comes the invitation:—

## LET US APPROACH.

Having, therefore, brethren, holy liberty to enter into the Holy places by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which He hath dedicated for us, through the veil, that is His flesh, and having a **Great** Priest over the House of God. In this we have all that is demanded on the part of God. And, what an all! It needs but on our part the faith that appropriates this all! Without this though all absolutely true in itself it cannot be intelligently experienced.

A holy liberty is accorded **at all times**, of entrance into the Holy places, where God has fully displayed Himself. No other price could have purchased this precious privilege but the Blood of Jesus, that holy, blessed Man! This expression occurs nowhere but here, and it constitutes the newly dedicated, living way. That is, the way of the living who alone can approach the living God. This way is through the veil, His flesh. His body was given for us! His holy flesh rent! The blood of that Holy thing born of Mary, shed! The path of life for **Him** lay through **death** (Ps. xvi. 11). The way of the living into the presence of God now is through **His** death. We may well contemplate as we approach, this only means of entry and have it deeply written upon our hearts, that we allow not that which He allows not there; that is, ourselves.

Above all, having a Great Priest over the house of God. Why a **Great** Priest? Is it not that here

we are on the Melchizedec side absolutely? We have done with High Priests, even great High Priests. "High" is comparative. There are other priests of that order who will in their turn become High Priests. The Aaronic High Priest was after all but a wilderness priest. He could never bring the people themselves to God. He could not even represent them there continually. But in this aspect of things Christ is necessarily superior to those High Priests, and in Chapter iv. is called the **Great High Priest**. Here, however, High Priests drop out. The **Great** Priest takes up His sole work. None but He ever! Great as the One Who offered **Himself** spotless to God! Great as **The Priest** upon the Throne of God! Great, as He Who consecrates the worshippers filling their **hearts** with that which produces spiritual Gifts, the sacrifice of praise to God continually! Great, in His Godhead! Great, as Son! Great, as Priest over the house of God, compassing heaven, into which He has gone; and earth where our feet now stand! Great, absolute! Great, incomparable! The alone, only Priest of this order perpetually and for ever! None but He!

The following lines by an unknown author are beautifully true of Him in this aspect:—

Priests! Priests! There's no such name! Christ's own  
except

Ye take most vainly. Through heaven's lifted gate,  
The priestly ephod in sole glory swept,  
When Christ ascended, entered in, and sate,  
(With victor face sublimely overwept)  
At Deity's right hand to mediate;  
He only! He for ever! On His breast  
The Urim and the Thummim fed with fire  
From the full Godhead, flickers with th' unrest  
Of human, pitiful heartbeats. Come up higher  
All Christians! Levi's tribe is dispossess.

A triple exhortation follows. Let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Let us,

as Christians, come up higher! Why stand afar off? Why not experience this highest, greatest of all privileges! It needs but a confiding heart that gives full credence to the testimony of the Holy Spirit! Testimony to the perfection of the work of Christ in every way! Testimony to the will and wish of the heart of a God of Love, who would have His people near Himself! This is the product of faith which is the characteristic principle of the epistle, and without which it is impossible to please God. Faith, which has ever characterized God's men all along the line, whether for the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ (Heb. xi. 4), or the patience, which is by faith for walk (xi. 8), or the energy of faith for service (xi. 23), or that faith which reaches highest, as leading to worship, though on the bed of death and leaning upon the top of a staff (xi. 21). The faith that believes that God exists, which transports the spirit into His presence, the Holiest of all, is unquestionably the highest act of faith and gets its own reward, bowing in worship before Him. But here the soul is led away to Christ (Ch. xii. 2). He Who passed through all the course of faith, start to finish, and is seated upon the Throne. Able to extend help in every need from the beginning to entering the Holiest here, and to the end in Glory!

We enter the Holiest by faith having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; that is, a conscience so perfected, that the guilt of sin can never more be laid upon it as imputation; and the body bathed with pure water; all that is of the first man being held in the place of death. These two things answer to the sanctification by blood and by water of the Priests of old. A third sanctification by oil (Lev. viii. 30), which sets forth the Spirit, is omitted here because the Spirit is the Witness in Hebrews and in no case the power of sanctification.

Thus sanctified the Priests are consecrated.

**Hearts** are filled with Christ and each in his measure unites with all who approach and perfect the blessed heavenly service of praise to God, through our Great Priest over the House of God.

Further, we are exhorted to—

### HOLD FAST AND CONSIDER.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope unwaveringly. This hope is always **Glory** in Hebrews. It is the fruit of the counsels of God and the subject of promise. Christ having already entered as our Forerunner. The **Promiser** is faithful. If the better hope brings us nigh to God, he who approaches God must hold fast the confession of the hope in this, the scene of His rejection.

Thirdly, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.

Full assurance of **faith** is Godward and brings us into the Sanctuary. Confession of the **hope** of **Glory** is manward. Provocation to **love** is saintward. So the believer is perfected in the graces of Christ.

Finally we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. In thus assembling the opportunity for all these things occurs. But exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

This constitutes the full blessedness of approach to God, with all its valued accompaniments, by faith.

The fringe only of this vast subject has been touched upon in the above. May the Lord open it out in every way to His beloved people! In its widest extent it compasses those,—

“Scenes surpassing fable and yet **true**;  
Scenes of accomplished bliss!”

Scenes which, however, are not yet.

In comparing these passages of the Old and New Testaments, we have seen—

## THE TYPE MELCHIZEDEC FULFILLED IN THREE WAYS.

1. A people on earth blessed under Messiah, as Melchizedec with earthly blessings. 2. Those who, while on earth, are the subjects of heavenly blessing under this same Melchizedec, the Son of God. 3. The Heading up of heaven and earth in one vast system of blessing under the same blessed Person. the heavenly saints in heaven with Him and the earthly saints upon earth.

1. The first thing in view is the filling the habitable earth to come with earthly blessings; of which Christ is the High Priest. Earth in the coming day shall be filled with the happy votaries of a Saviour—God Whom they will bless through their King, a Priest upon His Throne. This relates to earth **only**, and these are the **good** things to come, though it will form part of a wider system.

2. The present time is transitional, and the saints are in a mixed condition. Neither earth nor heaven are **filled** with their destined happy inhabitants under the blessing of Melchizedec. But there is a people on earth who are being brought to glory and who have meantime access to God in heaven in spirit. These being saved with an eternal salvation, are instructed by the present Spirit as to this. For such Christ is the Melchizedec Priest in heaven, through Whom they receive heavenly power and blessing, and worship God through Him, worship being the highest act a creature can be capable of, and the object of all God's dealings with man. Heavenly worship is necessarily of a higher order than earthly, though both combined are necessary to form the complete Melchizedec system.

Our position is thus a mixed or dual one. We are here in the wilderness, which earth has become to us because it has rejected the One Whose love has won our hearts. Such a people need a Priest who can sympathise with and succour them, exercising the Aaronic functions. But being also a people who have access by Christ and His work into the Holy places, which includes heaven itself into which Christ has gone for us, we need a Priest who fills His office and performs His functions there, blessing His people with heavenly blessings, and presenting the Gifts they bring to God. In both ways the Melchizedec Priesthood is needed for us to-day, and the perfected Son is the only One Who can take up this Priesthood and meet the need.

The ministrations of this our Melchizedec in mercy and blessings, with the holy happy worship of consecrated hearts in the Holiest, brings us into the realisation of "heaven on earth begun!" These constitute the **better** things now present, of which the epistle to the Hebrews speaks so constantly.

3. Yet a little while and the habitable earth to come shall have entered upon its good things under the New Covenant; then shall it be filled with earthly blessings, Jew and Gentile each in their sphere. But before then, heaven having been purified and Satan cast out thence, we who have known what access to God is, and worship in heaven in spirit, shall be actually there in heaven, eternally linked up with our Priest in glory! What will "heaven in heaven" be? These are **the best things** God has to give, and we the happy recipients.

In all this, what is of special importance for the saints to-day is to know the **present** activities of the Lord Jesus as the Melchizedec Priest of the epistle of the Hebrews! This introduces to blessing of an entirely different character, to that with which earth is blessed, to be approached by faith alone. Heavenly blessing, known in communion!



Blessing before which, that which will make this earth, though resplendent with a glory hitherto unknown, sink to its true secondary place.

A short recapitulation of the main features of what has occupied us may serve to fix it more upon our hearts and to draw out our affections toward God. If we look at them with a more direct reference to the notices of the session of our Lord at the right hand of God, it may bring out these features in a slightly different aspect.

The Glory of His Person gives Him title to a place upon the Throne of God. The **two administrations** from that place to His people upon earth, with a view to securing the Glory of God in worship, are the great things presented by the testimony of the Holy Spirit to a faith which always grips what is thus offered.

1. The first announcement of this session (Ch. i. 1-3), is in connection with His presentation as Son. Here:—

## HE TAKES HIS SEAT ON GOD'S THRONE. GOD'S FELLOW.

He, Who made the worlds; became incarnate; completed the revelation of God; was the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His essential Being; the Upholder of all things by the word of His power; Who having by Himself made purgation for sins, for His own glory, in a universe stained by the sin of the creature, sat Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thence He **overrules the universe** now, making the most **adverse** means work out His purposes for the glory of God, and, blessed be His Name! making all things to work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Here, He takes His seat as God's Fellow; having been owned as such upon the cross when smitten (Zech. xiii. 7). Thence He is Universal Ruler! Not King upon His own Throne, as yet.

2. In the second notice (Ch. i. 8, 9), He is apostrophized by the Spirit as—

### SITTING AS A MAN ON HIS OWN THRONE— HAVING FELLOWS!

This is quoted from Psalm xlv., where the Spirit addresses Him in vision, as the Messiah. When cited in Hebrews, the proofs of His Godhead and suitability for the Throne had been already given. As a Man, He had loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. This indicates Holiness, a nature which God alone possesses inherently. Fallen man's proclivities are in the very opposite direction. Consequently, immediately One appears, who exhibits these attributes of a Holy Nature, the Spirit hails Him as God. "Therefore O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. xlv. 7 margin). Seated as overcomers with Him upon His Throne, these, His fellows, are anointed with Him, with the Spirit of joy, which is the spring of praise, a Priesthood for the universe!! Here, as everywhere, He has the pre-eminence and is anointed **above** His fellows; the only deserving One of the whole company. All the rest stand in Him alone. They hymn God's praise as the redeemed from the earth, even amid the wreck of all that out of which they are redeemed. (Verses. 10-12).

3. The third notice (Ch. i. 13-14) shews—

### HIS SUPERIORITY TO ANGELS.

Only to The Son has God said, "Sit at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." Angels

are servants, not Sons. Blessed servants indeed, who here are shewn to be ministering spirits for them who shall be heirs of salvation. But the Eternal Son **alone**, sits upon the Throne of God.

4. In the next notice (Ch. ii. 9)—

### HE IS CROWNED A PRIEST UPON THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE LAMB.

This notice does not mention His session at the right hand of power, but refers directly to it. He is crowned a Priest upon the Throne. The terms which describe the character of this crowning, plainly indicate this. "We see Jesus crowned with Glory and Beauty." The last two words are a reference to the garments made for Aaron of old. When dressed in these garments, he bore the names of the tribes upon his shoulders and upon his breast. But as to fact, Aaron never wore these garments in the Holiest, in the presence of God. But now, faith sees Jesus in the very heavens thus crowned. It knows that His affections led Him down into death for His own; that there, His power destroyed him that had the power of death. That He rose again from among the dead and entered into heaven with the same affections playing about the loved ones and the same power stretched out on their behalf.

5. The fifth notice (Ch. iv. 14-16) similarly does not mention His session upon the Throne. It indicates, however, that thence:—

### HE ADMINISTERS MERCY AND GRACE. AARONIC FUNCTIONS.

Jesus the Son of God, having passed through the heavens, is upon the Throne in heaven. Just as the High Priest of old passed through the Court,

the Holy place and the Holiest of all, on the great day of Atonement, into the presence of God with the blood. Only the High Priest never touched the Throne, though he sprinkled the blood upon it. Jesus took His seat **upon The Throne**, our Great High Priest. He is there viewed in three ways:— 1. Representative, so that we may hold fast our profession (ver. 14). 2. Sympathetic, having been in all things tempted as we are, sin apart, so that we may count upon succour (ver. 15)). 3. Administrative; His very presence there has transformed the Mercy seat into the Throne of Grace (ver. 16). Thence He administers to those who approach the special mercy needed and grace for seasonable help. Grace is supreme here. It is the **Throne of Grace**.

Here the Lord is the **Wilderness Priest**, the Antitype of Aaron, but **Great**, in comparison of him.

This forms one of the two spheres of the administration of our Priest, the other being that of power and blessing; He being upon the Throne crowned with a double Priestly crown, the Great Antitype of both Aaron and Melchizedec. His people here are viewed as in the wilderness with all its besetments, compassed with infirmities. The Word of God, too, searches the heart and knows all its thoughts and wills, making no compromise because they are His people, but rather because of that, demanding a more stringent adherence to it. These things would drive us to an abandonment of the confession and this Satan is not slow to suggest.

But over against these, the Priesthood of Jesus, the Son of God, and the Throne of Grace are brought in to enable the tempted to hold fast. All they need is supplied from that place where grace is supreme, the place where man is in favour. Jesus, the true Man being seated there. To this place they approach for the necessary mercy, and thence it is ministered with great delight. Nothing but such things are administered from the Throne of Grace.

His ever-living intercession there has foreseen the need and **drawn** the soul to this, the only source of help.

Let this be well laid hold of! Here we approach to **get**. In the measure we obtain what is needed thus, we are enabled to answer to the second invitation (Ch. x. 22), where we approach to **give**.

6. The sixth notice (Ch. viii. 1) introduces His session **upon the Throne** specifically. In this case—

## HE ADMINISTERS HEAVENLY POWER AND BLESSING. MELCHIZEDEC FUNCTIONS.

We have such a glorious Being as Priest, Jesus, **The Son**, perfected evermore, made higher than the heavens! He has, as Great Priest after the order of Melchizedec, taken His seat on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens, the central seat of supreme power. Thence He is Administrator of heavenly power and blessing. This is the second sphere or circle of His administration. He is here the Antitype of Melchizedec blessing Abraham. His people having been the recipients of the mercy and grace needed for the wilderness, and being empowered from on high, are now as overcomers and having access to God, met by the blessing Priest, Who fills their souls with heavenly blessing. He then awaits the Gifts which they may bring, these being of a voluntary as well as of a sweet savour kind, that He may present them to God.

This is the first time He is **said** to be **on the Throne**, and is evidently a reference to Psalm cx. 1. From this place He starts **officially** His Melchizedec Priesthood. He is the Sanctuary Priest here; Minister of the Holy places and of the true Tabernacle. **Ready to offer the Gifts of His people.**

Then, as we have seen, He, as Mediator of the New Covenant, **prepares His people to offer Gifts.** Making them willing in the day of His heavenly power over the hearts of His own, in the beauties of holiness (Ps. cx. 3). From the womb of the resurrection morn He leads a New, a voluntary company to take up the praise of God.

Further, **He prepares the place,** which is **heaven** itself, where our God has displayed Himself in Him; that we may present through Him, the results of His own blessed work and of His service to our spirits. All that is needed now are the Gifts, and **these He prepares also.**

7. The next statement of His session in heaven (Ch. x. 12) shews that—

### AS SACRIFICING PRIEST HE IS SEATED FOR EVER THERE.

Having offered His one perfect Sacrifice for sin—Himself—He has sat down in perpetuity on the right hand of God, having for ever done with that question. Nor should His people now be detained with it, being themselves also sanctified in perpetuity, by His blood. It is their privilege to pass on in full consecration with their Gifts, which are furnished from that same precious work.

Everything being now clear, sin for ever done with, the way into the Holies opened up, through the Veil, His Flesh, He is presented as the **Great Priest** over God's House, that vast abode, to lead His people in to worship God, having filled their hearts with voluntary sweet savour offerings, a consecrated company.

The alternative bearing of this finished work is solemnly presented here. From the right hand of God, He is "expecting till His foes be made His footstool"! Whether His perfect Sacrifice for sins

be accepted or rejected, there remains "No more offering for sins." Only in the latter case, rejectors are classed among **His foes.**

8. But for His friends we have finally (Ch. xii. 2), that—

## AS THE GREAT MELCHIZEDEC PRIEST HE SITS UPON GOD'S THRONE.

This is the second direct mention of his **session upon the Throne.** Here it is as having Himself run the whole race, start to finish. He is able, therefore, to help His own in every stage right through, having trodden every footstep Himself, by faith. Now He sits upon the Throne as the **Great Melchizedec Priest, filling up in Himself both orders of Priesthood.** Able to exercise **Aaronic functions,** for He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, perfected thus, though The Son, for this very thing. Able also to exercise the **Melchizedec functions,** refreshing the soul in His love with the bread of peace, the wine of joy, then filling it with blessing, to lead into the Holies to worship.

"Immortal glories crown Thy Name;  
Thou blessed Priest and King;  
May heaven and earth resound Thy fame;  
Each day fresh praises bring."

G.J.S.

## BY THE SAME.

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