

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

NUMBER IV.

APRIL, 1850.

ARTICLE I.

CHURCH AND STATE.

In a preceding number of this periodical a statement was given of the leading theories by which many seek to justify the union of the State with the Church. These theories have been drawn only from writers who profess to recognise the two organizations as distinct from each other, however inaccurately they may have defined the boundaries of either. It is scarcely necessary to apprise the reader, that on the one and on the other side of this intermediate school, are to be found two opposite poles of doctrine. The first may be said to find its ablest representative in the philosopher of Malmesbury; though as there is nothing new in error, Hobbes simply revived and modified the exploded dogmas of Democritus, which were propagated still later by the Epicureans. Regarding human law as the only source of moral distinctions, he consistently enough considered the Church the mere creature of the State, spoken into existence only as an instrument to accomplish the ends of civil policy. The second extreme is that held by the Romanists, who make the Church, on the contrary, engulf the State; as may be seen from the writings of Bellarmine, and others of the same communion. The extravagance of both these opinions is the best guarantee that they will never prevail. The former, we may hope, is already abandoned to the

ARTICLE II.

THOUGHTS UPON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

The mediation of Christ is represented in the Scriptures, as consisting in the discharge of three principal offices—those of a prophet, a priest, and a king. That God should instruct and govern us through the agency and instrumentality of another, is so perfectly in keeping with the whole analogy of nature, that none who pretend to any reverence for the Scriptures—who even admit the historical reality of Jesus, are disposed to deny that he is, in some preeminent sense, the moral teacher and moral ruler of mankind. All who acknowledge any revelation acknowledge that, through Jesus Christ, God has communicated discoveries of His will, which are of the last importance to the improvement and happiness of the race. Too many, indeed, reduce his prophetick functions to the mere publication of truth, and his kingly office to the proclamation of the laws which men are required to obey; thus divesting him as a teacher, of the dispensation of the Spirit, and merging his royal prerogative into that of a messenger of the king. But though there has been a disposition to strip these offices of some of the peculiarities which distinguish them, as exercised by Christ, and which give them indeed their value and efficacy to us, yet no peculiar presumption has been felt to lie against the general fact, that his mediation embraces the elements of instruction and rule. Widely different is the case in regard to his priesthood. This has ever been the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence in the Christian scheme. Every artifice of learning and criticism has been tried to expunge from the Scriptures their plain and obvious teachings upon the subject. The word of God has been twisted, distorted, mutilated—the simplest rules of grammar set at defiance and the established usages of language disregarded and despised, in order to give some colour of plausibility to the shameless denial of the sacerdotal mediation of the Saviour. What renders this conduct the more remarkable is, that the New Testament gives a prominence to the priesthood, which it no where concedes

to the kingly or prophetick offices of Christ. It was the very end of his incarnation that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. There was obviously no necessity for such a miracle as the assumption of human nature by His Divine person, if the only result to be achieved were the discovery of truths, inaccessible to the efforts of reason—and the promulgation of laws, resting upon the authority of God. Prophets and Apostles were abundantly competent to offices of this sort. They could teach—they did teach—The New Testament itself—the very oracles of God—is the labour of their hands directed by the Spirit of God.

The incongruity is so palpable and monstrous betwixt the pomp of preparation involved in the common doctrine of the incarnation and the end to be accomplished—betwixt the opulence of means and the poverty of result, that those who deny the priesthood do not scruple to deny the Deity of the Son—and with a painful consistency of error, reduce Him who is over all God blessed forever, to the level of our poor, dependent humanity. The doctrines of a proper Sonship and a proper priesthood are, in the Christian economy, inseparably linked together. And it is a happy circumstance for the faith of the Church, that the enemies of the cross can never hope to prevail without a double work of destruction. Their argument against Priesthood is felt to be incomplete until they have demolished the Deity, and their arguments against the Deity unsatisfactory until they have demolished the priesthood of Christ. They must show that He has never been addressed in the language, in its strict and proper acceptation, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee, before they can show that it has never been said to Him, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. But while the Scriptures insist with peculiar emphasis upon the priesthood of Christ, and represent the functions which are discharged in it as essential to salvation, it is not sufficiently considered that these functions themselves are not necessarily sacerdotal—that they might have been discharged by one who was not a priest in the common acceptation of the term. All that seems to be indispensable to salvation is the obedience of a substitute voluntarily assuming our guilt, and able to endure the curse of the

law. The imputation of an adequate righteousness, upon the ground of federal relations, is the principle into which the apostle resolves our justification, in the Epistle to the Romans. The government of God demands that sin should be punished, and that life should be the reward of perfect obedience—and the salvation of a sinner turns upon the possibility of vicarious righteousness and vicarious punishment. These are the doctrines which Paul enounces and vindicates in that great epistle which has ever been the bulwark of the Evangelical scheme as contradistinguished from the dreams of formalists, pharisees and mysticks. He says nothing there specifically of priesthood. It is Christ a substitute—Christ the federal representative of sinners—Christ obeying and Christ dying in the place of the guilty—these are the topicks of discussion—these are the doctrines which lie at the foundation of our hope, and make the gospel emphatically tidings of great joy. But these doctrines do not necessarily include priesthood. We can manifestly conceive of a mediation by substitution which shall not, at the same time, be sacerdotal. The Son of God, for aught that appears, might have become incarnate—assumed our legal responsibilities and brought in an everlasting righteousness—he might have been a sponsor, paying our debt and slain by the sword of divine justice in our stead—he might have fulfilled all the requisitions of the law, or of natural religion, and have pledged the faithfulness and truth of God to our redemption, and yet not have performed any of these duties in the character of a priest. It becomes, therefore, an extremely interesting question, why the mediation of Christ has been made to assume the peculiar form of priesthood. If atonement is all that can be proved to be essential to pardon and acceptance—and vicarious obedience and vicarious punishment all that are essential to atonement—if substitution is the fundamental principle of redemption, why is it that the substitute has been ordained a priest, that his death is a sacrifice as well as a satisfaction to justice—and that with the blood of this offering he has passed into the holiest of all to make constant intercessions for his people? If we could have been saved by a substitute who was not a priest, and redeemed by a death which was not a sacrifice, why have a priest and a sacri-

vice been the chosen means of accomplishing the work? These are not questions of idle curiosity. They have been suggested to my own mind by an attentive study of the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews. The first—the Epistle to the Romans, discusses the principles of the gospel in their general relations to the moral government of God, and demonstrates, as well as asserts upon authority, the absolute necessity of legal substitution in order to life. But if the disclosures of revelation stopped here, we might look upon the death of the Redeemer as the result simply of the operation of justice—a death inflicted by the law—exclusively penal in its nature and relations—exacted of him in the same sense in which it would otherwise have been exacted of the sinner. We might regard pardon as resulting from faith in that death as a satisfaction to justice—and access to God as immediate and direct in consequence of this historical fact as a past reality. The principles here discussed would resolve the security of our state into the covenant-faithfulness of God, without the least insight into the manner in which it is actually made available to the saints. All that we could say would be that our debt has been paid—that justice no longer demands our lives—that God has promised in consequence of the Redeemer's death to receive us into favour—and upon the ground of that death we might approach Him ourselves and sue for mercy. This is all that could be certainly collected from the general discussion of this Epistle. But when we turn to that to the Hebrews, we find a substitute indeed, and the substitute demanded by the Epistle to the Romans—but that substitute is embodied in a priest—we find a death—a penal death—a death which is commensurate with the curse of the law—but it is a death which is also a sacrifice—at once the result of the operation of justice and of a free-will offering to God. We find justification and pardon resolved ultimately into the obedience and death of Christ as past, historical facts, but immediately due to relations sustained to Him as a living person and Redeemer—and access to God ascribed—not so much to faith in His past achievements—as to His present appearance for us in the holiest of all, and the covenant-faithfulness of God is seen to be maintained through the agency of Him who ever liveth to make intercessions for us.

The Epistle to the Hebrews may be regarded as a detailed account of the method, in which the great law of substitution has been actually applied, in the redemption of our race. While the one to the Romans shows what must needs be done in order to our salvation—the one to the Hebrews shows how it has been done—and where the arrangements have gone beyond the strict requisitions of necessity, they are demonstrated to be the dictates at once of mercy and wisdom. Priesthood is the perfection of mediation. There is not a single circumstance which distinguishes a priest from a general substitute which is not significant—a proof of goodness—a fresh illustration of the adaptation of redemption to the condition of its objects—not a single circumstance which distinguishes a sacrifice from the ordinary forms of death, that does not enhance the preciousness of the Saviour's work. The full effect of this truth is lost upon most Christian minds, through inattention to the distinctions in question. They admire the goodness and adore the wisdom of God in providing a substitute for the guilty, able to reconcile the conflicting claims of justice and of grace—but apart from the adaptation of His person to the mighty work, they see nothing upon which they are accustomed to dwell as peculiarly indicative of the divine goodness. They overlook the adaptation of His office—they forget that the manner in which He has accomplished the work is as glorious as the matter—the how as sublime as the what. The work as done, the person by whom—exhaust their topics of admiration and of praise, and they fail to enter into those other motives of faith, devotion and thanksgiving which are derived from the contemplation of the office in its essential and distinguishing features. They use the terms Priest and High Priest, and have a habitual reference to the appearance of the Saviour in the presence of God—but their High Priest is, after all, but little more than an all-sufficient sponsor, and His intercessions are regarded rather as acts of royalty than sacerdotal pleas. It is amazing how little and seldom we enter into those views of the death of the Redeemer, which spring from the consideration of it as a real and proper sacrifice—how little we discriminate betwixt a legal representative and a consecrated Priest—

betwixt Christ glorious in His kingdom and equally glorious in the Holiest of all—betwixt even his triumphant ascension as a king and his passage as intercessor, not without blood, into the presence of God. As these distinctions are evidently important—and the benefits of that peculiar form of mediation to which the Saviour was appointed are clearly explained by the apostle, it may be well to show how much we have gained and how pre-eminently God is glorified by this whole arrangement. Let us, then, contemplate Jesus, not simply as the apostle, but the High Priest, of our profession, and let us endeavor to collect from the Scriptures the excellency and glory of this species of mediation.

I. It deserves first to be remarked that those conceptions of the origin of salvation which are suggested by substitution in its nakedest form, are rendered clearer and more impressive by the fact, that the substitute is also a Priest. The appointment of any representative is an act of grace—redemption, no matter how achieved, is the offspring of mercy. The justice which connects punishment with guilt attaches the penalty to the person of the offender—and though it is capable of being satisfied by vicarious sufferings, it is the prerogative of the law-giver to say, whether he will accept a substitute and transfer his vengeance from the original transgressor to an innocent but adequate sponsor. But this grace is more conspicuously displayed in the constitution of a Priest than the designation of a simple surety. While, in either case, the whole proceeding is of grace, there are, in the consecration of a Priest, a solemnity of purpose and an absolute sovereignty of will, which arrest attention and compel the most thoughtless to acknowledge that it is the finger of God. In considering the claims of a surety, all that would seem to be important is his ability to pay the debt he assumes. But in the case of a Priest this ability must concur with other qualifications—the anxiety to secure which is an additional proof of the mercy which pities the condition of the lost. It is always an act of sovereign condescension to admit a substitute—but there is nothing inconceivable in the supposition that the proposition to redeem the guilty might proceed from himself and not from God—that he might volunteer his services—and

so become the author of the scheme which dispenses salvation to men. But the honour of Priesthood no man can take to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Hence the apostle insists upon it that Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him—Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. A Priest is a solemn minister of religion—the channel through which all worship is conducted—the organ of all communications betwixt God and the people. This august agency none can assume without the authority of God. So awful and momentous is this office—which really collects the prayers and praises and thanksgivings of a world into a single person—-which centres the hopes of mankind upon the conduct of a single individual throughout all ages; so tremendous is this responsibility and so sublime the honour, that it would be the climax of presumption, on the part of any one, to propose that it should be conceded to him. It belongs to God and to God alone to designate a Priest. The idea of a mediatorial worship, conducted by a permanent and glorious minister, and so conducted as to strengthen the ties of personal obligation, is an idea which could only originate in the mind of the Deity—and there were an evident fitness and propriety in the solemnity and grandeur attached to the appointment of Jesus to this office, when he was consecrated not without an oath. A scheme which contemplates an arrangement of this sort bears stamped upon it the strongest impress of grace. It sprang from the bosom of God—it was mercy which conceived the purpose of salvation—mercy which accepted the substitute, and mercy upon mercy, the exuberance of grace, which made that substitute a Priest. This last feature makes it little less than blasphemy to imagine that redemption could have any other source but the bosom of the Almighty. It is a Divine plan.

The acceptance of any substitute on the part of the Deity, contains an implied pledge that he was adequate to the task. We can scarcely conceive without horror, that a Being of infinite benevolence should subject the innocent, however willing he might be to undergo the torture, to unspeakable sufferings, when it was known beforehand that they would be incompetent to redeem the

guilty. God, we may rest assured, would never take a surety who was unable to pay. But the guarantee arising from the Divine character, that an accepted mediation shall be sufficient, is immensely strengthened when the substitute is considered as not only accepted but *proposed* by God—and set apart to his work with a solemnity of installation, which would seem to throw the most awful imputation upon the Divine veracity, if the sacrifice should fail to be adequate. Can we, for a moment, indulge the suspicion that Jesus shall not infallibly save every sinner who applies to Him—when He has been solemnly appointed to this office by the oath of God? Was that oath an idle flourish—a mere mockery of our woe—or was it not rather a proclamation to all the intelligent universe, that the scheme of redemption should be as stable as the eternal throne—the Priesthood of Jesus as incapable of disappointing our hopes as God of ceasing to be? This designation of Jesus to the Priesthood was the sole ground of security to the ancient saints. The great work was only in prospect—it stood in the counsel of God—and as the strength of Israel was not a man that He should lie, nor the Son of man that He should repent, the Patriarchs and Prophets looked with steadfast hearts to the great events which are matters of history to us. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Such is the strong consolation which the oath of God is suited to impart to the heirs of His Grace—that if nothing more were known of the economy of Redemption than that it depended upon a Priesthood appointed by Himself, and consecrated with the solemnity of this awful sanction, this would be sufficient to establish their hearts. They would feel that the scheme could not fail—that the Glory of God was so deeply concerned in its success that Heaven and earth might sooner pass away, than a single sinner fall short of Salvation who had fled for refuge to the hope set before him. Such impressiveness could not be imparted to the acceptance of a substitute—or even the selection of a mere representative. The forms of inauguration—the awful rites of consecration—the proofs of love and of confidence im-

plied in the delegation of so imposing a trust, these must all be wanting, and strip the transaction of whatever attractions they are fitted to give it upon a sinner's regard. No form of mediation could beforehand so deeply pledge the Deity to its success, as that which turns upon an office to which God alone is competent to call. In making it His prerogative to glorify him who shall be clothed with the Priesthood, we make it absolutely certain that he who is so honoured shall glorify God in the wisdom of the choice.

As in every instance of substitution, the free and cordial acquiescence of the substitute is indispensable to the success of the arrangement, it is a favourable circumstance when the form of mediation can be made conspicuously to display it. His consent should not only be presumed, but known. It should be patent and manifest in the whole transaction. There would be an appearance of hardship, if not of injustice, in a proceeding which should doom the innocent to suffer in the place of the guilty, without the concurrence of their own wills. If arbitrarily done, it would be flagrant and intolerable tyranny—if done from high and solemn considerations of public policy, it would impeach the wisdom of an administration, which had been so imperfectly digested as to demand an occasional departure from distributive justice, an occasional disregard of personal worth or delinquency, in order to answer its proper ends. If the scheme of Redemption, however, proposed Jesus to His people as only a legal substitute, though His consent might be easily collected from the circumstances of the case, yet it would not be conspicuous from the nature and progress of the work. Still less could it be seen, that His consent was the spontaneous movement of His own heart, rather than a pious submission to the will of God, with whom the scheme must originate. But when he is announced as a Priest all difficulty vanishes. He must delight in the work—the offering which he brings must be a free-will offering, or it could be no offering at all. If the victim laid upon the altar were not fully and cordially surrendered to God, the external act were hypocrisy, and the whole service a mockery. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou didst

not desire; mine ears hast thou opened—burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo I come—in the volume of the book it is written of me—I delight to do thy will, oh my God.

Among the qualifications indispensable to a Priest, next to his having somewhat to offer, nothing is more earnestly insisted on by the Apostle than a sympathizing nature. He must feel a real solicitude in the objects of his care. He must be one that can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. He is not to bring his sacrifice with a cold and repulsive sense of duty—nor from abstract regards to the dignity or glory of the deed—but he must be governed by a real *philanthropy*—he must have love and pity in his heart—he must weep for the transgressor while he makes atonement for the guilt. As he is a mediator betwixt God and men, he must combine in his person the apparently incompatible elements of zeal for the Divine glory and affection for the souls of men. He must love the Lord his God, and maintain the integrity of His throne—while He commiserates the condition of the lost, and would rescue them from their melancholy doom. He must have a brother's heart while he vindicates the decree of eternal justice. It is this zeal for God and man—this admirable blending of piety and philanthropy, which renders it certain that a Priest must always rejoice in his work. This is a qualification which he must have—it is of the essence of the office—and if at any period in the progress of his work, he should fail to possess or evince it, his acts cease to be sacerdotal—they become sacrilegious—the offering of strange fire upon the altar. This consideration puts it beyond doubt—beyond the possibility even of suspicion, that the substitution of the Saviour was the result of “a momentary enthusiasm, a sudden impulse of heroick feeling, which prompted him in the ardour of the moment, to make a sacrifice of which, on cool deliberation, he repented.” The very nature of the Priesthood demands that the spirit of sublime devotion to God, and heroick self-sacrifice for man, which first secured his consent to the enterprize, should animate him at every step in his history, and sanctify every function of his office.—He is not to be the passive recipient of ill. As a Priest

he *must act*—there are things to be done even in the endurance of the curse—and his whole heart must burn with piety and compassion, while he bears the sins of the world in his own body on the tree. The lofty and god-like motives which induced the Redeemer, in the counsels of eternity, before the morning stars had yet sung together, or the sons of God shouted for joy, to become the lamb to be slain, must have continued to operate with undiminished intensity, or the prerogatives and glory of his office had been forfeited. The Priestly spirit must have continued to dwell and to reign in his heart, or the Priestly robes would have been taken from his shoulders. He must have been as free, as cordial, as delighted, when he uttered the cry of lamentation and woe upon the cross, which shook the earth and startled the dead, as when at the glorious suggestion of the scheme, he uttered the language, *Lo, I come*. As the work of a Priest, it is stamped upon the whole process of Redemption that the substitute gave his consent—that his self-devotion was spontaneous and free—the execution of a settled purpose, to which he was impelled by no constraining influence of the Divine will—by no transitory fervours of enthusiasm—no martyr impulse of the moment—that he delighted in the work—it was his meat and drink—he felt it to be an honour and not a hardship—its successful achievement a crown of glory, and not a triumph over cruelty. This single consideration, that it displays so conspicuously the freeness of the Saviour's mediation, is itself a sufficient vindication of the wisdom and fitness of a Priesthood. It shows that our felicity has not been purchased at the expense of the rights of another—and though there was an immense cost of suffering and of blood, it was never for a moment begrudged—never for a moment sustained with reluctance. We have no occasion for regrets that the blessings which we enjoy have been put into our hands by cruelty, injustice, or even harshness and severity to others. They are the free gifts of that sublimest of all spirits—the spirit of a Priest.

It is obvious from the preceding train of remark, that all those views of the origin and success of the scheme of Redemption, which the general idea of substitution naturally suggests, are rendered more striking and im-

pressive by the peculiarities of Priesthood. If legal substitution involves a dispensation with the primary requisition of the law---which attaches punishment to the person of the offender---which proves that the substitute must be appointed by God---the necessity of this inference is immensely enhanced, when that substitute sustains an office which absolutely demands a vocation from above. The proposition to suffer might originate from a competent sponsor—the proposition to be a Priest could not be made without blasphemy—and any scheme which comprehends the functions of a real and proper Priesthood, can spring from no other source but the bosom of God. If the acceptance of a substitute carries a presumption that his proffered mediation must be successful, this presumption is magnified into certainty, when the substitute is not only accepted but appointed by God, and invested with an office which requires a formal and solemn inauguration. The presumption in the one case arises from the general principle that whatever means are appointed of God must be efficacious---but the certainty in the latter arises from the awful sanctity of the oath with which the Son was declared to be a Priest forever after the order of Melchezidek.

If the consent of the substitute must, in every instance, be presumed—the righteousness of the procedure depending upon his concurrence—it is obviously important that it should be open and palpable; and this result is effectually attained by an arrangement, which could not subsist a moment longer than the consent of the substitute is given. The Priestly spirit, which is essential to the Priestly office, exacts delight in the work—and all sacerdotal functions would behove to be suspended when the Priest failed in the spirit of his vocation. The joy of the Mediator in the work, therefore, and the vindication of God from all suspicion of cruelty, injustice, or severity, is complete and triumphant when the Saviour's death is made a sacrifice—a free-will offering to God. But though these considerations are not without their value in illustrating the Divine wisdom and goodness, yet we are far from supposing that they constitute the peculiar advantages of sacerdotal mediation. The pre-eminent importance of the office is rather to be sought in the light which it

throws upon Redemption as a work achieved—and in the arrangements which it makes for the successful application of its blessings to the heirs of the promise. It is precisely the scheme in which the provisions of the Gospel most conspicuously display the glory of God, and are best adapted to conciliate regard, and to inspire confidence and hope. Grace is here seen to be a remedy without the disgust which remedies usually create—it is rendered attractive to all who know their disease and appreciate their danger, and administers strong consolation under circumstances in which no other arrangement could save from the encroachments of despair.

II. When we contemplate the death of Christ as simply the death of a substitute, we see in it nothing more than a full satisfaction to the claims of justice. The sponsor pays the debt, and pays it cheerfully—the legal representative endures the curse which others had incurred, and falls beneath the sword which the guilt of others had drawn from its scabbard. It is a transaction of law and government—the infliction of a judicial sentence.—Though it is implied that the substitute approves the equity of the law under which he suffers—and is prepared to vindicate the Divine conduct from the charge of unreasonable rigour; though the justice of the whole transaction is assumed—yet when it is represented as simply the operation of justice, much of its moral grandeur and impressiveness is lost. We see in the substitute a victim to his own generosity—and considered exclusively in this light, there are probably few men who have not had occasion to fortify their minds against a momentary impression of unrelenting severity, by appealing to those awful attributes of God, which make atonement the exclusive channel of mercy to the guilty. We must go beyond the event to its principle and causes before we can be at ease, when we survey the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth. He is felt to be a passive victim of Divine wrath—he bares his bosom to the stroke—he receives the storm which beats in violence and fury—he simply, in other words, stands and endures—while God, and God in His most terrible forms of manifestation, is the sole agent in the case.

Widely different is the impression which is made when the transaction is contemplated in its true light. There

is no room for the remotest suspicion of inexorable rigour---when Jesus is seen to be a Priest---His death a sacrifice---and the whole transaction an august and glorious act of worship. The position of Jesus is sublime when standing before the altar---He confesses the guilt of His brethren---adores the justice which dooms them to woe---and almost exacts from God as the condition of His own love---that justice should not slacken nor abate. That prayer of confession---that assumption of guilt---that clear acknowledgment of what truth and righteousness demand, makes us feel that God *must* strike---that the edict must go forth---awake, oh sword, against my shepherd and the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. Still sublimer is His position, when with profound adoration of the Divine character, by His own proper act---his own spontaneous movement---he lays his life upon the altar, virtually saying: take it---it ought to be taken---let the fire of justice consume it---better, ten thousand times better that this should be than that the throne of the eternal should be tarnished by an effeminate pity. We feel that death is not so much a penalty inflicted as an offering accepted. We feel that God is glorious, that the law is glorious in the whole transaction, because Christ glorifies them. He lays down His life of Himself---it is His own choice to die rather than that man should perish, or the Divine government be insulted with impunity---and though when the offering was accepted, justice inflicted upon Him the full penalty of the law---though the fire which consumed the victim was the curse in its whole extent, yet as it was an act of worship to provide it, and especially as that victim was Himself, every groan and pang---every exclamation of agony, amazement, and horror, was a homage to God which, in itself considered, the Priest felt it glorious to render. And if Jesus in all the extremity of His passion, proclaimed to the universe what from the nature of Priesthood He must have proclaimed---that the whole transaction was a ground on which God was adored by Him --that His Father was never dearer---never more truly God in His sight than when he accepted the sacrifice of Himself---and ought to be adored by all, the sublimity of the principles involved, and the interest of Jesus in them, are a perfect vindication from every illiberal suspicion. There is something to our

minds inexpressibly sublime when we contemplate the scheme of Redemption as accomplished by an act of worship--when we look upon Jesus not as a passive recipient of woes--the unresisting victim of law--but as a minister of religion, conducting its services in the presence of angels and men, upon an emergency which seemed to cover the earth with darkness. Our world becomes the outer Court of a sanctuary--where a sacrifice is to be offered in which the Priest and the victim are alike the wonder of the universe--in which the worship which is rendered leaves it doubtful whether the Deity is more glorious in his justice or his grace. In this aspect, the satisfaction of Jesus is not merely the ground upon which others are at liberty to approach and adore the Divine perfections, it is itself a prayer uttered by the lips of one whose deeds were words--a hymn of praise chanted by Him whose songs were the inspiration of holiness and truth. Every proud imagination is rebuked--every insinuation against the character of God is felt to be a shame to us--every disposition to cavil or condemn is consigned to infamy, when we remember that the whole work of Jesus was a solemn service of religion, as well that by which He descended into the grave, as that by which He passed through the Heavens into the holiest of all. He was a Priest in His death--a Priest in His Resurrection--a Priest in His ascension. He worshipped God in laying His life upon the altar--He worshipped Him in taking it again--and it was an act of worship by which He entered with His blood in the very presence of the highest to intercede for the saints. It was religion in Jesus to die--to rise--to reign, as it is religion in us to believe in these great events of His history.

Here, then, is an incalculable advantage of Priesthood ; while it makes the passion of the Redeemer a full and perfect satisfaction of Divine justice, and so lays an adequate foundation of pardon, it vindicates the Divine glory in every step of the proceeding, by making every step an act of adoration and praise. It makes the Saviour adore the Father in His death--makes that very death an offering of praise--redemption itself a mighty prayer, and throws the sanctities and solemnities of worship--and worship on the part of one who knew what was the

proper ground of worship--around all the stages in the developement of the economy of grace. This seems to us to be the very climax of wisdom. It was glorious to have provided a substitute who should be able to bear our sins in his own body upon the tree--to have devised a scheme by which the conflicting claims of mercy and justice should be adjusted and harmonized, by which God could be just, and, at the same time, the justifier of those who believe in Jesus--but it was the very perfection of wisdom to have executed this scheme so that the intensest sufferings should have produced only a deeper impression of the Divine glory and of the excellence and value of the Divine law. Surely in this arrangement the law is magnified and made honourable.

2. Another circumstance which illustrates the importance of sacerdotal mediation, is the provision which it makes for the application of redemption to the heirs of the promise. The discussion has often been agitated, which precedes, faith or regeneration. On the one hand it has been maintained, and successfully maintained, that faith is a holy exercise, and necessarily supposes a change of heart--and on the other, with equal truth, that a spiritual nature is the work of the Holy Ghost, and He is vouchsafed in His saving operations only to those who are entitled to the favour of God. They must be in Christ in order to be recipients of saving grace--they must have received that grace in order to be in Christ. There are but two hypotheses by which this difficulty can be met upon the scheme of simple substitution, and both of them liable to insuperable objections. The one is the Antinomian theory of eternal justification, which, as it makes acceptance with God compatible with a state of sin, is destructive of the interests of holiness; the other is, the theory of a change in the Divine mind, in relation to a sinner, at a particular period of His history, which takes place without any particular reason why it should be affected then rather than at any other time. It is supposed that the covenant of redemption included a promise to the mediator, that at a given time in the history of each, the heirs of the promise should be renewed by the Spirit and enabled to believe on the Saviour. The actual communication of the Spirit is solely in virtue of

that promise. Now if the sinner were not justified in the justification of Christ, if, before the critical period arrives, he is the object of Divine reprobation, what is to make him less so after it has come? If there was that in his character and relations to God which made it inconsistent with the Divine perfections to impart to him tokens of favour, the original promise has neither changed that character nor those relations, and has, consequently, not removed the inconsistency. The change towards him in the Divine mind is purely arbitrary. If it should be said that the work of Christ has laid the foundations of that change, the reply is obvious, that at the given time, the sinner's relations to that work are no nearer than they were before--and if that be the cause of it, the change must have occurred when Christ himself was justified. These difficulties seem to be insuperable upon the hypothesis of simple substitution. We must fall back upon Antinomian principles, or confess that the conversion of a sinner is utterly inexplicable.

But when we take in the idea of Priesthood, the whole difficulty vanishes. There is no need for asserting what the scriptures every where deny, an eternal justification--or an actual justification in the resurrection of Christ, or an arbitrary change in the feelings and sentiments of the changeless God. The Spirit, in his first operations is imparted, not as a token of God's favour to the sinner, but as a token of His regard to the great High Priest who pleads before the throne. It is not that the sinner is accepted, but that Jesus is accepted. God looks only on the great intercessor, and gives him power to give eternal life to all whose names are on his breast-plate, and when, in answer to these Divine intercessions, the Spirit is given to Christ that Christ may give him to us--when in consequence of that gift he descends, not from the father, but from Christ to us, and unites us to Jesus---then God looks upon us in the Redeemer and justifies us in consequence of that union. Here there is perfect harmony in the whole plan.

3. Another immense advantage of a Priesthood is, that it quickens and stimulates the devotion of the Church by the assurance it inspires, that all true worship, however imperfect or inadequate, shall infallibly be accepted and

rewarded. Upon the scheme of simple substitution, the approaches of a sinner to God would be immediate and personal—he would go in his own name, depending for acceptance upon a work which had already been performed—he would plead the promises which were suspended upon it, and cast himself upon the unfailing faithfulness of God. We are far from saying that this would not be a sufficient ground of confidence and hope—but no man that knows the deceitfulness of his heart, the depths of iniquity within him—no man who feels his own vileness and pollution, and appreciates, at the same time, the transcendent holiness of God, could venture, without fear and trembling, however supported by a covenant which guarantees his acceptance, to come into the presence of Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who charges the angels with folly. To talk of confidence and boldness under such circumstances, would be sheer madness. However we might be authorized to feel it, we could not feel it. The awful holiness of God would be like a consuming fire—an oppressive sense of unworthiness and of immeasurable distance and separation from the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, would arrest the prayer as it arose in the heart, and check the confidence which atonement, as a past historical fact, was suited to inspire. We should say with the Israelites, that we cannot speak with God. There must be a mediator of prayer and praise, of all the exercises of religious worship, as well as a mediator to purchase our pardon. This is accomplished by a Priesthood. There is no direct and immediate approach to God. We come before him only in the name of our Priest who attracts us by community of nature, and who presents all our worship for us before the Eternal throne. Our prayers are not heard and received as *ours*, but as the prayers of Jesus—our praises are not accepted as *ours*, but as the praises of Jesus. The imperfection which attaches to our performances, our pollution and weakness and unbelief, stop with the High Priest—His intercession and atonement cover all defects, and we are faultless and complete in Him. The prayer which reaches the ear of the Almighty is from Him, and not from us, and must be as prevalent as His worth. Here is our confidence, not

that Jesus died, but that Jesus lives—that he is our intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and there presents, enforces, and sanctifies the religious worship of earth—here is our confidence, that in the whole process of salvation, God regards the Redeemer and not us, and deals out blessings according to his estimate of Christ—here is our confidence, that if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. What an encouragement to prayer and praise! And what thanks shall we render unto God for adapting the marvellous scheme of His grace, with such consummate wisdom, to the wants and weaknesses of men. Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. This approach to God, through the mediation of a Priest, is one of the highest privileges of the Gospel, and meets so completely a prime necessity of nature, that where it is imperfectly understood, we are disposed to make arrangements of our own which shall answer the same end. All corrupt religions have an order of Priests. They could maintain no hold upon the people—they could not enlist the sympathies of the heart, without some provision of the sort. It is the glory of the Gospel that it has a Priest who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him, who can sanctify the meanest worshipper and consecrate the humblest offering. None need be afraid or ashamed, it is not they, but he, who is accepted in the house of God. It was an ancient reproach of Christianity, both among Jews and Gentiles, that it was a spiritual and personal worship, without the intervention of either altar, temple or sacrifice. It had, indeed, no imposing ritual, no pomp of cere-

mony, no gorgeous solemnities---all was simple and unpretending—its institutions were addressed to intelligence and not to taste—to the heart instead of the fancy. Still there was a temple in the Christian scheme, more august and glorious than any which could be reared by hands---it had an altar, a Priest, a victim, and a sacrifice, which should forever abolish, through their transcendent efficacy, all other altars, all other Priests, all other victims, however costly or imposing---it possessed, in perfection, all those advantages of sacerdotal mediation which Judaism and Paganism faintly adumbrated---and instead, like them, of making its Priesthood subservient only, to a vicarious religion, it secured the real worship of the heart.

4. It deserves finally to be added that a mediation of Priesthood is the form in which consolation is most effectually administered to the children of men. It is necessary to any substitute that he should be a kinsman of our race—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. But beside the possession of our nature free from the stain and impurities of sin—nothing more is required for the purposes of vicarious righteousness and penal expiation than the consent of the substitute to undertake the task. If he *can* die the death to which we are doomed, and is willing to suffer in our stead—he is a competent Redeemer. But though this is all which is absolutely essential to legal substitution, it is not all which the state and condition of men evince to be desirable. We want a redeemer with a brother's heart as well as a brother's nature. Though not indispensable to our safety, it is indispensable to our comfort, that our substitute should be touched with a feeling of our infirmities—that he should be able to bear our sorrows and carry our griefs. Now this exquisite sympathy, which is one of the most powerful incentives to faith and love, is essential to a Priest. Every High Priest ordained for men must not only be a participant of their nature, but must have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. He must enter with sympathetic tenderness into all their temptations and calamities—their fears and apprehensions—their cares and sorrows. He must be prepared to pity and encourage the weak—to comfort the weeper in the house of mourn-

ing---to wipe the widow's tears---to hear the orphan's cries---to lie down with the beggar upon his pallet of straw and to watch with those to whom wearisome nights are appointed. He must be a friend in all those emergencies in which friendship is our richest boon.

This qualification is found preeminently in Jesus. Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, he possesses that absolute purity of nature in which the sensibilities have lost none of their delicacy from the petrifying influence of sin. Trained, too, by a protracted discipline in the school of affliction, he knows the temptations of our race, he knows what it is to weep---he knows the burden of a heavy heart. It was, perhaps, one design of the varied scenes of trial through which he passed, to give him that experience of our state, which should call into the liveliest exercise the exquisite sympathy of his soul. In generous natures common troubles and afflictions have a tendency to knit them together---it is only where the heart has been seared by sin and immersed in selfishness, that it can look with indifference upon struggles of others similar to those through which it has passed. The apostle assures us that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. And those who have felt his presence in their trials can appreciate the priceless value of his sympathy. He has gone before us through every path of sorrow and we cannot utter a groan nor heave a sigh which does not go to his heart. His pity for the guilty is as tender as his sympathy with the saints. No language can express the intensity of his compassion for those who in ignorance and folly disregard the day of their merciful visitation and are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. He has no pleasure in their death---Oh Jerusalem---Jerusalem---thou that stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. The sublimest example of compassion which the world has ever beheld was furnished by the Saviour in that memorable prayer---when "the clouds of wrath from heaven

and from earth, pregnant with materials which nothing but a Divine hand could have collected, were about to discharge themselves on him in a deluge of agony and blood," when insulted by men, abandoned by his friends, mocked by his enemies—jeered by devils and deserted by God, he was about to expire in solitude and darkness—he could still for a moment, in the plenitude of his pity—forget these unspeakable calamities and pray for the forgiveness of the remorseless agents of his death. This was compassion like a God, And what an exquisite spectacle of tenderness was that—when Jesus, on the cross, just before the consummation of the last event that should fulfil the predictions of ancient prophecy, consigned his mother to the care of the beloved disciple. Surely such an High Priest became us. In our waywardness and folly, in our sins and temptations—in our murmurs and impatience, we should alienate any other friend but one like him, that sticketh closer than a brother.

ARTICLE III.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME ASSYRIA.*—GEN. x: 10. 11.

The rendering of this passage in the common English version, which makes Asshur the builder of Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen, is objected to for the following reasons :

1. That it introduces Asshur, the son of Shem, before his birth is mentioned, in verse 22d ; and, among the sons of Ham.

2. That it gives "the beginning," of the kingdom of Nimrod, and, without telling us of the completion of it, as we should naturally expect, turns off our minds to another person. The course of thought is interrupted. The four cities mentioned in verses 11 and 12, would seem naturally to form the completion of Nimrod's kingdom ; and the counterpart of the four built in the land of Shinar.

* This article presents an ingenious theory respecting the name, Assyria, though we are not prepared to accede to its correctness.