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AN APOSTOLIC FORTNIGHT.

REV. JAMES I. VANCE, D. D.

Text: "I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."—Galatians 1: 8.

The verse records a memorable visit made by one good man to another, more than eighteen centuries ago. The visit lasted but fifteen days, but it left an impression on both men that lasted for a lifetime, and on their cause that lasted for all time. It was a noteworthy event for many reasons.

The visit was notable because of the men. They belonged to that limited and elect class known as "the world's great men." Their names are catalogued in that list, whose numbers are few, but who live at the top of humanity and are recognized as its leaders. They were prophetic souls, men with the vision of seers. A visit from John Milton to Oliver Cromwell would interest us, or from George Washington to Frederick the Great, or from Homer to Shakespeare. In some respects of deeper interest, for of greater moment, was Paul's visit to Peter.

The visit was notable also because of the cause these men represented. They stood near the natal hour of the world's greatest religious movement. Christianity was as yet an unknown force in the world. Next to Christ, these two men were to do more than any others in establishing the church.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

REV. R. A. WEBB, D. D

The mediatorial problem which Jesus came to solve made it necessary for him to execute the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest and of a King. The necessity of the first was grounded in human ignorance; of the second, in human sinfulness; of the third, in human dependence. While all three are held to be essential by the Reformed theologians, the priestly work of Christ is ranked as the most central and dynamically important feature of the whole ministry of reconciliation.

Anti-Calvinists, on the other hand, have labored to deny, or evade, or minify the sacerdotal function of the Christian Redeemer. Preachers of an ethical gospel, for example, throw the emphasis upon his prophetic work, and put out the catchy phrase, "salvation by revelation," and accent the moral influences of his precepts and example. Those of Arminian alignments stress his kingly office, and point the sinner's eye to executive clemency and governmental policies as the central sources of his hope. Those of mystical affiliations, who flock with the expositors of the "new theology," get away from the cross by standing by the cradle of the Saviour, and discourse with untentious sweetness and luscious vagueness about the gospel of incarnation and the metaphysical union of humanity and divinity. The motive and zeal for it all is to escape "the blood theology," and its Calvinistic implicates. Any sophism to avoid the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of the Redeemer!

The most central fact in the Christian system is not the doctrine, not the prerogative, not the cradle, of the Saviour, but his *cross*. To that, all Old Testament prophecies and rituals pointed; of that, Jesus spake most intently; in that, Paul said he gloried above all else. Sinners are saved, not by the life of Christ, but by the death of Christ, his sacrificial and priestly death. All else was ancillary to his shedding of his atoning blood.

That he was a Priest, not in some metaphorical and poetic sense, but in strict literalness and in exact truth, the Scriptures dogmatically assert. (Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 5:6; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21.) Indeed the entire epistle to the Hebrews is a treatise upon, and exposition of, the priesthood of the Redeemer, but, in addition to the specific teachings of this particular book, priestly terms, as descriptive of one aspect of his saving work, are diffused everywhere throughout both the Old and New Testaments, rendering it impossible for any one to deny the fact of his priesthood and priestly work, without tearing out of the Bible terms and phrases and figures which are interwoven into the very warp and woof of the Scriptures. The language of the Old Testament is everywhere and persistently the language of the altar, and the figure of the New Testament is everywhere the figure of the "Lamb slain." Throughout, priestly concepts embroder the very texture of divine revelation.

A priest is that minister of religion who offers worship through the medium of *sacrifice*. He must, consequently, have an altar, a victim, and a ritual. (Heb. 5:1, 2; 2:17; 8:3; 10:11.) *Generically*, he is a minister of religion; *specifically*, he is that minister of religion who offers sacrifices for sin—this in his differentiating and definitive mark. A priest without a victim would be an empty-handed minister of religion; without an altar, he would be a minister without the necessary tool of his office; without a ritual, he would be a minister without a formula for his services. These things must all be taken together to complete the concept, to round out, the definition of a priest.

The function of the priest is distinctly different from that of the prophet. There is need for them both in any scheme of saving truth, but the prophet is that intermediary through whom God makes known His will to the world; while a priest is that intermediary between God and the sinner who atones for the offence of man and renders him acceptable to God. It is through the kingly office of the Mediator that God administers His whole redemptional program. The function of a priest is chiefly and fundamentally that of offering for sin—expiating guilt on the

one hand, and propitiating Deity on the other. If man had remained unfallen and un sinful, there had been no place and no duty for the priest, but now that he is estranged and is morally offensive to his Maker, the superlative need of his soul is, not a doctrine, not a ruler, not a metaphysics, but an atonement, a something which will reinstate him in the favor of his Maker by wiping out his transgression. Something must be done for a sinner that will justly and honorably appease divine wrath. The purpose and the office of the priest in religion is piacular—to make the *poena vicaria*.

(1) From the dawn of sacred history, the first and everywhere prevailing mode of access and acceptability to God was through the priest and his sacrifice. Cain and Abel, in the beginning of the race's history, offered sacrifices to their Maker; the one, the first fruits of his fields, and the other, the firstlings of his flocks; God accepted the bloody offering of the one and rejected the oblation of the other. At the assuagement of the deluge, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled a sweet savour." (Gen. 8:20.) The first thing Abraham did on entering the land of Canaan was to "build an altar and call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:7, 8.) The other patriarchs and that isolated character, Melchisedek, imitated his example. Job, a patriarch somewhere between the deluge and Abraham, as the head of his family "offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all" (Job. 1:5). Then the Mosaic dispensation had an elaborate ritual of the *poena vicaria*, for the expiation of the greater and lesser offences of Israel.

(2) That those sacrifices were a *poena vicaria* is amply proved by the very ritual of the altar-service prescribed by the Mosaic legation. The essential points in the formula for the bloody offering were: (a) the presentation of some regulation victim at the altar by the worshipper; (b) the imposition of the hands upon the head of the victim, symbolic of the imputation to it of the guilt of the worshipper; (c) the slaughter of the sin-bearing vic-

tim, in token of the surrender of the worshipper's life for his offence against God; (d) such a disposition of the blood of the vicarious victim as would indicate that it had been accepted in lieu of the blood of the worshipper; (e) the burning of the symbolically tainted flesh of the victim according to prescription, so as to show that the whole offence had been extinguished from the sight of the Deity. The elaborate and minute Old Testament ceremonial becomes almost childish upon any other theory than that of the traditional interpretation, namely, that this whole priestly transaction symbolically expiated guilt and placated an offended Deity. A prophet is necessary to teach the world the will of God for salvation, but a *priest* was required in that typical economy to make atonement for guilt.

(3) That the teleology of sacrifices as given is the correct interpretation of their meaning is proved by a reference to all heathen religions. However gross or however refined, these heathen religions are but collapsed and perverted forms of the once pure religion of Jehovah, primarily revealed to our race; and all these heathen forms construe the Deity as angry and as standing in need of placation; and sacrifices and offerings, in all sorts of crude forms and with all sorts of absurd and superstitious and offensive rituals, are made for the purpose of appeasing the wrath and propitiating the favor of the Deity. The blood of a thousand victims pouring from heathen basins and countless ablutions made by heathen priests, are but so many testimonies derived from the traditional history of a fallen race in proof of the proposition that the religion of sacrifice is the religion of a sinful world, and that the ministry of the priest is the only ministry effective for sinful men. It is not the prophet, but the priest, which officiates at the altars of earth, binding to the horns of the altar victims of real or imaginary worth for the atonement of guilt. All these things, were they truly understood and rightly interpreted, but point to Christ, who was, at once the priest and the victim of the true and effective religion of redemption. The Mosaic system being a true and correct typification of his saving sacrifice, and all heathen abortions and abom-

inations being but the vain and despairing illustrations of the world's crying, but misunderstood, need of the true sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth, and of its pitiful, silly, and monstrously absurd efforts to find him whom their souls need without divine revelation. Revelation teaches, and the frantic efforts of a foolish heathenism, that the only effective religion of a sinful man is the religion of the priest and his sacrifice. The one desideratum is an authorized and competent priest appointed of God, and ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices.

(4) That the priestly oblation is a genuine *poena vicaria*, designed to satisfy the offended holiness of the Deity and to reset the offender in the divine favour by expiating his transgression, is further proved by the fact that no other explanation of their nature is rational and adequate. Strenuous efforts are being made, with all the adroitness of special pleading and with all the skill of expert learning, to give some significance to sacrifices which would eliminate the "blood theology," which lies in the very bosom of this interpretation of the priest and his offering. The Calvinistic theory of atonement, with all its logical implicates, which this conception of the priest's office requires, is the cause of this zeal and sophistry. They have been called "fines" imposed upon offenders; "feasts" made in honor of the loving kindness of God; "symbols" of a renewed profession of allegiance and obedience, made under the sense of restoration to His favor; "expressions of gratitude" for the special and general benefactions of providence; "types" of fellowship restored between God and the offender; "metaphors" borrowed from heathens and Jews as convenient and familiar figures under which to set forth the gospel; they have been called anything and everything in order to avoid the idea that sin needs expiation and God needs placation. But none of these explanations, nor any others which might be invented, can account for the idea that these effective sacrifices were always *bloody* offerings. Why *bloody* the fine, the feast, the symbol, the type, the metaphor? Why always demand the services of a *priest* for the fine, the feast, the symbol, the type, the metaphor? Grant for one swift moment the biblical

doctrine that "without shedding of blood is no remission," and at once the reason for the bloody sacrifice becomes apparent. Grant this truth, and it is obvious that only the services of a priest at an altar can be effective. A prophet might have been the minister of the fine, the feast, the symbol, the type, the metaphor. Indeed if this were the true meaning of the sacrifice, it is obvious that the prophet would have been the proper and appropriate officer for such services.

(5) Finally the gospel throws the accent upon the *priestly* mediation of Christ, with such varying modes and with such persistent energy, as to preclude the reduction of this aspect of his saving work to any secondary or subordinate place in the scheme of his redemption. The terminology of the altar abounds throughout the gospel, and its most familiar expressions are derived from the ritual of sacrifice. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jno. 1:29). "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jno. 2:2). "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (Jno. 10:11). Such passages exclude all attempts to explain away the priestly character of the work of Christ in the salvation of sinners. His case irrefutably proves that his death was a genuine *poena vicaria*.

There is an imperative and unavoidable need for the priesthood of Christ. "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). "If a law had been given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). If salvation could have been in any other mode than by the priestly sacrifice of the Redeemer, it would have been in that other way. It was by the death of Christ because it could not have been by his incarnation, nor by his teaching, nor by the exercise of executive clemency. And where is the ground of this awful necessity?

(1) Holiness is the dynamic center of the divine character, the *fons et origo* of all God's life and activity. Sin is the moral opposite of holiness, and antagonises God at the very center of His moral being. Before He could receive a creature affected by such a moral malady into His bosom and fellowship and life, without the loss of self-respect, the sinful creature must be purged of his defilement; sacrificial blood, securing the grace of the Holy Spirit, is the only abstrurgent revealed in Scripture; hence the necessity of that priestly sacrifice which Christ made in offering himself upon the altar of atonement, grounded in the very nature of that holiness which is the center and determination of all the divine life and activities. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:7).

(2) Justice is God's sense of righteousness, His conscience. Sin is wrong, and puts the creature affected by it in opposition to the divine righteousness. It ought to be punished, it deserves to be punished. Not to punish it would be to do an ethical wrong, to perpetrate sin, to expose the person so overlooking it to just moral censure, and render him truly liable in his own person for the punishment which he would not inflict upon the sinner who ethically deserved it. The divine sense of what is right and proper, the eternal and spontaneous and necessary deliverances of the divine conscience can not be satisfied except the thing which ought to be done, be done. The only possible mode of relief for the divine conscience, if it spare the sinner, is in the *poena vicaria*. If the matter can not be reached in this mode, it can not be reached at all, and the sinner must be left to his fate. Nothing but the sacrificial blood of the Lamb of God can, in strict literalness and ethical efficiency, be a genuine *poena vicaria*, so satisfying the divine conscience as to leave it ethically pure and uncompromised. The necessity for the priest and his sacrifice is grounded in the ethical nature of the Deity, in that conscience which makes it impossible for God to do any wrong, which makes Him the immutable standard of all rectitude (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19).

(3) God is a true being. Every expression of Himself corresponds to fact with precision and exactitude—He never over-expresses Himself; He never under-expresses Himself; He never misrepresents in any matter, nor in the minutest degree. But to proclaim a guilty sinner just, when as a matter of fact, known to the omniscient mind of God, he is unjust, would be to perpetrate a falsehood, to treat one who deserves condemnation and expulsion from His presence as if he were His beloved friend and loyal servant, would be to make untrue representations of Himself. To justify the ungodly, as God does do, in consistency with His own truth and frankness and transparency of character, demands some adequate expiation of the guilt, some *poena vicaria*, which shall truly and fully and honorably satisfy His spoken word, and that love of truth which lies in His bosom deeper than any mere outward expression of it. Were He to overlook sin as a governmental expediency; were He to pass it by with a mere moral reprimand; were He to use it as a mere occasion for pointing a moral lesson to this world; were He to deal with it upon the grounds of moral expediency and pardon it without any atonement, He would not be true to Himself, His word and His own self-respect; He would not be true to the moral universe whose moral ideals find their eternal norms and standards in Him. The necessity for Christ's expiatory sacrifice is founded in God's immanent and necessary love of truth. He is an honest God and can not perpetrate the semblance of a fraud. (Ps. 146:6; 2 Cor. 1:18; Rev. 6:10.)

(4) As a God of love the Deity must administer penalty wherever it is deserved in the interest of universal happiness, for love is the impulse to bless. But sin brings misery by the force of its own gravitation, not to mention its judicial consequences. The race would be more wretched in the non-infliction of penalty upon the guilty, in withholding judicial censure from the evil-doers, than it would be from the rigid enforcement of law and good behavior by the imposition of due and proper penalties for offences committed. The only ground for the remission of penalty which even the divine goodness could sug-

gest, must be found in some vicarious suffering which would adequately and truly safeguard human happiness. Not to punish evil, either personally or vicariously, would be to doom the race to misery, even as the non-infliction of penalty in the State would wreck all civic happiness. The very goodness of God demands, in case of the non-infliction of penalty upon the person of the offender, that some *poena vicaria* must become the justifying reason. (1 Jno. 4:16.)

The love of holiness—the love of righteousness—the love of truth—the love of goodness—these are the four normative motives of the divine heart, the central principles of all God's moral life and conduct. It is the love of holiness which gives Him infinite self-respect, and makes Him the standard of all virtue; consequently He must hate and smite all that opposes itself to Him. It is His love of righteousness which immanently causes the "Judge of all the earth to do right," and insures the world against every wrong at the hands of God; consequently the transgressor must suffer the punishment due to him for sin. It is His love of truth which makes Him invariably express Himself fully and with absolute exactitude, judging all things as they really are and treating them always just as they ought to be treated; consequently He feels truly toward sin, and inflicts it as it ought to be, in order to be true to Himself. It is His love of goodness which makes Him to be concerned in the happiness of Himself and that of His created universe, and guarantees that He will always do the thing which is consistent with true happiness; consequently His very love of goodness necessitates His punishment of the wicked, in order that the suffering which ought to be inflicted to prevent misery may be inflicted. The atoning priest and his sacrifice are thus made necessary in the redemptional program of God by His love of holiness, His love of righteousness, His love of truth, and His love of goodness. If there be any salvation for sinful men it must come in the form of a *poena vicaria*, rendered by a competent and official priest at an altar to whose service he was ordained of God. The very impulses and principles of the divine nature are such that they

can not be ignored, nor cheated, nor throttled. The prophet may declare, and the king may rule, but only a priest can satisfy the demands of the holy, ethical, truthful, and loving nature of the Deity. Without the priest and his blood is no remission.

The onliness of the priesthood of Christ follows directly from its nature and necessity; himself the Priest, himself the Victim, he only can take the sinner's place and perform upon himself the ritual of the saving sacrifice. The Melchisedecan, or Patriarchal priesthood, and the Aaronic, or Mosaic priesthood, were but prefigurations of the priesthood of Christ, drawing all their significance from the proleptical and anticipatory sacrifice on the cross; except as types of that better sacrifice they had been but the impotent slaughter of animals, attended by the vainest of ceremonies. As the tabernacle was but the provisional temple, made necessary by the exigencies of the sojourn in the wilderness, prior to the time when the permanent house could be built according to the pattern shown Moses in the Mount, so the Patriarchal and Mosaic priesthoods were but temporary expedients, anticipatory of the sacrifice and service of Christ, and drawing all their significance and power from him by reaching forward to his death on Calvary; they were but the shadows of which he was the substance; the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin; they were effective only as faith looked through and beyond them to the Priest and Lamb of Calvary.

Look over Heb. 9:7, 8. and it will be seen:

(1) That all who precede him were not real priests, but only "figures" of him that was to come; (2) that all the victims that were slain on Jewish altars were not effective in themselves, but derived all their force from the sacrifice that was "better" than they; (3) that there was no need, as there could be no repetition, of the priestly ministration of human types and figures after "Christ was once offered to put away sin"; his was the finale of priestly service in the religion of the Redeemer.

All human priests are now but usurpers of the function. Empty handed, they have no victim to offer; without an altar, they can only officiate by the side of structures of their own

erection; without a ritual, they can only put on the priest's frock, and mumble an ineffective jargon; without divine ordination, they thrust themselves into the priest's office, as useless as they are offensive. We do wisely to exclude priestly terminology from our vocabulary, and priestly garments from our ministerial backs. It would be but common prudence if, as Presbyterians, we could cease to speak about "offertories," and "altars," and "services." Names are wedges which ultimately drive home ideas. As a prophet, Christ has no successor in the publication of the will of God to men; as a king, he has no successor to his throne and his crown; and as a priest, he has no successor to his vestments and service, for like Melchisedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, the Redeemer is "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," without predecessor and without successor in the priest's office—he abideth a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek, the first and the last and the only occupant of the priest's office in the Christian religion.

To satisfy divine justice in its claims upon sinners, to reconcile offenders to God; to create a ground upon which continual intercession for sinners could be based; this Priest offered himself as the Victim upon the altar of sacrifice. The Priest and the Victim coincided in the same person. As the High Priest of the Christian religion, clad in the sacerdotal vestments of his office, he led himself as a Lamb into the outer court of the world, the bloody place of sacrificial slaughter; laid his hands upon his own devoted head, confessing thereon the sins of those for whom he transacted, thus making himself their scape-goat and sin-bearer; then he drew forth the sacrificial knife, amidst the astonished gaze of angelic hosts assembled on the battlements of the sky as spectators of the scene, who veiled their faces at the flash of the blade, while the stars stood back out of the sweep of his arm, and sheathed it in his own heart, pouring out his own blood in lieu of the justly forfeited life of his people; he bound his human nature to the horns of the altar which had been kindled with the fires of divine wrath against sin, that it might be consumed to

ashes for the sins of his saints; he caught the precious blood in the basin, and passed with it into the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and pushing aside the veil of partition, went into the shekinah of God's presence, and sprinkled his blood upon the ark and upon the mercy-seat round about, as evidence of his fulfillment of his mediatorial engagement; and then he returned to the threshold of the sanctuary with absolution and benediction for all those for whom he transacted. The Old Testament ritual and the Epistle to the Hebrews justify all this imagery. "He made himself an offering for sin." As a Priest he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin; no man took it from him, but he laid it down of himself. He was the Priest and the Victim in the same person, and in the same great saving transaction.

It was the sublimest act of worship in the annals of time or in the records of eternity. As a Priest, Christ, clad in priestly robes and carrying sacrificial implements in his hands, stands beside the altar as a worshipper ready to lay an offering thereon. With that conception of the divine holiness and justice which filled his mind in that supreme moment, with that sense of profound respect and passionate love which filled his bosom at that hour, with that awful devotion and religious fervor which animated his spirit and kindled his heart, with his perception and estimate of the exceeding sinfulness of the sin for which he was about to offer, with a mind fully understanding and with a heart fully appreciating the meaning and solemnity of the crucial moment, what victim does his devout priestly instinct permit him to lay upon the altar as worthy of him and of his Father? Shall the expression of his religion and devotion as he stands at the altar's base be made by the slaughter of thousands of rams, or in the libation of ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall he climb the altar stairs, bearing in his arms for the sacrifice the first-born of the sons of men, or the tallest archangel which treads the gorgeous mosaic of the skies? What offering shall this Priest who came out of the bosom of God and who understands and appreciates God and reverences and respects and adores God with all the fullness of his being—what offering shall

this Priest make which he is not ashamed to present, and upon which he can stand and base all his intercessions for sinful men? This Priest in his quest for something worthy to bind to the horns of the altar climbed in through the windows of the God-head, and laid his hand upon the second person of that holy circle, and sacrificed him in sheer devotion to his Father. Did ever piety go beyond this? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." The transaction on Calvary was the very climax of priestly worship.

That the innocent should suffer for the guilty, that even the animal, which had done no harm should, under the typical system, be required to bleed and die to exculpate the human being who did do the wrong; that the place of Jehovah's worship should be the place of slaughter and blood and death has ever appeared more or less harsh and shocking to human sensibilities. It is even next to impossible to prevent the pious mind from revolting at the character of the God who should make such inexorable demands, even in the nakedest justice. Theologians are accustomed to seek relief from this repulsive aspect of the gospel by drawing attention to the fact that the substitute which voluntarily gets in the place of the guilty must bear all the judicial and moral consequences of his position, however shocking to the sensibilities of the beholder; that it is but violated law collecting its debt out of the voluntary substitute, and that the *poena vicaria* can be no more attractive to the aesthetical sensibilities than the *poena persona*. If the disclosures of divine revelation stopped here; if the death of Christ were represented as the bare result of substitution in the strict rigor of law, then we should, by the sheer force of divine authority have to believe that it came about by the operation of naked justice, that it was a death inflicted by righteous law, exacted of him as a legal substitute just as it would have been exacted of the original offender. Faith could so receive it, and our corrected sense of justice could so approve it, while the heart smothers its own cry, and the face shiveringly turns away from the scene.

But there is something which keeps the Christian from bleeding internally as he looks upon his Redeemer hanging in dying agonies upon the cross, and which robs the moral theory of the atonement of the potency of its appeal to mere sensibility. What is it that thus protects the Christian heart, and despoils the ethical critic of the gospel of the very strength of his appeal? What is it that makes the spectacle the most charming sight within all the range of chastened Christian vision? What is it that enables the saint to stand in the presence of that terrible tragedy, from which the moon hid her face and the earth rent her bowels, and sing songs and shout halleluiahs? Is it hardness of heart and unfeelingness of spirit? Is it because he is the beneficiary of the appalling sight? Does his selfishness so forcibly assert itself even at the foot of the cross, that he can joy and rejoice at the death of his precious Redeemer? Any natural man, not hopelessly hardened, would sympathize with the awful sufferer, and deplore the death and agony of his friend even though he himself were the beneficiary of those sufferings and of that death. Is the Christian so unnatural a being as to drown his sympathies in the sense of his personal gain? If so it is a fearful expose of the selfishness of the creature which is born again and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. There is, there must be, some more potent and rational reason why the beneficiary can look upon the cross with complacency and delight. The case is not only mitigated, but it is absolutely cleared by the reflection that Christ died, not merely as the sinner's legal substitute under the operation of justice, but that in dying "he made his soul an offering for sin." In it all he was a priest performing a religious rite upon himself, engaged in performing a sublime act of worship, an heroic and exalted act of pious devotion at the altar of the God he adored and loved, conscious that he was doing the very thing which would make his Father love and crown him. It was a sublime act of filial affection, the sublimest exhibition of pious worship in the annals of time or records of eternity. He was not a simple legal substitute dying under broken law for sinners, he was a Priest of the Most

High God, officiating at the altar of worship, and offering up himself as a testimonial of affection and praise. The motives in the bosom of the Redeemer in the atoning act transmute the whole transaction into a doxology of praise to his heavenly Father. Who can not admire such an exhibition of filial devotion?

This is the sublime and biblical conception of the death of Christ. It relieves it of all apparent ruthlessness and severity by transforming it into the highest act of priestly worship. He dies not as the felon dies, who perishes in the merciless grasp of broken law, which can not stay its terrible hand until it has crushed the life out of the criminal; he died not as the unfortunate dies, who, coming too near the revolving wheels of this world's machinery, is caught by bands and pulleys and cogs and torn asunder; he dies not as the invalid dies, whose life-tides run out gradually until the beach is dry; but he dies as the sacrificial lamb dies, upon whose devoted head is laid the sins of the offerer, and then is sacredly bound to the horns of the altar. He died as only Christ could die, himself the Victim waiting for the sacrifice, and himself the Priest who sacredly offers himself upon the altar as the sublimest expression of filial piety which a devoted and affectionate Son could make to the Father whom he worshipped and adored. No wonder the holiest angel puts his golden wings before his face when he compares his loftiest act of devotion to that worship which was rendered on Calvary by him who was prevented by the nails in his hands from clasping his heart which was breaking in filial love for his adorable Father! No wonder the sacramental host can gather around the base of Golgotha, with uncovered head and unshod foot, moved, not by the selfish profit which accrues to the saint out of all that awful tragedy of suffering and death, but with transfigured wonder and admiration of such a spectacle of reverence, affection and loyalty and devotion to God, the mighty Maker and Judge of us all! No wonder the devil and all the enemies of God groaned in defeat and despair, when they saw him, whom they had sought to traduce from the service of God, in that last consummate act of piety, offering up his life to God as a testimony of his respect

and love and devotion! No wonder death and the grave could not hold him in their dominion, for the almighty arms of his heavenly Father stretched down to him, who as a priest had offered nothing less than himself in the very loftiness of his devotion and in the exuberance of his piety, that he might send up to heaven a savour which would be fragrant throughout all eternity! No wonder Jehovah acclaimed him the "Saviour of the World!" No wonder it was proclaimed from the skies, "Let all the angels of God worship him!" No wonder he cried out from his seat on the flaming circle of the heavens, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" Here is the bottom meaning of it all, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again"!

Louisville, Ky.