

## 171. Christ Our High Priest.

**Such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this He did once when He offered up Himself. Heb. 7, 26. 27.**

Christ performed His high-priestly office by fulfilling the Law in our stead, giving Himself a ransom for sinners by sacrificing Himself for us, and making intercession for us before the Father as our Advocate pleading our cause. In all this there is nothing superfluous, not a single thing which would not be necessary for the salvation of sinners.

If Jesus had not *fulfilled the Law of God* completely to the very last jot, no sinner could ever be justified; for the heavens shall fall and the earth be removed, but of the Law not one tittle shall pass away; it must all be fulfilled. And in every point He did everything necessary for our redemption. He has made all things, ready, and to this day He provides for each soul all things needful for its comfort and its salvation. Truly, such a High Priest became us!

Further, the high priest of the Old Testament daily had to offer sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's. Not so Christ; He, by one offering, perfected an everlasting reconciliation of God with man by fulfilling the Law of God for us and by *offering up Himself* upon the altar of the cross, by His innocent suffering and death. Thus He made atonement for all and changed the wrath of God to grace. For by the sacrifice of Christ, God has been perfectly reconciled to all men.

But our Lord and Savior has not only perfectly reconciled *God* unto us, He also brings us to perfect communion with Him. Through His *intercession* He continually keeps open for us a free access to God. In the Old Testament the high priest sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of the victims, thus bringing the blood before God. This was a figure of the sacrifice of Christ and the blood He would shed for all sinners and bring before the throne of God as a propitiation for their sins. The blood of Christ cries: "Father, forgive!" Without ceasing it testifies that the sins of all men are perfectly expiated and again and again, as it were, reminds God of the great atoning sacrifice on Calvary. But through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, He also enables us to go to God.

## Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, we bless and praise Thee that Thou wast made under the Law and didst perfectly fulfil it in our stead to win for us the righteousness acceptable to God. Grant that we may in true faith accept Thee as our only and eternal High Priest, who, by entering once into the Holy of Holies, hast purchased for us eternal redemption and even now as our Advocate makest intercession for us. O Lord Jesus, who didst love us even unto death, grant us grace not to remain indifferent to Thy love, but to be moved by it to love Thee in return, not only in word, but in deed and truth. Amen.

Th' atoning work is done,  
The Victim's blood is shed,  
And Jesus now is gone  
His people's cause to plead.  
He is the High Priest of the blest,  
And bears their names upon His breast.

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