

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Church Association Tract 140

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MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I charge you all to make a practical use of the great doctrine of the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember and rejoice that your Lord and Saviour is not dead, but liveth, and sitteth at the right hand of God to be your friend, your advocate, your almighty, powerful, loving, tender-hearted High Priest. Some men never enjoy “heaven on earth” because they only take a partial view of the truth as it is in Jesus. What boldness it gives to a man in prayer when he feels that there is One pleading for him at the right hand of God. And oh! how great the comfort we have in every time of trouble from feeling that we have a living Priest in heaven who has suffered himself, being tempted; who knows alike the heart and the mind of every man. Take the position of a man here on earth who knows what poverty, hunger, and thirst are, left alone, deserted by all but his Father in heaven. Oh! what a comfort it is for such a man to feel that he is safe in the arms of Jesus. After all it is a grand comfort to feel that there is something in the heart of man to which the priestly office of Christ, when the heart is enlightened, exactly corresponds. It fits just like lock and key. A religion without a priesthood never goes down with man. Sacerdotalism never can meet the wants of man, but a religion without a priesthood of some sort never yet acquired much influence. The whole mystery of the mighty power of the Church of Rome—exercised, I am afraid, not for the good of men’s souls—lies mainly in this, that she has succeeded in introducing the doctrine of a human priesthood, which does to some extent satisfy the cravings of the natural man. But when the conscience is enlightened, by the Holy Spirit, and the understanding opened to see the meaning of Scripture, we find we have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, so that we can come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Lord Jesus can feel for us because He knows what a man is. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. No priest ordained by man on earth can take the burden off our souls. Tell us not of any priest but Jesus Christ. What other priest could we want? Why should we suffer ourselves to be borne away from the living fountain of waters, and taken to a fountain not blessed of God? Let me charge you all, if you love spiritual life—if you desire to enjoy comfort in Christ—if you wish for comfort under trials—if you desire to be assured of your eternal salvation—grasp firmly the doctrine of the priestly office of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is most important that you should carefully avoid any teaching which even appears to make men the mediators between ourselves and God. At all our religious meetings I earnestly hope that those who undertake to advise inquirers will press on them the great necessity of not hanging upon man, and looking to man, for “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” (Jer. xvii. 5.) Lead the inquirer straight to Jesus. Tell him that Jesus died for him. Point out to him the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Tell him who wants advice how he can obtain help. Tell him that the great High Priest sitteth on the right hand of God, to be *his* friend and *your* advocate. Point out to him that He ever liveth to make intercession for them that come unto God by Him. Show him the blessed truths contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Point out to him the fulness and completeness of the Priesthood and finished work of Christ. Every man who has come to Christ should be able to say, “A burden has been taken off my back. A load has been taken off my conscience. Jesus Christ is the true High Priest. I want no absolution of man. I have found the true High Priest in Him.” And what we want—we who teach in the pulpit—is the habit of living and dealing familiarly with Him, as with a friend and physician, to whom we go in every time of trial.