Articles by C. H. Darch

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The Priesthood of Christ (May–June 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, May–June 1971.

Editor's note: This treatment of the Priesthood of Christ by C. H. Darch, Taunton, England, is very concise but nevertheless clear. We do appreciate ministry from a fellow-servant of the Lord who is author of numerous booklets and articles, and is also engaged in editorial work.

The priesthood of Christ is of such vital importance that it should be constantly before our minds, occupying our attention as one of the great themes of Scripture. This short study is designed to highlight this subject and encourage worship and increase knowledge of this heavenly work of the Lord on behalf of His people.

Let us consider first the Necessity of His priesthood. This lies in the fact of sin, which is a rebellion against God. Sin has placed man in such a helpless condition and position that he must have a sacrificing Priest to stand between himself and God. Therefore, men the world over have made to themselves priests in the hope of thereby approaching God. It is only by God's appointed Priest that man is met in all his needs, represented before God's face and led to enjoy access into God's presence.

The Source of this priesthood is grace and grace alone. God in His great mercy appointed His own Son to be our sacrifice and High Priest. God could have left men to perish but He did not; indeed it is grace from start to finish that God has condescended to come to where we

were in the Person of His Son. Men would never have found such a Priest, yet God has provided Him for us.

The Function of this priesthood is mediatorial between God and men. Mediation includes far more than priesthood. As Mediator He is Prophet, Priest and King. As Prophet He came from God with a wonderful message for His people, as Priest He makes them fit for God's presence, as King He will reign over them for ever. Indeed the time is coming when the ends of the earth will put their trust in Him and the nations will bow down before Him (Ps. 22:27), when He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28), "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). But it is with the priestly work of Christ we are now concerned. He, as Melchisedec was, will be both King and Priest upon His throne.

The Lord Jesus has every qualification for priesthood, for such a High Priest became us, that is, perfectly suited to us. As man's representative He has been received by God because He has met all the just demands of God upon Him and fulfilled all the will of God. He is at the same time approachable by His own people.

In Hebrews 5:1-5 we have several statements concerning His qualification for the Priesthood.

I. The High Priest must be taken from among men. This is necessary because He must be approachable by men in their needs. So Christ, who became man and lived with men, perfectly understands their needs, and can "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them who are out of the way." In Chapter 4 we are led to something even richer than this. Jesus, the Son of God, is

sympathetic, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He has been tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart.

He must be ordained by God. No man can take this honour unto himself, only those who are called of God, as was Aaron. "So Christ glorified not Himself to be made High Priest" but was God appointed, because God said to Him, "Thou art a Priest for ever" (Ps. 110:4).

A priest must have something to offer. The Lord Jesus offered Himself, and as the servant in Exodus 21:1-6 offered Himself on the perfect ground of love and could say, "I love my master, my wife, and my children," so Christ loved God enough to offer Himself to God as the perfect sacrifice for His people whom He loved to the end.

The Design of the priesthood is first of all that God might be honoured, and He is greatly honoured thereby, in a way that no human heart or mind can conceive. His law is upheld. His justice is satisfied. His righteousness is manifested, His holiness is unsullied, His grace is magnified, His mercy extended, and His sphere of love enlarged. What worship this should bring from our hearts!

In second place, it is purposed that Christ should thereby be magnified. Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto Him? Who has done so wondrously? Who deserves more praise and glory? The answer is none, for He has excelled them all. He is higher than the heavens, in Heaven itself sharing God's throne. What worship it brings to the hearts of His people when this is contemplated!

Thirdly, it is that man may be redeemed, pardoned, justified, sanctified, succoured (Heb. 2), saved to the uttermost (Heb. 7), and ultimately glorified, and made into the likeness of Christ. Truly none but God could have found such a Man or devised such a scheme. How worthless other priesthoods are in the light of all this! How empty are their labours! How foolish their enterprises! If God be for us, who can be against us?

IV. God-given Illustrations of the priesthood are found in the Old Testament, these are the first-born, Moses, Aaron and Melchisedec.

The first-born was set aside by God (Numbers 3:11-13), but we can rejoice that the Lord who is the First-born of many brethren has not been set aside, but as such takes up the work and carries it through to completion.

The work of Moses as priest (Ps. 99:6) was great and many-sided, but his intercessory work is the one which seems to stand out, for without it the people might have perished (Ex. 32; Ex. 17). This of course illustrates the intercession of Christ on behalf of His people, but the end comes, Moses dies, and his intercession ends. The time will come when the Lord's people will not need His intercession because they will be safe to sin no more, but even when that ends and the work is done, He does not die as Moses did. Thank God, He lives in the power of an indissoluble life (Heb. 7).

Aaron made propitiation; he, too, died, but our Lord made propitiation for His people and did it only once for all. He is not as Aaron whose work was imperfect so that he had to repeat it constantly. Christ perfected and finished the work of reconciliation.

The Work of the priest is to make propitiation for sin and to maintain His people in favour with God. Propitiation carries with it the thought of not only pleasing God, but the removing obstacles which hinder fellowship and blessing. Never will the Lord let His people perish, none shall pluck them from His hand; for He saves His people from their sins (not in their sins, because that would not be grace but disgrace); and therefore being saved from sin, His sheep follow Him. If we do not follow Him, we have no right to suppose ourselves to be His sheep for of them He said, "They follow Me" (John 10:27). Some, like Peter, may do so afar off, but they follow Him nevertheless.

Melchisedec's death is not recorded, because the work of Christ after the order of Melchisedec has no end. When Abraham returned from the battle, Melchisedec fed him with bread and wine, and he also received tithes from Abraham. He was not a priest because his parents were such, nor does his priesthood pass to his children, nor is there a record of it ending. This also is true of the Lord. He will care for His people for ever and receive their worship. No death here! It is mentioned concerning Melchisedec that he was "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3). He was not a priest because of his birth or family, neither was his priesthood transmitted to another and in all this he was made "like unto the Son of God."

The Character of this priesthood is unchanging, and He is therefore able to meet and deal with all changes. It is holy and cannot be defiled by sin. This Priest is merciful and faithful, merciful to His people and faithful to His God (Heb. 2:17).

The Position of the High Priest now is at the right hand of God in Heaven. God has accepted Him, and this makes the salvation of His people absolute and secure. Separated from sinners in resurrection, He is now higher than the heavens in ascension glory.

Finally we rejoice in the Climax of the priesthood which will ultimately bring His people into His presence in His likeness. This should fill our hearts with worship, joy and gratitude as we contemplate our great High Priest. Through His unceasing ministries we shall be saved to the uttermost and be among that countless throng of children God has given Him. We gladly and expectantly await His return the second time unto salvation.

The Death of Christ (Apr 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 4, Apr 1955.

When the Son of God died it was the greatest event that had occurred in this world's history. It is the centre around which history revolves. It is beyond anyone to speak of all its greatness, but we wish to point out a few things concerning this great event.

To the human race death is natural, but though Christ's death was real, and He did actually die, the spear thrust into His side proved this, yet His death was

Unnatural

In the first place, He was the Creator of the Universe, and for Him to die is wholly unique; moreover, He was the Jehovah of Isaiah chapter 6, the Adonahy of Psalm 110:1, and the God of Isaiah chapter 45:22. Secondly, under the old covenant God had said, "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them," (Lev. 18:5). He kept them perfectly, but yet He died. Thirdly, He died for the ungodly, therefore in His death it was shown what was righteously due to them. The law laid down the principle of an eye for an eye; therefore because sin is a revolt, Christ as the sinner's substitute was scourged by wicked men. Because law breakers come under the curse, Christ was nailed to the tree. Sin had reigned in death (Rom. 5:21), therefore they crowned Him with a crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of glory. Notice the superior accuracy of the Revised Version (as in places innumerable). Sin did not reign unto death, with the view to men dying, but it reigneth in the fact that

death follows it in every sinner. In fourth regard, men killed Christ and became His murderers, though no man took His life from Him (John 10:17-18); which very fact made it unnatural. His death was also

Preternatural

It was this because God had so ordained it from before the foundation of the world, and because it was foretold by the prophets in great detail, from Genesis 3, where it was said that He was to be the seed of the woman and be bruised by the serpent, on too many well known passages, far too many to mention in this short script. Moreover, He told His disciples of His coming death, and, when He had fulfilled the last scripture concerning this great event, He cried, “It is finished.” In conclusion, the death of Christ was

Supernatural

It was not the nails nor the spear that caused His death. Men and demons could not slay Him. He laid down His life and yielded up His spirit. He offered Himself to God; and when men had done their worst, He cried with a loud voice, proving that His strength had not ebbed away as many would have us believe; then He deliberately bowed His head and commended His spirit to God. Perhaps the last statement is the most remarkable of all, that He, the great Sin-Bearer, could commend Himself to God. The immediate rending of the veil, making open the way into God’s presence, proved that He was accepted by God, to whom He committed Himself.

How marvelous are all His ways, and His wonders past tracing out.

The Forgiveness of Sins (May 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 5, May 1955.

If a father finds so much pleasure in forgiving his wayward son that he not only gives him a kiss, but also, the best robe, the ring on his hand, and the shoes on his feet, and provides the fatted calf and music with dancing, (Lu. 15:11-24), how much more delight must it give to the God of all grace and the Father of mercies to forgive the returning sinner, for He is the fountain of grace. He forgives the penitent his iniquity, transgression, and sins, and His pardon is without limit; it is

Eternal Forgiveness.

The unbeliever never knows the forgiveness of sins as long as he remains in unbelief. He might justly read Psalm 23 as: The Lord is not my shepherd, I shall want; He does not make me to lie down in green pastures; He does not lead me beside the still waters. The believer in contrast has redemption through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of sins, (Eph. 1:7). We are sometimes questioned why we do not ask that our sins be forgiven. The answer is, that we do not ask for the things which we already possess. In addition to forgiveness, we have as gifts, eternal life (Rom. 6:23), the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17), the Holy Spirit (Thess. 4:8; 1 John 3:24), the Kingdom (Luke 12:32), God's Only Begotten Son (John 3:16), and in Him all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). These are our present possessions.

In Col. 1:9-11, we see some of the things that we might well pray for, and in verses 12-14, things that we have and give thanks for. We were once in the power of darkness, and Satan was our God (2 Cor. 4:4); we walked according to the course of this world, and were helpless to get out of that position, but God in His mercy not only transferred, but translated us into a higher kingdom, the Kingdom of His Dear Son.

If an animal were to be translated into the human kingdom, it would need a new nature to live its new life. Thus it is with us; God has made provision for this and states, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” (2 Cor. 5:17). “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” (John 3:6). “That ye may be partakers of the Divine nature,” (2 Pet. 1:4). “He has made us meet to he partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” (Col. 1:12). Whatsoever God does; He does perfectly.

As God sees it, our history as sinners ended at the cross of Christ, when He died for us and we died in Him, (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 2:19). This took effect when we came to Christ, at which time we became the children of God (1 John 3:2). As children we sometimes need

Paternal Forgiveness.

We do not now need the sins of our entire life to be forgiven; but, as children are taught to say, “I beg your pardon,” so, being in the family of God, if we confess our sins, that is each sin separately, there is forgiveness for us, (1 John 1:9). By nature we like to take the easy way and ask merely for general forgiveness, but it means more to be honest with God and give sin its real name. We should be most careful about this, lest we go on in

sin which hardens, (Heb. 3:12-13) and so backslide from God.

There is also Governmental Forgiveness. We can expect that God will forgive us if we from our heart forgive men their trespasses (Matt. 6:12); also, “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,” (Gal. 6:7). God’s laws are unchangeable. The Judgment Seat of Christ should be continually before us, where each one will hear an appraisal of what he has done, whether it be good or bad, (Col 3:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). “So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God,” (Rom. 14:12). If in all our actions we would consider how matters will look on the Day of Christ; our thoughts, words, and deeds, would be greatly transformed, making our lives more to the glory of God, and conforming them more into the image of His Son.

God Glorified in Christ’s Death (Aug 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 8, Aug 1956. Printed there under the name "C. H. Vareh," apparently a misprint for Darch.

Human beings are inclined to see themselves the centre of everything, therefore it is no wonder if when surveying the death of Christ we view it from our own standpoint, instead of seeing the glory of God in it.

The death of Christ was an act between the Father and the Son, and, while it was for man’s good, we must never forget that it was also for God’s glory. Moreover, the great aim of God in Christ was not only to reconcile the world to Himself, but also through it to glorify Himself.

Through Christ’s obedience and death God magnified His LAW (Isa. 42:21). The Lord Jesus kept the law of God in a world of sin, which made Him as conspicuous as a fire burning in mid ocean. Even in the midst of all the suffering He never deviated but was obedient to the very last letter and thereby honoured God’s law more than it was dishonoured by Adam’s fall.

God magnified His LOVE by sending his only beloved Son to save rebellious men; and when men treated Him so wickedly He did not withdraw Him from this scene but gave Him up to death, because He had set His heart on fallen man to redeem him to Himself. It is love unchangeable, incomprehensible, and unfathomable.

God magnified His JUSTICE inasmuch as when the Lord Jesus made Himself responsible for our sin, God called upon the sword to smite Him (Zec. 13.7). Justice and judgment are the foundation of God's throne (Ps. 89.14) not love and mercy, as many would have us believe. Mercy follows justice but does not exist without it.

He magnified His HOLINESS. It has been said that God manifested His love to the sinner at Calvary, and one might add that He showed His hatred of sin more at the death of His Son than He ever will in eternal judgment.

He magnified His TRUTH by fulfilling all His promises and prophecies concerning Christ, so that not one failed but all are fulfilled as touching that great event; and He will yet magnify His truth by fulfilling the whole of His promises to His Son, but at present the Son is waiting till the right time comes for His enemies to be put down (Ps. 110.1).

He magnified His WISDOM by proving to the universe His ability to deal with the question of sin in justice and yet in love and mercy. Apparently Michael the archangel did not fully understand how this was to be (Jude 9), but today it is clearly demonstrated and thereby God is magnified.

He magnified His POWER by proving to our wondering eyes that His Son could endure all the punishment that was measured out to Him as the result of sin. How great was His sustaining power!

He magnified His GRACE by condescending to touch poor fallen man, and to allow His Holy Son to have the iniquity of us all laid upon Him (Isa. 53.6).

He magnifies His MERCY by receiving sinners on the ground of that work. Even in the intensity of His suffering the Lord said to a criminal, who was being put to death for crime, “Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

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By reason of the shock absorbers on modern automobiles, the rough places on the road are not so severe. Is our life journey rough? Do our experiences jolt us? Christ is our Peace, the One who bears our burdens with us. The One who intercedes for us. What a wonderful Christ is ours, Who comes to us, Who abides in us and with us, Who absorbs the shocks and woes of life and gives us peace!

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Christian graces produced by the Holy Spirit, win the admiration and respect of friend and foe alike.

Him Did God Exalt (Mar 1965)

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One cannot read through the Acts of the Apostles without being struck by the fact that the centre of the message given by the apostles was Christ in exaltation. It is a vital part of the Gospel, that one Man pleased God so perfectly that He not only accepted the satisfaction that Christ made in His death, but has exalted Him to sit on the Throne of Glory for ever and ever, all power now placed in His hand, the whole universe being subject to Him.

Moreover, Christ has taken up this position as our Lord and is therefore, for the welfare of His people, working all things after the counsel of His own will, as Advocate for all who obey Him and interceeding on their behalf.

The intercession of Christ is of vital importance to the believer.

First, because His intercession is based on indisputable merit and therefore must prevail in the High Court of Heaven; on which account He must, in very righteousness, be granted that which He purchased for the people.

Second, His intercession is fully assured by the fact that He asks only that which is agreeable to the Father, who, therefore, is always ready to grant that which our exalted Lord requests for His people.

Third, the success of Christ’s intercession is found in the fact that He is the Beloved of the Father, who delights to

please His Son and will give to Him all His desire for His people.

Fourth, the success of Christ's intercession is fully assured by the fact that nothing can hinder or counteract it, hell may rage, sin may rise against the throne, but the work of the Lord stands and prevails; "Therefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (R.V. Heb. 7:25).

Yet a friend writing recently from U.S.A. remarked that he had listened to over two hundred evangelical broadcasts and only one had mentioned Christ in His exaltation and only six mentioned His resurrection.

Things may not be as they should be, and never will be so as long as sin is in the world, but all our hope is in Christ exalted. Therefore this should be proclaimed. If only a dead Christ is presented to the world, there is no hope; indeed "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable" (R.V. 1 Cor 16-19). Our whole hope is in our risen exalted Lord, who now occupies the throne of God for us and who is interceding for us as our Advocate.

It is of vital importance that the world should hear of Christ in His exaltation, so that the attention should not be occupied with just a cross or a dead Saviour, but with One who has all power and can give repentance, faith, and victory over sin to those who look to Him.

To get men occupied with the cross is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough; and to tell them to go to the cross for salvation is misleading, because when they arrive at the cross they will not find the Lord there, for He is on the throne of God. Rather may we learn a

lesson from the Apostles and ever point men to our exalted Lord, who having died and risen again, can save from the guilt of sin, the power of sin, the pleasure of sin, the penalty of sin, and the presence of sin, now and for ever.

To Him be glory for ever and ever. AMEN.