

Chapter 07

To proue the Priefthood of Chrift incomparably to excel the Priefthood of Aaron (and therefore that Leuitical Priefthood now to ceafe, and that law alfo with it) he fcanneth euery word of the verfe alleaged out of the Pfalme, Our Lord hath fworne: thou art a Prieft for euer, according to the order of Melchifedech.

Gen. 14, 18.

For this ^aMelchifedech, the King of Salem, Prieft of the God moft high, who met Abraham returning from the flaughter of the Kings, and bleffed him: ² to whom alfo Abraham deuided tithes of al: firft indeed by interpretation, ^a)the King of iuftice: & then alfo King of Salem, which is to fay, King of peace, ³ ^a)without father, without mother, without Genealogie, hauing neither beginning of daies nor end of life, but likened to the Sonne of God, continueth a Prieft for euer.

Nu. 18, 21.

Deut. 18, 1.

Iof. 14, 4.

⁴ And ^a)behold how great this man is, to whom alfo Abraham the Patriarke gaue ^a)tithes of the principal things. ⁵ And certes they of the fonnes of Leui that take the priefthood haue commandement to take tithes of the people according to the Law, that is to fay, of their Brethren: albeit themfelues alfo iffued out of the loines of Abraham. ⁶ But he whofe Generation is not numbred among them, tooke tithes of Abraham, and bleffed him that had the promifes. ⁷ But without al contradiction, that which is leffe, ^a)is bleffed of the better. ⁸ And here indeed, ^b)men that die, receiue tithes: but there he hath witnes, that he liueth. ⁹ And (that it may fo be faid) by Abraham Leui alfo, which receiued tithes,

^a When the Fathers & Catholike Expositours pike out allegories and myfteries out of the names of men the Proteftants not endowed with the Spirit whereby the Scriptures were giuē, deride their holy labours in the fearch of the fame: but the Apoftle findeth high myfterie in the very names of perfons & places, as you fee.

^b The tithes giuen to Melchifedech were not giuen as to a mere mortal mā, as al of the Tribe of Leui & Aarons order were: but as to one repreſenting the Sonne of God, who now liueth & reigneth & holdeth his Priefthood & the fūctions thereof for euer.

was tithed. ¹⁰ For as yet he was in his Fathers loines, when Melchifedech met him. ¹¹ ¶If then confummation was by the Leuitical Priefthood (for vnder it the people received the Law) ¶what neceffitie was there yet another Priefthood. ¶what neceffitie was there yet another Priefth to rife according to the order of Melchifedech, and not to be called according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For the Priefthood being ¶tranflated, it is neceffarie that a tranflation of the Law alfo be made. ¹³ For he on whom thefe things be faid, is of another Tribe, of the which, none attended on the altar. ¹⁴ For it is manifelt that our Lord fprung of Iuda: in the which Tribe Moyfes fpake nothing of ‘Prieftes.’ ¹⁵ And yet it is much more euident: if according to the fimilitude of Melchifedech there arife another Priefth, ¹⁶ which was not made according to the Law of carnal commandment, but according to the power of life indiffoluble. ¹⁷ For he witneffeth, *That thou art ¶a Priefth for euer, according to the order of Melchifedech.* ¹⁸ Reprobation certes is made ¶of the former commandement, becaufe of the weakenefle and vnprofitableneffe thereof. ¹⁹ For the Law brought nothing to perfection, but ¶an introduction of a better hope, by the which we approach to God. ²⁰ And in as much as it is not without an othe, (the other truely without an othe were made Prieftes: ²¹ but this ¶with an othe, by him that faid vnto him: *Our Lord hath fworne, & it fhall not repent him: thou art a Priefth for euer*) ²² by fo much, is IESVS made a furetie of a better Teftament. ²³ And the other indeed were made Prieftes, ¶being many, becaufe that by death they were prohibited to continue: ²⁴ but this, for that he continueth for euer, hath an euerlafting priefthhood. ²⁵ Whereby he is able to faue alfo for euer ‘going’ by himfelf to God: ^a)alwaies liuing to make interceffion for vs.

Priefthhood.

Pf. 109, 4.

Pf. 109, 4.

them that goe

*Leu. 9, 7.
16, 6.*

^a Chrift according to his humane nature praieth for vs, & continually reprenteth his former paffion and merits to God the Father.

owne finnes to offer Hoftes, then for the peoples. For this he did once, in offering himself. ²⁸ For the Law appointeth Prieftes men that haue infirmitie: but the word of the othe which is after the Law, the Sonne for euer perfected.

ANNOTATIONS

1 Melchifedech.) The excellencie of this perfon was fo great, that fome of the antiquitie tooke him to be an Angel, and fome the holy Ghoft. Which opinion not only the Hebrewes, that auouch him to be Sem the Sonne of Noe, but alfo the cheefe Fathers of the Chriftians doe condemne: not doubting but he was a mere man, and a Priefte, and a King, whofoeuer he was. For els he could not in office and order and Sacrifice haue been fo perfect a type and reemblance of our Sauour, as in this Chapter and other is shewed.

3 Without father.) Not that he was without father and mother, faith S. Hierom *ep. 136.* for Chrif himself was not without father, according to his diuinity, nor without mother in his humanity: but for that his Pedegree is not fet out in the Genefis, as the Genealogie of other Patriarches is, but is fodenly induced in the holy hiftorie, no mention made of his ftocke, Tribe, beginning, or ending, and therefore in that cafe alfo reftembling in a fort the Sonne of God, whose generation was extraordinarie, miraculous, and ineffable, according to both his natures, lacking a father in the one, & a mother in the other: his Perfon hauing neither beginning nor ending, & his Kingdom, & Priefthood fpecially, in himself & in the Church, being eternal, both in refpect of the time pafte, and the time to come; as the faid Doctour in the *fame epiftle* writeth.

4 Behold.) To proue that Chriftes Priefthood farre paffeth the Priefthood of Aaron; and the Priefthood of the new Teftament, the Priefthood of the old law; & confequently that the Sacrifice of our Sauour and the Sacrifice of the Church doth much excel the Sacrifice of Moyfes law, he difputeth profoundly of the preeminences of Melchifedech about the great Patriarch Abraham who was father of the Leuites.

4 Tithes.) The firft preeminence, that Abraham paid tithes, and that of the beft and moft cheefe things that he had, vnto Melchifedech, as a duty and homage, not for himself only in perfon, but for Leui, who yet was not borne, and fo for the whole Priefthood of Leuites ftocke, acknowledging thereby, Melchifedech not only to be a Priefte, but his Priefte and Superiour, & fo of al the Leuitical order. And it is here to be obserued, that whereas in the *14. of Genefis* whence this holy narration is taken, both in the Hebrew, and in the 70. it ftandeth indifferent or doubtful whether

The reftemblance of Melchifedech to Chrif, in many points.

By the fundrie excellencies of Melchifedechs Priefthood is proued the excellencie of the Priefthood and Sacrifice of the new Teftamēt.

He receiued tithes of Abrahā, and confequently of Leui and Aaron.

Melchifedech paid tithes to Abraham or took tithes of him; the Apostle here putteth all out of controuersie, plainly declaring that Abraham paid tithes to the other, as the inferior to his Priest and Superior. And touching payment of tithes, it is a natural duty, that men owe to God in all lawes & to be giuen to his Priests in his behalfe, for their honour & liuelihood. Iacob promised or vowed to pay them, *Gen. 28.* Moyse appointed the *Leuit. 27. Nu. 18. Deut. 12. 14. 26.* Christ confirmeth that duty *Mat. 23.* and Abraham specially here giueth the to Melchifedech plainly thereby approving them or their equiualent to be due to Christ and the Priesthood of the new Testament, much more then either in the Law of Moyse, or in the Law of Nature. Of which tithes due to the Clergie of Christes Church see S. Cyr. *ep. 66.* S. Hierom *ep. 1. c. 7. and ep. 2. c. 5.* to Heliodorus and Neptianus, S. Augustin *ser. 219 de tempore.*

Tithes.

7 Is blessed of the better.) The second preeminence is, that Melchifedech did bless Abraham: which we see here S. Paul maketh a great and foueraigne holy thing, grounding our Sauours prerogative about the whole Order of Aaron therein: and we see that in this sort it is the proper act of Priesthood: and that without all controuersie as the Apostle faith, he is greater in dignitie, that hath authoritie to bless, then the person that hath not, and therefore the Priests vocation to be in this behalfe farre about any earthly King, who hath no power to giue benediction in this sacred manner, neither to man, nor other creature. As here Melchifedech, for Christ blessed much more, and so haue the Bishops of his Church done, and doe. Which no man can maruel that our Fore-fathers haue so highly esteemed and fought for, if he marke the wonderful mysterie and grace thereof here expressed. This Patriarch also which here taketh blessing of Melchifedech, himself (though in an inferior sort) blessed his sonnes, as the other Patriarches did, and fathers doe their children by that example.

He blessed Abraham.

Blessing a great preeminence, specially in Priests.

11 If consummation.) The principal proposition of the whole Epistle and all the Apostles discourse, is inferred and grounded vpon the former prerogatives of Melchifedech about Abraham and Leui: that is, that the end, perfection, accomplishment, and consummation of all man's duties and debts to God, by the general redemption, satisfaction, full price and perfect ransom of all man-kind, was not achieved by any or all the Priests of Aarons Order, nor by any Sacrifice or act of that Priesthood; or of all the law of Moyse, which was grounded vpon the Leuitical Priesthood, but by Christ and his Priesthood, which is of the Order and rite of Melchifedech.

The full accomplishment of man's redemption was not by Aaron, but by Melchifedechs Priesthood.

11 What necessitie.) This disputation of the preeminence of Christes Priesthood about the Leuitical Order, is against the erroneous persuasion of the Iewes, that thought their law, Priesthood, and Sacrifices to be everlasting, & to be sufficient in themselves without any other Priest then Aaron and his Successors, and

The Apostle to confute the Iewes false persuasion of Aarons Priesthood and Sacrifices, speaketh altogether of the Sacrifice of the Crosse.

without al relation to Chriftes Paffion or any other redemption or remiffion, that that which their Leuitical offices did procure: not knowing that they were al figures of Chriftes death, and to be ended and accomplished in the fame. Which point wel vnderftood and kept in mind, wil cleere the whole controuerfie betwixt the Catholikes and Proteftants, concerning the Sacrifice of the Church. For, the fcope of the Apoftles deputation being, to auouch the dignity, preeminence, neceffitie, and eternal fruit and effect of Chriftes paffion, he had not to treat at al of the other, which is a Sacrifice depending of his Paffion, fpecially writing to the Hebrewes, that were to be inftructed & reformed firft touching the Sacrifice of the Croffe before they could fruitfully heare any thing of the other. Though in couert and by moft euident fequele of difputation, the learned and faithful may eafily perceiue whereupon the faid Sacrifice of the Church (which is the Maffe) is grounded. And therfore S. Hierom faith, *ep. 26.* that al thefe commendations of Melchifedech are in the type of Chrifft *Cuius profectus Ecclefiæ facramenta funt.*

12 Tranflated.) Note wel this place, and you fhall perceiue thereby, that euery lawful forme and manner of law, ftate, or gouernement of God's people dependeth on Priefthood; rifeth, ftandeth, falleth, or altereth with the Priefthood. In the Law of Nature, the ftate of the people hanged on one kind of Priefthood: in the law of Moyfes, of another: in the ftate of Chriftianity, of another; & therfore in the former fentence, the Apoftle faid, that the Iewish people or Common-wealth had their law vnder the Leuitical Priefthood, and the Greek more properly expreffeth the matter, that they were *legitimated*, that is to fay, made a lawful people, or communitie vnder God, by the Priefthood. For there is no iuft nor lawful Common-wealth in the world, that is not made legal & God's peculiar, and diftinguifhed from vnlawful Common-weales that hold of falfe goddes, or of none at al, by Priefthood. Whereupon it is cleere, that the new law, & al Chriftian peoples holding of the fame, is made lawful by the Priefthood of the new Teftament, and that the Proteftants shamefully are deceiued, and deceiue others, that would haue Chriftian Common-weales to lacke an external Priefthood, or Chriftes death to abolifh the fame. For, this is a demonftratiō, that if Chrifft haue abolifhed Priefthood, he hath abolifhed the new Law, which is the new Teftament & ftate of Grace, which al Chriftian Common-wealths liue vnder. Neither were it true, that the Priefthood were tranflated with the Law, if al external Priefthood ended by Chriftes death, where the new law began. For fo the law fhould not depend on Priefthood, but dure whē al Priefthood were ended: which is againft S. Paul's doctrine.

Furthermore it is to be noted, that this legitimation or putting Communities vnder law, & Priefthood, of what Order foeuer, is no otherwife, but by ioyning one with another in one homage of

No lawful State of people without an external Priefthood.

External Priefthood neceffarie for the ftate of the new Teftament.

External Sacrifice alfo neceffarie for the fame.

νενομοθετηται

Sacrifice external, which is the proper act of Priesthood. For, as no lawful state can be without Priesthood, so no Priesthood can be without Sacrifice. And we meane alwaies of Priesthood & Sacrifice taken in their owne proper signification, as here S. Paul taketh them. For, the constitution, difference, alteration, or translation of states & lawes rise not vpon any mutation of spiritual or metaphorically taken Priesthood, or Sacrifice: but vpon those things in proper acception, as is most plaine.

Laftly, it followeth of this, that though Christ truly sacrificed himself vpon the Croffe, (there also a Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech) and there made the full redemption of the world, confirmed, and consummated his compact, and Testament, and the law and Priesthood of this his new and eternal state, by his blood: yet that can not be the forme of Sacrifice into which the old Priesthood and Sacrifices were translated, whereupon the Apostle inferreth the translation of the Law. For they all were figures of Christs death, and ended in effect at his death, yet they were not altered into that kind of Sacrifice, which was to be made but once at his death, and was executed in such a sort, that peoples and Nations Christned could not meet oftē to worship at it, nor haue their law & Priests constituted in the same. Though for the honour and duty, remembrance and representation thereof, not only we Christians, but also all peoples faithful, both of Iewes & Gentils, haue had their Priesthood and Sacrifices according to the difference of their states. Which kind of Sacrifices were translated one into another: and so no doubt is the Priesthood Leuitical properly turned into the Priesthood and Sacrifice of the Church, according to Melchisedechs rite, and Christs institution in the formes of bread and wine. See *the next note*.

17 A Priest for euer.) Christ is not called a Priest for euer, only for that his Person is eternal, or for that he sitteth on the right hand of God, & perpetually praieeth or maketh intercession for vs, or for that the effect of his death is euerlasting: for all this proueth not that in proper signification his Priesthood is perpetual: but according to the iudgement of all the Fathers grounded vpon this deep and diuine discourse of S. Paul, and vpon the very nature, definition, and propriety of Priesthood, and the excellent act and Order of Melchisedech, and the state of the new law, he is a Priest for euer according to Melchisedechs Order, specially in respect of the Sacrifice of his holy body and blood, instituted at his last supper, and executed by his commission, commandment, and perpetual concurrence with his Priests, in the formes of bread and wine: In which things only the said high Priest Melchisedech did Sacrifice. For though S. Paul make no expresse mention hereof, because of the depth of the myfterie, and their incredulity or feebleness to whom he wrot: yet it is euident in the iudgement of all the learned Fathers (without exception) that euer wrot either vpon this Epistle, or vpon the 14. of Genesis, or the Psalme 109, or

The translation of the old Priesthood & Sacrifices, must needs be into the said Priesthood & Sacrifice of the Church.

How Christ is a Priest for euer.

Christs eternal Priesthood consisteth in the perpetual Sacrifice of his body and blood in the Church.

by occasion haue treated of the Sacrifice of the altar, that the eternity and proper act of Chriftes Priefthood, and confequently the immutabilitie of the new Law, confifteth in the perpetual offering of Chriftes body and bloud in the Church.

Which thing is fo wel known to the Aduerfaries of Chrifts Church and Priefthood, and fo granted, that they be forced impudently to cauil vpon certaine Hebrew particles, that Melchifedech did not offer in bread and wine: yea & when that wil not ferue, plainly to deny him to haue been a Prieft: which is to giue check-mate to the Apoftle, and ouerthrow al his difcourfe. Thus whiles thefe wicked men pretend to defend Chriftes only Priefthood, they indeede abolifh as much as in them lieth, the whole Order, office, and ftate of his eternal law and Priefthood.

Arnobius faith, *By the myfterie of bread and wine he was made a Prieft for euer.* And againe, *The eternal memorie, by which he gaue the food of his body to them that feare him, in Pfal. 109. 110.* Lactanius, *In the Church he muft needes haue his eternal Priefthood according to the Order of Melchifedech. Li. 14. inftitut.* S. Hierom to Euagrius, *Aarons Priefthood had an end, but Melchifedechs, that is Chriftes and the Churches is perpetual, ^{a)}both for the time paff and to come.* S. Chryfoftom therefore calleth the Churches Sacrifice, *hoftiam inconfumptibilem, an hoft or Sacrifice that can not be confumed. ho. 27. in 9. Hebr.* S. Cyprian, *hoftiam qua fublata, nulla effit futuræ religio, an hoft which being taken away, there could be no religion. de Cæna domini nu. 2.* Emiffenus, *perpetuam oblationem & perpetuo currentum redemptionem, A perpetual oblation and a redemption that runneth or continueth euerlaftingly. ho. 5. de Pafch.* And our Sauour expreffeth fo much in the very inftitution of the B. Sacrament of his body and bloud: fpecially when he calleth the later kind, *the new Teftament in his bloud*, fignifying that as the old law was eftablished in the bloud of beafts, fo the new (which is his eternal Teftamēt) should be dedicated and perpetual in his bloud: not only as it was shed on the Croffe, but as giuen in the Challice. And therefore into this Sacrifice of the altar (faith S. Auguftin *li. 17. ce Ciuit. c. 20.* S. Leo *fer. 8. de Pafsione*, and the reft) were the old facrifices to be tranflated. See S. Cyprian *ep/ 63. ad Cecil nu. 2.* S. Ambrofe *de Sacram. li. 5. c. 4.* S. Auguftin *in Pfal. 33. conc. 2.* and *li. 17. de Ciuit. c. 17.* S. Hierom *ep. 17. c. 2. & ep. 126.* Epiph. *hær. 55.* Theodoret *in Pfal. 109. Damafcene li. 4. c. 14.*

Finally if any of the Fathers, or al the Fathers, had either wifedom, grace, or intelligence of Gods word and myfteries, this is the truth. If nothing wil ferue our Aduerfaries, Chrift IESVS confound them,

The Proteftants cauiling vpon particles, againft Melchifedechs facrifice & Priefthood directly againft the Apoftle.

Chrifts eternal Priefthood and Sacrifice in the Church is proued out of the Fathers.

Ep. 126.

^a That is from Adam to the end of the world, reprefented by Sacrifice.

and defend his eternal Priesthood, and state of his new Testament established in the same.

18 Of the former commandment.) The whole law of Moyfes containing all their old Priesthood, Sacrifice, Sacraments, and ceremonies is called the *Old commandment*: and the new Testament containing the Sacrifice of Christs body and blood, and all the Sacraments & graces given by the same, is named the *new mandatum*: for which our forefathers called the Thursday in the holy week, *Maundy thursday*, because that in it, the new law and Testament was dedicated in the Chalice of his blood: the old *mandatum*, law, Priesthood, & Sacrifices, for that they were insufficient and vnperfect, being taken away: and this new Sacrifice, after the order of Melchisedech given in the place thereof.

19 The introduction.) Euer obserue, that the abrogation of the old law, is not an abolishing of all Priesthood, but an introduction of a new, containing the hope of eternal things, where the old had but temporal.

21 With another.) This other signifieth the infallible and absolute promise of the eternitie of the new Priesthood and state of the Church. Christ by his death, and blood shed in the Sacrifice of the Croffe, confirming it, sealing it, and making himself the surety & pledge thereof. For though the new Testament was instituted, given and dedicated in the Supper, yet the warrant, confirmation, and eternal operation thereof, was achieved vpon the Croffe, in the one oblation and one general and euermlasting redemption there made.

23 Being many.) The Protestants not vnderstanding this place, feare very foolishly, that the Apostle should make this difference betwixt the old state and the new: that in the old, there were many Priests, in the new, none at all but Christ. Which is against the Prophet Esay, specially prophesying of the Priests of the new Testamēt (as S. Hierom declareth *vpon the same place*) in these words, *You shal be called the Priests of God: the Ministers of our God, shal it be said to you:* & it taketh away all visible Priesthood, and consequently the lawful state that the Church and Gods people haue in earth, with all Sacraments and external worship.

The Apostle then meaneth first, that the absolute Sacrifice of consummation, perfection, and vniuersal redemption, was but one, once done, and by one only Priest done, and therefore it could not be any of the Sacrifices, or all the Sacrifices of the Iewes law, or wrought by any or by all of them, because they were a number at once, and succeeding one another, euery of their offices and functions ending by their death, and could not worke such an eternal redemption as by Christ only was wrought vpon the Croffe. Secondly, S. Paul insinuateth thereupon that Christ neuer loseth the dignitie or practise of his eternal Priesthood, by death nor otherwise, neuer yealdeth it vp to any, neuer hath Successors after

The old commandment & the new.

Maundy thursday why so called.

The introduction of a new Priesthood.

The eternitie of the new Priesthood confirmed by the Fathers other & Christs passion.

By the comparison of many Priests, & one, is not meant, that there is but one Priest of the new Testament.

The meaning is, that the absolute Sacrifice of eternal redemption could not be done by those many Aaronical Priests, but by one only, Christ IESVS who liueth a Priest for euer, hath no Successors, and as cheefe Priest, worketh & cocurreth with all Priests in their priestly functions.

Esa. c. 61.
ἱερεῖς
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him, that may enter into his roome or right of Priefthood, as Aaron and al other had in the Leuitical Priefthood, but that himself worketh and concurreth with his Minifters the Priefts of the new Teftament, in al their actes of Priefthood, as wel of Sacrifice as Sacrament, bleffing, preaching, praying, and the like what fo-euer. This therfore was the fault of the Hebrewes, that they did not acknowledge their Leuitical Sacrifices and Priefthood to be reformed and perfited by Chriftes Sacrifice of the Croffe: and againft them the Apoftle only difputeth, and not againft our Priefts of holy Church, or the number of them, who al confeffe their Priefthood and al exercifes of the fame, to depend vpon Chriftes only perpetual Priefthood.

27 This did he once.) This is the fpecial preeminence of Chrifft, that he offereth for other mens finnes only, hauing none of his owne to offer for, as al other Priefts both of the old and new law haue. And this againe is the fpecial dignitie of his owne Perfon, not communicable to any other of what order of Priefthood fo-euer, that he by his death (which is the only oblation that is by the Apoftle declared to be irreiterable in it-felf) paid the one full fufficient ranfom for the redemption of al finnes.