

AARON AS A PRIEST.

Whom does Aaron as a priest represent? In brief, we answer, Christ; but Aaron with Moses as an administrator of judgment represents the saints with Christ. In the deliverance of Israel he is administrator of judgment; while in the work of atonement, as revealed in Lev. 16, he is priest.

But if Aaron as priest represents Christ, in order to understand the subject, it is necessary to answer the question, Who is Christ? This may seem to some a strange question, but to us it is very important. We think it has been shown that the Christ of the Scriptures is a compound being. Divine and human, and that there are two stages of His existence after his birth in the flesh, first the natural, afterward the spiritual. In the first He was a Divine being in human form, and in the second a human being in Divine form. He is "the root and the offspring of David" since His exaltation as well as before. Rev. 22:16 and Rom. 1:3-4. The mystery of Godliness includes His being exalted to glory as well as the manifestation in the flesh. 1 Tim. 3:16.

It has also been shown from time to time that the Christ of scripture is a complex being, presented to our minds by the figure of a man – Head and Body; – Jesus Himself being the Head and believers being the many members of the one Body. This being true it follows that there is a progressive development of Christ from Jesus in the flesh, until the last member of His Body is exalted to glory. What was true of the Head is also true of each member of the Body, first a manifestation in the flesh, and afterward an ascension to glory.

Because the Head was exalted to glory at the beginning of the gospel age, and the Body is not so exalted until the end of the age, it

follows that Christ is represented as acting in both Heaven and Earth at the same time during the gospel age. It is that same Divinity which, dwelling in the humanity of Jesus, constituted Him the Son of God, which dwelling in us constitutes us the sons of God. In Him it was native, while we derive it from Him, as branches derive their life from the vine. The Spirit of truth manifested in the church is Christ's representative, was given as an evidence of the acceptance of our Head and the completeness of His work, and is termed Christ in us. Rom. 8:9-10, Gal. 2:20 and 4:19, and Col. 1:27.

In this last verse He is called, "the hope of glory," – the only hope of success. As He conquered by virtue of the Spirit, so it is only by the Spirit that we can overcome and reach glory. Paul says, "I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13.

All this work of the gospel age is the antitype of the work of the atonement day, – the tenth day of the seventh month – under the law. And as Aaron made the sacrifices then, and as Christ either in Himself or in us, makes the sacrifices in this age, it follows that at the beginning of the atonement day Aaron represented Jesus Himself; in the sacrifice of the goat he represented Christ in the saints, who follow the Lord in sacrifice; and in cleansing the sanctuary and laying his hands on the head of the scapegoat, he represented Christ and the saints, who execute judgments and deliver.

It seems as if this principle of growth must apply as surely as the idea of Christ is progressive. As Aaron's work of that day represents the whole work of the gospel age, we cannot escape the conclusion that at the beginning he represented the Head, and at the end represented the whole Body, or perfect Christ.

The closing work of Aaron, – the change of garments and the washing of his flesh, – we have purposely left unmentioned until now. The consideration of the work of the atonement day – both type

and antitype – has changed our ideas of this washing. We will endeavor to present our present view of the subject, without reference to the past. An increase of light on any subject modifies former ideas. We think this subject of the washing has never been presented in the light of the true character of Christ as the Divine in the human, and as progressive in development. We will not claim perfection of thought, but present our ideas with the assurance that truth will stand the test, and imperfect ideas will be pruned by further investigations.

We believe further, that this subject of washing can only be understood in connection with a right view of baptism. We think our readers have had placed before them of late a very clear view of this subject. There is a symbolic baptism, and a real one. The symbolic is a sinking into and rising from the water. The real baptism has two phases – first the denial of self and living to God, or, as Paul expresses it, dying to sin and living to holiness; (Rom. 6,) and second, dying to mortality and living to immortality.

These two phases of the real baptism [R160 : page 7] are the real "washing of regeneration" without which it is not possible to enter the heavenly kingdom. Christ Himself was the first to pass through the process of regeneration. The symbolic baptism represents the real, and when any person submits to the form, loyally, he is counted what he is to be – clean or holy. The symbolic baptism stands at the entrance of the earthly phase of Christian life. Regeneration complete, is the second birth, or entrance upon the perfect and independent spiritual life.

As Aaron at first represented Jesus alone, so the first washing of Aaron's flesh was fulfilled in that phase of baptism which introduced our Saviour to the work of the ministry, with the "holy linen garments" or, representing Him as a righteous servant. And all who follow Him in the voluntary sacrifice of self and the world, are counted as dead with Him, buried with Him, and risen with Him.

This one baptism, or washing, carried to its legitimate consequences, brings both Christ and the saints into a state of immortality. Then why should Aaron wash his flesh a second time? Because the "great multitude" of the household of Christ, represented by the house of Aaron, and for whom atonement was made by the first sacrifice, have failed to present themselves a voluntary sacrifice, and are therefore not entitled according to the original arrangement to the Divine life and a place in the kingdom.

It is true that before this second washing they have been separated and washed their robes, and thus have done what is involved in the first phase of the real baptism, but it is not with the "great multitude" as with the "little flock" – a voluntary sacrifice; they are driven to it, so to speak, under the influence of peculiar judgments. So the first washing could not properly represent them.

It is evident that Christ Himself and the saints once washed and glorified need not the second. We have seen that before the second washing of Aaron the blood of the goat had been sprinkled, representing the ascension of the saints; the sanctuary was cleansed representing the separation of the "great multitude" from Babylon, giving them a position on, "as it were, a sea of glass;" and the hands laid on the scapegoat, representing the pouring of the seven last plagues on Babylon. Now all that remains to be done for that multitude is their complete deliverance from the world, as Israel were delivered from Egypt after the plagues. These are the only part, (and they are the great part) of Christ's body who at that point of time remain unwashed. When that is done, all are rewarded, – Christ his saints and the great multitude who are to serve before the throne.

That the great multitude are Christ's in the sense we have presented seems evident even from the fact that they have robes; that is, they had been counted holy, or had Christ's righteousness imputed to them. But they had defiled their garments by contact with Babylon,

and therefore their loss of the crown, and the need of the judgments to separate them.

Christ is acting as priest in all who are possessed of His Spirit; and that work of the Spirit cannot be complete until all the household are immortal.

The garments worn after the first washing were the "holy linen garments," representing the righteous servant; and this is the condition of every member of the body, from Jesus down, during the period of sacrifice, or other earthly work. But the garments worn after the second washing, are "the garments for glory and beauty" or the ordinary garments of the high priest, except on the day of sacrifice. Language is unmeaning if the garments "for glory and beauty" described in Exodus 28 are the same as the simple attire of the priests during the work of sacrifice. We know that the holy linen garments were worn only on the day of atonement, or tenth day of the seventh month, but in Ex. 28:29-30 we learn that the glorious garments were to be worn before the Lord continually.

We know that if Christ had not been a priest during His earth life, He could not have offered the sacrifice, and we know also that He wore the robe of righteousness, but not the robe of glory until His ascension. And we have the assurance that if we wear the robe of righteousness, and follow Him in sacrifice, we shall be glorified with Him. From which it is evident that the garment to be worn after the second washing is the glorious garment.

The work of the high priest under the law was an annual repetition in type, of what Christ does only once, and he would not have been a type of the Christ if, when he had gone through with the service of the tenth day of the seventh month for the first time, he had after the second washing put on his old clothes. Of course, if, as we believe, he wore the glorious garments "continually," that is all through the year, except on the atonement day, it would follow that

when he came to the first washing of all succeeding atonement days, he would lay aside [R161 : page 7] the glorious garments to begin again the work of sacrifice, and put them on again after the second washing.

When once the perfect Christ is glorified, it is evident that they will not lay that glory aside until the work is done which was represented by a whole year under the law, and it will never need repetition. The one perfect sacrifice lasts forever. Heb. 10:12. His priesthood will be as endless as His mediatorial reign, and that continues after His coming until all His enemies are subdued.

But some one may ask: "If, as you claim, He was a priest when He was here in the flesh, and will continue to be a priest after His return during His reign, how will you harmonize Paul's statement: "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest." Heb. 8:4. If any one will carefully read the context, he will see that Paul is contrasting the typical priesthood of the tribe of Levi, and the antitypical priesthood of our Lord, who sprang out of Judah. The typical is the earthly, and the work of the antitype is the heavenly. The statement of Paul is equivalent to saying: "If this service were the typical, our Lord who sprang from Judah would not be a priest, for there are priests of the tribe of Levi, who offer according to the law." Please read the context for yourselves. Whoever is determined, in spite of the context, to force the idea that Christ could do no part of His work as a priest on earth, must either deny that Christ is a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," or that He will return to earth until that "forever" is ended. All Christ's priestly work is heavenly, though part of it is performed on earth, because He is a priest by virtue of His Divinity or heavenly nature. And what is true of Christ the Head is true, in turn, of each member of the body. Christ in us, to perform the work of sacrifice, is the hope of glory. How significant then the exhortation of the apostle, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The Divine in the human is the only hope of humanity.

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