

AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

"Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Psa. 110:4.

A priest, in the only true sense, is a mediator between God and fallen creatures, the object of such mediation being to restore and establish harmony. To accomplish this work the mediator must be one who is acceptable to both parties; otherwise the work of reconciliation cannot be accomplished.

The office of the priest or mediator between God and man is to restore to perfection and consequent harmony with God, a whole race of beings condemned to death, and already dead or dying. Hence this priest must of necessity be "*mighty* to save." (Psa. 89:19.) He must have both right and power to recall the dead to life, and ability to instruct and discipline, and thus to lead every willing subject back to the perfect estate from which Adam, and the race through him, fell. To secure this right, he must first satisfy the demands of Justice, which required the extinction of the human race; and these demands of Justice could only be met by a sacrifice of *equivalent* value – a human life for a human life. The life of Adam, and all represented in him, might only be redeemed by another perfect human being. And so it was – "Since by *man* came death, by *man* came also the resurrection from the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.) By the sacrifice of a perfect *human existence*, then, the *right* of the priest to restore is secured.

But beyond the right, or privilege, of restoring, the priest must have the *power*, and power would of necessity presuppose his own everlasting existence. He must have power to create, since to restore to being that which had completely lost existence, is to re-create it, and is a greater work even than the first creation; he must also have perfect knowledge, both of God's requirements and of human necessities, as

well as perfect ability, to guide a race so destitute, back to the glorious heights of perfection and blessed harmony and communion with God.

What an office! Who would presume to assume such a title? It belongs really and only to Jehovah's Anointed. Even Jesus, "the Anointed one, did not glorify himself to become a High-Priest," but he has "been declared by God a High-Priest according to the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 5:5,10, Diaglott.) Jehovah honored him by inviting him to that position, and giving him all power to fill it. In harmony with God's plan, not only has Jesus, his anointed one, been chosen as the Chief or High-Priest, but the "little flock" who follow him in sacrifice now are called to be "joint heirs" with him in the same honor. If we suffer with him we shall also be glorified together.

Jesus alone is the priest, but when redeemed by his death and associated with him in sacrifice now, and in divine power hereafter, we are *counted in* with him, and together with him constitute the great prophet, priest and king promised to bless the groaning creation – the seed of promise.

From these considerations it should be plain to all that the real priest is just as truly a king, in whose hand absolute power is vested. And in looking back to the types or illustrations God has given us, we find just such an illustration in Melchisedec, who was "a priest upon his throne." Other illustrations of Christ as a priest are given in the Aaronic priesthood, where the special features of the redemptive sacrifice are shadowed forth – its perfection, its completeness, its acceptableness, as also the share which the little flock has with him in that sacrifice.

Christ was not constituted a priest after the Aaronic order. The Aaronic priesthood sprung from the tribe of Levi, while "our Lord (according to the flesh) sprung from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood"; and the members of his body are chiefly chosen from among the Gentiles. As a man, Jesus was not a priest, neither as men are the saints members of the royal

priesthood, but as "*new creatures*" they shall hold and execute their office. Jesus as a "new creature," "partaker of the divine nature" (which he was from the time of his baptism) was the priest, and as a priest he offered up his perfect human nature an acceptable sacrifice to God. He *consecrated* or offered himself in sacrifice before he became the priest, but the anointing was necessary to enable him to accomplish the sacrifice as well as to apply its benefits to men. The human nature, when sacrificed, could do nothing more; it must remain a sacrifice forever; but the new nature, fully developed in the resurrection, has "all power in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18.

The new nature (the priest) is not of the Aaronic order; it does not trace its lineage to any human source. This fact is strikingly typified in the priesthood of Melchisedec, whose lineage is not recorded, and thus is typified the endless life of Christ. In this type the work of sacrifice is not shown, as he represents the Christ glorified and reigning after the work of sacrifice has been completed, and the divine nature fully perfected.

In Heb. 7, this Melchisedec is declared to be greater than Abraham, thus showing that the divine Christ will be greater, and therefore able to bless the "friends of God" on the human plane.

"Wherefore he [Christ] is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" [of the divine nature]. Heb. 7:25,26. And this blessed assurance of such a priest, so *mighty to save*, is confirmed unto us by the oath of Jehovah. (Heb. 7:21; Psa. 110:4.) What strong consolation then may those have, who have fled to Jehovah's Anointed for refuge: "Jehovah [R714 : page 5] hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou are a priest forever after the order (or manner) of Melchisedec." What believer, then, may not read his title clear to the promised restitution? and what justified one

who has offered himself as a living sacrifice may not read his title clear to joint-heirship with the Head in that glorious anointed body.

"Wherefore, holy [justified] brethren partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus...for we have become associates of the Anointed if indeed we hold fast the beginning of our confidence, firm to the end." Heb. 3:1,14, Diaglott.)

We conclude, then, that while the Aaronic priesthood furnishes typical illustrations of the sacrifices and sufferings of Christ and the blessings to follow, yet, as a system, it does not completely illustrate the glorious, everlasting and unchangeable character of his priesthood during the Millennial Age; and for this cause Melchisedec was presented that thus might be shown his glorious office of priest while king – a priest upon his throne. Here, too, the body of Christ is no longer shown as separate individuals, but in the ONE, complete. In the work of sacrifice we have seen the head or chief priest and the under priests more or less separately sacrificing, as represented in Aaron and the under priests, but in the future glory, all will be united as represented in Melchisedec alone.

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