

THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

DEUT. 18:15-22, AND ACTS 3.

In these Scriptures is to be found our subject. In the former is the prophecy of Moses, and in the latter Peter touches on its fulfilment. To find an apostle dealing with the fulfilment of prophecy is a great advantage, as it is one of our best safeguards against error and uncertainty. It is here, as it frequently happens elsewhere in similar cases, minute details are not dealt with: only broad outlines. Peter identifies the Prophet like unto Moses, and indicates the sphere and scope of his mission, together with its results. The likeness is not of a personal kind, either in nature or character; but is to be found rather in position and work. Nor is this likeness at all exact, being that of antitype to "type," reality to "figure," or substance to "shadow."

I. As "*our Passover*," Christ is the Prophet like unto Moses. When the Passover was instituted, "the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.'" There is an adequate reason for this. The life which man derives through the first Adam is condemned; and God has never entered into covenant with man on the basis of condemnation. In the institution and observance of the Passover, the people were typically passed over from death unto life. Their physical lives were preserved when others were destroyed; and that preservation is a type of a more widely extended and enduring one. In the treatment of the Passover lamb, there are at least two points which ought to be specially noted. First, as to the *blood*: "They shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the houses wherein they shall eat it... and the blood shall be for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you

to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12:1-28). Very early the eating of blood was prohibited: "Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Gen. 9:4). This prohibition was frequently repeated, and a specific reason assigned for it: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). The shedding and sprinkling of the Passover blood is a striking "figure" of giving "life for life" – the requirement of **[R1321 : page 120]** divine justice before the condemned could be justified. It was only a "figure," however – the reality came afterwards: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). The other point is as to the *flesh*: "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it...with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover." Through the blood-shedding, the life of the Israelites was preserved; but the wilderness journey was before them, and they had to eat of the flesh as well. This feature, too, is a striking "figure" of the Lamb of God – "our Passover." Through the shedding of his precious blood we have life. But that is not all. The journey of life has to be pursued, the enemies of life have to be overcome, the work of life has to be accomplished, and the discipline of life has to be perfected. In all this there is wear and tear – weariness and exhaustion; but **[R1322 : page 120]** our strength is renewed by heavenly food: "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven: for the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world....He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst" (John 6:27-58).

II. As "the Resurrection," Christ is the Prophet like unto Moses. Typically, the Israelites were "bought" before they began

their journey; but they did not travel far until they were brought face to face with another divine lesson. "The Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea." With the sea before them and Pharaoh's host behind, the children of Israel saw no way of escape, and in terror they cried out: "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" By divine appointment Moses had "bought" them with blood, and by the same authority he had to deliver them with power. He was not overcome, either by the faint-heartedness of the people, the power of Pharaoh, or the untowardness of the position: "Fear not," (said he) "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." He "stretched out his hand over the sea," "the waters were divided," and the children of Israel passed through "upon the dry ground." "The Egyptians pursued and went in after them." Moses again "stretched forth his hand over the sea," and "the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh." "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Ex. 14). This transaction is a striking "figure" of the deliverance to be effected by Christ from the bondage and power of death, hades, and the devil. In reference to the "figure," the Apostle Paul says the people "were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2); and he teaches that baptism is an emblem of both death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3,4). Some theologians would have resurrection without ransom, others would have ransom without resurrection; but the Prophet like unto Moses is both: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14,15). Pharaoh held fast his captives until the typical lamb was slain; so, until the antitypical Lamb was slain, the devil held fast his captives. When the typical lamb was slain the power of Pharaoh was broken; so, the power of the devil was broken when the antitypical Lamb was slain; and

complete matter-of-fact deliverance became a mere question of time. Ransom and Resurrection follow each other like cause and effect – just as sure as the one has been paid the other will be accomplished. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction: Repentance shall be hid from my eyes" (Hosea 13:14).

III. As "the Life," Christ is the Prophet like unto Moses. The order of events in the type is significant: first the Passover; then [R1322 : page 121] the deliverance from Egypt; and afterwards the giving of the law. So it is with the antitype: first the death of Christ for the life of the race; then the resurrection of the race; and afterwards the giving of "the law of the Spirit of life" to the race. In the type, Mount Sinai is the scene of the law-giving "glory;" in the antitype, Mount Zion is the scene of "the glory that excelleth." "For ye are not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more...but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:18-24). In the type, one nation was delivered from Egypt, and led to Mount Sinai to receive the law; in the antitype, all nations are to be delivered from hades, and led to Mount Zion to receive the law. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God

of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2,3). This feature of the likeness between Christ and Moses being of supreme importance, it is necessary to consider it somewhat in detail. The likeness between "figure" and reality very often runs into broad contrast; and in no feature is this more observable than in the present one. The Apostle Paul deals largely with it in his epistles; and perhaps no passage could be found more graphic or sublime than that in 2 Cor. 3. In that short chapter are crowded together more ideas than are to be found in some volumes; and it is our present purpose to enumerate and emphasize some of them. 1. The "figure" was written "in tables of stone;" the reality, "in fleshly tables of the heart." Stone is a fitting figure of human hearts petrified by sin. Of those upon whom the seed of the kingdom falls, a large proportion are found to be "stony ground." This condition of man was foreseen and provided for. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26). Moses rehearsed all the words of the law unto the people; the Prophet like unto Moses not only rehearses the law, but opens the minds and the hearts of the people to receive it. The disciples were made aware of this soon after he rose from the dead. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45); and this operation has been going on ever since, as all true believers can testify, of whom Lydia – "whose heart the Lord opened" (Acts 16:14) – may be taken as a sample. Moses carried the law to the people in his hands; Christ carries the law to the people in his heart. "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:7,8). Love begets love. If we would open another's heart, we have to lay bare our own. God acts upon this principle; and God manifest in flesh was an embodiment of it. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). This

is the law of love, as it is "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:26); and faith "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

2. The "figure" was ministered "in letter;" the reality is ministered in "spirit." The "figure" is the "old" covenant; the reality is the "new." Some theologians would fain find the reality of the present figure in the letter of the Gospel. Not so the apostles – they never used one letter as the figure of another; they used one letter – "the letter" – as the figure of a higher and much superior force – "the Spirit." "Our Gospel" (says Paul) "came not unto you [R1322 : page 122] in word only, but also in power, and in the holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thes. 1:5). "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20). Change the form of the letter, or the word, as you may, and you do not assist man to break his fetters – you merely change the form of his slavery. He exclaims still, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:29). It is only through "the ministration of the Spirit" that man obtains freedom. "The Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Its ministration is "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).

3. The "figure" was "the ministration of condemnation" and "death;" the reality is "the ministration of righteousness" and "life." The law of Moses is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). It is the ministration of condemnation and death to man because he is

unholy, unjust, bad. That which is right must always condemn that which is wrong. The law could do nothing else. It never was intended to do anything else. In proportion to the information it gives, it condemns. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Rom. 7:9). Man's radical need is Life. The law has neither promise nor power of life in it; and therefore it cannot meet his need. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. 3:21,22). "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is the law of righteousness. The operation of this law accomplishes in man what the law of Moses could never do. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness [R1323 : page 122] of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:2-4). Some teachers who despair of obtaining righteousness by the law of Moses seem to think that it is obtainable by the law of conscience. That is a great mistake. The Jew has the law of conscience, as well as the law of Moses, and he has failed to obtain righteousness, either by the one or the other, or both combined. The fact is, the weakness of the law of Moses is through the flesh; and conscience in this respect is no exception to the other elements of the flesh – all are weak, and all are sinful. For righteousness, man must look much higher than himself. His only hope is in the Righteous One. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:5,6). Moses taught righteousness, and enforced it by sanctions; it is the Prophet like unto Moses "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor.

1:30). Moses imparted righteous words and righteous motives; in addition to these, the Righteous One imparts righteous life – the power which embodies righteous words in righteous deeds. Nor is this the power of imitation merely; it is the power of being. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). It is "the Spirit of life" permeating the "new man" as really as the blood permeates the "old."

4. The "figure" was "glorious;" the reality "excelleth" in glory. Moses was with the Lord forty days and forty nights "on Mount Sinai, and did neither eat bread nor drink water." When he came down Aaron and all the children [R1323 : page 123] of Israel saw that "the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him" (Ex. 34:28-30). Even the ministration of condemnation and death was given in glory. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance;... how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in that respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." Our ideas of the glory of the Prophet like unto Moses, and of his ministration, are naturally contracted and very inadequate. We know something of the sufferings of Christ; but comparatively little of the glory which is to follow. Peter, James, and John, however, had a "vision" of it; and they tell us that "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). Saul of Tarsus, too, had a "heavenly vision," and after it he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9). But, of all highly-favored ones, the saintly witness of Patmos stands pre-eminent, and his description of the Glorious One is graphic and sublime in the extreme: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last....I turned to see the voice that spake with

me;...and I saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:10-18). That is an inspired conception of the present glory and majesty of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Perhaps we are to receive no fuller description of it until that day when we are to see it for ourselves. He is glorious in retinue, glorious in person, glorious in position, and glorious in power and authority. "All power (said he) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). The glory of Moses has been "done away," the glory of Christ "remaineth:" "For...the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6,7). The lawgiver of Israel put a veil on his face when he spoke to the people; and that veil was typical of the blindness of their hearts. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." "For God, who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." – 2 Cor. 4:3,4,6.

5. The "figure" was *a present possession*; the reality is *an object of hope*: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." It would be well for us to note that "the ministration of the Spirit" is an object of hope. Many plume themselves with the conceit that they have that ministration now in all its fulness. Not so the apostles. Paul makes their position clear: "By manifestation of the truth (wrote he), commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God...by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." "In nothing am I behind [R1323 : page 124] the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 4:2; 6:4-7; 12:11,12). Who is there in the present day that can show such a record? And yet *to Paul* "the ministration of the Spirit" was *an object of hope*. One of his statements to the Corinthian believers is somewhat enigmatical: "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men." Mark: Believers are an epistle, that epistle is written in the apostle's heart, and it is known and read of all men. How can an epistle which is written in one man's heart be known and read of all men? It was Paul's hope that these believers would one day be "manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ," which was written in his heart. "Our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also partakers of the consolation." "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. 1:7-14). "We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire." "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming" (1 Thes. 2:17,19). These believers were not then "manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ," but it was Paul's hope that they would be so declared, and that hope was written in his heart. *When* is "the epistle of Christ"

to be "known and read of all men?" When it becomes *like* its writer – the Christ: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). *Why* is the epistle to be like its writer? These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee....O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world....I pray for them....Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:1-23). Mark: Christ prays that he may be glorified; Christ prays that believers also may be glorified; Christ prays that he and they may be glorified, "*that* they may be made perfect in one;" and Christ prays "that they may be made perfect in one, *that* the world may know" that the Father hath sent him. When that marvelous prayer has been answered – as answered it certainly will be – *then* will believers be "known and read of all men – manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." Not written by that compound and antagonistic process which prevails at present; "but with the Spirit of the living God." Not in some crooked, cramped, contradictory, or undecipherable hieroglyphics – such as the best of us are; but in characters so clear that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err" in reading them. Not limited to one nation, like the figure; the reality – the epistle of Christ – is to be sent to all the "ends of the earth," and will be "known and read of all men."

6. The "figure," in its sanctions, did not extend beyond the first death; the reality, in its sanctions, includes the "second death." That [R1324 : page 124] there is to be a second death is clearly revealed: "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). As the first death terminates the first life, so the second death may terminate the second life. Some theologians teach that there will be two terminations to one life; as well might they teach that there have been, or will be, two beginnings to one life; the Scriptures teach no such doctrine. There is a radical difference between the law regulating the first death [R1324 : page 125] and that regulating the second. The first death comes upon the entire human race (Adam excepted) independent of individual will. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom [margin] all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). On the contrary, the second death will reach no man independent of his will. When "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," an offer of the water of life is to be made to every man. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). The only obstruction, or limitation, to the enjoyment of life as then to be offered will be the will of the hearer – "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." How very different that will be from the state of things prevailing now. Then will be in full force the law of life and death depicted by the prophets. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20). "And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). "The water of life freely" then unto everyone who "will" receive it;

"destruction from among the people" then unto everyone who "will not hear that prophet." There are those who say, deliverance from the second death may be expected; but the Scriptures utter no such word. They give no uncertain sound as to deliverance from the first death; but touching deliverance from the second death they are silent. While we ought to be prepared to speak whatever the Scriptures speak, we ought also to be prepared to be silent on whatever the Scriptures are silent.

In conclusion: (1) It is simply impossible to compress "the ministration of the Spirit" so as to bring it within the limits of the present age. There is in that ministration a galaxy of life, and light, and liberty, and love, and power, and righteousness, and glory, and blessedness, which is altogether incompatible with the present state of things. The more determinedly the work of compression is driven, the more conspicuous becomes its failure; and therefore, of necessity, we have to look forward to post-resurrection times for the beneficent fulness of that ministration. As that is so, it may be asked: (2) Is there no part of the "ministration of the Spirit" now? Most certainly there is. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18). Those being taken out from the others now are the "first fruits." So is it as to the blessedness enjoyed now by those who are taken out. "In whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13,14). But, the "*first fruits*" are *not* the "*lump*," nor is the "*earnest*" the "*inheritance*." The "first fruits" and the "earnest" are indications of the nature of the "lump" and of the "inheritance," and pledges, too, that the "lump" and the "inheritance" will follow in due time. "For if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." "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. 11:16,23.

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It is said that the Jewish population of Russia doubles its numbers in thirty years, while the native population doubles only in ninety years, and the population of Europe only in one hundred and fifty years. The Russians therefore fear the time when they will be outnumbered.

The Jews who are being driven by persecution to Palestine, although unable to understand each other's language, have all some knowledge of Hebrew, which, it is said, is rapidly becoming a living tongue in the Holy Land.
