

AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

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

APRIEST, in the only true sense, is a mediator between God and fallen creatures, the object of such mediation being to restore and establish harmony on a legal basis.

The office of the priest or mediator between God and man is to restore to perfection and consequent harmony with God a race of human 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 the *right* and the *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 in 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 *corresponding* sacrifice – a human life for a human life. The life of Adam and all in him could be redeemed only 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* is secured the *right* of the priest to restore.

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. 5:4,5,10 – *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 great High Priest; but the Gospel Church, redeemed by his death and associated with him now in sacrifice, and to be associated with him in divine power hereafter, is counted in with him, and, together with him, will constitute the great Prophet, Priest and King promised, to liberate and bless the groaning creation – the Seed of promise. – Gen. 22:18; 28:14; Gal. 3:29; Acts 3:20-23; Psa. 110:4.

From these considerations it should be plain to all that our High Priest is truly a King, in whose hands absolute power is vested. And in looking back to the types God has given us, we find Melchisedec, to whom we are cited as an illustration of this priesthood both by the Psalmist and by the Apostle Paul. (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:5,10.) They show that Melchisedec, who was a priest upon his throne, represented the Christ in glory and power, while in the Aaronic Priesthood the special features of the redemptive sacrifice were shadowed forth – its perfection, its completeness, its acceptableness, as also the share which the Church has with Christ in that sacrifice.

Christ was not constituted a priest of the Aaronic order: that priesthood was only the type or figure. The Aaronic priesthood sprang from the tribe of Levi, while "our Lord [according to the flesh] sprang from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood;" and the members of his body, the Church, are chosen chiefly 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 hold and execute their office. Jesus as a "new creature," "partaker of the divine nature" (to which he was begotten at 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 on becoming the priest, and he received a special anointing for the office which was necessary to enable him to accomplish the sacrifice as well as to apply its benefits to men. His 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 priestly office of the new nature 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 and death are not recorded*. He was a priest without having inherited the office from his father or his mother – thus typifying Christ's priesthood, which came not of the lineage of the flesh, as did the Aaronic priesthood, which Israel thought to be the real. Neither was Melchisedec's death recorded, nor a successor named (Heb. 7:3, *Diaglott*), that thus might be typified the continuity of Christ's priesthood. In this type the work of sacrifice is not shown, as Melchisedec represents the Christ glorified and reigning after the work of sacrifice has been completed, and the divine nature fully perfected.

In Heb. 7:4-10 Melchisedec is declared to be greater than Abraham, thus showing that the divine Christ will be greater, and therefore able to bless every "friend of God" on the human plane.

"Wherefore he [Christ] is able to save them to the **[R1956 : page 69]** 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 [lifted higher than the highest – to the divine nature]." (Heb. 7:25-27.) 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 has sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of [or typified by] Melchisedec." What believer, justified by faith, 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? He is authorized and is able to save completely all that come unto God by him now, as well as all who shall hear and come in the Millennium.

"Wherefore, holy 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, it did not completely illustrate the glorious, everlasting and unchangeable character of his priesthood during the Millennial age; and for this cause Melchisedec was presented as a type, that thus might be shown his glorious office of priest and king – a priest upon his throne. Here, too, the body of Christ is no longer shown as separate individuals, but *as 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 all will unitedly share in the future glory represented in Melchisedec alone.
