

[R2821 : page 179]

A HIGH PRIEST OF COMING GOOD THINGS.

– HEB. 9:11-14;24-28. – JUNE 2. –

Golden Text: – "He ever liveth to make intercession."
– Heb. 7:25.

NO SIGNATURE is attached to the Book of Hebrews, nor does the writer of it in any way identify himself, except as we see in its style, close reasoning, deep penetration and wide knowledge of the divine plan, strong evidence that it was written by the Apostle Paul. Who but he could have written it? It is not addressed to Jews, as if with the intention of converting those who did not believe in Christ – but to the Hebrews – to those who were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, but who had accepted Christ.* The Apostle would strengthen and establish the faith of these (and indirectly of all others who would come to a similar knowledge of God's dealings with Israel). In this epistle he seeks to show that, so far from the new dispensation repudiating the old one, it was merely an advance step which was being taken because its due time had come. The Jewish system was not being repudiated as a divine institution, but was being established as such, everything in the new dispensation having an analogy to the things in the old one, but on a higher plane.

*Nevertheless, we believe the Book of Hebrews to be a presentation of the Gospel specially suitable as a message to unbelieving Jews – superior in its influence to anything which we or others could present. Accordingly, we are preparing a booklet giving this Epistle in the *Hebrew-Jargon*, familiar to Jews of all nationalities, for use among them, – hoping that through the assistance of our readers in all lands it may be the means under divine providence of blessing and enlightening some, and preparing them for the mercy future, mentioned by the Apostle in Romans 11:31. We will send a copy of this brochure when issued to each WATCH TOWER subscriber, and trust that few if any will be wasted; – the stewardship then will be yours.

Thus all the Mosaic arrangements were honored, and shown to be of divine institution, good for the time, and serving a noble purpose as types and lessons of instruction and preparations for the Gospel. The time had now come for the establishment of the antitype – the antitypical Covenant through the antitypical Mediator, sealed with the antitypical blood of the Covenant, and to be followed by the antitypical Day of Atonement, preceding the antitypical blessing of the people and their full and permanent release from sin and condemnation.

In line with the foregoing, the Apostle, in the lesson before us, is pointing to Jesus, ascended and in the heavens, as the antitype of the earthly high priests when they went into the "Most Holy" on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle the blood of the atonement upon the Mercy Seat. It will be remembered+ that on the Day of Atonement the high priest put on his linen garments (not his glorious garments) and with the blood of the sacrifice went into the Most Holy to present it as the ransom price – the atonement. While he was within the people had no evidence of divine favor resulting from his sacrifice, but waited on their faces in the dust, representing the prostrate and helpless condition of mankind in degradation, needing and waiting for the divine blessing. So, now, our High Priest is in the heavens, and we must not look for the blessings of restitution until all the work of atonement be accomplished, and until all the members of his body shall, with their Head, have put on the garments of glory and beauty, typifying honor, majesty and authority. Then the blessing will quickly follow, from the uplifted hands (manifested power), of our great High Priest; **[R2822 : page 180]** then, indeed, restitution blessings will prevail toward the whole creation now groaning and travailing in pain together. – Rom. 8:22.

+See [Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices](#) – this office.

It is in respect to this coming blessing that the Apostle declares our Lord to be a High Priest of coming good things – coming blessings – obtained of God in a higher tabernacle or temple than the Jewish earthly one – a tabernacle, the Holy of Holies of which is heaven itself, from which in due time our great High Priest comes forth with the promised blessings of restitution, etc.

In order to appreciate this matter we must see that not only was the High Priest superior to the high priests of the Aaronic order – their antitype – but also that the sacrifices which he presents are of a superior character – his own blood, his own life: having sacrificed it on our behalf he entered into heaven itself, the holy place – "having found [procured] lasting ransom-deliverance [for those whom he as high priest represented]." – Verse 12.

The Apostle urges that these conclusions are logical and reasonable, they recognized the fact that the typical sacrifices had served in a measure for purification, and made the creatures represented thereby *typically* acceptable with God for a time, and this, which was all that the most zealous Jew could claim for the Law, being accepted as true, how much greater must be the blessing which the greater, the antitypical, High Priest would bring, would secure, as the result of his better, more precious and wholly acceptable sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus offered up himself; the offering took place at his consecration, which was symbolized by his baptism at Jordan; his dying, his sacrifice, began there, tho it was not "finished" until he breathed his last at Calvary. His flesh which he offered was "holy, harmless, undefiled," an acceptable offering, a full offset or *ransom-price* for father Adam, through whose disobedience the condemnation of death came, not only upon himself, but also upon all his posterity. The man Christ Jesus was begotten again, begotten to the spiritual, the divine nature, through the

holy spirit which there came upon him, and which constituted him the Anointed – the Christ, the Messiah. From that moment onward this Anointed One, Messiah, the new creature, was the anointed high priest, whose business for the time was that of offering up himself – offering up or sacrificing himself as the man Jesus, even unto death. Meanwhile, as a "new creature," he was growing in grace and gaining all the experiences necessary to fit him for his office as man's High Priest in all things pertaining to God. Jesus, from the time of his anointing of the holy spirit, was reckoned as having begun the new life, as having been begotten of the Spirit to be a spirit being (which was perfected in the resurrection, when he arose from the dead a quickening spirit) – it is to this spirit begotten High Priest that the Apostle refers, saying that our Lord (the new creature) offered himself (the man) without blemish unto God through, or by, the eternal spirit by which he had been begotten. – Verse 14.

TO WHOM WAS THE RANSOM PAID?

Some have inquired sarcastically, "To whom was the ransom paid?" asserting that if paid at all it must have been paid to Satan. Our answer to this question is found in the Apostle's words in vs. 14 of this lesson; – that our Lord Jesus offered himself *to God* in sacrifice; that the ransom price was paid to Justice, that it was not Satan who gave the law under which Adam was tried, and under which, on his failure, he was condemned to death; but as that was God's law and God's condemnation, so the ransom price which God provided for in Jesus must be paid to God – to divine Justice – "that he might be just and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." – Rom. 3:26.

The Apostle urges that this clear view of how "Jesus died and paid it all," how he *bought* us with his own precious blood, giving the exact sacrifice which was necessary, according to the

divine law, should purge or free our consciences from a sense of guilt, and that forever. We should see that if God, who counted us justly condemned, has provided now in this sacrifice a ransom price acceptable to himself, "He is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) And since this is a matter of faith, our blessing and good conscience toward God, and realization of the full reconciliation through the precious blood, will be in proportion as we exercise faith in this great fact which God has revealed in his Word. According to our faith it will be unto us; he who exercises the faith may go on realizing his acceptance with God; but he who fails to exercise faith will be hindered from approaching God, and using the blessed opportunities put before us in the Gospel, as truly as those who know not of the ransom.

The Jewish Covenant was one which required perfect works, and not merely a perfect heart or will; and since, as fallen men, the Israelites could not perform *perfect* works, even their best endeavors must be works which could only result in death. Now, however, realizing the better sacrifices which Christ had accomplished, and realizing that a new order or dispensation had come in, based upon a new covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, they were to realize that he, having paid the *ransom-price* for the "sins of the whole world," could accept their will, their intentions, their righteous endeavors, as fulfilling their Law Covenant, and thus they might thereafter enjoy a living **[R2822 : page 181]** faith, instead of sorrowing for works that were dead.

To impress the foregoing lessons, the Apostle, in vss. 24-28, contrasts the work of Christ in the true tabernacle or "Holies" with the work of the typical high priest of the Aaronic order in the typical Tabernacle or Temple. Jesus could not have been an earthly High Priest, because, according to the Law, the priests could only be of the tribe of Levi, whereas our Lord

sprang from Judah. Thus he could not, and did not enter into "holy places" made with hands, the typical; but his is a higher priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, as the Apostle elsewhere explains, and the Temple in which he offers is the antitypical one, and hence it is that in entering the "Holy of Holies" he entered heaven itself, there to appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf, as the earthly priests once every year, on the Day of Atonement, went into the typical presence of God, into the typical "Most Holy," appearing before the Shekinah glory (representing God) over the Mercy Seat.

For the same reason, the Apostle explains, it is not necessary that Christ should repeat his sacrifice every year, because his is the antitypical one and prevails everlastingly. The typical priests needed to repeat their typical offerings "year by year continually," *because* they were merely types, and could never cancel sin, but merely, by divine arrangement, covered it for a year. The Apostle reasons that if Christ's sacrifice had been no better than these it would mean repeated sufferings on our behalf, but, on the contrary, all the facts agree that his sacrifice was once and forever; because it was a complete, a perfect sacrifice, which the divine law demanded. This is in direct conflict with the teachings of the Church of Rome, which claims that our Lord's sacrifice needs to be repeated (in the "sacrifice of the Mass") in order to the forgiveness of each particular sin for which it is applied; hence the claim of Romanism that her priests have power to transmute the elements of bread and wine into the actual body and actual blood of Christ; to recreate Christ for the very purpose of *sacrificing him afresh* – and this sacrilegious, blasphemous misrepresentation of the divine arrangement is repeated, not only yearly, but daily, in all parts of the world where Romanism has a foothold.

And so far has Protestantism lost sight of the real character of Papacy, and the original grounds for protest which separated

their fathers from Papacy, that they are now generally ignorant of this her claim, and ready to consider the Mass as merely a symbol of our Lord's sacrifice, of the same meaning as their own Eucharist or "Communion" service. The coronation oath of the British kings was so formulated as, if possible, to hinder any but a Protestant from ever coming to the throne; hence on this subject the oath declares: – "I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous."

The Romanists of Great Britain are complaining against this form of oath as being a reflection against their religious doctrines; and Protestants have so generally lost sight of the real meaning of the Mass that they are inclined to agree with the Romanists that the oath has become obsolete and might properly be changed. Their forefathers evidently knew much more about the real meaning of the Papal doctrine respecting the Mass, that it is blasphemous and sacrilegious, and particularly emphasized in the Scriptures as "the desolating abomination." (Dan. 11:31; 12:11.) The Scriptural proposition is that our Lord's sacrifice was once for all, and that Christ dieth no more, death hath no dominion over him (Rom. 6:9), and the Apostle in our lesson shows that there could be no need of a further atonement sacrifice than that which God has already provided. It is able to make perfect and that "unto the uttermost" those who would approach to God.

Perhaps no statement of the Scripture is more thoroughly misunderstood than the 27th verse of this lesson, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." It is unreasonable to suppose that the Apostle has suddenly dropped the topic of his discourse respecting Christ as the antitypical High Priest, in contrast with earthly priests, and to

suppose that here he refers to mankind in general, out of all relationship to his subject. Indeed, as respects mankind in general, the verse would not be true; it is not true that God appointed man to die and after that a judgment. On the contrary, Adam, the one perfect man, was appointed to life, and it was while thus appointed to life that he had his judgment or trial; and it was his failure in that trial which brought the sentence, death. Death is the penalty, and must follow the judgment, not precede it. True, the Scriptures teach us that there is to be another judgment or trial for all mankind (and that with some, believers, this trial has already begun), but it is not because matters were so "appointed," but because Christ has redeemed us from the original sentence of death, paying it once for all. And in the *new* trial or judgment, thus secured, the same principle as in Adam's case will hold true again; – the redeemed are appointed to life if they will obey the great Law-giver – they are not "appointed" to die, and none will die except as wilful sinners in the Second Death. The world of mankind, [R2823 : page 182] as a result of the redemption, will be awakened from the tomb, that they may have their judgment or trial (John 5:28,29), – such a judgment or trial must precede the Second Death sentence in any event.

What the Apostle does mean by this statement may perhaps be more clearly shown by a paraphrase, as follows: We have just seen how the Jewish priests, and their service in the earthly holy places, typified Christ Jesus and his service in the heavenly holies, – now notice that, "As it is appointed unto men[-priests] once to die [typically, as represented in the animals which they slew, as their representatives] and after this the judgment [passing in beyond the second vail into the presence of the Shekinah glory, to offer the blood of sacrifice and to receive divine judgment in the matter, it implied that if everything had been properly done by the priest he would live, and be *judged* worthy to be the Priest for the people, and to go forth

again as the bearer of divine favor, – to bless them, forgiving their iniquities and releasing them from all condemnation thereunder, – but if anything on his part had been improperly done, in a manner unacceptable to the Lord, his *judgment* would have been unfavorable; he would have perished, died, in passing under the second vail; for this was the law on the subject – Lev. 16:2]."

This interpretation not only connects with the preceding verse, but also with the succeeding one, for the Apostle says, "*So* [in like manner] Christ was once offered [died] to bear the sins of many [and we have evidence, in the giving of the holy spirit at Pentecost, that his sacrifice was acceptable to the Lord, and that he liveth, and that divine *judgment* has been rendered, accepting his sacrifice, and therefore favorable to us, for whom the sacrifice was made] and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin [not as a sin offering, nor as a sacrificing priest, but in the glory and majesty of his exalted office, symbolized by the robes of glory and beauty, worn by the Aaronic high priests] unto salvation [to accomplish for mankind the deliverance from sin, death and all the concomitants of death, sickness, pain, sorrow]."

Meantime, throughout the Gospel age, the Lord's people by the eye of faith beheld the great High Priest as their Mediator, "who ever liveth to make intercession for *us*," while he awaited the Father's time for his coming forth a second time to make good his exceeding great and precious spiritual promises and blessings upon his Church, and to grant the promised restitution blessings to the world, foretold "by all the holy prophets since the world began."

But in advance of the actual blessings, by faith, all who are his brethren, his disciples, walking in his footsteps, seeking to fulfil their sacrifice as he fulfilled his, and under his assistance

and direction, may realize that they are not aliens and strangers and foreigners from God, but that they are accepted with the Father – not directly but indirectly, "accepted in the Beloved," who is our Intercessor, our Mediator, and in whom alone we have a standing before the Father and may ask or expect any favors. – Eph. 1:6; Rom. 5:1,2.
