

AARON AND CHRIST

"Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." *Jesus*

Yahweh (that is, I shall be, *ehyeh* Exod. 3:15) said to Moses, "See that thou make what thou wast caused to see after their pattern shewed thee in the mount" (Exod. 25:40): which things, Paul says, are only "the image and shadow of the heavenly things", as God said to Moses: and elsewhere he says that "the Jews have the model of the knowledge of the truth in the law" (Heb. 8:5, Rom. 2:20). From which, and other passages that can be adduced, it is evident that the following proposition is true, namely,

That the Mosaic System of Righteousness is symbolical of the Righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

Definition By "Mosaic System of Righteousness" is meant, *All that was necessary to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, but which could not free the conscience from sin. To impart this carnal purification to the worshipper a High Priest and his Household, distinct from the other classes of the Jewish nation, legally inaugurated and sanctified, were necessary; also a tabernacle, sacrifices, washings, etc., etc.*

Definition By the "Righteousness of God" is meant, *A justification from all past sins devised and enjoined by God a purification of the heart, or conscience, without the necessity of obeying the law of Moses (which since the Destruction of the temple in Jerusalem cannot be kept) but attested by that law and the prophets a justification through Jesus Christ's faith (*dia pisteos Jesou Christou*) that is, through belief of what He and his apostles preached concerning the Kingdom of God and his Name (Acts 8:12): in other words, through belief of the Gospel to all that shall put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). The "Righteousness of God" is the "Gospel of the Kingdom", sometimes called "*the gospel of Christ*", and often simply "*the gospel*", which Paul says, "is the power of God for salvation of every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and then to the Greek", or Gentile (Rom. 1:16).*

Nothing can save Jew or Gentile but "the power of God." The power for that special purpose is the gospel only; so that *saving power* and *the gospel* are but different phrases for the same thing.

Look into these sayings narrowly "Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "If a man love me he will keep my words" (v. 23). "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). "He that rejecteth me, and keepeth not my words...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10, Gal. 5:14). Hence, *love* and *obedience* in scripture language are but two words for the same idea, or thing: so that God in

Jesus admits of no love, or professions of devotion and attachment, that are unaccompanied with a childlike obedience to "whatsoever" he commands. Where obedience is not, there love does not exist; and where there is no scriptural love there is no obedience in word or deed; and where these are absent the spirit of love, which is "the spirit of Christ", is wanting. "Love suffers long and is kind; it envieth not; it boasts not itself (not full of wordy professions); is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not its own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but *rejoiceth in the truth*; beareth all things, *believeth all things*, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:47).

To persons in whom such a disposition has been created, the precepts of Jesus are, *He who believeth the Gospel of the Kingdom, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth it not shall be condemned* (Mark 16:16). Here the gospel is that proposed for *faith*; and baptism, the thing prescribed for *obedience*, that the believer may show or prove whether that faith hath worked in him a true and genuine love to its author. Baptism is only for such believers; for baptism is "*the obedience of faith*" (Rom. 16:26); so that where belief of "*the truth*" does not exist, there can be no true obedience.

When Jesus came to John he demanded to be buried in water that he might come out of it an immersed man. With a view to this he said, "*Thus, outo (in this way), it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness*": and the apostle adds, "When he was baptized, he went *up* straightway *from* the water"; clearly evincing that he must first have gone *down* into it. And now, mark this well *After he had done this*, God acknowledged him as His son, and declared himself well pleased with him (Mat. 3:13-17). Jesus had been God's most excellent Son for thirty years, but He withheld His acknowledgment of him till he commenced a course of obedience in being baptized.

Jesus was a Jew under the law of Moses. When, therefore, he spoke of the "all righteousness" to be "fulfilled", he spoke of the necessity of *doing what was signified* by the prophetosymbolic institutions of the Mosaic Law.

Jesus being the Anointed Seed long promised of God, was therefore the High Priest who was to arise after the similitude, likeness, or order of Melchizedec, and to sit upon his throne as a priest upon his throne, and to bear the glory (Zech. 6:13). This being so, he would have at some future time to occupy the place formerly held by Aaron; and as the Aaronic Inauguration was representative of the Melchizedec, Jesus had to be consecrated after the same example or type, that in so doing he might antitypically fulfill the representation of the law.

Aaron was forbidden to enter into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle without being adorned and glorified with garments of splendor and holiness, and therefore styled, "*Holy Garments*". Nor was he permitted to enter even when habited

with these, *unless he had been previously baptized*, upon pain of death. The law said, "*He shall wash his flesh in water, and so put them on*" (Lev. 16:4). He was not permitted to officiate as high priest in his ordinary attire. He must "*put off*" this, and "*put on*" the Holy Linen Robe; and had he put this on without bathing his flesh in water, and proceeded to officiate, this unbaptized High Priest of Israel would have been struck with death. When legally invested and arrayed the Aaronic High Priests were "*Holiness to Yahweh*", and the representatives of the Holy and Just One in his character and priestly office; though oftentimes, as in the case of Caiaphas, by practice unjust and wicked men. The symbolism relative to the high priest was the "*righteousness*" to be fulfilled by Jesus before he could enter upon his functions by "*the power of an endless life*" as High Priest, first over the Household of God, and afterwards over the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

John the baptizer, a greater prophet than Moses (Luke 7:28), but not so great as Jesus, preached and administered "*the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*" (Mark 1:4). Jesus came to him to be baptized of this baptism; for as Moses baptized Aaron and his sons, so the greatest of all the prophets was appointed to baptize Jesus and his brethren. But some may object that Jesus had no sins to be remitted, and had no need of repentance, and was therefore not a fit subject for such a baptism. It is admitted without reserve, that he had no sins of his own, having never transgressed the law: nevertheless, as the *SinBearer of the Abrahamic Covenant* through whom it was confirmed (Rom. 15:8), Yahweh made the iniquity of all "*the children of that covenant*" to meet upon him, that by his bruise they might be healed (Isa. 43:56). He was not the *SinBearer* of every son of Adam that ever lived; but of the true believers from Abel to the Day of Pentecost, and of the obedient believers of the truth constituting his Household; separated by "*the obedience of faith*", from Pentecost in the year of the crucifixion to his future appearing in Jerusalem; and of the living Twelve Tribes when their transgressions shall be blotted out as a thick cloud at their ingrafting into their own Olive Tree; and of that family of nations of which Abraham is the constituted father when they are made righteous; so that the sins of the whole of that world, which shall dwell upon the earth in the postmillennial eternal ages, and which will all of it have been separated from Adam's race by "*the obedience of faith*" will have met upon Him, and been borne away into everlasting oblivion. This is the world so beloved of God, "*that he gave his only begotten son...that through him it might be saved*" (John 3:16).

But to return. Jesus, with the sin of the world thus defined rankling *in his flesh*, where it was to be condemned to death when suspended on the cross (Rom. 8:3), came to John as the "*Ram of Consecration*", that his *inwards* and his *body* might be washed according to the law (Exod. 29:17,22). But these representations of the law and the prophets could not have

found their antitype in Jesus, if, in the days of his flesh, he had possessed a holier or purer *nature* than those for whom he was *bruised in the heel*. His *character* was spotless; but as being the Seed of the Woman, of whom no clean flesh can be born (Job 25:4), and Seed of Abraham, which is not immaculate, be it Virgin or Nazarite, His nature was flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14), which Paul styles "sinful flesh", or flesh full of sin, a physical quality or principle that makes the flesh mortal; and called "*sin*", because this property of flesh became its law as the consequence of transgression. "God made Jesus to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him*" (2 Cor. 5:21).

In this view of the matter, the SinBearer of the world indicated, was a fit and proper subject of John's baptism of repentance for remission of sins. The holy and undefiled disposition of Mary's Son was *granted to him for repentance* in fulfilling the symbolical righteousness of the law when he descended into the Jordan to enter into the antitypical robe of righteousness with which he must of necessity be invested before he could enter into the Most Holy as High Priest after the order of Melchizedec. In being baptized he commenced the development of *a character distinguished by perfect faith and obedience*. This character was his holy raiment, and was without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This was the "*fine linen, clean and white*" with which he arrayed himself; or "*the righteousness of the (king of) saints*" (Rev. 19:8). It was the antitype in part of Aaron's holy garments; and he had to put it on in the same way that Aaron did, "by washing his flesh in water, and so putting it on." He was baptized of John into a *holiness of his own*, which began with *obedience* in the Jordan, and ended with *obedience in death* on the cross. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that every tongue should confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11). Had Jesus yielded to John (supposing the thing to have been possible), he would have stood before his nation as the High Priest of Israel, claiming to officiate in the Most Holy Place without baptism, a spectacle it had never seen before, nor ever will while the world stands.

But the symbolic righteousness of the Mosaic law not only required the High Priest to put on the Holy Vestments by having his body baptized, but it also commanded his Household to be baptized into theirs also. The law reads thus: "This is the thing Yahweh commanded to be done: and Moses brought Aaron and his sons and *washed them with water*. And he put upon Aaron the coat, etc.; and he put coats upon his sons, and girded them with girdles, and put turbans upon them, as Yahweh commanded" (Lev. 8:5,6,13; 16:4). Here, as I have said, Moses performed the part of John the baptizer to Aaron and his sons, who were to be rulers and priests in Israel. Aaron and his family were their nation's priestly household; and it was the office of the High, or Chief, Priest to make atonement, or

reconciliation, first for himself, *then for his household*, and lastly, for all the congregation of Israel; but admission into the Holy and Most Holy places was only permitted to the baptized; they must bathe their flesh in water and so put on the holy garments. Hence, all Israel's priests were immersed persons; and so also all that shall be their priests and kings in the Age to Come, and have power over the Gentiles, must be immersed likewise.

Jesus, the Melchizedec High Priest of Israel, has a Household as well as Aaron had. A proof of this is found in the words of Paul. In writing to certain Hebrews who had *believed* the gospel of the kingdom and the name of Jesus, and had *obeyed* it in having their "bodies washed with pure water", he says, "Christ is a Son over his own house, *whose house are we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope (Acts 28:20; 26:6,7) firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6,14). Now, Jesus speaking for himself and others, said, "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness." It is therefore necessary for all "*his house*" to do as he did, but with this modification of the significance of the deed, namely, he was baptized as the initiative of his own holiness, sacrificial and priestly; they must be baptized into His *and* into a development of their own conformable to his; and with this induction for a beginning, thenceforth "continue patiently in well doing" (Rom. 2:7) that they may be holy as he was holy in the days of his flesh; as it is written, "Be ye holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

Jesus and his Household are the future kings and priests prepared of God to rule Israel and the Nations for Him. The law and the prophets which attest the righteousness of God require them all to put on that righteousness by bathing. Jesus commands the same thing, and says, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, *till all be fulfilled*" (Matt. 5:18). Therefore he said to his apostles, "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature" and "teach them who receive your proclamation to observe whatsoever I command you" (Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:20). By virtue of this saying the apostles became the depositories of his commands; so that in the words of Jesus, "He that heareth them, heareth him; and he that despiseth them, despiseth him; and he that despiseth him despiseth Him that sent him" (Luke 10:16). Now, Peter, who was one of these plenipotentiaries of Christ, commanded Cornelius, "*a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; and gave much alms to the people (Israel), and prayed to God daily*", Peter, I say, "commanded" this company of pious Gentiles, who believed the word Jesus began to preach in Galilee, "to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:2,48). The apostolic style of address was, "Children of the stock of Abraham, *and whosoever among you feareth God*, to you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26). A man's supposed piety did not exempt him from the necessity of believing and obeying the gospel of the kingdom, or, as Paul styles it, "the

word of this salvation." Peter went to Caesarea to tell pious, godfearing men, "words whereby they should be saved" (Acts 11:14). But, however pious they may be who are ignorant of these *saving words*, they are alienated from the life of God through that ignorance (Eph. 4:18). Piety in general has so little to do with an understanding of the word of the kingdom and the obedience it enjoins, that it has passed into a proverb, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." In a certain sense this is true. *The most ignorant are for the most part the most pious, and the most intolerant of the truth and its obedience.* This is *Pharisaism*, whether it flourish in the first, or in the nineteenth century; and in reference to which Jesus has said, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. 5:20). Pharisaists "appear to men to be righteous"; but men uninstructed in the gospel of the kingdom are incompetent to distinguish the counterfeit from the true. A man in this century will have no more ability to enter the kingdom of the heavens, if his righteousness exceed not that of contemporary churchmen of the strictest sect, than would those addressed by Jesus whose righteousness might be on a par with the pietists of his age. Shall it be said that it was necessary for the Melchizedec High Priest, who was innocent of transgression, and who for thirty years had enjoyed the favor of God and man, to be immersed in a baptism of repentance for remission of sins; but that it is not necessary for the pious who would compose his household, who are sinners by nature and practice? Nay, if it were indispensable for Jesus to be buried in water that he might begin a career of holiness to Yahweh in coming up out of it, it is infinitely more so that all should tread in his steps of perfect faith and obedience who would be invested with "robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb", having their loins girt around with the girdle of truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; and on their heads the helmet of salvation (Rev. 7:4, Eph. 6:14, 17). An immersed High Priest requires an immersed household. There is one law for both, as there was one baptism for Jesus and his apostles; on whom as upon all others of the household, the necessity is imperative to fulfill all the righteousness foreshadowed in Aaron and his sons. There is no discharge from this necessity for Jew or Gentile; "for *thus* it behoveth us to fulfill all righteousness."

APPENDIX

As there is a certain degree of interest connected with the circumstances which originated the foregoing exposition of the words of Jesus in reply to John, it may not be unedifying to state them here.

In our meetings at Knickerbocker Hall, since my return

from Baltimore, I had been expounding and testifying the kingdom of God, both out of the law and the prophets, by the light of the New Testament, to audiences in which there were evidently several deeply interested in the word preached. They came and went, but no decision was manifested. In order, therefore, to afford them an opportunity of declaring themselves, our congregation determined to have a *soiree* on the last Sunday evening of the year, to which they would invite all who were disposed to come. Invitation was accordingly given to everyone that thirsted for the water of life, to take tea with the brethren in their hall; that they might with freedom, sociality, and friendship, state what difficulties disturbed their minds, and ask for any information they desired, which would be cheerfully given, as far as our ability supplied.

The evening party convened at 6 pm. and continued till about twenty minutes to 11 pm. The singing of a hymn by the brethren, and thanksgiving by the chairman opened the meeting; and after tea was disposed of, general conversation gave place to the consideration of an important subject mooted by a brother. This was on the necessity of faith and obedience to salvation in the kingdom of God. The remarks which accompanied this were quite suggestive; and caused me to insert a postscript in the same direction. In the course of what I said, I submitted the substance of the exposition now before the reader; with the additional observation, that to determine the *act* of obedience in connection with water, it was quite unnecessary to have recourse to Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, as the terms used in connection with baptism were quite sufficient to indicate it. These were a being "*born of water*", "*buried*", "*planted*", "*body washed*", etc., which would not admit of the ideas expressed by *sprinkling* and *pouring* at all (John 3:5; Rom. 6:4,5). To be born of earth, flesh, or water, is for the subject to emerge from a previous concealment therein. To be buried or planted is to be put out of sight, or covered up, in whatever medium may be employed; and to wash the body is to bathe it, as is evident from the law, wash and bathe being there interchangeably used. After this several difficulties were presented and considered, and satisfactory explanations elicited, at least to some. Some stated their convictions, and determination to be baptized, upon an intelligent and hearty belief of the gospel of the kingdom and Name of Jesus. Of these some had been immersed among the Baptists; others, not at all; while others concurred in the truth of the gospel as they had heard it taught in our meetings, but did not yet see it necessary to repeat immersion, though they admitted that before their baptism they knew nothing of the kingdom of God. How, then, could they have believed the gospel, seeing that the glad tidings are about that kingdom? If the kingdom be not doctrinally in a man's heart, the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles is not there; and this being absent, he is destitute of "*the substance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things*

unseen"; in other words, he is without the faith that is necessary to be possessed for justification in passing through the water "into the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

In fine, the meeting progressed and concluded with so much good feeling and gratification at the interesting matter brought out from the word by the questions asked, that our worthy chairman was pleased to say, that such meetings were "better than half a dozen sermons." And this I have no doubt is true; and were it not for the trouble and expense inseparable from such meetings, I doubt not but a weekly *soiree* in New York city, conducted as this was, would conduce to a greater progress of the truth in a shorter time, than in the ordinary course of things. Not having the gift of discerning spirits, a teacher of the word cannot now say, "Why say ye in your hearts?" If he could, he might speak his words so seasonably as to result in the conviction if many whose skepticism is never reached. In social meetings, however, the restraint felt at public meetings is removed; and out of the fulness of the heart the mouth feels at liberty to speak. Thus the teacher gets at the workings of the inner man; and oftentimes with few words converts the difficulties of months into the fading shadows of dissolving views.

At the *soiree* we were favored with the company of two sons of Abraham according to the flesh; one from Hungary (a first lieutenant in the Kossuth's forces), from which he had been expelled by the tyrant of Vienna; the other from Amsterdam, where and in Germany he had been laboring for five years as a missionary among the Jews. They are both believers in Jesus as their longexpected Messiah; and understand well the things of his kingdom and name. But with respect to baptism, they share in the darkness which everywhere pervades the sectarian world. They are both learned in Hebrew lore, and well able to cope with both the rabbis and clergy of all "the Synagogues of Satan" in this large and corrupt community; and I sincerely hope that a career is opening to them in which they will be able to bring many of their brethren, according to the flesh, to the obedience of the faith foreshadowed in the law, and unqualifiedly enjoined by their King upon all who seek his favor in the Age to Come.

About two days after the *soiree* I was much gratified at receiving a visit, in company with one of our members, from these two sons of Israel. They spent the afternoon and evening with me at my residence. They came to declare their entire conviction, that as Jesus descended into the water and came up out of it, so it was the duty and privilege of all who believed the gospel of the kingdom to do, in obedience to the Word of God. I was agreeably surprised at this intelligent and candid avowal, having, at a previous interview with one of them, in company with another Israelite, heard them allude to immersion in a manner which led me to conclude that they had no very high opinion of the views that would lead a man into "much water." I inquired what led them to their present

conclusion. They said that their consideration of the subject was not a new thing. One said that he had attended lectures on the subject of baptism in London; but that they had failed to convince him of the necessity of immersion. They looked to the intention, not to the quantity of water. The other from Holland, who had been convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus by M. Da Costa, a Jewish missionary in Germany, had been poured upon; but on hearing my remarks on baptism as a burial, a planting, a being born, etc., and on the necessity of fulfilling all righteousness as foreshadowed in the law, they praised the Lord that the matter was now plain to them, and they were determined to become obedient to the faith. A word spoken in season how good it is! It is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. After this shall our little flock despair of doing something with the Jews in this city? There are said to be 300 here who have avowed their belief in Jesus; though but few, it is probable, have obeyed the gospel he preached. A worthy Israelite, employed by the Presbyterian Church as a missionary among the Jews, used to be a very regular attendant on my expositions of Moses and the Prophets, when we met at Convention Hall; and I hear that since he left the city he also has been immersed. He understood the Gospel to some extent, although in the Presbyterian service at that time; but he did not see that his more scriptural faith necessitated his separation, though he felt much the inconvenience of the connection. "These Doctors of Divinity", he used to say, "don't like to hear of judgment coming upon Gentiles, and the restoration of Israel. They like smooth things, and cry, Peace, peace. What I want to know is just what is possible, that I may not spend my strength for nought. If Israel cannot be individually converted till the Lord come, I would know it, and turn to the Gentiles; and if these are impervious to the truth, I would try to save myself and turn to some other employ." Soon after this he told me he was about to leave New York, and go to some part that was more of a Galilee, and there preach to both Jews and Gentiles. "Where", said I, "will you find it with the light shining therein?" He thought he might find it in the region around Rochester. He went, and has since returned, finding, it is probable, that the light was as incomprehensible to the Yankee Galileans as to their predecessors in Israel's land.

I learned from my Jewish visitors what I hoped may come to pass, namely, that a convention of the Jews who believe in Jesus, residing in New York and its environs, will be convened in the spring. I shall be informed of it, and shall certainly, all things concurring, attend. As the Virginia Elymas truly says, "the Gospel preached by Dr. Thomas is just the gospel for the Jews." I doubt not if I could get it before them many of the devout minds among them would embrace it, and become its earnest and zealous advocates. The Protestant gospels only perpetuate their blindness. The clergy may sometimes convince them that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel; but this is all they can do. They cannot show them

the Gospel of salvation; if any of them attain to it, it is in spite of clerical perversions. My friends are emancipated from these, having lost their faith in Lutheran and Calvinistic divines. One of them, who is now a member of our body [the other also, since this was written], called upon a Lutheran shepherd in Williamsburgh, with whom he conversed on the coming of Christ to Jerusalem. The pastor asked if there would be a Lutheran church there when he came, and whether he would come to that church; to which our friend answered, "no": "Then", said the divine, "I don't want to go there." Why? Because he loves his church, by which he receives his consolation, better than the Lord!

But, reader, I have narrated to your more details of Jewish affairs than I intended. I hope, however, I have not wearied you; but the fact is, the things pertaining to Israel are to me most interesting matters. I summoned our Jewish friends before you to account for the appearance of the exposition of our Lord's words in these columns, but have not yet done it. In brief, then, one of them requested that I would commit the substance of what he heard from me at the *soiree* to paper, that he might transmit a translation of it to his friends in Germany. Having done so, as I cannot afford time for writing much that is not available for these pages, I copied it with amplifications, which have swelled it from two to four pages, exclusive of this appendix, and now present it to you, believing that what is good for Jews in the German fatherland is good also for Gentiles in AngloSaxondom. That the same results may ensue from its perusal in your case, that have already manifested themselves in theirs, if thou art still in unbelief or disobedience, is the earnest desire of your friend and wellwisher, the

Editor.

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