

Levi's Urim and Thummim Found With Christ.

by John Gill

John Gill's sermon explores the significance of the Urim and Thummim as symbols of divine guidance, ultimately fulfilled in Christ as the holy One.

Scripture: Exodus 28:30, Numbers 27:21, Deuteronomy 33:8, John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Colossians 1:19, Colossians 2:3, Hebrews 7:26, 1 John 2:1, Revelation 1:5-6

Topics: "Divine Guidance", "Christ as High Priest"

Description

John Gill preaches on the significance of the Urim and Thummim, emphasizing that they represent the light and perfection found in Christ. He explains how these ancient tools were used by the high priest to seek God's counsel for the people of Israel, paralleling Christ's role as our High Priest who intercedes for us. Gill highlights that the true Urim and Thummim are embodied in Jesus, who fulfills the need for divine guidance and perfection. He draws connections between the historical context of the Urim and Thummim and their ultimate fulfillment in Christ's ministry, underscoring the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Levitical system. The sermon concludes with a call to recognize the completeness of all spiritual blessings in Christ, who is the source of all light and perfection.

Transcript

LEVI'S URIM AND THUMMIM

FOUND WITH CHRIST,

A Sermon

DEUTERONOMY 33:8

And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim, and thy Urim be with thy holy One, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.

These words are part of the blessing wherewith Moses blessed the tribe of Levi, when he blessed that and the other tribes a little before his death. He was a man eminently raised up by God for much good to the people of Israel; he was a glorious instrument in God's hand, to deliver them out of Egyptian bondage; and was a guide, a governor, a legislator, nay, a father to them in the wilderness; but having unadvisedly spoke with his lips concerning them, it went ill with him for their sakes; so that he was not allowed to enter into the land of Canaan; but, as in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he is bid to go up to mount

Nebo, and take a prospect of the promised land and die.

Moses, thus having notice of the time of his departure being at hand, and having a real affection and concern for this people, by a prophetic spirit, blesses the several tribes, verse 1. This is the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death, And prefaces his benediction with observing the wonderful love of God to that people, in giving them a law by his hands, which was delivered in so august and magnificent a manner, verses 2-5.

And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shinned forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

And then he proceeds particularly to bless the tribes, beginning with Reuben, verse 6, who was Jacobs firstborn; but had forfeited his birth-right by his sin. Judah, in verse 7 is blessed next, who, though the fourth son, is blessed in the second place, because to his tribe belonged the kingdom, and from thence was the Messiah to arise, one of whose characters is, the lion of the tribe of Judah; and, perhaps, all that is said in this blessing may very well be applied to him.

In the next place comes Levi, in the words I have read, Simeon his brother in iniquity, being wholly omitted; And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah. Which words I intend, by divine assistance, to open and explain. But I must entreat your patience a little, whilst I remove the difficulties of the text; which I shall endeavor to do. First, By giving some account of the Urim and Thummim. Secondly, By shewing who the person is whom Moses intends, and points at, in these words, to whom the Urim and Thummim belong.

First, I shall endeavour to give some account of the Urim and Thummim. The first mention that is made of them, is in Exodus 28:30. And than shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. The words Urim and Thummim are by the Septuagint rendered a manifestation and truth; though they may be much better translated lights and perfections; as they are by Aquilla, in Leviticus 8:8 and are frequently applied, by divines, to that light of knowledge and integrity of life, which are requisite characters in every minister of Christ; but what these Urim and Thummim were, is not so easy a thing to determine: Some of the Jewish Rabbi have ingenuously confessed, that they knew not what they were, and some of our Christian interpreters have thought it safest to leave them as things unknown, and not conclude anything certainly about them; though the scripture seems to speak of them as things well known; and an inquiry into them is nowhere forbidden; therefore we shall attempt it at this time.

There has been a variety of opinions concerning them, which particularly to enumerate, and enter into the consideration of, would be both tedious, and to little purpose, one thinks that these two words, Urim and Thummim were engraven on a stone, or a plate of gold, and put into the breast-plate, even as those words, Holiness to the Lord, were engraven on a plate of gold, and fastened, by a blue lace, to the front of Aaron's mitre. Another is of opinion (Calvin in Ex. 28:4), that they were two famous and remarkable characters in the breast-plate, which suited with those names: Others have supposed, that this was the writing of Shemhamphorash, that is, the name Jehovah (which the Jews say is unlawful to be pronounced

but by the high-priest when he entered into the holy of Holies) which name, either by itself, or with other divine names, explanative of it, were put into, or engraven on the breast-plate; and this way go most of the Jewish doctors.

Others have imagined, that they were little images, which the high priest carried about with him in the folds of the breast-plate, and as often as he inquired concerning anything, God, or an angel in the name of God, did by these, answer very clearly and distinctly, what was to be done, or not to be done; and that, because of the perspicuity and certain completion of the answers, the one was called Urim, and the other Thummim; and that, whilst the priest was inquiring, the images glistened and appeared very bright, to fix the people's attention, and raise their admiration: they also imagine, that these images are the same with the Teraphim made mention of in many places of scripture with the ephod, but never in a good sense; for they were idols which the Jews, who were a people prone to idolatry, had learned to worship of the nations; and they seem to be household gods, such as the Lares or Penates among the Romans; wherefore it cannot be supposed that these were the Urim and Thummim which were put into the breast-plate, because it would have been directly contrary to the second commandment.

Others have been of opinion, that these were a work purely divine, not made by Bezaleel or any other artificer, but by God himself, as the two tables of stone were, on which the law was engraven: and that God gave these to Moses, and he put them into the breast-plate; though of what form and matter they were they will no more pretend to tell, that they would of what stone the two tables were made. But the opinion, which at present I am most inclined to come into, is, that the Urim and Thummim were no other than the twelve stones in the breast-plate, on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and that these were called Urim, because they were clear, lucid, and transparent; and Thummim, because they were perfect and complete, had no blemish or defect in them: what induces me to embrace and prefer this opinion to all others, is, because in Exodus 34, where there is a particular account given of all the priest's vestments, and more especially of the breast-plate and the things appertaining thereunto, there is mention made of the twelve stones, but no notice taken of the Urim and Thummim: now if the Urim and Thummim had been anything different from the stones, Moses would not have omitted the mention of them, seeing he takes notice of things more minute than these: and as also, in Leviticus 8:8 where is given the like account, mention is made of the Urim and Thummim, and no notice taken of the stones, which is a further confirmation of this opinion.

Likewise, I find some of the most learned of the Jewish writers are of the same opinion, particularly Josephus, whose testimony must go a great way in this matter, seeing he lived while the second temple stood, was by sect a Pharisee, by profession a priest, and of the blood royal; and therefore no doubt, had all the opportunities and advantages of informing himself in these affairs. Having thus considered what they were, let us now observe what was the use of them, which I apprehend to be twofold.

I. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel being engraven on them, they were borne on Aaron's heart, when he went into the holy place on the day of atonement, for a memorial before the Lord, so that what Aaron then did, more especially, he did, not in his own name, but in the name of the whole congregation of Israel; he acted as their representative, when he slew the sacrifice, and carried the blood within the veil, for it was not only for himself, but for all the people. II.

By these, the high priest consulted God for the people in matters of moment; thus we read in Numbers 27:21, And he (that is, Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in,

both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. Consultation by Urim and Thummim was made by the priest only, but not without having on the Ephod, and generally before the ark of the covenant; not for private persons and for private affairs or for things trivial, but for public persons, and in matters of moment.

And so we read, in the Misnah, They inquire by Urim and Thummim, but they do not inquire by these .for a private person, but for a king, and for the house of judgment, and for him whom the congregation needeth. This was certainly a very great favor, which God indulged this people with, that they could thus have recourse unto him on emergent occasions; and it was an evidence of God's displeasure to Saul, when he would not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by Prophets: How long those things continued in use, is not so well known.

The Talmudists say", That king ,Josiah hid the Urim and Thummim under ground in a cave, before prepared by Solomon, together with the anointing oil, the ark of the covenant, Aaron's rod, and the pot of Manna, and that these things could not be found when they returned from Babylon; therefore tell us that these five things were wanting in the second temple, namely, 1. The ark with the mercy-seat, and cherubims. 2. The fire from heaven which burnt up the sacrifice. 3. The Shechinah, or the divine presence. 4.

The holy Ghost, or Spirit of prophecy. 5. The Urim and Thummim. And in the Misnah they say, "After the death of the former prophets the Urim and Thummim ceased." Maimonides indeed says, that the Urim and Thummim were made in the second temple, though not used; his words are these, "They made in the second temple Urim and Thummim, to the end, they might make up all the eight ornaments, although they did not inquire by them: and wherefore did they not inquire by them? because the holy Ghost was not there."

Josephus says, that the shining of these stones had ceased two hundred years before he wrote his Antiquities; and it is manifest from scripture, that the Jews were without them when they returned from Babylon, as appears from Ezra,(2:63) And the Tirshatha, that is, Nehemiah, said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim. This shews the deficiency and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and what need there was of another priest to arise with the true Urim and Thummim, not after Aaron's order, but after the order of Melehizedek.

But now let us consider a little, in what way and manner God was pleased to return answers by Urim and Thummim. The Jews generally say, it was by the extraordinary brightness and protuberance of some of the letters upon the stones, which swelling, and appearing higher and brighter than others, either altogether, or one after another, the priest could read the answer which should be returned: but there not being a complete alphabet in the names of the twelve tribes, they added the names of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and this not being sufficient, they added these words, Col Elle Shibte Israel, "All these are the tribes of Israel."

Here being now a complete alphabet, they suppose an answer might be returned this way upon any affair that was consulted about. Others, that the priests knew the mind and will of God, by the brightness or dullness of the stones; that if the stones were bright, the answer was in the affirmative; if dull, in the negative; and so they returned the answer to the people. Others have been of opinion, that the priest, when he went and asked counsel of God, having on the breast-plate and the Urim and Thummim it, God was pleased to enlighten his understanding, and fix in his mind a firm persuasion of the truth of the answer

intended, and accordingly he returned it.

But I am most inclined to think, that God gave the answer by a distinct and articulate voice; my reasons for it are, because in Numbers, when the priest asked counsel of God, it is said, at his word, or at his mouth, that is, of the Lord, Shall they go out, and at his word, or mouth, Shall they come in (Num. 27:21); and in all the instances we have of inquiry, being made by Urim and Thummim, the answers, as they appear to me, were given this way: Thus, after Joshua's death, when the people of Israel inquired of the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?

The Lord said Judah shall go up (Judges 27:21); And when David ordered, Abiathar the priest to bring the Ephod to him, and he inquired of the Lord, saying, Will Saul come down? And the Lord said he will come down: Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said they will deliver thee up (1 Sam. 23:11, 12). Thus I have endeavored to give you some account of the Urim and Thummim, which I suppose to be the twelve stones in the breast-plate, on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; one whereof use whereof, was, by them to ask counsel of God in matters of moment; and the answer was given to the priest, by a distinct and articulate voice, he having on the breast-plate at that time, with these stones in it.

Secondly, I shall now proceed to show, who the person is, whom Moses intends, and points at, in these words, to whom the Urim and Thummim belong. And here are two things spoken of him, which maybe a direction to us in finding out the person intended. 1st, He was God's holy One. 2dly, He was proved at Massah, and strove with? at the waters of Meribah. 1st, Both these are true of Aaron; he was an holy man, had the principles of grace and holiness wrought in his soul, and lived an holy life and conversation, and therefore he is called the saint of the Lord; they envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord (Ps. 106:15).

He was also proved at Massah, and strove with at the waters of Meribah; which may he referred either to God, or to the Israelites proving him: God proved him at Massah, or tempted him in, or with a temptation, as the words may be read. Even as he is said to tempt Abraham, so he may be here said to tempt Aaron; But how? Why, by suffering the people of Israel gather together against him and Moses, and to murmur against them for want of water. But how did it go with Aaron in this temptation, or trial of his faith and patience?

All the three Targums, on the place, gave it in his praise, that he stood in the temptation, was perfect, and was found faithful: But this doth not seem so well to agree to the account in Numbers, where it is said, And the Lord spake to Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord: And he was sanctified in them (Num. 20:12).

It seems from hence, that he did not stand in the temptation; and therefore God strove and contended with him; that is, blamed him, and shewed manifest tokens of his displeasure at his carriage and behavior; or else the words may be referred to the tribe of Levi, who, with the rest, of the Israelites, tempted and strove with Moses and Aaron at these places; though some of the Jewish writers exempt the tribe of Levi, and say, that they murmured not with the other murmurers. 2dly, These two characters in the text may very well be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ: the character of an holy One well suits with him; he is so both as God and man; he is the man thy holy One, as the words may be rendered; he was so in his conception

and birth, and therefore called that holy thing; holy he was in his nature, and in all the actions of his life, and therefore a proper person for the Urim and Thummim to be with, and a suitable high priest for us; for such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26); of him also it may be truly said, that he was proved at Massah, and strove with at the waters of Meribah; for the Israelites not only tempted and strove with Moses and Aaron, but they tempted and strove with the Lord Jehovah; Thus in Exodus we read, that Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me?

Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord (Ex. 17:2)? And in verse 7 he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord; saying, Is the Lord among us or not? And in Numbers, This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them (Num. 20:13). Now, who was this Lord; this Jehovah, whom they tempted and strove with after this manner? He was no other than the angel who was sent to conduct them through the wilderness, the Angel of God's presence, the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears from 1 Corinthians 10:9, Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

So that Christ is the holy One who is more especially intended here, who was tempted and strove with at Massah and Meribah; therefore to him the true Urim and Thummim belong. And the words may be thus paraphrased, And of Levi, that is, of the tribe of Levi, he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim (or thy lights and thy perfections, O God) be with thy holy One, Christ Jesus, whom thou, O Levi, with the rest of the tribes of Israel, didst tempt at Massah, and strive with at the waters of Meribah.

Thus having opened the words, and endeavored to remove the difficulties of the text, I shall in the following observation, give you what I conceive is intended therein, namely, That the true Urim and Thummim are with God's holy One, Christ Jesus; or, What was meant and typified by the Urim and Thummim, is to be found fully and complete in Christ.

And in speaking hereunto I shall,

I. Endeavour to shew, how the Urim and Thummim are with Christ according to the significance of the words.

II. How they may be applied unto him, with regard to the use of them.

I. I will endeavour to shew, how the Urim and the Thummim may be said to be with Christ, according to the significance of the words. The words, as I have already observed, signify, lights and perfections: now, all light and perfection are in Christ; it hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell (Col. 1:19). Fulness and perfection of all that is great and glorious, valuable and precious, are to be found in him; in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). 1st, The Urim is with Christ; all light is in Christ, and from him.

As all that light which was created on the first day, and disseminated throughout the whole creation until the fourth day, is in that great luminary the sun; so all that light which is dispersed among the creatures, is, in its full perfection, in Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness and as all bodies, celestial and terrestrial, have their light from the sun, so all creatures have their light from Christ, who is the light of the world. There is a threefold light, that is in, and is communicated to us from Christ; the light of nature, grace, and glory. (1.)

The light of nature is from Christ. The light of nature, in fallen man, must needs fall short of what it was in man in a state of innocence, yet it is not wholly lost, but there are some remains of it in him; which, though not sufficient to save him, yet are enough to leave him without excuse; for, by this light of nature, he may arrive to the knowledge of a divine Being; seeing the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

He may hereby know, that this divine Being is possessed of great and glorious perfections, that he is to be worshipped and adored by him; he may hereby in some measure know the difference between good and evil, as the apostle observes in his epistle to the Romans; For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law to themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another (Rom. 2:14, 15).

Also, he may in some measure know how to conduct himself as a rational creature in this world. Now all this light, is from Christ; for, as we are told by the evangelist John, he is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9); but every man that comes into the world, is not lighted with the light of grace, or the light of glory; and therefore it is the light of nature which is there intended; for John is not speaking of Christ, as the author of the new, but as the author of the old creation: for he tells us, that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:3&4): So that as we have our natural being, and our natural life, from Christ, as a creator, from him also we have our natural light, as such. (2.) The light of grace is from Christ. The light of grace is that whereby a poor sinner, who was darkness itself, being born, and brought up in darkness, and having lived and, walked in darkness, is now made light in the Lord; so that he sees his depraved, miserable, and lost state by nature; as also, the necessity, as well as fulness, glory, and suitableness, of salvation by Christ; and can say, as the poor man did, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see (John 9:25).

The work of grace upon the heart of a sinner, consists much in his being called out of darkness into marvelous light, marvelous and surprising light indeed The characters they bear, who are thus called by divine grace, are children of the light and of the day; for they are no more children of the night, or of darkness; for the darkness is past, and the true light now shines. Now all this light is from Christ: If any souls have, this light, it is he that gives it to them; Christ shall give thee light.

If any are called to this marvelous light, it is by him; if any are made light, it is in or by the Lord Christ; for he is given by God the Father to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of his people Israel. For this light of grace includes in it the light of the knowledge of the divine perfections, the light of the knowledge of Christ, and the light of the knowledge of gospel truths; and all these are in and from Christ. 1. The light of the knowledge of the divine perfections, is in and from Christ, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, that is, of the glorious perfections of God, is given to us in the face, or person, of Christ Jesus.

It is true, God has discovered his perfections in the works of creation and providence; for, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work (Ps.19:1). There is a glorious shine of his power, wisdom, goodness, &c. upon them, but there is a far more glorious display of the divine perfections in him, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. For in

the contrivance of salvation by him, the depths of wisdom and knowledge are discovered; in the mission of him, the exceeding riches of his love, grace and mercy, are laid open; in his accomplishment of the work, the arm of almighty power is made bare; and in the sufferings which he underwent, in our room and stead, the glories of divine faithfulness, justice and holiness, are surprisingly displayed; here mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Ps. 85:10).

Here is no clashing among the divine perfections, but a sweet and an entire harmony among each other, all shining forth with equal glory and lustre in man's salvation. Now, this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent (John 17:3); that is, to know God in Christ. The Heathens may know him in the creatures, but they cannot know him in Christ without a divine revelation and that revelation must be attended with a supernatural light; which light must come from Christ himself.

2.

The light of the knowledge of Christ is from himself, for it is in his light we see light. As we see the sun in its own light, and it is impossible for us to see it any other light than its own; so we see Christ, the Sun of righteousness, in his own light; and it is impossible for us to see him in any other; it is in his own light we see him as the eternal Son of God, as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: It is in his own light we see him as the mediator between God and man, as the Saviour of sinners; that salvation is in him, and in no other; that it is in vain to expect it from hills and mountains; for truly, and alone, in our God is the salvation of Israel.

It is in his own light we see the glory and efficacy of his atoning sacrifice, whereby he has put away sin, and perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It is in his own light we see the efficacy of his precious blood, whereby the remission of our sins is obtained, and our souls are washed and cleansed from all sin, and our consciences purged from dead works to serve the living God. It is in his own light we see the completeness of his justifying righteousness, which is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, and by which we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.

It is in his own light we see those immense treasures of grace and glory which lie hid in his person; we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten; and one main branch of that glory consists in his being full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

3. The light of the knowledge of gospel truths is from Christ; it is he that opens our understanding that we may understand the scriptures. It is he that gives us to know the mysteries of the kingdom. It is he that sends his spirit as the spirit of truth, to lead us into all truth; otherwise the Bible would be a sealed book to us, a book full of riddles: the truths and doctrines contained therein would be as parables, and dark sayings.

David knew this full well, and therefore prays after this manner, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law (Ps. 119:18).

(3.) As the light of nature and grace is from Christ, so likewise is the light of glory. Heaven is represented to us a lightsome place; it is called, the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12); and all that light that fills it, is from Christ. That city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Rev. 21:23).

When you are safely arrived there, all darkness of infidelity, doubts and fears, will then be' dispelled, and your souls will be irradiated with those beams and rays of light from Christ, which will for ever strike you with wonder and pleasure: then shall you behold his glory, and see him as he is: then shall the sun be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light to thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory; thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon

withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended (Isa.60:19, 20).

Thus the Urim is with Christ; all light of nature, grace and glory, is in him, and from him. 2dly, The Thummim is with Christ; all perfections are in him, he includes and comprehends all. 1. All divine perfections are in him; in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Whatever perfection is in the Deity, is to be found in Christ; whatever is a divine perfection, he is possessed of. Is eternity a divine perfection? It is in Christ; he is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end; which is, and which was, and which is to come (Rev. 1:8).

Is omnipotence a divine perfection? It is in Christ; he is the Almighty. Is omniscience a divine perfection? It is in Christ; he needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man (John 2:25); and therefore Peter appealed to him, as the heart-searching, and rein-trying God: and said, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee (John 21:17). Is omnipresence a divine perfection? It is in Christ; therefore he says, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

Is immutability a divine perfection? It is in Christ; he is Jesus, the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb. 13:8). In short, is there any other divine perfection? It is in him; he is possessed of all, and therefore is the true God, and eternal life. 2. A perfection of the gifts of the Spirit is in him. God has not given the Spirit by measure to him; with this oil of gladness is he anointed above his fellows; which like the precious ointment on Aaron's head, that ran down to the skirts of his garments, descends from him to all the members of his body, in their measure.

All those gifts of the Spirit, which are to be found in men, come from Jesus Christ. There was a very large measure of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon the apostles at the day of Pentecost, but from whom did they receive it? From an ascended Lord and King; as is manifest from what the apostle Peter says in the Acts; Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, that is Christ being exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, he hath shed forth this which you now see and hear (Acts 2:33).

This he did both as a fruit and evidence of his being ascended on high, and of his having received gifts for men. 3. A perfection of all grace is in Christ; he is said to be full of grace, of all sorts of grace needful for the believer: and therefore we should be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; which is in him to its full perfection, and which the believer will always find sufficient for him. Particularly there is a perfection of justifying and sanctifying grace in Christ. (1.)

There is a perfection of justifying grace in Christ; there is a perfect righteousness in him; he is not only righteous as he is God, and as he is God's servant, but he is also Jehovah our righteousness; which righteousness was wrought out by him, and is imputed by the Father, and applied by the Spirit to us; it is every way complete and perfect; it is sufficient for all the elect; it is a garment down to the foot, covering the meanest members in Christ's mystical body; and by it are they justified from all things, be those all things what they will; they are acquitted and discharged from all sin and condemnation by it, and stand in it complete and irreproveable in the sight of God. (2.)

There is a perfection of sanctifying grace in Christ; perfect holiness is in him; from him must we have our holiness, as well as our righteousness, we stand in need of an holy nature, as well as of a justifying righteousness; and as without the one, so neither without the other can we enter into the kingdom of

heaven; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14); no, not without a perfect one. From whence now must we have perfect holiness? from ourselves we cannot expect it, but from Christ, who has purchased and procured it for us, and has now all the holiness of his people in his hands, and is giving it forth unto them, that they may be perfectly meet for the eternal enjoyment of himself, who of God is made unto them sanctification, us well as righteousness. 4.

The perfection of all covenant blessings and promises is in him: The blessings of the everlasting covenant are upon the head, and in the hands of our Joseph, who was separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; therefore whatever blessing we are blessed with, whether it be with the pardon of sin, or with a justifying righteousness, or with any other, we have them from Christ; hence we have reason to say with the apostle, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3).

And as all blessings, so all promises are in Christ; they are all in him, yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God, by us (2 Cor. 1:20); there is a perfection of them in him; so that the believer cannot come under any case or circumstance of life, but there is a promise in Christ, suitable for him, had he but faith to view it, and lay hold upon it. 5. Perfection of all light and life, strength and wisdom, joy and comfort, is in Christ. That the perfection of all light is in Christ, I have shown already; and as all light so all life is in him; for with him is the fountain of life, from whence all the streams of life flow.

If you ask, how came it to be in Christ? I answer, he did, in the everlasting counsels of peace, ask it of his Father for all his seed, and he granted him his request; as it is said, he asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever (Ps. 21:4). Thus he came to have life in himself, as mediator for the elect, and to have a right to dispose of it to as many as the Father gave to him: and for this purpose did he come into the world, to remove obstacles out of the way, that the streams of life might run freely; that so we might have it, and have it more abundantly than ever Adam had in innocence, or the angels now have in heaven.

Also perfection of strength is in Christ; we are poor, weak creatures, in ourselves, yet there is strength as well as righteousness for us in him he is the man of God's right hand, whom he has made strong, not only for himself, but for us; so that though we are incapable of doing anything of ourselves, yet we can do all things through Christ strengthening us. There is likewise a perfection of wisdom in him, not only for himself, to qualify him for the discharge of every branch of the mediatorial office, but also for us, to direct and guide us in all our ways through this wilderness, he is the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of God for us; for he, of God, is made unto us wisdom, as well as sanctification and righteousness.

There is moreover, a perfection of joy and comfort in Christ; there is always matter of rejoicing in him, his person, blood, and righteousness, are a sufficient ground for the same: There is always an abounding of consolation in him; for as our sufferings, our trials, our reproaches, and calumnies, which are cast upon us, for the sake of Christ, abound; so our consolation abounds by him; and whatever comfort comes any other way, there is just reason to suspect it is ill-grounded.

Thus the Thummim is with Christ, as well as the Urim, all perfection is in him. So much for the first thing. II. I shall now inquire how the Urim and Thummim may be applied to Christ, in respect to the use of them. I have already observed a two fold use thereof: the first was that upon these stones, that is, the Urim and Thummim, were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel which the high priest bore upon his heart, when he went into the holy place, or a memorial before the Lord; from whence we may observe

these two things.

First, That the elect of God lie near the heart of Christ, the great High priest; for as the names of the twelve tribes were engraven on these stones, and borne upon Aaron's heart: so are all God's elect engraven On the heart of Christ; not only upon the palms of his hands, but upon his heart, as the church in Solomon's song desired; saying, Set me as a seal upon thine heart (Cant. 8:6): they lay near his heart, and were the objects of his love from eternity; he was not only rejoicing in and with, and before his Father, but also in the habitable parts of the earth, in the views of that part of the earth which he knew would be so, and where his elect should dwell; and his delights were with the sons of men, even before the earth was made, or the highest part of the dust of the world was formed: They lay near his heart when he died for them, and there they still lie, and ever will do so.

Secondly, That what Christ did, who is our high priest, with Urim and Thummim, he did it as our representative, in our name, and in our room and stead; even as Aaron, when he slew the sacrifice on the day of atonement, and carried the blood within the vail, did it in the name of the whole congregation; so when Christ offered up himself a sacrifice, he did it in our name, and for our sins: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7); and this was received by the Father, as an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor on our account; and now he is entered into the holy place by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

It is, with the names of all the elect, engraven upon his heart; he is entered into heaven as a forerunner for them; he is gone before to take possession of glory in their name, as well as to prepare it for them; and therefore they are said now to sit together in heavenly places in him (Eph. 2:6); what he receives there, he receives in their name; what he does he does in their name; and on their account, he appears in the presence of God for them. So much for the first use of the Urim and Thummim.

The second was, that with these the priest asked counsel of God for the people in matters of moment. This may represent unto us Christ's acting for us as an Intercessor, Advocate, or Counselor, one of whose titles in Isaiah is the Counselor (Isa. 9:6); or, as the Septuagint translates it, The Angel of the great council; he acted as such, in the great council that was held between the eternal Three, concerning man's salvation; and has acted as such ever since; he now pleads our cause, removes all charges, answers all accusations, consults our interest, and acts the whole part of an advocate for us; If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

But let us consider a little more particularly, how these things may be applied to Christ. 1. None but the high priest might ask counsel of God by Urim and Thummim; Joshua must stand before Eleazar the priest who shall ask counsel for him at the judgment of Urim before the Lord (Num. 27:22); so none but the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's counselor, advocate, intercessor and mediator; no angels nor saints departed; for there is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

As there is but one mediator of redemption, so there is but one mediator of intercession; so that when we want counsel and advice, we must employ him: when we want any favor at God's hand, we must make use of his interest: when we have a cause to plead, he is the only person we must, and the most proper person we can, apply unto. 2. The high priest, when he did this, put on the Ephod, and none but he might do so. The Ephod may represent unto us the garment of the human nature, with which Christ, our great high priest, is clothed; which, though all the three persons had an hand in making, yet it was thought proper that the second person alone should wear it; which garment, as the Ephod was girt about the priest

with a curious girdle, is girt about Christ with the girdle of love, and no other girdle but that could have fastened it to him.

Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14), the children whom he loved, and because he loved them, therefore he himself also took part of the same. And as the Ephod was a glorious garment, being adorned with sparkling gems and precious stones, so is the human nature of Christ, now in heaven full of glory; For we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour (Heb. 2:10): and in this nature as well as in the divine, does he act the part of a counsellor, advocate, and intercessor for us. 3.

Counsel was asked by Urim and Thummim only for public persons; as for a king, or the house of Judgment; the senate or sanhedrin; or the whole congregation of Israel; and that only in matters of moment, as I have already observed. Now our great high priest, with Urim and Thummim, is acting the part of a counsellor and intercessor, not for the men of the world, but for the whole congregation of the elect; I pray for them, says he; I pray not for the world (John 17:9). Those that he concerns himself for, are persons of note, they are princes, the sons of a King, nay, Kings themselves; such whom he has loved and washed from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests to God and his Father (Rev. 1:5, 6).

And the things that he is concerned about for them, are not trivial matters, but things of the greatest importance; such as the conversion of elect sinners, and the consolation of called saints, that they may have the Spirit as a comforter to abide with them; and the manifestations of pardoning grace to their souls; that their faith may not fail in an hour of temptation, but that they may persevere to the end, and be with him, where he is, to behold his glory. 4. The person for whom counsel was asked, was to stand before the priest: which shews us, that we must make our application to Christ, our high priest; we must ask in his name, and put our petitions into his hands, and stand before him waiting for an answer; for he has said, whatsoever ye ask in my name that will I do. 5.

And lastly. As those responses which God returned by Urim and Thummim were certainly true, without any falsity or equivocation in them, such as the diabolical oracles of the Gentiles had; so as true are all those things which he says unto us by Christ: God did at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak in time past to the fathers by the prophets (Heb. 1:1); sometimes by dreams and visions, and sometimes by Urim and Thummim; but he hath now in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

And as all he said by dreams and visions, or by Urim and Thummim, was true so is all that he has said to us by his Son, who is truth itself, the faithful witness, who hath fully declared the whole counsel of God unto us. Thus I have considered how the Urim and Thummim may be applied to Christ, or said to be with him, and lastly, Is the true Urim and Thummim alone with Christ? You learn hence, the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of Aaron's; the Levitical law was but a shadow of good things to come, which good things are brought to us by Christ, who is the substance of those shadows.

And we may also learn the glory of the gospel dispensation, in which the day is broke, and the shadows are fled and gone; and we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18) .

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