

## VI. - The Mystic Meaning of the Tabernacle and its Furniture

Now the high priest's robe is the symbol of the world of sense. **The seven planets are represented by the five stones and the two carbuncles**, for Saturn and the Moon. The former is southern, and moist, and earthy, and heavy; the latter aerial, whence she is called by some Artemis, as if Aerotomos (cutting the air); and the air is cloudy. And cooperating as they did in the production of things here below, **those that by Divine Providence are set over the planets are rightly represented as placed on the breast and shoulders; and by them was the work of creation, the first week. And the breast is the seat of the heart and soul.**

Differently, **the stones might be the various phases of salvation**; some occupying the upper, some the lower parts of the entire body saved. **The three hundred and sixty bells, suspended from the robe, is the space of a year, "the acceptable year of the Lord," proclaiming and resounding the stupendous manifestation of the Savior. Further, the broad gold mitre indicates the regal power of the Lord, "since the Head of the Church" is the Savior. (Eph\_5:23)** The mitre that is on it [i.e., the head] is, then, **a sign of most princely rule**; and otherwise we have heard it said, "The Head of Christ is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1Co\_11:3; 2Co\_11:31) Moreover, there was the breastplate, **comprising the ephod, which is the symbol of work, and the oracle (λογιον); and this indicated the Word (λόγος) by which it was framed, and is the symbol of heaven, made by the Word**, and subjected to Christ, the Head of all things, inasmuch as it moves in the same way, and in a like manner. The luminous emerald stones, therefore, in the ephod, signify the sun and moon, the helpers of nature. The shoulder, I take it, is the commencement of the hand.

**The twelve stones, set in four rows on the breast, describe for us the circle of the zodiac, in the four changes of the year. It was otherwise requisite that the law and the prophets should be placed beneath the Lord's head, because in both Testaments mention is made of the righteous.** For were we to say **that the apostles were at once prophets and righteous**, we should say well, "since one and the self-same Holy Spirit works in all." (1Co\_12:11) And as the Lord is above the whole world, yea, above the world of thought, so the name engraven on the plate has been regarded to signify, above all rule and authority; **and it was inscribed with reference both to the written commandments and the manifestation to sense.** And it is the name of God that is expressed; since, as the Son sees the goodness of the Father, God the Savior works, being called the first principle of all things, which was imaged forth from the invisible God first, and before the ages, and which fashioned all things which came into being after itself. Nay more, the oracle exhibits the prophecy which by the Word cries and preaches, and the judgment that is to come; since it is the same Word which prophesies, and judges, and discriminates all things.

**And they say that the robe prophesied the ministry in the flesh**, by which He was seen in closer relation to the world. So the high priest, putting off his consecrated robe (**the universe, and the creation in the universe, were consecrated by Him assenting that, what was made, was good**), washes himself, and puts on the other tunic - **a holy-of holies one**, so to speak - which is to accompany him into the adytum; exhibiting, as seems to me, **the Levite and Gnostic, as the chief of other priests (those bathed in water, and clothed in faith alone, and expecting their own individual abode), himself distinguishing the objects of the intellect from the things of sense, rising above other priests, hastening to the entrance to the world of ideas, to wash himself from the things here below, not in water, as formerly one was cleansed on being enrolled in the tribe of Levi. But**

**purified already by the gnostic Word in his whole heart**, and thoroughly regulated, and having improved that mode of life received from the priest to the highest pitch, **being quite sanctified both in word and life, and having put on the bright array of glory, and received the ineffable inheritance of that spiritual and perfect man**, “which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and it hath not entered into the heart of man;” and having become son and friend, he is now replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face. **For there is nothing like hearing the Word Himself, who by means of the Scripture inspires fuller intelligence.** For so it is said, “And he shall put off the linen robe, which he had put on when he entered into the holy place; and shall lay it aside there, and wash his body in water in the holy place, and put on his robe.” (Lev\_16:23, Lev\_16:24) But in one way, as I think, the Lord puts off and puts on by descending into the region of sense; and in another, he who through Him has believed puts off and puts on, as the apostle intimated, the consecrated stole. Thence, after the image of the Lord, **the worthiest were chosen from the sacred tribes to be high priests, and those elected to the kingly office and to prophecy were anointed.**

~Clement- Stromata Book V Vol. 2