

Ed. Note:

George Herbert, poet and pastor, describes the conflicted convictions of every pastor who takes his own sins seriously, but the holiness that Christ bestows even more seriously.

AARON.

HOLINESS on the head,
Light and perfection on the breast,
Harmonious bells below raising the dead
To lead them unto life and rest.
Thus are true Aarons drest.*

Profaneness in my head,
Defects and darkness in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest :
Poor priest ! thus am I drest.

Only another head I have
another heart and breast,
Another music, making live, not dead,
Without whom I could have no rest :
In Him I am well drest.

Christ is my only head,
My alone only heart and breast,
My only music, striking me e'en dead ;
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in Him new drest.

So holy in my Head,
Perfect and light in my dear Breast,
My doctrine tuned by Christ (who is not dead,
But lives in me while I do rest),
Come, people ; Aaron's drest.

* Exodus xxviii. 29-37.

Source:

Herbert, George. The Works of George Herbert in Prose and Verse.
New York: John Wurtele Lovell, 1881. 276-277.