

Our Anointing Through Christ

***“To whom God
would make known
what is the riches
of the glory of this
mystery among the
Gentiles; which is
Christ in you, the
hope of glory.”
—Colossians 1:27***

THE SCRIPTURES FRE-quently speak of the church as being “in Christ,” giving the thought of membership in his body. (Rom. 12:4,5; I Cor. 12:12-27; II Cor. 5:17) Our Lord used the figure of a vine and its branches to convey the same thought. He spoke of himself as the vine, and of the church as the branches, partaking of nourishment through the vine. (John 15:1-7) This is not the thought, however, that is expressed by the apostle’s words, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

The word Christ signifies anointed. All who will be members of the royal priesthood are anointed—not separately, but collectively. “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.” (II Cor. 1:21) This was pictured in the Old Testament by the installation into office of both the kings and the high priests of Israel. According to the Jewish law, every king and every

high priest must be anointed, or else he could not serve. The oil which was used in this ceremony was of a peculiar kind, which was not to be used for any other purpose.—Exod. 30:22-33

The anointing which our Lord and the members of his symbolic body have received is different from any other arrangement in the entire world. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is variously spoken of as the spirit of holiness, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of truth, the spirit of God, and the spirit of Christ. (Rom. 1:4; II Tim. 1:7; John 14:17; Rom. 8:9) It is not the Truth, but the spirit of the Truth. It is not God or Christ, although it is in harmony with the character of both the Father and his Son. It is not holiness, yet it is in full accord with holiness. It is, however, reflective of a mind that is fortified and strengthened by the Word of the Lord. It is the spirit, or disposition, which is associated with a sound mind, with holiness, with truth, and with the attributes of God and Christ Jesus. This enables its possessor to view things more correctly, giving wisdom and grace for the affairs of life far beyond any that they would have had without it.

As the anointing of kings and priests in Israel was the divine evidence that they were accepted to office, so it was with our Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter tells us that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.” (Acts 10:38) Our Lord was set apart for a very high office. In harmony with the divine arrangement, he is to be the great antitypical King and Priest, “after the order of Melchisedec.”—Heb. 5:6

Jesus prayed to God concerning his followers, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is

truth.” (John 17:17) The word “sanctify” means to set apart, or make holy. During the Gospel Age, God has been setting apart those who are to be members of the body of Christ. These are invited to be kings and priests unto God, and they are called “a royal priesthood.” (I Pet. 2:9) Consequently, when one is received into this body, under the headship of Christ, he comes under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. “You have an anointing from the Holy One.” (I John 2:20, *New American Standard Bible*) This anointing is from the Father in that he alone can give the recognition. It is by means of the Son, and through him alone, that we can come to the Father. —Matt. 11:27

This is well illustrated by the consecration of the Jewish high priest. The holy oil was poured upon Aaron’s head, pointing forward to the anointing of our Lord at the time of his consecration. The oil then ran down to the very skirts of Aaron’s garments, prefiguring the anointing of the body of Christ, which is the church. (Ps. 133:2) This descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church was manifested at Pentecost. —Acts 2:1-4

DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANOINTING AND BEGETTING

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is slightly different from the begetting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which came upon Jesus at Jordan was both the anointing and the begetting power of God. John the Baptist saw and bore record that our High Priest was thus begotten, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.” (John 1:32) From the moment at which

he was begotten, our Lord was also anointed, and the term “Christ Jesus” means “anointed Jesus.”

Concerning Jesus’ disciples at Pentecost, they were waiting for acceptance by God. Our Lord had appeared in the presence of God as their Advocate, in order that their consecrations might be acceptable. (I John 2:1) The Father recognized their acceptance by shedding forth the Holy Spirit, and gave visible evidence by the appearance of “cloven tongues like as of fire,” which “sat upon each one of them.” (Acts 2:3) That recognition constituted both their begetting and their anointing. The former—the begetting—represented the matter from the individual standpoint, while the latter—the anointing—showed it from the collective. We are begotten individually, but we are anointed collectively.

If we were to consider the anointing and the begetting as two different steps of progress, we would be obliged to say that the begetting of an individual takes place first, and then he becomes part of the anointed class, and recognized as an heir of God. However, this ordering of one before the other is not necessarily in accord with the thought. These seem to be two pictures which represent the matter from two different standpoints. We are not individually anointed, nor are we collectively begotten.

This Holy Spirit which we receive from God abides in us, as long as we remain under its life-giving influence. By doing so, we will also continue to abide under the anointing as a prospective member of the body of Christ. The Apostle John said, “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.” (I John 2:27) Our individual begetting takes place at the beginning of our consecrated earthly sojourn.

If we are “faithful unto death,” our resurrection, or spirit birth, will take place. (Rev. 2:10) Thus, we are individually begotten, and then at the end of our earthly course, born of the spirit.

Paul gives us serious admonitions concerning the Holy Spirit’s vital importance in our life: “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,” and “Quench not the Spirit.” (Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19) A quenching, or extinguishing, of the Holy Spirit’s begetting power in us would also mean a ceasing of being part of the anointed class. If we “have not the Spirit of Christ,” then we are “none of his.”—Rom. 8:9

In the Scriptural picture of anointing, it is the entire body which is anointed, and there is no need for a repetition of the ceremony which took place on the Day of Pentecost, nor of its miraculous outward manifestations. At the beginning of the Gospel Age, the one body was symbolically anointed, and all who will be members of that body have come under the one anointing. All who faithfully remain under that anointing will share in Christ’s resurrection, the “first resurrection,” to “glory and honour and immortality.”—Rev. 20:6; Rom. 2:7

FOREKNOWN OF GOD

Just as our Lord was begotten to a new nature by the Holy Spirit, each member of his body must be similarly begotten, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (I Cor. 15:50) If we have received this begetting, and come under the church’s anointing, we are eligible to all that God has promised to the Christ—first to the Head, and then to the members of his body. As God foreknew the work of his only begotten Son, the Redeemer,

he also foreknew this class.—Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4,5; I Pet. 1:18-20

Long before our Lord came to earth to provide the redemptive price for Adam, the Father had planned that there should be a special anointed company. The head of this class would be Christ Jesus, and his body would be the church. (Eph. 1:3,4,22,23) Jesus was to have the highest place in the Christ company, and associated with him would be those who have his spirit, and who had made a full consecration of their lives to do God's will faithfully, even unto death.—I Pet. 1:2-4

For those who have made an acceptable consecration of their will to God, and have presented themselves in sacrifice, Jesus stands as their Advocate before the Father, covering their blemishes and imperfections. Our Lord's work is not that of anointing, but of making it possible for us to be received by the Father. The anointing is of the Father, but by means of the Son's redemptive work. The Apostle Peter says that because of Jesus' faithfulness as man's Redeemer, he "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," to be "shed forth" to his consecrated followers.—Acts 2:33

If we have this spirit of God, it is an evidence to us that we are his children. As long as we possess it, we maintain our relationship as sons. (Rom. 8:9,14) The resulting thought is that if we are children of God, we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (vs. 17) The Apostle Peter adds that we are begotten "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by

the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”—I Pet. 1:4,5

The words of our opening text suggest the thought that whoever has the Spirit of God has evidence of a “hope of glory,” and will receive the fruition of their hopes if found faithful. On one occasion, which we have previously quoted in part, the Apostle John said, “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.” Then he adds, “ye need not that any man teach you.” (I John 2:27) That is, those who have this anointing do not need someone to teach them that they are abiding under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They have the indication or witness of it in their own hearts and experiences. These evidences are more apparent to themselves than to anyone else.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

The testimony that we have been anointed may not be understood except as we have the instructions of the Word of God. The Scriptures give us an outline of the witness to the possession of the Holy Spirit, so as to leave no room for doubt. They tell us that the Holy Spirit, the begetting power in us, leads us more and more to have the “mind of Christ.” (I Cor. 2:16) We were not begotten or anointed with the mind of Christ, but with the Holy Spirit. However, if we have the Holy Spirit, we will find it needful to develop the mind of Christ. Paul said, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 2:5

A fundamental aspect of the mind of Christ is the desire to do the Father’s will and to engage in his service. Jesus, even at the young age of twelve,

expressed to his mother his need to “be about [his] Father’s business.” (Luke 2:49) We recognize that we have a Heavenly Father whose service is the highest possible work in which we can engage. The labor of the spirit-begotten child of God must be heavenward, otherwise he will lack proof that he has passed from the condemnation upon the human race and become a New Creature.

If we have the spirit of loyalty to God, to the Truth, and to the brethren, we have the mind, or disposition, of Christ. Indeed, we still have the weaknesses of the flesh to contend with, but it is our privilege to fight against these. (I Tim. 6:12) In so doing, we become transformed in the spirit of our minds, and have our life more fully centered in the Truth and in the service of the brethren.

If there is a decrease of zeal in this direction, then we may know that there is danger of going backward instead of forward. There is a possibility that we may lose our “first love,” and become more or less cold to the Word of God. (Rev. 2:4; Matt. 24:12) If we allow our minds to be led away to earthly things, ambitions, or worldliness, all of which war against heavenly things, these may be evidences of a loss of our first love.

The Apostle John admonishes us: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (I John 2:15) We should seek our pleasures, not from earthly sources, but from the heavenly bounties which are ours to claim. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2) We are not speaking against those requirements of family, home, or job which are part of our earthly

stewardship. Our eternal aspirations, however, are to be bent heavenward. Jesus instructed us: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." —Matt. 6:33

If we strive to make these principles applicable to all the affairs of life, and do not lose our focus concerning the things which are most important, we will be blessed thereby. We will be helped in the Lord's service, and prepared for the kingdom in which God has promised us a share. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matt. 6:19,20) The chiefest of all treasures is the personal love and communion of God and his Son, Christ Jesus, and the honor and privilege of being "espoused . . . to Christ." —II Cor. 11:2

OTHER EVIDENCES OF THE ANOINTING

In addition to having the mind of Christ, we have other evidences that we have been anointed. We find ourselves needing spiritual food, and to satisfy our hunger, the Heavenly Father has provided us the knowledge of his glorious plan and of his character. Each new view of these things gives us fresh inspiration. If we then find some of our brethren spiritually hungry, how can we withhold from giving them the spiritual refreshment which we have? Indeed, we have the blessed privilege of helping them to be filled with the nourishing food of God's Word, being "instant in season" and "out of season," for their spiritual benefit.—II Tim. 4:2

If we love the Truth, we will serve the Truth. This service is sure to bring upon us the disapproval of the world, and will not result in an earthly reward.

The world will conclude that we are doing it for money or some selfish reason, for they will surely fail to see the real purpose of a truly consecrated life. In many cases, the selection and preparation of the members of the body of Christ for placement in the symbolic temple of God is going on without the knowledge of the world of mankind. (I Kings 6:7) If, in all these things, we patiently endure, we will thereby prove ourselves to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.—II Tim. 2:3

If devotion to the will of the Father brought upon our Lord shame and ignominy, we must not wonder that we are treated likewise. If the world called the “master of the house Beelzebub,” they will assuredly call his followers some evil name. (Matt. 10:25) The willingness to persevere in all this, and with joy count it as a part of our sacrifice and reasonable service, is a further evidence that we have been anointed.—Rom. 12:1

We may find that we can very easily love some of the brethren, but that there are others whom it is not so easy to love. They may seem not to be loveable, or we may perceive that they are not easy to approach. Some also may view us in this same way. However, we all should reflect that if the Lord can receive and love us as his brethren, we should do the same, and look past these things. We must develop love for all the brethren—the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated—and desire to render them assistance as opportunity arises, without partiality toward one over another.—John 15:13; I John 3:14,17; James 3:17

The evidences that one has come under the anointing of the Holy Spirit are: increased hunger

for spiritual things; a desire to assist others to see and to grow in knowledge and heavenly grace; persecution from the worldly minded; and the development of the mind of Christ. Additionally, it is to have a disposition which is loving, generous, forgiving toward others, and reverential toward God and obedient to his will. Whoever finds, upon self-examination, that he has these evidences in his heart of a full devotion to God's will, has the witness of the spirit that he is a child of God. Such, Paul says, are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:26,29

THE HOPE OF GLORY

The word "glory" carries with it the thought of honor and dignity, and sometimes also that of brightness or shining. The Scriptures speak of the Heavenly Father as having the "excellent glory," that glory which is above all others. (II Pet. 1:17) Our Lord Jesus is said to have been "received up into glory." (I Tim. 3:16) Of Adam, it is said that he was "crowned . . . with glory and honour," and given dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea. (Ps. 8:5-8; Gen. 1:28) In this connection, Adam's glory seems to refer to the fact that he was made in the image of his Creator.—Gen. 1:27

Applying these same thoughts to ourselves, we find that at the present time we have no glory of this kind. The blessing and honor we have received, however, is the possession of the Holy Spirit, which is the evidence of our adoption into the family of

God. This is merely the beginning of the glory which God has promised to those who are faithful—an “earnest of the Spirit.” (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5) To have the begetting of the Holy Spirit in us is to come under its anointing power. If we allow the Holy Spirit to operate in our life, and faithfully cooperate with it, the end will be glorious.

The anointing which we have received is the spirit of Christ in us. It is the hope or basis of the glory which we are seeking, and which is to be like that of our Redeemer, whom God has exalted above all angels, principalities and powers. This anointing, this spirit of Christ within us, is the promise, hope, and basis, of all that is coming to his faithful body members. Let us, therefore, heed the admonition of Paul that we “quench not” this Holy Spirit of Christ. On the contrary, let us cultivate it, develop it, and give attention to it daily. Continuing, the apostle says, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (I Thess. 5:19,21,22) Thus, may we hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Matt. 25:21 ■