

THE GOSPEL TO ABRAHAM.

The word gospel signifies good news. There are parts or elements to the good news however; there are first principles of the gospel of Christ (Heb. 6:1.) and there are more advanced doctrines also. For instance, when you became aware that you were a sinner, and learned that Jesus had become your ransom, and that as a result you might now, approach God as a perfect man and not as a sinner, and that by and by in God's due time (the Millennial Age) all marks of sin would be removed and you would then be actually perfect (still a man), that was good news to you; it was the basis of your harmony and friendship with God. It was the same thing which centuries ago was good news to Abraham. Paul tells us: "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4:3. What good news did God communicate which he believed? "The gospel...saying: In thee shall all nations be blessed." The process by which all nations were to be blessed was not understood by Abraham except that it should be through his offspring, but he believed the fact without knowing how. We are made acquainted with the manner in which the blessing comes, viz: that Jesus was (through Mary) the seed of Abraham, and as such gave his life a ransom for all men; that as a consequence, in due time all men will be justified, and released from all the ills which come through sin.

Yes, the restitution from Adam's sin – the justification of humanity by Christ's sacrifice, was the good news to Abraham, to us of the gospel age, and is to be good news to the whole world in the Millennial Age, for it is "to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. 2:6. It is this message that is called "the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people," (during the coming age). Rev. 14:6.

But there is another phase of the good news (gospel) which belongs exclusively to this Gospel Age. Something "which in other ages was not made known unto the Sons of men, as it is now (during this Gospel Age) revealed unto his saints (n.t.) and prophets (public expounders,) by the Spirit." Eph. 3:5.

This special good news is, that since Jesus' sacrifice, God is calling out from the world of humanity, some to become "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" – to "become partakers of the divine nature," (2 Pet. 1:4) to cease to be men and become "new creatures in Christ Jesus," (2 Cor. 5:17.) and as such to be "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord." This is "our high calling" of God, which we are to make sure of, by crucifying and sacrificing the human nature. This is the prize for which we seek – "Glory, Honor and Immortality."

But these prizes were not offered to Abraham; he was not told about the joint-heirship, nor about sitting in the throne, nor about Immortality. No, these were not made known in past ages. "Jesus Christ...brought Life and Immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1:10. Nor will this high calling be made during the future ages, for the "body of Christ" will be completed in this age. The Bride will be developed, and the marriage of the Lamb will come when "his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19:7.

So we see that we get all that Abraham got, viz: justification by faith from all Adamic sin, and in addition are invited to become a part of "The Seed which is Christ." Gal. 3:29. Abraham was the father of this Seed in a certain sense, but certainly not a part of his own Seed. But more on this again.

Jesus was anointed of the Spirit – "the Lord's anointed" – and this we have seen is the meaning of his title, Christ; and all who become members of the Christ, must be made partakers of the Holy Ghost – anointed. Now we want to show that none were ever thus

anointed before Jesus, and if this be the case none ever were members of his body before this age.

David is called the Lord's anointed, but he was anointed of Samuel with the anointing oil to the office of King; but both David and the oil were types: The oil a type of the Holy Spirit, and David a type of Christ in his office of King. Aaron was the Lord's anointed also, but he too was anointed only with the typical oil and was himself a type of Christ in his office of Priest. The Spirit of God [Holy Spirit] came upon the Prophets during the Jewish age, but in a different way entirely and for a different purpose than its operation on the church during this age. Then, it was simply a power, which took possession of the Prophet; over which he had little or no control, which simply used him as a machine. (See Num. 22:38.) Never before Jesus, did the Holy Spirit act as "a comforter" and guide into an understanding of truth, and this is the special work of the Spirit now. It is given to the new creature as a seal or evidence of his being begotten to the divine nature and as an earnest of his final deliverance, or birth into the Spiritual form.

The Spirit had written the mysteries through the Prophets, but had not revealed them. These mysteries were written for the church; (Jesus and his **[R218 : page 1]** body) and no one else could know them, nor will any one else understand them until the church is complete and "the mystery of God... finished."

Many of the Prophets were good men who loved God and whom God loved; yet, Daniel called the "greatly beloved" prayed for weeks, to God, desiring an understanding of some of the prophecies which he himself had uttered. But the Spirit gave him no understanding of it: finally in pity God sent an angel, gave him all the understanding possible (but evidently not satisfactory) and finished by telling him that the thing was closed up and sealed for a time, but would be understood when due. See Dan. 12:9.

For the same reason that prophets though beloved could not understand, the angels also beloved could not understand, viz: God had not revealed his plan, hence it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (nor angel; we might add, on the strength of Peter's statement) the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us (the church) by His Spirit;... Now we have received...the Spirit of God, that we might know, the things freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. 2:9,13.

Peter evidently refers to Daniel's interest above referred to, when he says: (1:10.) "Of which salvation (our high calling) the prophets have enquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the GRACE THAT SHOULD COME UNTO YOU: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was (speaking) in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed (by the angel, no revelations were made to them by the Spirit) that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister, the things which are now reported unto you, by them which have preached the gospel (good news) unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, [to be your guide in understanding the preaching] which things the angels desire to look into." Now we ask, could Peter express more pointedly than he here does the view which we are advocating. They prophesied of the grace (favor – high calling) which is come unto you – the gospel church. Now notice another point made strong by Peter's expression; the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. To all who see how the church or "body" of Christ has fellowship with the "head" both in sufferings and glory, this statement is full of meaning. Our hope is to be accounted worthy to suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together; (Rom. 8:17.) but the Prophets spoke of the sufferings as all future; they spoke of them "beforehand," so we may be sure that no matter how much the prophets may have suffered as

witnesses for God, their sufferings were not like those of the gospel church reckoned a part of the sufferings of the Christ.

Now again, to his body the church, Jesus is called the "Head," "Leader," "Captain of our Salvation," and how proper it is that a leader should precede the followers. How could Abraham and the Prophets walk in His footsteps as he hath set us an EXAMPLE? (1 Pet. 2:21). If Abraham and the Prophets be counted as a part of the Christ, then Jesus was their follower; if their sufferings be a part of the afflictions of Christ, then Jesus was merely filling up their afflictions. But not so – the Head suffered first and then the body follows – "considers him" and his example. This is our privilege to "Fill up that which is BEHIND of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24).

But we have already shown that one reason why we are called the Christ, is that we are like our Leader, anointed of the Spirit or power of God. The Father gave it without measure to Jesus the head; and Jesus when glorified gave of the same to his body, the church at Pentecost, as Peter explains: "He being by the right hand of God exalted, hath shed forth this." (Acts 2:33.) The Spirit in this sense as a witness of our sonship (on the spiritual plane), as a guide into all truth (as it becomes "meat in due season") came to the church first at Pentecost, as we read that The Holy Ghost was not yet [R218 : page 2] given because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39.) Jesus must first make his sacrifice and be accepted of the Father, before any could be received as spiritual, new creatures and recognized by the Spirit's adoption as such. Jesus' words bear the same import; He said: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you" – "even the Spirit of truth." (John 15:7, 15:26). Hence it is evident that the Spirit in this sense of enlightening and anointing is given only to the body of Christ (anointed).

But some one enquires, Is it ever stated that the church is anointed? Yes, we read (1 John 2:27): "The anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you [Ye are not dependent upon human wisdom and science.] but the same anointing teaches you concerning all things." [Diaglott]. Again let Paul tell us of our anointing (2 Cor. 1:21) "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us in God; who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

We conclude then, that whatever God may have in his plan, as the reward of Abraham, the Prophets, and all ancient worthies, it is not the same thing which is promised to the Christ, which began with the head and will end with the last member – in this age. Thus we see that while there was good news to Abraham, and is to be everlasting good news in future ages, yet our Father hath bestowed "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his loving kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
