

THE ANOINTED ONLY ARE COMMISSIONED TO PREACH

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the Day of Vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." – ISAIAH 61:1-3.

WHEN the Prophet Isaiah uttered these words he spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Peter tells us, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved of the Holy Spirit." Further, he says, "Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace which should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed, That not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel, with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven." – 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

In our text the word anointed is used in the sense of ordination. The high priests of Israel were successively anointed, or ordained, of God, the anointing oil representing the Holy Spirit. Their kings were anointed to reign over the typical kingdom of God, the oil here also representing the Holy Spirit. And so Christ, the great High Priest and King, was ordained of God by the anointing of the Spirit. It was not an anointing of men or by men.

In our Lord's case we know exactly when this prophecy was fulfilled. It was when He came to John at Jordan to be baptized, and there presented Himself in sacrifice to God. The Divine acceptance of this sacrifice was manifested by the impartation of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist saw the Spirit as a dove descending upon the Lord, the sign given to John, but seen by no one else. Jesus recognized that He had received a special anointing and unction from the Father – and others from that time perceived it. We are not to suppose that Jesus performed miracles before He was anointed, but this does not signify that He did not speak kind words and do kind acts before that time; for as a perfect man He possessed the Spirit of God in the full measure that a man in the image of God would possess it.

The fact that our Lord Jesus waited until He was thirty years of age before making His special consecration and receiving His ordination and commission to preach does not mean that His followers should wait until they are thirty before they begin to preach. It was necessary that Jesus should conform Himself to the requirements of the Law of Moses, given by God to the Jews; for Jesus as a man was a Jew, born under the Law and subject, therefore, to its every feature. Full manhood under the Law was not attained until the age of thirty. Our Lord came to give His life as a substitute for the forfeited life of Adam. Adam was a complete, perfect man, and our Lord must attain maturity as a perfect man before He could be a perfect substitute, a corresponding price.

THE "BODY" OF CHRIST NO PART OF THE RANSOM

With the disciples of the Lord Jesus during this Gospel Age, the matter is quite different. Consecration is appropriate to whoever has the maturity of mind to realize clearly what he is doing – to realize the merit of Jesus' death and the significance of becoming a joint-sacrificer with Him. The giving of the Ransom

is *not* shared by the followers of Christ. *That was His work alone.* But His disciples are permitted of God, in the opulence of His favor, to be counted in with Jesus as a part of the Sin-Offering for the world, *after* His merit has been imputed to them and they have become members of His Body, which gives to their offering a virtue which it could not otherwise possess. His merit is all-sufficient, and it is *His* merit that purchases the world, through His Body, the Church.

The anointing that was upon Christ Jesus continued with Him throughout His earthly ministry – the fulness, or completeness, of God's favor rested upon His every word and act. God was manifest in His flesh; for He was the perfect human representation of all the qualities of Jehovah's glorious character. This was demonstrated in His resurrection from the dead after His sacrifice had been finished. Otherwise His work of sacrifice would have been a failure and He would have remained in the congregation of the dead, and there would have been no benefit accruing to mankind from His death. Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit and anointed at His baptism, and was born a completed Spirit Being of the very highest rank at His resurrection. No other being had ever been created on this plane of life. Hitherto Jehovah alone had possessed Divine, incorruptible life.

OUR TEXT APPLIES TO THE ENTIRE CHRIST

We might have inferred without any direct statement that the words of the Prophet in our text apply to our Lord Jesus, but no doubt is left in our minds when we find that He Himself quoted these words in His sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He was brought up. He there stood up and read a part of this prophecy aloud. Then closing the Book He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:16-21.) He pointed [**R5536 : page 278**] out that He was the one referred to by the Prophet. And we see the appropriateness of this application in every way.

But while the prophecy was primarily fulfilled in Jesus, and applied especially to Him, we understand that it applies also to the members of Christ. These by becoming His Body, thus became a part of Himself. It is not because of any merit of their own.

This anointing that is on the Church comes to us through Christ, flowing down from the Head over all the Body members, as shown in the type of the high priest of Israel, and as declared by the Psalmist. (Psalm 133:2.) The Lord Jesus is our great Advocate with the Father, and in Him alone have we any standing before God. We are thus received of the Father as spirit-begotten sons, even as was our Head. We are begotten of the Spirit, as was He.

Our vital union with our Lord as members of His Body is also further shown by the Prophet Isaiah. Read carefully the 49th chapter, vs. 7-9, and their interpretation by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:1,2. This same Apostle further declares, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Again, "The cup for which we bless God, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the participation of the Body of Christ? For we, the many, are one loaf and one Body." "Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." – 1 Corinthians 12:12; 10:16,17; 12:27.

Again, the Apostle Paul declares of the Church, "Whereunto He [God] called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." How the deep sayings of the Savior become luminous in the light shed upon them by the Apostles after their anointing of the Spirit! How the Master fulfilled to them His promise made just before His crucifixion! He said, as we remember, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, it shall guide you into all Truth, for it shall not speak of itself; but whatsoever it shall hear, that shall it speak, and it will show you

things to come." (John 16:12,13.) These were the deep things of God, which only the spirit-begotten, spirit-taught children of God can understand.

We are, if faithful, to be made *like Him* and share His exceeding glory. No wonder the Apostle exultingly declared, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." – 1 Corinthians 2:10.

APPLICATION OF OUR TEXT NOW

The Apostle John says that "the anointing which we have received of Him abideth in us." Again, "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him [God] and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." The Apostle Peter declares that Jesus "having received of the Father the promise [**R5537 : page 278**] of the Holy Spirit [for the Church], hath shed forth this." (1 John 2:27; 4:13; Acts 2:33.) It is *from* the Father and *by* the Son. This corroborates St. Paul's statement that all things are *of* the Father, and all things are *by* the Son. (1 Corinthians 8:6.) The Scriptures tell us that we were begotten and anointed of God.

The anointing of the Church is for a work yet future. The work of Christ and the Church will not be accomplished in this present Age. But God gives to those whom He has accepted opportunity to use in His service in the present life talents which He has entrusted to them. They are, as far as they are able, to bind up broken hearts and give "the oil of joy for mourning," and thus to help to allay the sufferings of others, especially of the Lord's Household, though they are to assist any as they have suitable opportunity. But their special work in blessing and comforting the world will be in the kingdom. All mankind will be brought back from the tomb and will have all the blessed assistances of Messiah's Reign. Everything

evil will be uprooted, and everything good will be fostered and blessed.

While the anointed of God are on this side of the veil they are, as His ambassadors, to show forth His praises by telling others of the coming Kingdom and the blessings then to be showered upon all, when the favors of the Lord shall be poured out upon *all men*. They are to tell that these blessings are both for those now living and for those who have gone down into the grave. God's great Plan for the world is much broader and grander than once we thought. It is worthy of such a God as ours! Then let us tell to all who have an ear to hear, that the Lord is now pouring out His Spirit upon His servants and handmaidens, and soon will pour it upon all flesh – all mankind.

We are instructed that this anointed class are to preach to "the meek." They are not to preach to the rebellious or the indifferent; these are to be dealt with by and by. The judgments of the Lord will forcibly break their hearts, and will effectively deal with all. The ambassadors of the Lord are to seek especially all those everywhere who manifest that they are feeling after the Lord, who are not satisfied with the things of the world, but who are longing for better, nobler things, who have and manifest a teachable disposition.

WHO MAY SPEAK IN THE LORD'S NAME

The text intimates that nobody is to speak in God's name except those who have been Divinely commissioned to do so. Others may tell the story so far as they have learned it, but they are not authorized to speak in the name of the Lord. We are inclined to think that such do more harm than good, mixing error with Truth; for those who do not understand the Message have not been commissioned of the Lord to be His ambassadors. With God, human ordination counts for nothing. In human ordination, each denomination qualifies its own ministers. But the ordained

ministers of God are servants of God and not of error. They are servants of His Truth, not of the traditions of men.

What we have said as to speaking in the Lord's name does not mean that we are to carry the matter so far as to say that no one but those who see the real Plan of God should even sing a hymn. In fact, the children of God are not to endeavor to hinder any from declaring the Truth. Jesus gave a good illustration of this principle when His disciples told Him that they had found some who were doing a work in His name and that they had forbidden them, because they did not follow Him. The Lord replied, "Forbid them not." And so with us. We are not to interfere with any who are preaching the Gospel, even through strife, for they may do some good. Neither are we to endeavor to stop any who preach what they believe to be the Gospel. This is not our present commission, or any part of it. We are not as yet judges of the world; but we are to recognize the difference between such and those who are the true ambassadors, or ministers, of God.

God says of some who profess to be His mouthpieces, but whom He calls "wicked," "What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My Covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee?" (Psalm 50:16,17.) Why should any undertake to give out the Message of [R5537 : page 279] God when He has not recognized them by granting them the anointing of His Holy Spirit, when they have not been taught of Him, and are not doing His will? Let all others do whatever they like in *co-operation* with the Truth, but only those who have been ordained of God in this one way should preach the Gospel. All who have received the Divine commission should rejoice in their wonderful privilege of proclaiming the Good Tidings.

One of the features of our commission as ambassadors of the Lord is "to comfort all that mourn." The children of God, who have

learned the true Source of comfort, are the only ones properly qualified to be real comforters, in the Scriptural sense. These have had their own hearts bound up and healed by the great Physician, and hence they know where to direct longing hearts who need the balm which only God can give. As the Apostle says: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Corinthians 1:3,4.) So then, whether while still in the flesh or after we have come into our inheritance beyond the veil, we are to be comforters, to lift up those who are oppressed with sorrow and care, to bring to them "the oil of joy," the Message of grace.

We are to be comforters at this particular time of "them that mourn in Zion." This is a work that the saints of today, who have been enlightened and blessed by the Message of Present Truth, are eminently qualified to do. Many of us were mourners in Zion before this refreshing Message came to us, mourning because of the confusion and worldliness and dearth that prevailed in the nominal systems wherein we were bound. But now we are free, and no more are "our harps hung upon the willows of Babylon." They are attuned to the harmonies of Heaven, and we can now sing with the spirit and with the understanding the glorious "Song of Moses and the Lamb." So let us be zealous in carrying this glad news to all the mourners in Zion not yet delivered, that they may join with us in this glad song.

The entire Message as given in our text is now due to be proclaimed. We remember that on the occasion when our Lord read from the prophecy in the synagogue, He omitted the words, "and the Day of Vengeance of our God." That part of the prophecy was not due to be proclaimed; and Jesus could not have said of these words, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," for

He was not to proclaim as then at hand the Day of Vengeance. So He read only the parts of the prophecy whose fulfilment was then due to begin.

But today the passage is due to be given as a whole. We are on the very eve of this great Day of Vengeance. We are now proclaiming in the words of the Prophet Zephaniah, "The great Day of the Lord is near; it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the Day of the Lord; the mighty men shall cry there bitterly. That Day is a Day of Wrath, a Day of trouble and distress, a Day of wasting and desolation, a Day of clouds and thick darkness, a Day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities and against the high towers [strong and well intrenched governments]. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord. And their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the Day of the Lord's Wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured with the fire of His jealousy." – Zephaniah 1:14-18.

In that Day of terror and darkness men shall come to learn their need of a strong arm to deliver them. Their pride and self-sufficiency will be humbled into the dust. But out of that awful trouble mankind will come forth chastened and broken, and will be ready to be led out of the ruin and defeat of their own schemes and hopes, out of the darkness and chaos which in their ignorance and selfishness they precipitated upon themselves, out of the power of evil angels, into the light and blessing and deliverance then brought to them by the establishment of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, long promised for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

It will be a lesson never to be forgotten. The sons of God, then exalted to the rulership of the Kingdom, will begin their work of healing and blessing, of binding up the crushed and broken hearts of men. Their own experience in the present life will have taught

them how to sympathize with the poor, sin-sick world; and they will be able to pour into humanity's wounds the blessed balm of Gilead, "to give beauty for ashes," to wipe away all tears, and to lead all who will step by step up the grand Highway of Holiness then cast up for the people. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:10.) Only the incorrigible shall again have pronounced upon them the penalty of death – the Second Death, utter destruction. "These shall go away into everlasting cutting off, but the righteous into life eternal." – Matthew 25:46.

