

Concerning the ministers of Christ, and his church, and the testimony of them. How God has anointed the ministers of Christ, and his church, and they have the anointing in them.

By George Fox

Now he who establishes the ministers of Christ, and his church in Christ, and has anointed them, is God. Now here you may see Christ's ministers God has anointed. And the apostle said, 'who has also sealed us, and given us the earnest of his spirit in our hearts.' Here you may see God seals his people, his ministers, and his church, and gives them the earnest of his spirit in their hearts, and anoints them, and establishes them in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor 1:21-22.

Now concerning the son of God, the Lord said, 'You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness, above your fellows.' Heb 1:9.

Here you may see Christ's ministers and his church are anointed, and they have the anointing abiding in them; and they need no man to teach them, but as the same anointing teaches them of all things,. 1 John 2:27,20.

But God has anointed Christ with the oil of gladness above his fellows, who brings many sons unto glory; 'for both he that sanctifies, and those who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb 2:10-11.

And Christ makes his 'able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.' 2 Cor 3:6. 'And he that sows to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' Gal 6:8.

Here you may see what Christ's ministers sow to, and what they reap; 'for Christ when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men; and he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens,

that he might fill all things. And he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' These gifts of Christ to them, were and are 'for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying the body of Christ, until we all come into the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the son of God, and unto a perfect man, and unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' And this was the work of the ministry of Christ, and so brought them into the 'unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.' 'There is one body, and one spirit, even as you are called children into one hope of your calling;' and this hope is, Christ in you the hope of glory, whom the ministers of Christ preach, 'warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' And the ministers of Christ brought the church of Christ to 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and unto one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' Eph 4:8-14, Col 1:27-28. And the apostle said, 'If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, old things are past away, behold all things are become new; and all things are of God, who has reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.'

Mark, the ministers of Christ have the ministry of reconciliation given to them, to reconcile people to God through Christ. And now let all the ministers of Christ consider, how many they have brought to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; and how many they have presented perfect in Christ Jesus; and with the gift of the ministry of reconciliation, how many they have reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

And the apostle said, that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, &c. not imputing their transgressions unto them.' And again, Christ 'having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Christ, I say, whether they are things in the earth, or things in heaven; and he has put in us, or committed unto us, **the word of reconciliation**. Now then, we the ministers of Christ are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God.' 2 Cor 5:17-21, Col 1:20.

Now here you may see the ministers of Christ have the word of reconciliation committed to them, to reconcile people to God and Christ; for the apostle said to the church of Christ, the Colossians, 'You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds, by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled.' Col 1:21. Therefore let all the ministers of Christ consider how many they have reconciled to God by the word of reconciliation.

And the apostle said to the church of Christ, 'The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart; and this is the word of faith which we preach. If that

you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Rom 10:8-10.

And again the apostle said, 'Therefore God has also highly exalted Christ, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Philip 2:9-11.

Now here you may see all are to be subject to Christ's power, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; though they are not ministers and apostles, yet they are confessors, for with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, and the word of faith being in their mouths and hearts, that with the heart they may believe, and with the mouth confess. And **this is the word if they will hear it and obey it, and that will reconcile them to God.**

Now friends, if the Lord has counted you faithful, and put you into his ministry, seek to perform and fulfill it, and not neglect the gift that is given you; and be good examples of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and always be ready to preach the word, and be instant in season, and out of season. He who observes the wind or storms, will not sow the seed; and he who regards the clouds will not reap. Eccl 11:4. But the word of the Lord must be preached in season and out of season, as in 2 Tim 4:2. And the apostle said to Timothy, 'I put you in remembrance, that you stir up the gift of God which is in you.' 2 Tim 1:6. Which indeed there is need enough now to put many in remembrance, and to stir up the gift of God in them, and to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold of eternal life, whereunto they are called; and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and meekness.

And the apostle said, that the holy ghost witnesses in every city; saying, 'That bonds and afflictions abode him, and waited for him, but none of these things moved him; neither counted he his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy; and the ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' Acts 20:23-24. You may see the apostle had received his ministry from the Lord Jesus Christ, and what a resolution was in him to finish it, though bonds and afflictions waited upon him. He did not mind the storms and winds of persecution; and he exhorted others to take heed of the ministry which they had received from the Lord to fulfill it; and exhorted all to let their speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that they may know how to answer every man, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And Peter said in his General Epistle to the church of Christ, 'As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same to another, as good stewards of the manifold graces of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.' 1 Pet 4:10-11.

So here you may see the ministry is not limited to one sort of people, or to a tribe. But 'as every man has received the gift, even so let him minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' So this gift they receive from God, and are stewards of the manifold grace of God. 'And if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.' So not the oracles of men. 'And if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives him.' So it is not of the ability that they minister which men give, but what God gives. So it is to the glory of God through Jesus Christ.

And the apostle said, 'God has dealt to every man a measure of faith.' And he that ministered, was to wait on his ministry; and he that exhorts, on his exhortation; and he that teaches, on teaching; and he that gives, he must do it with simplicity; and he that rules, with diligence; and he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness. So this work and practice is from the grace and faith of Christ in their hearts. Rom 12:3-9.

And the apostle exhorts to give no offence in anything that the ministry, namely, of Christ, be not blamed.

Now you see what a care the apostle had upon him to keep all blameless, that God may be glorified, saying, 'But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in affliction, in necessity, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the holy ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live, as chastened, and not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.' 2 Cor 6:4-11.

Here you may see the ministers of God and Christ prove themselves.

And the apostle exhorts the ministers and the church of Christ, 'to put on the armor of light.' Rom 13:12.

Here you may see light is the armor against darkness and its works.

And again, the apostle writes to the church of Christ, and the ministers, and said, 'My brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.' Eph 6:11-17.

Here you may see the heavenly and spiritual arms and armor, that the ministers of Christ and his church are to put on, which is able to defend and preserve them, against the devil and all his foul instruments. For God's people have proved and tried these heavenly arms and armor, and by it they have been preserved steadfast and undaunted, and valiant for Christ Jesus and God's name and truth upon the earth; and by it they have been able to stand against the wicked, and overcome him, and have the victory over him. And my desire is, that all God's ministers and his church, may be armed with these heavenly arms and armor, in this their age and generation, and then they will not fear the devil, nor all his darts, nor lying accusations, nor slanders, nor false reports, but in the spiritual arms and armor of God, they will stand as valiant soldiers in Christ, over him and them all. Amen.

Let all have oil in their own lamps, and water in their own wells, and fruit on their own trees, and mind their own vine, and improve their own talent, and not hide it in a napkin, like the slothful servant, and let none put their candle under a bed, or a bushel, but in a candlestick, that it may give light. So let your heavenly light so shine that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

When Christ sent for his disciples, he said unto them, 'When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked you anything?' and the disciples answered and said, they lacked nothing.

The apostle said, 'Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the **hope** of salvation.' 1 Thes 5:8.

Here you may see that Christ's disciples lacked nothing, who freely had received, and freely did give.

And you that are of the day of Christ, be armed with this breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of hope and salvation.

David said, 'Mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.' Psalm 131:1.

And the apostle said, 'I strive to have always a conscience void of offence, toward God, and toward men.' Acts 24:16.

And the apostle writes to Timothy, to exercise himself unto godliness, for bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of what is to come. 1 Tim 4:7-8.

And the apostle said, 'Strong meat belongs to those who are of full age [finished, perfect], even those, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' Heb 5:14.

God chastens his people for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness. 'Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto those who are exercised by it.' Heb 12:10-11.

Now here Christ's ministers and his church must know these several sorts of exercises, both to God and man, and unto godliness, and a discerning of good and evil; and this exercise must be in the spirit and power of God, which keeps people's minds low and in humility. And this must be in the spiritual exercise, for bodily exercise profits little, or for a little time, that passes away, but godliness is profitable unto all things; and those who are exercised in this godliness, they have a promise of the life that now is, and of what is to come, which is life everlasting; and God preserve all his people in this exercise. Amen.

And Paul said to Agrippa, the king, when he was brought before him, he was sent to open people's eyes, and 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, **release from sin's slavery**, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified and **purified by faith** in me.' Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works consistent with repentance.' Acts 26:18-20.

So here you may see, it is no new thing for the ministers of Christ, to turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God.