

## Romans 16: 25-27; Colossians 1: 12 to 2: 3.

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The reception of the gospel in faith is essential to our apprehending the truth of the Mystery. Justification by faith and the confession of Jesus as Lord bring into salvation (see Romans 10: 8-13). The nature and character of God are brought out in the gospel. His nature — love; His character — holiness and righteousness. All presented on the principle of faith to faith. This involved the sacrifice of Christ whereby God's righteousness in blessing man was established. Man after the flesh has been judicially set aside thereby. The First Adam has been superseded by Christ, the Last Adam. If He is preached according to the gospel He is the new racial Head. It is equally true that He is the Head of every man (1 Cor. 11: 3 and Rom. 5: 18). So if God has to say to man for blessing He says it in Christ.

We learn from Col. 1 that Christ is preached according to both the gospel and the Mystery. He is pre-eminently Son of the Father's love. Into His kingdom we have been translated by the Father, having been delivered from the authority of darkness, blessed deliverance and translation. The Son of His love is Head of Creation, having entered it in inimitable grace by assuming Manhood. In doing so He takes precedence of all as Firstborn of all Creation. Not as first one born, that would make Him part of creation, but as First in rank. This declares His glory and His grace. He, as the active agent of the Godhead, brought creation into being, for His was the word which brought all things out of nothing.

We read in Col. 1: 16 that all was created "*in Him*" and "*by Him*" — He accomplished it "*for Him*." All shall serve His purpose, He shall be glorified in all.

Having shed His blood — this at once involved His incarnation and crucifixion — He shall yet reconcile all things in heaven and in earth to the Godhead. By His efficacious death He has now reconciled those who form the Assembly, in the body of His flesh through death. Thus we are in suitability to Himself. We have been brought to God by the gospel, and as sealed with the Holy Spirit, form the One Body of Christ. This leads us to the blessed apprehension of the truth of the Mystery. So we have been "baptised by one Spirit into one body" (1 Cor. 12: 13).

Christ is our life, He is our Object, that life in all its moral beauty is being reproduced and perpetuated in the members of His body, the Assembly, in the very world where He was rejected and crucified. This truth, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the crown of that which we have already seen in the ministry of our Lord. He was not then glorified, the Spirit could not be given, while as we have suggested His ministry prepared the way for what has now come to pass — Christ and the Assembly are one. This was implicit in the word of our glorified Lord to Saul of Tarsus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" To this the astonished Saul replied, "Who art Thou, Lord?," and there came the answer, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." Thus was the arch opponent won, and he went his way, to have revealed to him from the same Lord the truth of the Mystery, and to have committed to him the administration of it.

We have learned, I trust, that Gentile believers along with Jewish believers have been united to the glorified Christ. This is just what the truth of the Mystery means.