

## **"THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE."**

The inheritance of the saints is the crowning theme of all the messages to the Church since the day of Pentecost. Before that time no mention of it was made. In all his teachings Jesus never referred to it, but it was one of the many things he had to tell his disciples, which they were not then able to bear, because the Spirit had not yet come. (John 16:12.)

To the readers of the Tower, it is not necessary here to point out, the grandeur of the prize for which we are striving; it has been our central theme from the first up to the present time. The Tower has endeavored to continually hold it before the Church as the goal of their aspirations, and to point out with precision and care the "narrow way" which leads to it, and the dangerous snares of the adversary to arrest their progress.

Some with anxious solicitude now inquire, Is it possible for me yet to attain the High Calling, since the acceptable year of the Lord ended in the fall of 1881, as we have learned that any consecrating since that time, though acceptable to the Lord, are not acceptable as sacrifices, as candidates for the High Calling – the reign with Christ? Of all such inquirers we would ask, Have you "the earnest," or pledge of the inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit? If so, then you must have received it "after that you believed" (Eph. 1:13) – after you were justified and when you consecrated yourself entirely to God, as has been frequently explained, whether you can recall the time of your consecration or not. If, then, you have the earnest, or pledge, in due time you may have the inheritance also.

Addressing the consecrated ones Paul says, "Having [first] believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of the promise" (Eph. 1:13). The natural man, we are told, receiveth not the things of the

Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). Now, if we are able to appreciate the High Calling to such an extent that we find our hearts filled with an intense desire to obtain it, and a disposition to drop all the weights of earthly treasure and run with patience the narrow, difficult way, then we may be sure that this desire receives its impulse, not from the natural man, but from the new creature begotten of the Spirit. The old things – old aims, old ambitions and desires – you find have passed away, and you are reaching out after the things unseen and hitherto unknown.

Your ambition now is to share with Christ, not only in his glory, but also in his sacrifice and humiliation. Now, Paul says those who have thus received the spirit (intent or meaning) of the promise have in that fact a pledge of its fulfillment. By the Spirit which we have received, and which enables us thus to comprehend the magnitude of the promise, he says we are sealed – marked off – stamped as sons of God, adapted to the spiritual plane. If we find others who cannot understand or rightly value the High Calling, it is because they are natural men, and we should not upbraid them for not running for that which they cannot see or value. And as few can appreciate our hopes, we must expect to be a peculiar people and to be misunderstood by others.

In the light of these scriptures, any may readily know if they are sealed with the Spirit or not; and each time they contemplate the grandeur of the prize, they should gather courage and strength from the thought that this is an earnest or pledge of their inheritance. **[R494 : page 5]** Praise God for such an anchor to our faith!

But one inquires as he discerns this blessed assurance, Is it now settled beyond all peradventure that I shall obtain the inheritance? Well, let us see how Brother Paul regarded it. He certainly understood and rightly valued the High Calling, when, as he said, for

it he "suffered the loss of all things," if "by any means" he might attain it. Yet, though he had this pledge of the inheritance, he says, "Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have attained it; but one thing I do, even forgetting the things behind, and stretching forth towards the things before, I press along the line towards the prize of the High Calling of God by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:8-14 – Diaglott.)

To illustrate – a son becomes heir to his father's inheritance, and as a pledge or earnest of that inheritance he receives from his father a deed signed and sealed; yet he may lose that pledge by carelessness, or in an unguarded moment, having his senses stupefied by intoxication, he may barter it away, and so never come into possession of the inheritance to which he once was lawful heir.

In the same way, it is possible that though we realize that we are sealed, stamped, marked out as heirs of our Father's inheritance, we may nevertheless, through lack of care, lose it, or becoming intoxicated with the spirit of the world, and our spiritual senses becoming stupefied, we may barter it away for a trifling gratification of the old nature. Let us, like Paul, watch and continue to press "along the line" marked out – the line of sacrifice, even unto death.

R. W.

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