

## **SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.**

"After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest [the pledge] of our inheritance until the redemption [Greek – *apolutrosis*, a loosing away or deliverance. – See also Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23.] of the purchased possession." "Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption [deliverance]." – Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30.

THE expression, "sealed unto the day of deliverance," carries with it the idea that at an appointed day all of the sealed ones will be delivered. And the Apostle further emphasizes this thought when he speaks of the sealing as an earnest or pledge of our inheritance until the day of deliverance. The seal which thus marks all of those worthy of deliverance is here declared to be "the holy spirit of God." It is elsewhere called the spirit of Christ, because in Christ the spirit of God dwelt richly and without measure (Col. 1:19; 2:9; John 3:34); and whom God did foreknow as heirs of his exceeding great and precious promises, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. – Rom. 8:29.

The use of the term "sealed" in this connection is very significant when we consider the importance of the seal, which has been in use from remote antiquity. A seal is an authoritative impression affixed to an important document. When affixed by the originator of the document it testifies to its genuineness, and to the deliberation with which it has been executed. When affixed according to legal requirement, it not only thus authenticates, but it also ratifies, confirms and declares the document legal; and thus it becomes the pledge or assurance of its fulfilment. Hence, any act or other instrumentality which legally confirms or ratifies a statement, promise or agreement may properly be called a seal to such statement, promise or agreement.

It is thus that the inspired writers symbolically apply the term to God's gift of the holy spirit to the Church, which testifies to their divine recognition as sons and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that they suffer with him, even unto death. This sealing with the holy spirit is not accomplished by act of the individual sealed: it is the stamp of God, impressed by God upon all his believing and truly consecrated [R2064 : page 273] children. Those whose faith accepts, in childlike simplicity, the provision of God for redemption through the precious blood of Christ, with full purpose of heart to conform to his holy will in all things, and thus sanctify (set apart) themselves unto God and separate themselves from the world, are also sanctified (set apart) by God, being sealed, stamped, with his holy spirit for the day of deliverance.

That blessed day is the resurrection day, the Millennial day, early in the morning of which the overcoming Church will be delivered. – "God shall help her when the morning appeareth." (Psa. 46:5, margin.) While carefully guarding the seal of promise, we may, therefore, as the apostles indicate, look for that blessed hope at the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who shall then change our vile body – the Church, both individually and collectively – and make it like unto his glorious body; for, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Titus 2:12,13; 1 Pet. 1:7; Phil. 3:20,21; Col. 3:4.) It was to this blessed day that Paul looked forward with joyful hope, and to which he bade all of those look forward who, like himself, were sealed with the same holy spirit of promise, the earnest of their inheritance, saying, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." – 2 Tim. 4:8.

This "seal" is called the "holy spirit *of promise*" because it is of itself a foretaste, a firstfruit, a pledge, of that blessedness into which those who possess it and hold it fast shall by and by be delivered. Now, as Paul says (Rom. 8:23), having this first fruit of the spirit in the

imperfect earthen vessel which cannot fully and satisfactorily carry out the mind of the new spirit, and hence in which we groan within ourselves, realizing both these divine aspirations and our human shortcomings, we longingly wait for the glorious deliverance *provided* at the appointed day, – the deliverance or birth of those now begotten of the spirit of God, quickened by his mighty power, and developing daily toward the stage of birth, – the deliverance into the glorious likeness of our Lord and Head, in which we, like him, shall be filled with all the fulness of God, which Paul sets forth as the grand ultimatum of Christian attainment – "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:19.) Toward this end every truly overcoming child of God is constantly aspiring, and should be able from time to time to note perceptible degrees of progress; for even though in this tabernacle of the flesh we groan, being burdened with a weight of inherent imperfection, it is our duty and privilege daily to press toward this mark of holiness and Christlikeness, fully assured that, in due time, if we faint not in our strivings, we shall be delivered into the likeness of our Lord and Head.

In this view of the matter how important it is that those who hope for the deliverance should see to it that the seal of God is clearly stamped upon their hearts, that they have this holy spirit of promise constantly witnessing with their spirits that they are in deed **and [R2065 : page 273]** in truth sons and heirs of God. Nor is it enough that we have the recollection that at one time in the long-ago we were sealed with this spirit, if at the present time neither we nor our friends can discern the impression. The witness, to be of any value, must be a present witness, and must so continue to the end.

In order to the receiving of this divine impress or seal of God, the soul, having first by faith gratefully accepted the redemption provided in Christ Jesus, must also be in a plastic or receptive condition toward all the influences of divine grace, just as wax, being plastic, readily receives an impression; and, like wax, it must also have that cohesive quality whereby it may retain and preserve that impression. Such

plastic and cohesive qualities of the soul consist in (1), a loving and grateful submission of the whole heart and life to God; and (2), a resolute purpose and fixed principles of action. Unless the soul be in this attitude it would be impossible either to receive or to retain the seal or stamp of God. The stony heart will not take the divine impress. Nor could the unstable heart, or the double-minded man retain it (Jas. 1:6-8), such not having enough of the cohesive quality of stability and fixed principle. As in dough or other soft substances, it would soon subside and disappear, especially if some, however little, of the leaven of sin be permitted to work in it.

It is to the possibility of thus losing this divine impress upon the soul, that the Apostle refers in charging the people of God not to grieve the holy spirit whereby they are sealed. If we are fully and continuously submitted to the will and power of God, the impression of this seal should deepen with the passing years and become more and more distinctly legible; but, on the contrary, if we do not so continue to yield ourselves to the will and power of God, but allow the leaven of sin to abide and to work in us, we thus resist and grieve the holy spirit, which, if we continue to do, will in time result in the obliteration of the seal of God, and in the loss of that inheritance of which its possession was the pledge. Grieve not the spirit, efface not the seal, despise not the inheritance, but hold fast the seal, the pledge of your inheritance, and let its blessed impression deepen upon the soul, that, when the appointed day of deliverance shall have fully come, this clearly legible, God-given pledge may prominently attest its claim to be redeemed by the payment of that fulness of **[R2065 : page 274]** the divine bounty of which it is declared by the voice of inspiration to be the pledge.

Another thought in connection with this sealing is that, while the impression is distinctly felt upon the heart of the believer and is thus a testimony to himself of his divinely recognized kinship with God, it is also manifest to others; and it becomes more and more thus outwardly manifest as the impression deepens, bearing to the world its testimony of the wisdom, power and grace of God, and even in its silent eloquence

convincing the world of sin, of righteousness and of a coming judgment. – John 16:8.

It is not possible that any man should bear this divine impress or seal of God – even the first impression of it before the discipline of years has deepened and marked its outlines more distinctly and prominently – without its being observed by those with whom he comes in contact. Such is its transforming power that it will attract attention as strongly in contrast with the spirit of the world; and that without the slightest reference to it by its possessor. And if the seal, in its general outlines at least, is thus manifest even to the world, how much more distinctly should its features be discerned by those whose vision is clarified by the spirit of truth. Such quickly recognize in each other the stamp of God, and feel consequently a heavenly affinity which leads to a blessed fellowship and communion of spirit; and where the spirit of God is, there all the fruits of the spirit grow, and the more luxuriantly as the weeds of easily besetting sin, which are ever prone to spring up, are kept down.

If asked to describe the outlines of the seal of God upon his people, we could not do better than refer to the words of the Apostle, who speaks of it as "putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24.) And again, it is the image of God's dear Son. (Rom. 8:29.) Let us see to it that this seal is ours, and that its impress upon our hearts is becoming daily more and more distinct.

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