

ANOINTING, SEAL, AND WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

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Unknown to the world in general, the Lord has been carrying on a grand and glorious work. The mighty power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is working in the hearts of those to whom God has given the Spirit of sonship. This mighty power has and is working in the hearts of those whom the world esteems not, for they are the weak and insignificant as compared to the world's dignitaries. Despite their insignificance in worldly circles it is recorded, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Cor. 1:25) This text implies that the Lord's people are the weakest and least wise of his representatives, but they are still wiser and stronger than the forces pitted against them. Why is this possible?—because of God's Spirit that works in them.

When we understand that God's Holy Spirit is his holy influence or power which is invisible, yet a force and a power as it operates in the hearts and lives of his people, it makes for a simpler understanding of so important a subject. Such an understanding relieves us of the difficulty of endeavoring to associate a personality with the work of anointing and sealing of God's Holy Spirit. It prevents any from expecting a whisper from the Spirit as a witness, or a nudge as an evidence of sonship. This subject must be understood in terms of operation and effect and must be divorced from personality, sentimentality and emotionalism. New versions of the Bible are creating trouble for Trinitarians—their ideas are falling to pieces.

Anointing of the Spirit

In the typical services of the tabernacle inaugurated under Moses, the first usage is made of the term anointing. The High Priest was anointed with Holy anointing oil when inaugurated into office (which occurred only once in each High Priest's lifetime). Later on the Kings of Israel were anointed when accepted of the Lord to occupy this stately office. It is significant to note that the anointing with specially prepared oil was always used in conjunction with an inauguration to office. From this it may be seen that the Holy Spirit, compared to the Holy anointing oil, is used to inaugurate the consecrated into the office which they shall occupy if faithful—kings and priests of the Millennial Age. Such an anointing is suggestive of the dignity of office awaiting these, and also that service and ministry are the purpose of this office.

There is a distinction between the anointing and sealing which may be readily seen when viewed carefully. If the Lord did not intend to establish faithful Christians in the office of kings and priests in the age to come, it would not be necessary that they be anointed. This is not true with respect to the seal and begetting of the Holy Spirit. Irrespective of their future work and office, the mere fact that they are called to the high calling, involves

the necessity that they ultimately be born on the spirit plane in the divine nature and so they must first be begotten with the Holy Spirit to that nature. Likewise they must receive the seal of assurance of the Spirit to qualify for the spirit birth on the divine plane. The seal of assurance is very important to establish faith.

The question may arise, Is the anointing instantaneous or is it a gradual process? In Jesus' case, the account tells us, "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." (Mark 1:10) John records concerning Jesus, "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34) In that it is the Holy Spirit that anoints us, it must follow that Jesus' anointing was instantaneous, for "straightway" as he rose out of the water the Spirit descended upon him, and not in any small measure, but rather without measure was it given him. For that point and forward there could be no question as what position and work was to be his.

While the Lord's followers do not receive the Holy Spirit in such a marked and manifested manner, still they do receive it, and its effect upon their lives is just as potent. It may not be possible for them to point to the hour or day or month when they were anointed with the Spirit, but still it may be a matter of knowledge and fact to them that at some time from consecration they have been anointed.

The Apostle John declares, "And you have an Anointing from the Holy One; and you all know it." (1 John 2:20, Diag.) "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things." (1 John 2:27) Those anointed may "know it" by reason that they have felt drawn to Christ and to the Heavenly Father; they have responded to this drawing and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer, acknowledging their own unworthiness and sinfulness and trust in the blood of Christ to atone for their sins; they further consecrate their entire lives to God and take up their cross and follow their Master. When they have done this, they have done all required to receive the anointing of the Spirit, and may know they are now sons of God. Beyond this there is the witness of the Spirit to add to their assurance that they have been accepted of the Father.

The expression "anointing of the Spirit" is slightly different from the expression "begetting of the Spirit." The thought of "begetting" is that of a work complete upon occurrence, while the thought of "anointing" suggests an immediate beginning accompanied with a gradual work of progression. We are under the process of anointing from the time we enter the Lord's family, and receive a place in the glorious company of Royal Priests. We know that some fail to get their full anointing. Some of those who have been properly received, and begotten of the Holy Spirit, will fail to be fully anointed, and therefore, will fail to be of the Royal Priesthood class. They will be of the Great Company class instead. Therefore, it seems that the expression, "anointing of the

Spirit,” must include that mollifying and mellowing development which comes as we grow in grace and in knowledge, and not merely the time when we were anointed at the outset of our Christian experience.

The question often presents itself, Are we anointed individually? The answer is No. In the type the high priest, Aaron, was anointed with the Holy Anointing oil upon inauguration into office. The underpriests did not receive of this anointing, so that would preclude any possibility of their having an individual anointing. In Psalms 133:2 we read, “It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.” The word for “skirt,” literally translated is “mouth”—the opening at the neck of the robe. The thought is that the Anointing Oil poured on the head reached the mouth of the garment and hence the body shared in the anointing. The thought is the same as we have always believed, but that the oil did not necessarily deluge the whole body—the oil did reach the body, and the lesson is complete, for we are a part of the “body of Christ.”

The anointing oil used in typical arrangements of the tabernacle was a special preparation. In Exodus 30:23, 24 we read, “Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin.” The spices used do not seem in themselves to be significant, but by associating other Bible verses we may see their significance. In the typical anointing of Bezaleel, the chief workman of the tabernacle, we read, “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” (Exodus 31:4) We know the antitype of Bezaleel is Christ. In the antitypical anointing of Christ recorded in Isa. 11:2 it is recorded, “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” The only difference in the two verses is in respect to the terms “counsel and mighty” and “workmanship,” but both embody the same idea, i.e. deputy-ship and ability to accomplish the same.

These three verses parallel as follows:

(shekel about ½ oz. or ¼ oz.)

EXODUS 30:23

Holy Anointing Oil
 Olive oil, an hin
 5 quarts
 Myrrh, 500 - 18 lbs.
 10 oz.
 Cinnamon, 250, 9 lbs.
 5 oz.

EXODUS 31:3

Bezaleel
 Filled with the
 spirit of God
 Wisdom
 Understanding

ISAIAH 11:2

Christ
 Spirit of the Lord rest
 upon him
 Wisdom
 Understanding

Calamus, 250, 9 lbs. 5 oz.	Knowledge	Knowledge
Cassia, 500, 18 lbs. 10 oz.	Workmanship	Counsel and Might

(There was close to 47 lbs. of spices—if this was literally mixed with 5 quarts of olive oil it would be a paste. We believe it was the essence of the spices that were mixed with the oil.)

In the foregoing parallel we find knowledge parallel with Calamus and understanding with cinnamon, and of each a like quantity of 250 shekels. We would expect in our anointing to find knowledge and understanding equal. Those coming in under this antitypical anointing have the understanding of all the knowledge that gradually unfolds to them, for they possess hearing ears and seeing eyes.

Myrrh, representing wisdom, is equivalent in amount (500 shekels) to the total of both Cinnamon and Calamus (250 shekels each). We find in the anointing we receive that wisdom proportionate to understanding and knowledge. Cassia, representing workmanship in the sense of duty-ship or counsel or ability, is equivalent also in amount (500 shekels) to the total of both Cinnamon and Calamus. This would indicate that understanding and knowledge will correspondingly relate to our workmanship—workers that need not to be ashamed. Likewise, Cassia is equal in amount to Myrrh (500 shekels each) and this means our workmanship or deputy-ship is accompanied with the Heavenly wisdom which “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17

As we come in under such an anointing of the Spirit, with all its wonderful qualities, we are most blessed. The fragrance of the typical anointing oil must have been sweet smelling and of lasting effect. So with the antitypical anointing, for those having received it have diffused into their lives its fragrance, and their sacrifices in turn are a sweet-smelling savor to God. And as the mollifying and mellowing effect of this anointing progresses, it may be certain that the sweeter and richer becomes the fragrance emanating from such lives. “To one we are a savor of death unto death”—funeral flowers; “and to the other a savor of life unto life”—marriage flowers. (2 Cor. 2:16) The same sweet aroma to one class speaks of death, and they, withdraw from it; but to the Christian it speaks of the marriage to come.

The Seal of the Spirit

The basic meaning goes back to olden day customs of using a signet to seal, notarize, or place a stamp of recognition on a letter, article, or record. Sometimes it is emphasized that this custom was practiced simply to insure against intrusion. Actually however, it

was one more often to establish legality and authenticity than to insure secrecy. No doubt, secrecy was one of the purposes, but it was not the sole purpose. In Esther 8:8 we read, “Seal it with the king’s ring: for the writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may no man reverse.”

Usage does more to establish the meaning of a word than does any one given explanation of it. This holds true with the word “seal.” Because it appeared last, the final act in dealing with a record or letter, and because it was used to make the enclosure the seal has come to have the meaning of effectively closing, such as sealing a letter or a jar. When a figure is employed in a text, its usage there will often determine its meaning and sometimes we may gather several meanings, for a figure may be intended to teach more than one lesson. The seal, we believe is used to illustrate three truths: (1) authenticity, (2) impression of seal (Christ’s character), (3) finality.

(1) Authenticity: In Eph. 1:13 we read, “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of the promise.” Note: “ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”—Heb. 10:36. As the word is used here it means a mark of attestation or acknowledgment that guarantees to us a future inheritance if we follow on in the way we have started out. It is the Holy Spirit which constitutes this mark of attestation, and therefore it may be said of all those who have received the begetting of the Spirit that they are the sons of God and in line for the glorious future inheritance with their Lord. In this text though, there is nothing of finality about this seal to lead one to conclude that thenceforth glory and honor must follow unconditionally. The possession of the Holy Spirit is only an assurance that we are properly entered into the race that leads to joint-heirship with our Master; the race entered is not the race won, and only such that finish triumphantly shall be given abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

(2) Impression of the Seal: Former methods used in sealing documents also help us to catch the force of this illustration. They would have a stamp or die engraved with some special design which they would impress into heated wax on the document. The die was held in position until the wax solidified. If we were to use this to illustrate the sealing of the church, the seal would compare to Christ’s character likeness which is being impressed into the heart of each member. The heat is produced by the fiery trials and the character-likeness of our Lord is daily being impressed into the heart of each disciple. The impression of such a seal would not be complete until the fourth quarter mark of perfect love even for our enemies is reached. And even then, there must follow the hardening or crystallization of this impression in the heart, until finally the impression is permanently fixed to endure for eternity. It would be then that the Holy Spirit could be said to have accomplished its work. From this standpoint the seal of the Spirit would be an advanced witness of our acceptance with God, and when the sealing work is

accomplished in our hearts it would be the cream of Christian experience. Certainly none who have not reached the perfect mark of love may be said to have really enjoyed the richest experience in the Christian life.

If we think of the sealing work as being Christ's character-likeness being impressed into our hearts by the Holy Spirit it would admittedly follow that such an impression could not be made in our hearts instantaneously. There would even be the possibility of it never being impressed into our hearts. In Paul's letter to the Galatian brethren it appears that some to whom he wrote were not being properly developed. He writes, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ... O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth ... Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 1:6; 3:1, 3) And in his endeavor to rectify their position, Paul wrote, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) These had begun in the "Spirit," but were deceived into false conceptions of their relationship to the Law. They, therefore, had not developed properly as Christians and hence Paul did "travail in birth again until Christ" or the character-likeness of Christ was formed in them. One writer said of these Galatians, "Although they had been begotten by the word of truth, the new germ of spiritual being had not yet progressed even to the definite formation of Christian character which manifests its existence and life in activity; they had not reached the quickening stage, although it was high time that such indication of life should appear in them."

When one receives Spirit-begettal there comes a measure of assurance respecting the future inheritance, but unless there follows growth and development as evidence of the new life this assurance becomes dimmer. In the natural realm begettal is followed by quickening. This must also follow Spirit-begettal. In Rom. 8:11 we are told, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This quickening or energizing of our mortal bodies results from the Holy Spirit dwelling with us, implying something different from the begettal. Indeed, when the Spirit of God dwells in our hearts richly it will inevitably lead us to activity in the service of the Lord. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10) Mere belief is not sufficient for the true Christian. He must make confession of such belief if ultimate "salvation" is to result.

(3) Finality of the Seal: The figure of a seal is also made use of by the Revelator. Four angels are seen in a vision holding back the four winds of heaven while another angel, "having the seal of the living God," cries, "Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." (Rev. 7:1-3) Such a seal has been properly understood to mean that these are given an intellectual

appreciation of the plan of God, with its many beautiful phases, as a mark of attestation of their sonship and favor with God.

It seems that this sealing here has also a finality associated with it, for John records, “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Rev. 7:4) In that there are only a specified number so sealed it must be that this constitutes those marked as belonging to the “very elect”; those who are “called, and chosen, and faithful.” (Rev. 17:14; Matt. 24:24)

Additionally, this work was to be accomplished before the “four winds” could be loosed. The loosing of these “winds” will climax the time of trouble with its greatest fury and therefore conditions would be all but favorable for new ones to enter the race for the heavenly phase of the kingdom. Rather the faithful will all have been selected by that time, for they by scriptural implication are “accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass.”—Luke 21:36.

By use of such a figure many lessons may be inculcated, and all of them forceful illustrations of great truths. (1) Authenticity—the Holy Spirit which is the seal when first received does bring assurance of sonship and also hope with regard to a future inheritance. (2) Impression—as the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart, moulding it and fashioning it into the divine likeness, then it may be said that it is prepared and fitted for so glorious a nature. (3) Finality—and then, when the Spirit has accomplished its work in the heart, the crown of life is assured, and will be granted when this earthly life is completed. By clarifying the way we make use of the seal figure, it avoids any misunderstanding that might arise when one uses this figure in a limited way and another uses it in a broader sense.

The Witness of the Spirit

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. 8:16) This doctrine is very important to God’s people because on it depends to a considerable extent their possession of peace and assurance of faith. If they lack this testimony of the Spirit, doubts and fears will assail them, and they will find themselves among those who sing the well-known hymn: “’Tis a point I long to know—Oft it causes anxious thought: Do I love the Lord or no? Am I his or am I not?”

The misconceptions concerning the witness of the Spirit have led to much confusion and despair on the part of some. They imagined that feelings and emotions of joy possessed in the beginning when they first knew the Lord, were evidences of their sonship, and when, as it were, the “woes” of life overtook them and the first impulses of joy were lost in sorrow and disappointment, then uncertainties assailed the convictions of their sonship

and acceptance with the Father. Alas! they cry, “Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I found the Lord?” Anyone who allows his feelings to affect his course in life, even from a worldly standpoint, can never gain stability enough to live a life of accomplishments. One must persevere in what he has committed to do irrespective of feelings.

Can we imagine a Christian, with the great warfare before him, with the lofty heights to attain, and the path of self-sacrifice and death before him, allowing feelings to dampen his zeal or weaken his convictions? No, there must be a more firm foundation than this. The Christian must be guided by knowledge, that comes from a proper understanding of the Word of God; otherwise he will be an “on again, off again Finnegan.” All those who recognize that they have been drawn to the Lord, and who have faith in the atoning merit of Christ and who consecrated their all to God. may have the witness of the Word of God that they are accepted as sons, as probationary members of the church. The anointing and seal of the Spirit which they have received is a witness to them of their sonship. There are many other scriptural factors which augment this witness.

It is written, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” (Heb. 12:6, 7) Every evidence of our Heavenly Father’s disciplining hand upon us is a testimony that we are his sons, and while “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:11) We may not be able to rejoice in the chastening experience itself, but we may rejoice in the witness that it brings as a fresh evidence of our relationship to God. When we remember God’s statement, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,” we may take fresh confidence that we are still in the special love of the Father as long as we are being disciplined. (Rev. 3:19) Every experience, if properly received, has a little note attached with it—if you look for it you will find it—it reads—“with love from the Father.”

Employing the figure of a vine and its branches, the Master said, “I am the vine, and ye are the branches” and “every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (John 15:5, 2) As “branches” in the “vine” we are subjected to such experiences that tend to cut off all tendencies to “wood-making,” that is, all inclinations toward earthly attachments. If we find such “purgings” being made in ourselves it becomes another evidence that we are his children. It is true that even the worldly people have hardships and difficulties which may resemble those of the Lord’s people, but they cannot be considered marks of sonship, because only those who have made a covenant with the Lord in consecration, are being dealt with. Others may be profited by their adversities, to be sure, but may not view them as a “witness” of their relationship as sons in the divine family.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Gal. 5:23, 24) To the extent that we find these graces in our hearts and as they increase in intensity and maturity we may know from this that the “Spirit” is strongly testifying that we are the “sons of God.” While we may never possess perfection in these graces so far as our actions are concerned, yet we should realize a richer and fuller possession of them as we progress in the way. And one day there should come a ripeness and maturity to this “fruit of the Spirit” in our lives which will make meet for the inheritance promised all the faithful. And such completion in these graces should be sought as early in the Christian life as possible; there should be no procrastinating on our part and no time or effort spared from so grand a work. This life is too short, eternity is too long, to be otherwise minded.

Another vital “witness” is found when we are rejected and persecuted by our fellowmen for our insistence on preaching the message of truth. “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.” Those in whom the Word dwells richly must find expression of it by telling the glad tidings to others. Whether men hear or forbear, they shall still feel impelled to preach and make known the divine plan far and wide. Naturally the darkness hates the light and oppositions and persecutions will arise as they persevere in their ministry. But all such suffering and opposition brought about by a faithful proclamation of the truth is a “witness of the Spirit” reassuring such of sonship and acceptance with God. In that the very terms of discipleship entail suffering, it must follow that all those who “suffer” with him are his brethren and shall consequently “reign” with him. (2 Tim. 2:12) Every sorrow and pain that results from a close following of the Master becomes a “witness” of sonship, and an incentive to greater faithfulness.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:1, 2) To the extent that we find ourselves spiritually minded, seeking those things which are above, we may know that the “Spirit” is witnessing, confirming not only our sonship, but our growth and progression as sons. If we find an increasing desire for spiritual wisdom and understanding and a deeper knowledge of the truth, this is also an encouraging evidence to us. The apostle says, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom. 8:6) Hence, to be so minded should give us great confidence with respect to the “great recompense of reward.”—Heb. 10:35

There are many other witnesses of the Spirit, but greatest of these may be summed up in the word, love. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment [*krisis*, the church’s trial time associated with the Lord’s return] because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.”

(1 John 4:17, 18) If our love has been perfected and we are free from fear, allowing only the sweet influence of love to guide and control in life's affairs, then we have one of the grandest testimonies which can be had, and should rejoice in our blessed position.

When once we divorce our relationship with the Lord from ephemeral emotions and place it on a surer foundation of understanding and knowledge, we are then better prepared for a more effectual walk in this narrow way that leads to life. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)" Heb. 10:23

"... for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—1 Tim. 1:12