

Evidences Of Our Begetting

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Whether we are newly acquainted with the Truth, or a long time in the way or somewhere in between these two points, the question does arise (at least occasionally) HAVE I REALLY BEEN BEGOTTEN OF THE SPIRIT? Few doctrines are of more importance to the Lord's people than this one. We should desire, as his people, to have "that peace of mind emanating from our Heavenly Father... which passeth all understanding."

The Apostle in Heb. 10:22 also refers to a FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, another thing that we should desire. We believe these two points ("peace of mind which passeth all understanding," and "full assurance of faith") can more readily be ours as we realize that we have been begotten of His spirit. One of the best evidences we have of our begetting, that lie on the surface, is the fact that we are here. The world sings a song, that perhaps you have heard—WE'RE HERE BECAUSE WE'RE HERE. As the Lord's people, we do not come together to either sing or reason in this manner. We're here because the Lord is here, and he has invited us here. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.

In our Lord's great prophecy in Matt. 24, He points to the end of the gospel age, and states in verse 28, "WHEREVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE WILL THE EAGLES BE GATHERED TOGETHER." The carcass represents food, and the eagles represent the Lord's people. The eagle has a very keen sense of vision and appetite. The food of "present truth" which is now provided by our Lord, and the gathering of his people to it, fit the description of this prophecy exactly. The Lord has invited to his table those who are of His spirit—those who have a desire to be like Him and see Him as He is. If we have the desire to gather together and feed upon the Truth, we have an evidence that we've been begotten of Him.

In Rom. 8:16 the apostle refers to the witness of the spirit—this is according to the King James version. Let us consider Rom. 8:14-16 from our common version Bibles and then also the Diaglott translation of the same. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby, we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. For as many as are guided by God's spirit, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive a slavish spirit back again for fear, but you received a spirit of sonship, by which we cry Abba Father! The spirit testifies together with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

The word "sons" in the 14th verse and the word "children" in the 16th verse have very similar meanings. The word "sons" is from a Greek word meaning child, foal or son; and the word "children" is from a Greek word meaning child, daughter or son. Note how the

16th verse leads right back to the 14th verse—v. 16, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” And v. 14 says that “... as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The word “witness” in v. 16 is from a Greek word meaning to testify jointly, to corroborate by concurrent evidence.

We are especially interested in this 16th verse because the Apostle is comparing two spirits. When he uses the expression “The spirit itself,” we believe he is referring to the spirit of God, as it comes to us through the word of truth; and the spirit itself witnesses or testifies together with our spirit or our new mind. The question naturally presents itself at this point—how does the spirit witness or testify to us respecting our close relationship with the Heavenly Father? How may we be sure that we are sons of God?

I have had the experience of talking with some outside the Truth circle, who were very quick to mention their feelings of ecstasy at the time they became the Lord’s. They received the Lord’s grace with this feeling of ecstasy, and perhaps too they have the unscriptural feeling that once in grace always in grace. We believe however, that our feelings are an unreliable witness. We all belong to a fallen race actually—our fleshly bodies are imperfect, and we cannot judge ourselves according to our feelings—we would indeed have a very unreliable witness. We all know that there are times when we feel better than at other times. Our feelings then would say, when we are enjoying the mountain top experiences—“We belong to the Lord.” And then, when we are in the valley experiences—“We are not the Lord’s!” When we are in between these two points, our feelings would say—“Maybe you are the Lord’s and maybe not.” How thankful we should be that the Spirit does not witness according to our feelings, but rather according to our good common sense.

We can all arrive at certain conclusions concerning the natural man by taking notice of his words and conduct. We note what Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:11, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him...” For instance, if we were to engage in a conversation with a man who used such expressions, “There’s fertilizing to do on the back forty,” or “I’ve got to get the corn in pretty quick,” or “Looks like a wet spring, don’t know if I can get the machinery out on the field or not;” we would conclude that this man was a farmer. Maybe he’d pull a weed out of the ground and chew on it; and certain words used by such a man would indicate whether he was a successful farmer or an unsuccessful farmer.

So we may know God’s mind or Spirit by His words and by His dealings. The one sure and safe evidence that we have is the Word of God. That Word declares that the Holy Spirit is given to those who receive Christ as Saviour and Lord. In John 1:12 we read, “As many as received him, to them gave he power [or privilege] to become the sons of God. even to them that believe on His name.” John 7:38, 39 (Diaglott), “He believing into me, as the Scripture says, out of him shall flow rivers of living water. But this he

said concerning the Spirit, which those believing into him were about to receive...”

Then the text goes on to say, “For the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Here is a reference to the early church before Pentecost. After Pentecost many miraculous things took place.

Since we at this time desire a witness of the Spirit respecting our son-ship, we need then to ask ourselves a question or two. Bro. Russell suggests these questions on page 229 of the Fifth Volume of Studies in the Scriptures. We are to keep in mind that these questions are to be directed to ourselves. “Was I ever drawn to Christ?—to recognize him as my Redeemer, through whose righteousness alone I could have access to the Heavenly Father, and be acceptable with him?” If we can give a positive “Yes” answer to this question, the next question would be—“Did I ever fully consecrate myself—my life, my time, my talents, my influence, my all—to God?” If a positive “yes” can also be given to this question, the one asking the question, as the Pastor states, “May rest fully assured that he has been accepted with the Father in the Beloved One, and recognized of him as a son.” (End of quote)

These are reasonable and logical questions. They are questions that can be asked of ourselves, no matter how we feel—whether we are in the depths of despair or at the pinnacle of joy, or somewhere in between. We can ask these questions and come up with sound and helpful answers. If I can answer “Yes” to these questions and can say that now (at this present moment) I am trusting in him as my personal Saviour, and I still take him to be my Lord, then I believe I have the initial evidences that I have received the Holy Spirit.

Another way of expressing how the Spirit is received is described by the Apostle Paul and we hear these thoughts at the baptism and consecration services. Paul describes this as being baptized into Christ’s death—this means that after having believed into Christ as a Saviour, we give up our human will and accept the Divine will in its place. Faith in Christ as a Saviour, followed by a consecration to death of the old human will, brings a release from Adamic condemnation to death. To be baptized into Christ’s death, begins with the death of the human will and it ends in a literal dying with Christ, i.e. dying the same kind of death that he died—a sacrificial death. **THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL EVERY MEMBER OF HIS BODY HAS GONE DOWN INTO DEATH.** It is also true that, the resurrection of The Christ is not complete until every member of His Body is raised up from death. If we have made a consecration of this kind, and are now striving with His help to carry it out, we may be sure that we have received that adoption to sonship.

Along with such a definite conversion and consecration there are other evidences which belong to this initial evidence of this “newness of life.” An additional evidence would be the laying aside of sin on our part and the hungering for the word of God—a desire to

know the will of God better. The Apostle expresses it in 1 Peter 2:1, 2, “LAYING ASIDE ALL MALICE AND ALL GUILE AND HYPOCRISIES, AND ENVIES AND EVIL SPEAKING, AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY, IF SO BE THAT YE HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS.” Still another evidence, is a love for those who have experienced a like change. Referring to this one, the Apostle states it in 1 John 3:14, “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” It would seem that this evidence would be possessed by all who have received of his Spirit.

One outstanding evidence that we have is referred to in Rom. 8:11—we can properly say this is a quickening evidence—“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 [make alive] your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.” This indicates that the begetting evidences are going to be followed by an energizing of the believer to service for the Lord. Perhaps this service would begin by the confessing of Christ as our Lord and Saviour to others. Rom. 10:9, 10, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” We note how confession was made by brethren in the early church. Let us take Acts 5:29 to 32 as an example, “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” Also let us take Acts 4:8 to 12, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the important man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

An open confession of the Master is going to bring some persecution in the form of ridicule or whatever. A refuting of the prevalent doctrines of error will also bring persecution. This too, is a witness of the Spirit, for the scriptures bear witness that this will be our experience. Paul states this clearly in 2 Tim. 3:12, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Also 1 Pet. 4:14, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

The great object to be attained by those who are recipients of the Holy Spirit is a development into the character likeness of Christ. And as an earthly parent sees the necessity of chastising their children, so our Heavenly Father sees this need; and as this is administered we have another evidence of the witness of the Spirit. Paul's words in Heb. 12:5 to 11 are right to the point (using the Diaglott translation), "And have you forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons? My son, slight not the discipline of the Lord, neither be discouraged when reprov'd by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons; for is there any son whom a Father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then truly you are spurious and not sons. Have we then indeed received discipline from our natural fathers, and we revered them; shall we not much rather be submissive to the father of spirits, and live? For they, indeed, for a few days disciplined us, according as it seemed right to them; but he for our advantage, in order that we may partake of his holiness. But all discipline, indeed, as it respects the present, seems not to be of joy, but of grief; yet afterwards it returns the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Chastisement is a form of discipline. Discipline, chastisement or correction—whatever term we use—comes to all the Lord's people, or should. Just as there are natural children who need more severe correction, and some who need less, the same is true in the Lord's family. The more than overcomers are those who quickly follow the Lord's leadings. Here let us note the words of Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." An obedient child will watch the eye of the parent to note the expression of approval or disapproval. The true child of God will be guided by God's eye through the Word of Truth.

The corrections of the Lord are designed to remind us that we have been begotten to heavenly hopes. They help us to cultivate the habit of setting our affections on the things above and to wean us from the things of this earth.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding evidences of the quickening process of the Holy Spirit, is that of increased understanding of God's plan:—a love not only for the "milk of the word," but the strong meat also. Heb. 5:14, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." And then our Lord made a statement in John 8th chapter that especially indicates that an understanding of the truth (increased understanding) is an evidence of our begetting—John 8:31, 32, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"—free from superstitions, fears, errors and wrong doctrines.

Possibly we could consider that being called a “Russellite” was a witness of the Spirit—at least at this end of the age. While we should not encourage this term, since we are Christians, in the fullest sense of the word, yet we do not become too concerned over this expression. The world does not understand that Brother Russell was that servant, to bring meat in due season to the household of faith. Perhaps some of us are familiar with the poem entitled “How to Spot a Russellite.” Here it is:

“How to Spot a Russellite”

Rev. 14:4

It's not the outward gilding.	1 Sam. 16:7
But the inward man of heart	1 Sam. 16:7
That marks them as peculiar	1 Pet. 2:9
And from others set apart	Psa. 4:3
For they look like other people	1 Sam. 16:7
In outward dress and walk	John 7:24
But it's their speech betrays them	Matt. 26:73
When they commence to talk	Psa. 145:11
They claim eternal torment	Rev. 14:10, 11
Where immortal souls will dwell	Matt. 10:28
Is of Satan's institution	Gen. 3:4
And not the Bible Hell	Rom. 6:23, Gen. 2:17
That the grave is merely silence	Psa. 146:4
Dead know not anything	Ecc. 9:5,6
But in due time will awaken	John 5:28, 29
And come to their border again	Jer. 31:16, 17
And those old Bible stories	2 Peter 1:21
They treasure everyone	Heb. 10:1
As sacred types arid shadows	Heb. 10:1
Of better things to come	Matt. 5:18
God's Word is their foundation	Eph. 2:20
And not the creeds of men	Matt. 15:9
His Truth their shield and buckler	Psa. 91:4
From Error guideth them	Psa. 119:104
They talk about the Kingdom	Psa. 145:11
And the Golden Age to come	Acts 3:21
When all blind eyes will open	Isa. 35:5
The lame shall leap and run	Isa. 35:6
The Redeemed return to Zion	Isa. 35:10
All sorrow and sighing flee	Isa. 35:10
The desire of all Nations	Hag. 2:7
This Earth an Eden will be	Isa. 35:1, 6

“Seats free and no collection”
To God they’re set apart
Their money, time and talent.
They give with willing heart
They care not for earthly treasure
The Heavenly prize, they’d win.
And gladly toil and suffer
That Redemption Song to sing
Would you like to be a creature
That walks the narrow way
Then make your Consecration
Count the cost. Decide today
If you stand for “Russellism”
It will mean contempt and scorn
It will be too late for glory
When the “Russellites” are gone
—ONE OF THEM

1 Cor. 16:1, 2
Psa. 50:5
Rom. 12:2
2 Cor. 9:7
Matt. 6:19-20
Phil. 3:14
2 Tim. 2:12
Rev. 14:3
John 17:16
Matt. 7:14
1 Thess. 4:3
Luke 14:28
Rev. 2:10
1 Peter 2:20
Luke 13:24, 25
Rev. 22:11

Let us turn now to Rom. 5:1-5, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” This thought of the love of God being “shed abroad in our hearts” means a widespread love of God—in other words, our hearts are filled with the love of God. As an evidence of our begetting we should manifest that this is so. Let us continue to make it known that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Remember too, that Paul admonishes us to “fight the good fight of faith”—there is no question as to whether or not we’re going to fight—we are, but the question is—how are we going to fight? The weapons of our warfare are not carnal as the Apostle tells us in 2 Cor. 10:3 to 5, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” If we see this “good fight of faith” going on within us what an evidence this is that we are His.

We should especially bear in mind that all these evidences bring with them responsibility—we are special targets for the Adversary and we are on trial for life. We cannot let the

experiences of life sour us in any way, because a wrong spirit leads to losing the spirit of our God. And in the 8th chapter of Romans, the 9th verse, Paul states, “Now if any man [anyone, Diaglott] have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” So whatever profession we might make, unless we manifest the Spirit and love of God, our professions are empty.

So as partakers of His Spirit, let us continue to “Study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” It is what the Lord says that counts with us—now and in the future.

In the present life the words of Jesus apply—Matt. 7:24, Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and either doeth them or doeth them not, will be rewarded accordingly. The Lord is going to say to one class of His people, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.” This class will be those who have cultivated the Spirit of Christ. They will have walked in the Spirit, that they might receive the crown of life.

May the Heavenly Father help us all to appreciate the spirit of holiness unto the end.