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Why are the Dead not Raised to Life in Healing Campaigns Today?

(This article is published by request).

OUR subject is chosen on account of the great interest being shown, in recent times especially, in the claims that it is quite the right thing to expect. the Lord to heal bodily ailments or disabilities of those who exercise faith in Him.

One thing that is noticeable is the fact that not only those who specialise in faith healing, etc. (such as those of Pentecostal or Apostolic beliefs), are stressing this matter of bodily healings, but also some Of the other denominational churches are joining in and declaring that it is correct to seek, and expect the Lord to heal by miracles those who are suffering illness of one kind or another. This is certainly something new, but it all goes to show that anything of an outward appeal or demonstration is very attractive and captivating to those who do not study the Bible correctly, nor understand the Plan of the Ages .for this present Gospel Age, and for the ages to come.

It seems as though some of the leaders in some of the church systems are being stirred up by the campaigns of others who have started organizations in more recent years with special stress upon the healing of bodily sicknesses, and, apparently, not wishing to be left out of anything that seems to be "catching on" with a great number of people, *we* have now what might be called an epidemic of faith-healing propaganda which is often accepted at full face-value without examination of the Bible to prove whether it is truth or error.

In coming to the Bible for help in respect of any subject, how important it is to keep in mind that what may be true and appropriate for one age in God's Plan of the Ages, need not necessarily be true in another age, or every age. In other words, while there are fundamental truths which do apply at all times, there are other truths which apply only, and especially, for certain periods during the outworking of God's plan and which are termed "present truth" in the Bible; the thought being that a certain teaching was applicable to the time then present, as expressed by the Apostle Peter—"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." (2 Pet. 1:12.) It is of interest to note that the Greek word from which our English word "present" is translated in the text just quoted, means, "to be near; at hand, or time being."

During our Lord's first advent He performed quite a variety of miracles, as we know, in the turning of water into wine, feeding the multitude from a few loaves and fishes, curing ailments of various kinds in some people, and even raising the dead. These miracles were also carried over into the activities of the early church, for the reason that the same conditions applied for some years after our Lord's death as applied when He was on earth. So, the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 2:3,4 referred to the "So great salvation," and "God bearing witness with signs and wonders." (See also John 2:11.)

We wish now to examine the words of our Lord at the time of one of His most outstanding miracles, found in Luke 7:11-16. From verse 12 we read—"Now when he (Jesus) came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier (coffin), and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." What a wonderful demonstration of the power of God was thus manifested by our Lord on that occasion, and no wonder the people "glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people."

Reading on in Luke 7:17-23 we find a most helpful statement from Jesus respecting John the Baptist and the information He sends to John that he may know that Jesus is really the Messiah. Verses 22, 23 read—"Go your way,

and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

We note from verse 11 that "many of his disciples went with him, and much people," therefore the raising of the widow's son was well known, so in sending John's disciples to him in prison our Lord could well say—"Go your way,

and tell John what things ye have seen and heard." And amongst the most startling things they had seen and heard was the raising of the widow's son from death, by stopping the funeral procession. What would we think if we had been present and saw Jesus raise the widow's son to life from the coffin in which he was to be buried? Would we not also say, in the words of verse 16—"A great prophet is risen up among us; and, that God hath visited his people?" We surely would. And be it noted that this manifestation of God's power, in the hands of Christ, of raising the dead, was one of the important signs expressed to John the Baptist in prison, that he may know that Jesus was the true Messiah, and that he need not "look for another."

It is of interest in connection with our subject to mention that recently one of the faith-healing people, in dealing with these words of Jesus to John the Baptist, stressed the importance of healing of people and used the Lord's words —"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me"—implying that those who do not agree with their healing campaigns today are offended, and rejecting the Lord and His witness. Yet, this man ignored altogether the words of Jesus respecting the "dead being raised," and the "blind receiving sight" as part of the witness by which John could be sure that Jesus was the Messiah. And those who are today stressing the importance of healings for the sick quote the words of the Apostle Paul in Heb. 13:8—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"—in support, claiming that what the Lord did then, **He is** now doing today. But who has heard of anyone being raised from the dead by the Lord today? Who has heard of any of those who claim -that the Lord's power is the same yesterday, today and for ever in their healing campaigns ever attempting to raise the dead to life? Why do they not attempt to raise the dead, when they claim the same conditions exist today as when Jesus was on earth? They know very well that they have not got the Lord's power to do such things, despite their claims that His power is operative as at His first advent, but they know that they have some power to do a measure of healing, and to speak in tongues, etc., and are deceived into thinking it is the Lord's power.

What about the Apostles who saw the miracles of Jesus—raising of the dead, giving of sight to the blind, etc.—were they able to do the same? Yes, they did, because they were true disciples, and particularly, because it was still the appropriate time for such manifestations of God's power, while the church was in its infancy. From Matt. 10:5-8 we read—''These twelve Jesus sent forth . . . . And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give." Do we ever hear a present-day faith healer quoting these verses and claiming to do exactly what the Apostles did in the name of Christ? No, indeed, because those instructions cannot be carried out today, for the Lord does not work always in the same way. As we saw previously, there is some truth which is "present truth," for the time only when it was uttered.

However, what of the apostles; did they raise the dead in their day? Yes, they did. In Acts 9:36-42 we have the record of Peter restoring Dorcas to life from the dead, surely a most wonderful exhibition of God's power working through His servant in a special way that has never been repeated since the days of the apostles. Also we have the record in Acts 20:9-12 of Paul restoring the life of a young man who fell from the "third loft" and was killed. This surely was another marvellous manifestation of the Lord's power at the hands of His faithful apostle. If it had been God's will that these miracles of the apostles were intended to continue throughout the Gospel Age, surely Peter, after raising one from the dead, would have been full of exhorting others to do the same. But what do we find in Peter's writings? We find no references at all to any of the "gifts" of the spirit, but rather exhortations for the development of the "fruits" of the spirit. (See 2 Pet. 1:5-11.)

This agrees very fully with the particular advice of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Cor. 12:28-31 the apostle mentions the order in the early church and that there were gifts of the spirit operating at that time, some of which were more desirable than others, and yet he would show them "a more excellent way" than even the best of gifts. This he proceeded to do in chapter 13, showing that the development of the fruits of the spirit was the allimportant attainment for the Lord's people. In verses 8-11 in this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians we see how the Apostle is clearly revealing the progressing elimination of the "gifts of the spirit" as the church developed and sought fuller appreciation of spiritual truths.—''Charity never faileth; but whether there be (gifts of) prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be (gifts of) tongues, they shall cease; whether there be (gifts of) knowledge, it shall vanish away . . . . When I was a child, spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

How often we find reference being made to James 5:14-16 in support of physical healings today, but a careful examination of the context in James shows that bodily sicknesses are not referred to at all. It is of interest to find that the Greek word translated "sick" in this passage in James is the same as that translated "wearied" in Heb. 12:3—"Lest

ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Yes, some become spiritually sick, and need encouragement and prayers of others to assist them back into harmony and fellowship with the Lord. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." (Heb. 12:12,13.)

To safeguard the Lord's people against the many deceptions the Apostle Paul, in 2 Cor. 11:13-15, revealed that there would be "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." How significant are the words—'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." By deceiving our first parents Satan brought all the sorrow, pain, sickness and death upon mankind; now, he would seek to cure the very conditions he brought about—"as an angel of light,"—and this is very attractive and appealing to those who are not established in the truths, of God's Word, but are thinking more of temporary fleshly advantages which it is not the Lord's will to impart in this Gospel Age.

So far from expecting bodily healings today, the Lord's people are invited to walk in the steps of their Master, sacrificing the human life, walking by faith and not by sight. The Apostle Paul's own experience is a wonderful guide to Christians today, as well as when he wrote to the Corinthian church. He declared—"Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2. Cor. 12:7-10.) There can be no doubt that this was a physical disability, and the great apostle, who could even raise the dead by the Lord's power, found that God's will for him was that he may be sanctified and mellowed by the "thorn in the flesh," as His grace was realised sufficient, for the Lord assured him—"My strength is made perfect in weakness."

If it had been God's will to heal His followers in those days, and since, surely the Apostle Paul would have been healed immediately, and how easy it would have been for Paul to have healed Timothy—See 1 Tim. 5:23. But no, it was not God's will, neither is it His will today that His people should be healed by miracles. How noticeable it is that to the Corinthian church only does Paul mention the "gifts" of the spirit, and he seeks to wean them away from the outward show of gifts, and exhorts them to cultivate the "fruits" of the spirit. When writing his epistles to those churches which were not in danger of being deceived by continuing in the use of the "gifts of the spirit" the apostle does not even mention them. These brethren had developed from those outward manifestations, and were being built up in the "inner man," as they gladly sacrificed their human lives in the service of the Lord. As the apostle set the example, so all the Lord's true people gladly "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24; see also Rom. 8:14-18.)

Let us not be misunderstood, however, in claiming that the Lord does not heal by miracles today. Surely, the Lord's blessing upon the sick and suffering of mankind is most fitting, and it is pleasing in His sight that we offer up sincere and fervent prayers for His blessing and comfort to be upon all ailing ones, while at the same time we do our best with the assistance of medical men, and correct foods, etc., which the Lord has provided for our well being, that God's will may be done, as we progress along the Christian way. On the other hand we do well also not to neglect bodily weaknesses in view of the fact that we do not expect the Lord to heal by miracles. We must exercise the spirit of a sound mind and keep as well as reasonably possible, and correct habits of eating and drinking, etc., bring their own rewards. Those people who would not curb their appetites for food or drink which are injurious just because they appeal to the palate are not likely to .progress very well in spiritual things either. (See 1 Cor. 9:26,27.)

While, then, we see that the time has not yet arrived for the dead to be raised, neither is it the time for miraculous healings, etc., and while God permits Satan to deceive certain ones by false claims, yet we rejoice that the time is not far distant when the Lord's prayer will be answered—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven"—and the resurrection and blessing of all mankind will be accomplished as they obey the laws of the kingdom. (See John 5:28,29 [Rev. Version]; 1 Cor. 15:22,23.)

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PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

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Not Holding the Head.

(Col. 3:18,19.)

THE Apostle warns us all against a wrong attitude which at all times has more or less threatened the body of Christ, in its larger gatherings as well as in its little handfuls ;— he warns against the danger of looking too much to ourselves or to other men in the Church and not enough toward the Lord, who is indeed “the Head of the Church, which is His Body.” Some members he represents as taking a head position, forgetful of the fact that “one is the Head of the Church, even Christ,” and inclined, in consequence of this forgetfulness, to think too highly of themselves, to imagine that the whole weight and importance of the Lord’s cause devolves upon them, and to assume too much leadership.

The Apostle warns other less prominent members of the Church against a recognition and support of such wrong position, assuring them that their condescension is extreme, prejudicial to themselves and to the interests they would serve; that the angels, that is the messengers, the representatives of the Church (Rev. 1:20; 2:1) are not to be worshipped, though they are to be highly esteemed in proportion to their faithfulness, good works and humility.

He warns other members that such a humiliation as would ignore themselves entirely and cast all the weight and responsibility and influence upon these angels and elders would appear improper, and would indicate an unfaithfulness to Christ and a failure to rightly appreciate His arrangements.

Thus reproving two classes because of taking opposite extremes, the Apostle proceeds to explain that the difficulty with both parties is a failure to hold the Head in proper esteem —Christ, the only true Head of the Church. Whether by exalting ourselves, usurping our Lord’s place in the Church, and ignoring His words and arrangements and being puffed up as His servants, or whether, on the other hand, quietly submitting to such things and doing reverence to those who usurp the Lord’s place in His body, in either case the difficulty is the same—a failure to rightly recognise the true Head.

If we accept the fact that Christ is the Head of the Church, let us rest every argument on that basis; let us not feel for a moment that everything will go to pieces unless we steady the ark—that we are main spokes in the divine programme in any little quarter of Zion (1 Chron. 13:10). All such self-conceited ideas are traitorous as respects the Captain of our salvation, for He has told us, and we believe His word—"Without Me, ye can do nothing.” Every member of the body of Christ, whom the Lord has in any sense of the word set in the Church to serve His cause, should realise that he is not at all essential to the development of the divine plan, that it is a favour, pure and simple, that he has been granted a share in connection with it, that his blessings, day by day, more than compensate any little service and sacrifice he may be able to render. So far from feeling heady he should feel humbled by the thought that he is permitted to have any part in the great plan of God as a servant amongst his brethren, and he should realise distinctly that, so surely as the Lord is the Head of His Church, any who cease to occupy positions of trust in a humble manner will be debased, will lose privileges and opportunities, perhaps with injury to themselves and to others.

In 2 Tim.:3, the Apostle assures us that, in the last days, grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents (and higher authority in general), unthankful, unholy . . . . traducers, heady, high-minded . . . . having a form of godliness, but ignoring the power thereof.

This picture certainly fits well to our day throughout nominal Christendom, and it is not strange, therefore, that something of the same general spirit at times seeks to invade the camp of the saints—the little company of the consecrated who are striving to be overcomers of the world and its spirit. The fact that the Apostle writes thus forcefully on this question does not prove any lack of sympathy on his part, but the trouble is a grievous one and especially injurious to the brethren who may yield to such headiness; nothing is surer to sap spiritual vitality and to lead us into darkness, both doctrinal and spiritual.

It would be well for all whom the Lord hath set in the body, either in a humble position or in a conspicuous place, to have the Apostle’s words well in mind—that as our Lord humbled himself and was subsequently exalted, it demonstrates a principle at work in the Father’s programme under which all of His Royal Priesthood must humble themselves if they would in due time be exalted. The Apostle Peter’s argument also is, “Humble yourselves therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” Now is not the proper time for exaltation; to elevate ourselves or others under present conditions is to incur the greater danger of a fall. Hence, all who are earnest and of humble heart, should both watch and pray lest they enter into temptation along this line, which, from the very beginning of the Gospel Age, has been the most serious stumbling block in the pathway of this class. We remember that it was amongst the apostles themselves that the argument took place as to which would be the greatest in the Kingdom. Let us all remember our Lord’s words of reproof to them, “Except ye humble yourselves and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the Kingdom.”

Thus our Lord marks humility as one of the prime essentials of a place in the Kingdom. It will not be very long—let us have patience. Let us have faith, too; not be doubters. Much of the endeavour to grasp and wield authority in the Church is at first undertaken with the best of intentions, with the desire to do and be in the highest interests of the Church. In such cases, faith is not strong enough to realise how unnecessary we are to the divine plans and how able the Lord is to overrule every incident and circumstance according to the divine will. More faith in the Lord's power to regulate the affairs of the Church will counteract largely the efforts of some of His people to run the Church's interests along lines of their own wisdom and ability. Let us remember that He is able, He is willing, to work all things according to the counsel of His own will. Let us remember that our highest place is lying low, that the greatest mastery is self-mastery, and that whatever success we might have in usurping the place and authority of our Lord and His Word would undoubtedly react unfavourably to us in the end. Hence, in self-preservation, as well as in the interest of the Church and in honor of the Lord, we need to keep self under. Let us remember the words of the poet and apply them daily:—

"O! to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Saviour might see.
Rather be nothing, nothing
To Him let their voices be raised
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is He to be praised."

Let us keep ever in memory the Apostles' example and words: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. 4:5.)

When the Nations will Seek God.

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though he be not far from every one of us." —Acts 17:27.

NEW TESTAMENT evidences on this subject of seeking the Lord give the thought that not very many are in the condition of heart to seek Him at the present time. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ" and the faith of Jesus should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Nevertheless, as the Apostle puts it, God is "not far from every one of us," and every one who will seek or feel after Him, He will be pleased to bless by a manifestation of Himself. In fact, this is the very object of this present Gospel Age — to find, to enlighten, to bless and to gather into a special class those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Those of us who thus seek after the Lord He guides, draws, influences. He leads them to the Lord Jesus Christ, pointing to Him as the necessary way by which they may approach Himself and assuring them that there is no other name given whereby they can be saved (Acts 4:12), and that all who will come unto Him through Christ will be accepted.

Such as do come in this way, we have proven from our own experiences and the experiences of others, as well as from the Word, are met half way by the Lord. "Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you." (Jas. 4:8.) And as they draw nigh and continue to approach closer by God's grace, they are brought by and by to a full realization that God is willing to accept them as sacrificers, as "members of the Body of Christ." If they fall into line with the Divine provision and present their bodies a living sacrifice, they will be looked upon as holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1); they will recognize the "high calling" to "glory and honor and immortality" with Christ. But if they fail to go on, they will thus receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1)

The Apostle intimates, not only in the text under consideration, but also in his Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:4), that God wills that all men shall be saved; wills it in the sense that He will awaken them all from Adamic death and "bring them to a knowledge of the Truth ;" that they may be recovered entirely from all imperfections that belong to Adam's condemnation, and thus brought fully into harmony with Him. Because this is His will, He has made ample provisions — not only in the arrangement by which our Lord died on behalf of all mankind, that He might be the Ransomer of all, but also in the provision that all shall have the opportunity of coming to this knowledge and of benefitting thereby.

In this sermon on Mars Hill, the Apostle Paul pointed out to the men of Athens that this "unknown God," this God who was unknown to them, is the great God who has divided unto men their habitation and determined their bounds; that He is the supervisor of the nations; that he determines how long and under what conditions the nations may prosper and what liberties and opportunities they may have. Then he proceeds to point out that while God has for a long time left men in ignorance and winked at many of their imperfections and flagrant wrong-doings, as though He did not notice them at all, nevertheless another step has now been taken in His great Plan: "Now he commands all men everywhere to repent."

The Apostle further declares, I, Paul, have something to tell you about this great God and about His message—that all men everywhere should repent. Do you ask me why they should repent ? I answer, for the reason that God is prepared to forgive them their sins, on this condition: He was not prepared to do this a short time ago; He was not prepared to do this until Christ died; but since Christ has died and ascended up on high and "appeared in the Presence of God for us"—for believers—God is now willing to accept any who come unto Him through Jesus. It is proper, therefore, that I should tell you that there is to be an opportunity of future life through Him.

And, furthermore, it is proper that I should tell you also that "God has appointed a Day (the great Millennial period) in which He will judge (try) the world in righteousness." The whole world will then have a trial, a righteous trial, a fair, impartial trial, a full opportunity to come unto the knowledge of the "Truth ;" to come to a knowledge of right and wrong, a full opportunity to come to perfection of human life and to attain all that was lost in the fall of man. (Luke 19:10) This message should, as far as possible, be made known to all men everywhere, because every act of their lives will have a bearing on the future; it will either uplift them to some extent out of the depths of degradation into which the world has been plunged through ignorance and superstition and bring a development of character, or it will condemn them and bring a measure of retribution, and thus make the conditions of the future more difficult than they would be if righteousness were sought.

Speak only when you have anything to say which it is desirable to communicate. You do not know what a great gift of God it is not to be obliged to speak, and to know when to hold your tongue.—St. Gregory.

WATCH AND PRAY.

Communion with the Lord in prayer brings:

1st:—Increased confidence in the Lord’s supervision of our affairs.

2nd:—Increased faith in all the great and precious promises of His Word.

3rd:—Increased realization of His leadings, past and present.

4th:—Increased love for all the brethren in Christ.

5th:—Increased solicitude for their welfare and spiritual progress.

The Divine object, then, in answering prayer is that we may have a stimulation of faith in connection with our receiving daily blessing—both temporal and spiritual.

HIS CHILD’S PICTURE.

Bishop Thoburn tells a beautiful story about a picture of his deceased child. It seemed a very imperfect photograph, so blurred that scarcely a trace of the loved features could be seen in it. But one day he took the picture to a photographer, and asked him if he could do anything to improve it.

In three weeks the Bishop returned, and as he saw the picture in its frame on the wall he was startled. It seemed as if his child were living again before him. The image had been in the old picture, but was concealed beneath the blurs and mists that were there also.

In every true disciple there is the image of the Master. It may be very dim. Its features are overlaid by blurs and blemishes, and are almost unrecognisable by human eyes. It is the work of Christ in our lives to bring out this likeness. This is what He is doing in many of His ways with us.—"Sunday Pictorial.”

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Perth.—No. 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

The Witness and Seal of the Holy Spirit.

(Continued from last issue.)

Each should ask himself whether or not he has this witness of the spirit, this testimony to his growth as a new creature in Christ Jesus, and whether or not he is developing and maturing the kind of fruit here specified. Let us remember also that our growth in love and in all the fruits of the spirit is dependent largely upon our growth in knowledge; and our growth in knowledge of divine things is dependent also upon our growth in the fruits of the spirit. Each step of knowledge brings a corresponding step of duty and obedience, and each step of duty and obedience taken will be followed by a further step in knowledge, for so the spirit witnesseth, shall be the experience of all those who shall be taught of God in the school of Christ. If we have this witness of the spirit of growth, both in grace and in knowledge, let us rejoice therein, and let us follow on in the same pathway until it shall bring us, under divine guidance, to that which is perfect, both in knowledge and in grace.

Having learned how the holy spirit "witnesses" and what are some of its testimonies through God's holy Word, we do indeed find these very much more satisfactory than all the doubts and fears inspired by mental and physical conditions—feelings, falsely called by some the witness of the holy spirit. At the same time *we* cannot overlook the fact that all Christians cannot have the same witnessings from the spirit of God with their spirits or minds. All Christians of large experience and development should have testimony or witness on all these points, and on other points set forth in the Scriptures; but there are young Christians who have not yet progressed far enough to have all of these witnessings; some, perhaps, may be truly begotten of the Lord, and yet have but few of them.

The great Husbandman does not expect fruitage, neither green nor yet developed and ripe fruit, from the fresh and tender sprouts of a branch.

The first witness that the newly begotten may have is, that they are accepted with the Lord; that they are young branches in the true Vine: and the spirit of the Vine is in them—the desire to grow and to be like the Vine, and to bring forth fruitage. Nor should it be long after the branch first shoots forth, before the sign of leaves and the buds of promise for fruit will be discernible. The new-born babe in the spiritual family manifests its relationship to the older and more developed members of the family, not by its eating of the strong meat, which might strangle it, but by desires for the strengthening milk, to grow thereby.-l Pet. 2:2.

'Those who find themselves possessed of any of the witnessings of the spirit should rejoice correspondingly; and every particular they are lacking they should endeavour to cultivate and develop, so that they may ultimately have the witness of the spirit in their favor on every point of the Scriptural testimony respecting the pathway and experiences of the Lord's faithful people. Such will no longer be in doubt and perplexity. On the contrary, they will know, will have full assurance of faith, and will be rooted and grounded and built up and established in the faith. This is the divinely arranged way; we wholly escape from fear—from "Doubting Castle"—for our trust rests securely in the divine promises, which never fail. This is as true in the time of trial and adversity and darkness as when we are more particularly enjoying the light of our heavenly Father's smile.

The Seal of The Spirit

In Eph. 1:13,14, the Apostle refers to the seal of the spirit." In these verses Paul says that the Christians, after they had believed, (in the sense of making full consecration and following it up with a life of obedience) "were sealed with the holy spirit of the promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."

The expression ''spirit of the promise'' shows that there is a connection between this sealing and the promise which God has given us. It is an advanced evidence or attestation of God's covenant with the "sealed" one, that ''the exceeding great and precious promises" of the "things which God bath in reservation for them that love Him (supremely)" are true; and that he shall inherit those promised blessings after he has endured faithfully the tests of his love and devotion which God will apply.

The Apostle refers to this same sealing later on in the same epistle, and there identifies the "promise" with the "day of deliverance." (Eph. 4:30.) In other words, the seal of the spirit of premise unto the day of deliverance is but another form of expressing the thought that we (the Church) "have the first-fruits of the spirit," the hand-payment as it were, binding the contract or covenant between the Lord and us, and assuring us that if we faint not we shall inherit the promise to the full.

This seal of covenant relationship, of sonship and heirship, is not an outward sign upon our foreheads; nor is it a mark or manifestation of God's favor in earthly affairs, in worldly prosperity; nor is it now, nor was it ever, the "gifts" of

healing, or of speaking with tongues, etc., for many who possessed those miraculous “gifts” lacked the seal and witness of the spirit.—Acts 8:13-23; 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

The seal or pledge of the holy spirit is in the heart of the sealed, and hence it is that no man knoweth it save he that receive it (Rev. 7:17), except as others may see the fruits of it in his daily life. “He who establisheth us in Christ, and bath annointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.”-2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

This earnest or seal of sonship is the spirit of love which is at-one with the Father and all His holy arrangements, crying out, Abba, Father: I delight to do thy will, 0 my God. He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it “not grievous,” but delightsome.-l John 5:3.

The spirit of adoption or sealing as sons, the possession of the first-fruits or earnest of the coming inheritance, is, then, one of the most advanced “witnesses” of the spirit—the very cream of Christian experiences in the present life. Before attaining this stage of experience we must receive our share of the anointing by coming into the anointed body of Christ, the Church, by being begotten of ‘the spirit of Truth unto sanctification of our spirits to know and do the Lord’s will. This experience, comes after we have been quickened of the spirit to the service of righteousness: it is an evidence, so to speak, that we have passed from the embryo condition to one in which God can consider us sons and seal us as such.

As all believers should seek to come under the anointing and begetting influence of the holy spirit of God, the spirit of the Truth,—so all who have been thus begotten of the spirit to sonship should seek to attain that position of fulness of harmony with the Father that He can acknowledge and seal. And having attained this position, how careful we should be not to mar or blur the seal;—not to quench or extinguish this precious treasure;—not to turn this spirit of love and joy in the holy spirit of fellowship and communion into a spirit of heaviness, darkness, grief. Not to spoil this seal, but to keep it ever bright and fresh, should be the constant effort of all who receive it.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. „ 8.15 a.m.

Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. „ 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. „ 4.45 p.m.

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