

The Holy Spirit in the Life of a Christian

***“If you then, with
all your human
frailty, know how
to give your
children gifts that
are good for them,
how much more
certainly will your
Father who is in
Heaven give the
Holy Spirit to those
who ask Him!”***

***—Luke 11:13,
Weymouth New
Testament***

Earlier in this issue of *The Dawn* magazine, the events surrounding the Day of Pentecost were considered. It was on this day that the Holy Spirit was conferred upon Jesus' chosen Apostles as well as other believers gathered together in Jerusalem. Our present discussion will examine in more detail how the Holy Spirit operates in the lives of all the footstep followers of the Master.

The Holy Spirit can best be defined as the invisible power and influence of God. It is manifested in a great variety of ways. Speaking of God's creative power, we read that his Spirit “moved upon the

face of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2) That was life-giving power. The influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is primarily that of God’s mind and the power of his expressed will for his people.

It helps with an understanding of what constitutes the Holy Spirit to note how the Scriptures refer to its many facets. Various manifestations of the Holy Spirit are referred to as “the Spirit of Christ,” the “spirit of holiness,” the “spirit of truth,” “the holy Spirit of promise,” the “spirit of meekness,” the “Spirit of grace.”—Rom. 8:9; 1:4; I John 4:6; Eph.1:13; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 10:29

Anointed by the Spirit

There are a number of expressions used in the Scriptures that further describe the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a follower of Christ. One of these is “anointed.” The Bible testifies clearly that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 4:27; 10:38) We are also informed by the Apostles Paul and John that the followers of Jesus are anointed by the Holy Spirit. (II Cor. 1:21; I John 2:27) This is a function of the power of God on behalf of Jesus and his disciples.

The scriptural background of the word anointing was the divinely instituted ceremony by which Israel’s kings and priests were installed in office, the principal part of which was the pouring of anointing oil upon the head. It was the official designation to office, signifying that the one thus anointed was authorized to serve.—Exod. 28:40,41; 29:5-7; I Sam. 16:1,7-13

Jesus and his followers also constitute a priesthood. These, however, are not anointed with oil,

but by the Holy Spirit. This anointing came upon Jesus at the time of his baptism, constituting him the Anointed One, the one sent and authorized of God. (Matt. 3:16,17) The meaning of the word Christ is "anointed." Jesus recognized the meaning of his anointing. (Luke 4:14-21; Isa. 61:1-3) The anointing of the Holy Spirit also empowered Jesus to perform miracles, such as healing the sick and raising the dead.—Matt. 11:4,5

The psalmist suggests that the anointing oil ran down from the head of the high priest upon his body, and that this pointed forward to a oneness of an anointed class. (Ps. 133:1-3) It is evident that the anointing of the Spirit reached the body members of the Christ class at Pentecost, when it was "shed forth," symbolically speaking, upon the waiting disciples by their glorified Head. (Acts 2:1-4,33) Thus the followers of Jesus receive their anointing of the Spirit through him and as a result of having been accepted into the Christ company, the true church.—I John 2:27

Each consecrated follower of the Master since Pentecost, when accepted into the body of Christ, has come under this anointing. All in this position have the authority of God to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit in this age is to instruct the Lord's people, through the Word, to be witnesses for Jesus by proclaiming the Gospel. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19,20; Acts 1:8) The anointing constitutes them the "light of the world."—Matt. 5:14-16

As we have noted, the anointing of the Spirit empowered Jesus to heal the sick and raise the dead, which he did on a small scale at his First Advent.

This aspect of the anointing will become manifested world-wide when Jesus and his church, as authorized of God, are dispensing the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. Then all the sick will be healed and all the dead awakened.—John 5:28,29; 14:12; Rev. 21:4

Born of the Spirit

Beginning with Jesus, and continuing since Pentecost, one of the accomplishments of the Holy Spirit has been the producing of an anointed class, a “new creation.” (II Cor. 5:17, *English Standard Version*) The Bible likens this to the begetting, development, and birth of a child. This function of the holy power of God has been somewhat obscured by a failure of the translators in some instances to note the distinction between the thought of begetting and birth.

This has been due in part to the fact that, in the Greek language from which the New Testament is translated, there is only one word for both begetting and birth. One has to determine from the association in which it is used, as to what is meant. The Greek word is *gennao*. It is this word that is used in the genealogy of Jesus and properly translated “begat.” (Matt. 1:1-16) Clearly the word “born” would be quite improper in this instance.

It is this same Greek word *gennao* that is used in the account of Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus. He told this ruler in Israel that he would need to “be born [*gennao*] again” in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:1-8) Here the word born is the proper translation.

In the natural realm, begetting—that is, conception—must precede birth, but many students of the

Bible have overlooked this in applying the illustration to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of consecrated believers. Failure properly to apply the illustration has led to that incongruous and much overworked expression, "born again Christians."

Nicodemus failed to understand what Jesus meant by being born again, so Jesus gave another illustration, explaining that those who attain this new birth—"born of the Spirit"—are like the wind, in the sense that they can come and go unobserved, and are very powerful. (vs. 8) Manifestly this is not true of those who now claim to be "born again," yet are still fleshly beings.

Simply stated, spirit birth takes place at the resurrection of each faithful Christian. When Jesus was raised from the dead he was able to move about invisibly, and he possessed great power. (John 20:26; Matt. 28:18) Birth of the Spirit in the resurrection is brought about by God's power, his Holy Spirit, as the Scriptures bring to our attention in connection with Jesus.—Eph. 1:19,20

When Jesus said to Nicodemus as recorded in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again," he was referring to the complete change of nature to which the followers of the Master are called. It is to this that they must attain in order to live and reign with him in his kingdom, through the agency of which human life will be restored to mankind in general. Before this birth to the spirit nature can take place, there must be a begetting of the Holy Spirit, through the "word of truth." (James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23, *Young's Literal Translation*) To be begotten by the Word of Truth is the same as being begotten by the Holy Spirit, for the Word of Truth is the

product of the Holy Spirit, the source of which is God.

After spirit begetting there must be spiritual growth, in order that the New Creature be ready for spirit birth. (Eph. 4:23,24; II Pet. 3:18) Much of this spiritual growth is accomplished through the development of the “fruit of the spirit,” represented in the character qualities of “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Gal. 5:22,23) It is thus that the “inward man” is renewed while, during the span of human life, the “outward man” “is decaying.”—II Cor. 4:16, *American Standard Version*

Those who are faithful unto death and finally receive spirit birth will be like Jesus and “see him as he is.” They will experience the “power of his resurrection.”—I John 3:1-3; Phil. 3:10,11

The Witness of the Spirit

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God’s people at the present time is to testify to them that they are truly the “children of God.” (Rom. 8:16; I John 3:1) This “witness” of the Spirit comes to us through the written Word of God, by virtue of its explanations of what is involved in following in the footsteps of the Master and what experiences we should expect to have. This is the Holy Spirit’s witness because it was that same spirit which inspired and directed the writing of the Bible for our admonition.—Rom. 15:4; I Pet. 1:12; II Pet. 1:21; II Tim. 3:15-17

The fact that we have been drawn to the Father through Christ is in itself one of the witnesses of the Spirit that we have been accepted into his family.

(John 6:44) We also have the testimony of Jesus, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that all who are accepted by him will be first drawn by the Father. (John 6:37,45) If then, we have repented of our sins, and through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ have presented ourselves in full consecration to do God's will, we can be assured of our acceptance as children of God.

Another witness of the Spirit, and an especially important one, is the privilege we have of suffering with Christ. (Rom. 8:16,17; Acts 14:22) The reason this is so directly a witness of the Spirit is that the prophets, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, foretold that the Christ class would all suffer for righteousness' sake. (I Pet. 1:10-12; 4:12,13) If we are in this position, then we may know that we are children of God.

This does not necessarily imply imprisonment, or beheading, or other physical torture. Jesus was opposed by the religious rulers of his day, but no physical suffering came upon him until the very end of his ministry. If we are loyal to the Lord and the Truth, we will experience the general ridicule and ostracism of the world. If we are faithful in the service of the Lord, we will bring upon ourselves a degree of weariness and consequent pain, in which we should rejoice.

If we are being "led by the Spirit of God," in this we have another of its witnesses that we are the children of God. (Rom. 8:14) In Jesus we have a perfect example of what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of the Bible is that he was led in a way of sacrifice even unto death. (Isa. 53:7) If we are following the Spirit's leadings

in the same way of sacrifice, then we can be assured that the Father's name is being written on our forehead.—Rev. 14:1,4

Not all of the ways in which the Holy Spirit witnesses to us are associated with sacrifice and suffering. Much joy should be experienced by those who walk in the narrow way. (John 15:10,11; 16:24) Here, also, faithfulness on our part is essential if we are to experience these joys of the Christian life, which come through fellowship with the Father, with his Son, and with one another.

We should also enjoy the peace of God that results from full assurance of faith in his promises. (John 14:27; Phil. 4:6,7) This stabilizing peace through all the experiences of life is one of the blessed witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God. May we continue to enjoy it!

The Seal of the Spirit

When the Bible refers to the “seal” of the Spirit, the Greek word used means “to stamp with a signet or private mark for security or preservation.” (II Cor. 1:21,22) In olden times a signet ring, or a stamp, was used to seal and preserve important documents. The custom is similar today. A letter is sealed to secure secrecy for its contents. Contracts are sealed, or attested, to show their genuineness and guarantee their fulfillment.

This custom is used by the Lord in the Bible to illustrate a very blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of dedicated followers of the Master. The Apostle Paul refers to this seal of the Spirit as “an earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:13,14; II Cor. 5:5) Here the Greek word translated “earnest”

means “a pledge, ... part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest.”

Paul’s reference to the “holy Spirit of promise” in Ephesians 1:13 suggests one of the ways by which the Heavenly Father pledges, or attests, that we will receive a full reward, if faithful. This pledge is provided to us by the many promises which the Holy Spirit has caused to be recorded in God’s Word. These promises cover every situation in life that might otherwise hinder us from entering fully into our inheritance. Indeed, all of the blessings of the Holy Spirit are in fulfillment of divine promises.

The seal, or attestation of the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth, that we are the Sons of God is provided in the diversified promises of God relating to our needs, in order that we may be victorious and receive the crown of life. In this regard, we are promised wisdom to guide us in doing our Heavenly Father’s will. (James 1:5,6) Our foes as children of God are many and powerful. (Eph. 6:12) If we had to fight against these in our own wisdom and strength we would be defeated and would fail to attain the “great salvation.” (Heb. 2:3) However, the Lord has promised to help and protect his people. (Ps. 91:1-15; Eph 6:13-18) How precious are these promises!

Being sealed by the Spirit does not imply perfection of character or full control over the weaknesses of the flesh. Despite our imperfections, however, we have the assurance that, through Christ, God justifies us. Because of this we know that no one can properly condemn us, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God if our hearts

remain loyal to him. (Rom. 8:33-35) This is surely a blessed assurance of sonship.

One of the promises by which a continuance of this blessed relationship is attested to us, is that God, “who has begun a good work in you will complete it.” (Phil. 1:6, *New King James Version*) We know that our Heavenly Father will fulfill all his good promises toward us, for we are assured that it is his “good pleasure” to give us the kingdom, if we are faithful to our relationship to him as his children.—Luke 12:32

We expect that trials will continue to the end of our life, but we know that God is faithful. He will not permit us to be tested beyond our ability and, with his help, will enable us to endure.—I Cor. 10:13

Concerning God’s faithfulness there can be no doubt. (I Cor. 1:8,9) What more could the Lord say to “seal,” or secure, our inheritance? By having the Holy Spirit’s anointing, its witness, its sealing, and by continuing faithfully to the end of our earthly walk, we will receive spirit birth in the resurrection. Let us rejoice in these promises of victory, giving all glory to God our Father.—Phil. 4:20 ■

“What Is That in Thine Hand?”

*Though it be small and insignificant,
it can be powerful when committed to the Lord.*

*David had only a sling shot,
but with it he killed a giant
and Israel won a victory.*

—Pebbles and Poesies