

Sealed by the Spirit

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"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" Ephesians 4:30.

The seal is a guarantee between individuals, corporations, and nations. The seal stands for the fulfillment of everything involved in the contract. When this heavenly impress is put on a human soul, it is a divine testimony that all the promises of God will be fulfilled to that soul. It is the mark of a covenant never to be broken in time or in eternity. In all the whirl of the ages God never has broken his covenant with any soul. All the strength and integrity of the throne on high is back of his covenant.

The seal is a mark of ownership. In the centuries long ago emperors and rulers not only used the seal in stamping their own, but the seal often bore the image of the emperor, so that by the seal and picture any one could tell who the owner was. The sealing of the Spirit stamps the saint with the Divine image. This is not primarily an outward mark. We do not claim to be able always to recognize the saints from outward appearance. The seal is primarily an inward mark on the heart, but where God always sees it, and without the slightest difficulty knows His own. "Having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."

All about us are very ordinary people, who if our Lord should come, as He will come, suddenly and silently their places would be left vacant. Many of them are misunderstood, and misjudged, but He knows them at a glance, and will claim them as His very own. If you were selecting from a congregation, you might miss or overlook some, but He knows His own. I might object to some of you being put in charge of selecting the elect company; but can trust Him fully. He will make no mistake. When the scale of honor is reversed, many an unpopular and even obscure person, will spring into prominence, and suddenly become popular in the metropolis of the universe. And many, very many who have been prominent here, in labor, in giving, and even in sacrifice, will be forever forgotten.

A man never puts his seal on property until he has exclusive ownership. The United States never puts "U.S." on property which is not exclusively hers. Until the human soul is sanctified wholly the devil has a mortgage on it. God never will seal any property until He has a clear title to it. God never stamps anything that belongs to the devil. On a British ship the cordage has a thread running through it that marks it as the property of Britain. If you chop the rope up into inch pieces, every inch reveals its ownership. After you are wholly His you are not ashamed of your Father.

The seal is for security. It is issued as a protection against the spoiler's hand. Express companies seal their packages. Banks seal their valuables. Railroad companies seal their freight cars. The breaking of a seal is the violation of a law, the penalty of which is very heavy. However, burglars break open freight cars, open express packages, blow up banks and escape with the valuables. But when you are sealed by the Spirit your wealth is guarded by a heavenly squadron. The militia of the skies is sent for defense. No fires can burn it, no flood can overwhelm it, no thieves can break through nor steal. There are no moths, no rust, no decay.

The saints who have been whipped, or stoned, or burned, or hanged, or crucified, or boiled in oil, came out without harm. They lost nothing but their cords or weights. They shine with a heavenly luster that luxury and ease never could give them. All the confederated forces of earth and hell can never down you. The flying squadron from high is at your beck and call, any one of which is a match for hell's heaviest artillery. Sixteen sturdy armed Roman soldiers were to protect one dead man as they thought; but

one angel came down and they were all as dead men.

Sealed—how long? In affliction, and sorrow, in suffering and protracted testings, the wheels of time seem to drag heavily. Deliverance seems delayed. The night of sorrow is so long. How long will He guard our deposit? The text answers, "unto the day of redemption." Thank God, that is long enough. Danger will then be forever passed. We are not fully redeemed yet. We have been delivered from the world and saved from all sin, but the day of our complete redemption we wait and watch for. Thank God it draweth nigh.

In a very important sense the seal is put on our bodies. We may burn to ashes or molder to dust, we may rest in the coral coffins or among the slimy weeds of the deep sea. But in the day of our redemption every sleeping saint will awake at the first trumpet call coming forth to immortal glory. You may ask about amputated limbs, or scattered ashes, or a new body every seven years. If you bury me a mile deep with hard questions, after you are all through the Word of God will live forever. "It was sown." "It was raised." Whatever went down will come up. The saint will lose nothing but gain everything. When our Lord shall come the wheels of time will no more drag heavily. Time will fly. Important events will chase each other. The wedding celebration will soon be over. The millennial reign of glory will pass quickly. The short time that Satan will be loosed will whirl by. The resurrection of the wicked dead and final judgment will put us on the border of eternity, where time will be no more.

Forever heaven! Heaven forever.

—Pilgrim Holiness Advocate

"HOLINESS TO THE LORD"

Let us see—and with the conviction that we cannot do without it—that all selfishness be extirpated, pride banished, unbelief driven from the mind, every idol dethroned, and everything hostile to holiness and opposed to the Divine will crucified; that "holiness to the Lord" may be engraven on the heart, and evermore characterize our whole conduct.

David Livingstone.

A FAITHFUL PASTOR

He held the lamp each Sabbath day
So low that none could miss the way,
And yet so high to keep in sight
The picture fair of Christ the light;
The handle coming thus between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

He held the pitcher stooping low
To the lips of little ones below,
Then lifted to the weary saint,
And bade him drink when sick and faint;
The pitcher coming thus between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

He blew the trumpet loud and bold,
To storm the fort of Satan's hold,
Then with a tender note and clear
That trembling sinners need not fear;
The trumpet coming thus between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

But when the Master said, "Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant, come,
Lay down the trumpet, leave the camp,"
Thy hand is now most clearly seen,
Clasped in His pierced one, naught between.

"The Free Methodist"