

The Field of Clover

by H. P. Barker

H. P. Barker's sermon emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit as an earnest of our heavenly inheritance, providing comfort and spiritual insight into God's promises.

Scripture: John 14:26, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Heavenly Inheritance"

Description

H. P. Barker preaches about the significance of the Holy Spirit as the 'earnest' given to believers, providing comfort, assurance, and a foretaste of our heavenly inheritance. Using the analogy of a telescope given to a boy on a voyage, the Holy Spirit grants believers a clearer spiritual vision of the eternal promises awaiting them. Just as a farmer prepares a field of clover for his sheep, the Holy Spirit prepares believers for their heavenly home by allowing them to experience glimpses of their future inheritance now.

Transcript

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22). "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5:5). "...ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13,14).

As the "earnest" the Holy Spirit is given to us for our comfort and assurance. But there is more than this in the word translated "earnest". The Holy Spirit is the pledge that we will one day be put in possession of the inheritance reserved in heaven for us. Hence some translations render the word "pledge, foretaste, installment".

It is like this. I am going on a voyage overseas, and I promise to take my boy, a lad of twelve, with me. For his enjoyment on board the ship I buy him a telescope, not a mere toy, but a serviceable instrument. The gift is an assurance to him on my part that I intend to take him on the voyage.

But it is more than that. When the voyage is nearly ended word goes round the ship that land is in sight. I can see nothing, but my boy, with his telescope to his eye, says he can see the hills quite clearly. Soon I can trace the outlines of the hills, but my boy exclaims: "I can see the trees and some houses". These things a little later can be just discerned by unaided sight, but he sings out: "Father, I can see the people down on the wharf".

The telescope give him a clearer vision of the land to which he is going. It enables him to get glimpses of it before he arrives. That is what the Holy Spirit as the "earnest" does for us. He gives us a keener spiritual vision; He brings within the arena of present enjoyment the great things that constitute our eternal inheritance. He enables us already, as it were, to breathe the atmosphere of heaven, and to gain acquaintance with what is there.

I remember hearing, when quite a youth, an address on this subject by George Cutting. He pictured a farmer buying some sheep at a market, and entrusting them to his man to take them safely home. "Turn them into the enclosure by the barn, John, and cut a few armfuls of that sweet clover from the field behind the house, and put them into the enclosure for the sheep to feed on this evening. Tomorrow, we will turn them out into the field itself."

Does not this exactly describe the situation? We are the sheep that have been purchased and entrusted to the care of the Holy Spirit to be conducted home. In the glorious by-and-by for which we wait, we are going to be turned into a wonderful field of clover, so to speak. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit, as the "earnest" of the inheritance, gives us tastes of that sweet clover. Things which will be actually ours when we get to heaven are made real to us now.

Let us, then, do something more than continually thank God that He has given us the "earnest." The Holy Spirit opens to us the garden of God's delights. Let us walk through the length and breadth thereof. By faith we know that all is ours; by the power of the Spirit we appropriate and enjoy it; a different thing altogether.

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