

Scripture: 1 John 3

LD 18.46-49 (2)

Singing: 261:1-3 – 183:1-4 -- 69:1-2 – 228:2 – 170:1-3

The Profit of Christ's Ascension (2)

I. He ascended to give to us II. He ascended to labor for us

III. He ascended to receive us

I. He ascended to give to us

A. His main gift is shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:33; Romans 5:5

1. The gift of Holy Spirit is the 'earnest of our inheritance' (Eph 1:13-14)

2. This earnest is given to each believer upon faith (1 John 2:20)

a. possession of the earnest of the Spirit is not the same as *assurance*

b. possession of the earnest is the *birthmark of the regenerated*

B. How do I know I possess the Holy Spirit as the *earnest of future glory*?

1. The answers of 'pastor John' in 1 John

a. Pastor John follows His Master's teaching: *but the fruit ye know!*

b. our forefathers follow this same teaching: *LD 18.46; Canons I, 12; Canons V, 10 & Rej. 5; Confession 29; Catechism 18.49*

"The certainty is (...) an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."
(Westminster Confession of Faith, XVII, 3)

2. Healthy spiritual life seeks its assurance in Biblical marks and promises

C. The marks of the presence of saving Spirit of X in heart:

1. What are your thoughts, convictions, and exercises with *sin*?

a. Do you see sin as a hateful unrighteousness (1 John 5:17)

b. Is sin as sin bitter to you?

2. What are your thoughts, desires, exercises with Jesus Christ?
 - a. Holy Spirit has one main ministry: John 16:13-14 (6:45)

 - b. Is the Lord Jesus Christ genuinely precious and decided by you?

 - c. Do you love Jesus Christ even though you must admit you fail?

3. What are your thoughts, desires, and exercises about holiness?

Living these truths ...

- A. What if you recognize these workings of the saving Spirit in your heart?

- B. What if you miss these marks of weakest believer?

SAINTS AND PERFECTION

The life in grace here on earth was not intended to be the place of our perfection.
It is the preparation for it.

The 'perfect' Christian is the one who has a constant sense of his own failure but
minded to press towards the mark of perfection.

What is Christian perfection?

To love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as
yourself. Yet this is never reached while we live with our old flesh. But it is
promised as the gift of God's ultimate grace in Christ.

I would rather aim at perfection and fall short of it than aim at imperfection and
fully attain it. (Gordon)

A great deal of perfectionism is rotten at the core. (A. A. Hodge)