

OUR CALLING.

Very few seem to realize the value of the Christian's hope and calling. If they did there would be less clinging to the lower blessings (even) of animal life, and less cause for the use of the hymn,

"Look how we grovel here below
Fond of these earthly toys;
Our souls how heavily they go
To reach eternal joys."

Perhaps the emphasis the Bible lays upon our calling cannot be shown better than by reference to the unity of the Christian with Christ. This is taught in many ways. The vine and its branches (John 15) is a beautiful illustration of the fellowship with Christ. In the figure of a house the "Foundation" and "living stones" express a similar thought. The Head and other members of our body give the same general idea. The endearing name "Wife" is given to the church, and "They two shall be one" lays stress upon the truth we are teaching. Brethren beloved, have you ever realized the fullness of this fellowship, and that fellowship with Him is the basis of our fellowship one with another? The manifestation and evidence of this Divine unity is Love for the brethren.

We are too apt to think of ourselves in the relation of servants of Christ, instead of the nearer and dearer of brethren and friends. The service of these is the service of love. The exalted relation of the Christian secures him a share in all the promises made to Christ. In relation we are Sons of God, and Christ is our elder Brother, the First-born from the dead. This of course relates to the new life by resurrection, and to our present life as possessing the "hope of the glory of God." The Son is not the Father, but in an important sense one

with the Father. "I and my Father are one" cannot mean one in person, but in fellowship – "the unity of the spirit," and hence Christ prays for believers: "That they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us... AND THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN THEM; THAT THEY MAY BE ONE EVEN AS WE ARE ONE." John 17:21,22. This is the doctrine we inculcate in a nutshell. We are not speaking here of the mysterious doctrine of incarnation, but of the equally mysterious and important doctrine of exaltation. It was that we might go up and share his glory that he came down, and he went up as our Forerunner, and security. Is he Heir of God – "of all things?" Heb. 1:2. So are we, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. 8:17. If we have fellowship in his sufferings and are made conformable unto his death, as a willing sacrifice, we will have fellowship in his glory. Comp. Phil. 3:10 and 2 Tim. 2:12. As His victory was by the cross so we must take the thorny road and overcome. Is He to come in glory? We also shall appear with him in glory. Col. 3:3. Is He to have dominions and glory and a kingdom that all nations should serve Him? Dan. 7:14. The same is given to the "Saints." Ver. 27. Is He to rule all nations? Psalm 2. He says, "To him that overcometh...will I give power over the nations and he shall rule them...even as I received of [R31 : page 5] my Father." Rev. 2:26,27. Is He both King and Priest? The "new song" is "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth."

Certainly the "crown," "throne" and "reign" mean far more in the Christian hope than many suppose. To be a King can mean no less than to exercise authority, and priest certainly implies the ministration of mercy. Were there no other reasons for it, we might from this know that the nations are to be ruled for the purpose of blessing them, and that even the dashing in pieces in judgment is that men may learn righteousness. Isa. 26:9. His sufferings and temptations prepared him to be able to succor the tempted. Heb. 2:18. So too, the thorny road

they have walked, who are gathered out of every nation as members of the Christ of God, may serve to teach them how to sympathize with humanity in the struggle of life. Christ Jesus himself does not reach all humanity, but He will through his "many members" finish what he has undertaken, and by bringing God to man, bring man to God.

God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. So also "the saints shall judge the world." To judge is in one sense to rule. The judges of Israel were its rulers. "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment." Isa. 32:1. The world shall have what as yet they know not – a righteous government, in which the right will be duly appreciated and rewarded, and sin shall not go unpunished. The unity of Christ and the Church secures her a share in all His work. Surely our calling is "high" indeed. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful &c." Heb. 3:1. Let his faithfulness encourage our hearts in all our weary work, and his success be the assurance of our rich reward.

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"The strong argument for the truth of Christianity is the true Christian; the man filled with the spirit of Christ. The proof of Christ's resurrection is a living church, which itself is walking in a new life, and drawing life from him who hath overcome death. Before such arguments, ancient Rome herself, the mightiest empire of the world, and the most hostile to Christianity, could not stand."
