

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
1 Pet. 2:9.

"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Rev. 1:5,6.

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. 5:10.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
Rev. 20:6.

The above scriptures clearly teach that a part, at least, of the Church's work in the future, will be to officiate as the priests of God. As the work of the priest is one of intercession and of instruction in righteousness, they clearly prove that the glorious work of evangelization will go on after the resurrection has taken place. The fact that these offices of "king" and "priest" will exist, logically implies that there will be subjects to rule and learners to teach; otherwise the names would be meaningless and the titles an empty sound.

It is held by some that the reign of the saints will consist of a very brief "reign of terror," during which – with Jesus at their head – they will trample their enemies into the dust and utterly destroy them. We thank our dear Lord for a better hope. Our work will not

be one of destruction, but of salvation. We shall rule as kings, even with a rod of iron; but the grand object will be to humble the nations, and so fit them for the reception of truth. "For, when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26:9.

What a blessed prospect! what a glorious calling! A royal priesthood!

Who that is imbued with the spirit of the Master; who that has but tasted that the Lord is gracious, could desire more agreeable employment than to show forth the praises of our Saviour King, to those sitting in darkness? to bind up the broken-hearted? to proclaim liberty to the captive? to give beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning?

"To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love?"

To fit us for such an exalted and responsible position we require a peculiar training, and we feel warranted in claiming that the trials, temptations and discipline of this present life are for that very purpose.

Many a struggling believer, trying hard to overcome, buffeted by the enemy, tried by friends, weighed down by hereditary weaknesses in self, discouraged and faint, has cried out, from the depths of a loving heart: "Why, O! why this suffering? why this severe chastisement?" Let us glance for a moment at the pathway trod by the Master – our forerunner – and we shall find the answer.

"So, also, Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my son.... Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him

from death, and was heard in that he feared: Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. 5:5-9.

"For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Wherefore, in all things it behooveth him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2:10,17-18.

"For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15,16.

The reason, then, that the Church is called on to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" is, that all the body, in like manner to the Head, may be trained to perfect sympathy and to perfect obedience through suffering. In this present time, we in all our troubles come to our compassionate High Priest with boldness, realizing that he, having been partaker of flesh and blood, can truly feel for us and pity us; so in the age to come, the Church, the promised seed of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed (compare Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:14,16,29,) shall go forth a royal priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedec, fully prepared to sympathize with the nations, to lead them to the paths of righteousness, and to encourage them in the way of life.

Shall we shrink, then, from our cross? Shall we seek to put away the bitter cup that is sometimes pressed to our lips? Surely not. 'Tis a loving hand that presents it, 'tis a loving heart (infinitely loving) that sees the need of it. It is but the Master fitting us for his work; training us for the priesthood; teaching us to rule ourselves that we may know how to rule others; opening our eyes to the weakness of our own flesh, that we may have patience with those over whom we shall be given authority. (Luke 19:17,19.)

Courage, then, my Christian brother or sister, seeking with weary steps to run the narrow way. Heed not the rugged course; it is all hallowed and sanctified by the blessed feet of the Master. Count every thorn a flower; every sharp-rock a mile-stone, hurrying you onward to the goal. Let every advancing step be a "Nearer, my God, to thee:" every hillock in the road an "upward toward heaven." Keep your eye fixed on the prize. Soon – very soon – you may wear the crown.

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

W. I. MANN.
