

OUR HIGH CALLING.

"Paul, to the faithful in Christ Jesus:" – "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, [I] cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places – far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." – Eph. 1:1,15-23.

The high calling of the Gospel church is always referred to by the apostles as a mystery, as something hard to understand, and as a secret thing. Not so is it with the hope and calling of the world in general. It is to the glory of human perfection, and to all the blessings of divine favor designed for the perfect man. Such a restitution is clearly predicted and described by all of the apostles and prophets, as well as by the Lord Jesus. They show that all of the past condemnation against the race is canceled by the death of "the man Christ Jesus;" that every soul that accepts of his provision may go on to perfection and everlasting life; and that the earth itself will be brought to glorious perfection and made the fit abode for the redeemed and perfect race, so that even the deserts shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and throughout its length and breadth

there shall be nothing to hurt nor to offend. Of all this glory the human mind can form a tolerably clear idea. We can conceive of the perfection of the human body and of the human mind. Such a body would have complete exemption from sickness, pain and death; it would be in perfect health, with all the bloom and beauty and the freshness and elasticity of youth coupled with the vigor and dignity and glory of maturity. Such a mind would have all its powers of memory, reason, judgment, etc., perfect; and with the education and discipline of centuries it would be a living and accurate [R1252 : page 5] encyclopaedia, an authentic and voluminous history, and a master in the realms of science, philosophy, mathematics, art and every avenue of mental activity.

Such is the grand calling of the human race in general, yet in comparison with this, grand as it is, the call of the Gospel church is termed a high calling. What, then, is the hope of our calling? O! says the Apostle, feeling his inability to describe it, I pray "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

To understand the hope of this calling, he here intimates, requires something more than ordinary human ability. It is a call to a station higher than human; it is a call to joint-heirship with Christ, who has been made the "heir of all things," who is even at the right hand of the glorious Father – far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. What human mind can grasp the full meaning of such "exceeding great and precious promises?" To the natural man it is simply incomprehensible, and therefore foolishness; but to those who have received the spirit of wisdom and revelation – who have received the spirit of Christ –

this mystery is made known. To all others it is, and will remain, a mystery.

You, therefore, who have received the spirit of Christ, give ear; to you God would make known the fellowship of this mystery. We have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love unto all **[R1252 : page 6]** the saints, and by this we recognize you as fellow-heirs with all the saints of this age and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ; for every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. – 1 John 5:1.

By faith behold now the Lord Jesus, who, though he was made flesh (human) for the suffering of death, is now no longer "the man Christ Jesus," but who is now the divine Christ, unto whom is given "all power in heaven and in earth." Aye! hast thou read those words again and again without observing their weight? Consider now their breadth and scope. He is now so "highly exalted" above even his pre-human condition – which was the chief of all created beings, both angelic and human – that he is now seated with Jehovah in his throne, the throne of universal dominion and glory and power (Rev. 3:21), a partaker of Jehovah's own divine nature and "the express image of his [glorious] person," whom all creatures are now commanded to honor "even as they honor the Father."

What a height of glory is this to which this Heir of all divine things has been exalted, and in which the Gospel church is called to joint-heirship! How marvelous the favor of God in calling even one of his creatures to such fellowship and intimacy with himself, and endowing him with such power and glory and honor throughout all the realm of his own dominion. What if such a one should some time become puffed up with pride and turn traitor? with such unlimited power and influence what a rival he might become.

Ah! no; there is no danger of that. Before the Lord Jesus was thus exalted he was put to the severest possible test; and that test proved that there was no pride or self-emulation in him; that, on the contrary, he was so loyal and obedient to God and so confident of his superior wisdom and his love that he humbly submitted his own will and followed God's command even where he could not trace his wisdom – even unto death – even unto full surrender of his being. To thus *prove him*, as well as to give to the human race an actual experience with evil, and to angels and men an illustration of its effects and its penalty, God placed upon the human race the extreme penalty of his law, which penalty could only be set aside by a sacrifice of equivalent value. And the privilege of thus redeeming men by the sacrifice of himself – first by lowering him to the human nature and then by the sacrifice even unto death – was offered to the Son of God together with a promise of recovery out of death, which hope he could receive by faith only. This he did, and thereby proved his loyalty and his faithfulness – "*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name [his own of course excepted – 1 Cor. 15:27], that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth." (Phil. 2:10.) Divine wisdom foresaw that such a character, so like his own, would stand eternally.

This is the high calling of God; this the glorious inheritance into which Christ Jesus has already entered; this transformation to the divine nature is "the mighty power which God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." And now, beloved, hearken! "He gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." And this constitutes "the full development of him who is filling all things with all." That is, the divine Father, his divine Son, our Lord Jesus, and his bride and joint-heir, the Gospel church, will constitute the full development of the divine family whose grand, united, future work will be to fill all things (the universe) with all the blessings that the Father's eternal

wisdom has planned. And when this divine family has thus reached its "*full development*" there can not be another member added to it.

This, O ye faithful saints, is the glory and wealth of your high calling. Do you long for power – not for self-emulation, or pride, or vain glory, but for the blessed privilege of filling the universe with blessing, and peace, and praise, and love, and happiness, and never failing joy? – here then is your marvelous opportunity. But before the crown must come the cross. We must prove our loyalty and faithfulness as the Master proved his; we must take his yoke upon us and learn of him, cheerfully, lovingly and faithfully submitting to the humiliations and afflictions of the present time – even unto death – confidently remembering that faithful is he who hath called us, who also will exalt us in due time, after that we have endured sufficiently to establish our character and prove our worthiness.

If it is marvelous that the Son of God should be thus exalted, how much more so that we, who were once sinners and under condemnation of death, should be called to be partakers of the same divine nature. Yet it is God who hath called us, and who is he who shall judge us unworthy if God counts us among "the called, and chosen, and faithful?" And what wonder if others fail to comprehend these exceeding great and precious promises, and think those very presumptuous who claim them. Yet they are ours to be received with meekness and fear; and no man can receive them save through the divine revelation, the Word of God, and in the spirit of that revelation – the spirit of Christ – in meekness, and holiness, and faith. May the called ones give great diligence to make their calling and election sure.

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