

THE CHRISTIAN'S HIGH CALLING.

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In a certain battle, the attacking army found itself checked by a powerful battery planted on an elevation. The commander, selecting one or two of his best regiments, said to them "Yonder battery must be taken by bayonet. I *must* have it: and recollect that I go with you!" The fierce onset was made, and the battery was captured. That body of picked men were *called* to an especial duty; they "saw their calling"; they entered upon it under the leadership of him who had called them to the heroic achievement.

This incident may help to illustrate a very important word that is made prominent in the New Testament. Frequently the Christian life is described as a "calling"; the word rarely refers to a person's trade, or secular occupation. It has a spiritual signification, and it describes that act of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is brought into saving union with Jesus Christ. True believers are the "called of Christ Jesus"—"called out of darkness into light," and "called into eternal glory by Christ" that they might inherit the kingdom. The work of the Spirit on renewed hearts is spoken of as a holy calling; and all Christians are earnestly exhorted to walk worthy of their high calling. This discipleship of Christ—penetrated by His Spirit, warmed by His love, and consecrated by His service—is to be the prime business of every Christian's life.

Something more than a mere human agency stands behind every regenerated soul. Jesus Christ stands there, just as surely as His almighty power was behind Bartimeus when his blind eyes opened, or behind Lazarus when he stalked forth from the sepulchre. The tides in yonder harbor obey an unseen but mighty force. The fields will soon obey another force which will clothe them with living green. Our calling, brethren, is of the Son of God; He called us for Himself, to be a peculiar people—or as the Revised Version has it, a "people for His own possession."

(1) This is a *high* calling. A very false idea is current in society in regard to the relative respectability of different trades and

professions. A sincere heaven-born Christian life is the highest occupation on this globe. This honor is often attained by the humblest and most obscure; it is not a matter of birth or brains, or purse, or social distinction. "Ye see your calling," said the Apostle "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty and not many noble are called." Christianity is a great leveller *upward*. It rebukes the hateful spirit of caste—which is nowhere so abominable as when it draws its arbitrary lines through a church and across a communion-table. Common people often make uncommon Christians. There is no such lifting power as the grace of God. It abaseth the proud, but it exalteth the humble; for those whom Jesus calls, then He also glorifies. They belong to His royal family.

(2) Ours is also a "holy calling." The word here signifies set apart consecrated. Holiness is the unselfing of ourselves, and so living as to please God. It is just the putting of Jesus Christ into everything—in to the counting-room, and the shop, into trade and politics, into the home and household, into the heart's secret thoughts and the hand's busiest activities. What is "leaven" made for but to touch the whole measure of the meal? What is "salt" made for but to keep society from becoming rancid? Ye see your calling, brethren; and never was there a time when men and women who dared to be holy were more needed than now.

(3) To every reader of this paragraph who professes to be Christ's follower, is addressed the solemn injunction to walk worthy of the name you bear. Parents, you see your calling; it is the sacred trust of training souls for eternity. Your children are not foundlings, left on your door-step. What grows out of them by-and-by will be what grew into them while under your care. The baptism of infant children may be a solemn mockery—followed by such a criminal neglect as Eli's, and with the same result; or Baptism may be the initial step in such a training as Hannah gave to Samuel, and Eunice gave to Timothy.

This word "calling" is a great word. It bulks large to every member of Christ's flock in every relation of life. You are commanded to "make your calling sure"; not only sure for yourself, but to everybody who knows you. You are also "called to glory and honor." Live up to your high calling, and never lower your standard by a single inch! After life's bivouacs and battle-charges are over, there will be some splendid promotions in heaven—when Jesus will be "king of kings, and they that are with Him are the called, the chosen and the faithful."