

## “CALLED TO BE SAINTS”

(1 Cor. 1:2.)

(Discourse below by A. E. Burgess, given at the General Convention, Mountain Lake, Dark, Maryland, September 1 to 11, 1911; page 214.)

It is generally considered that a saint is one who during his lifetime has been separate from the world and its affairs, by immuring himself in some monastery, as a monk, or as a recluse or hermit, is sequestered in some desert region, away from the common haunts of humanity, living a life of holiness by spending his time in meditations, prayers and penances, and who, subsequent to his death, after spending a number of years in purgatory and having masses said for the repose of his soul, is then pardoned out of purgatory, is canonized by the church, with much pomp and ceremony and placed in her calendar of saints as a full-fledged saint.

But in the Scriptural usage of the term, a saint is one consecrated, dedicated to do the will of God, to live a life of holiness, purity, goodness, separated or set apart from the world, not by means of isolating himself from his fellows, but by providing things honest in the sight of all men, coming in contact with his fellows, using the world as not abusing it—in the world but not of it. Separated or set apart in mind and heart from worldly hopes, ambitions and desires, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them. Thus our text is addressed to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.

It will be noticed that the words *to be* are in italics, but while evidently supplied by the translators, they serve to bring out the thought of the Apostle, not that the Corinthians were called or designated saints by their friends and neighbors, but that they were called for the purpose of being saints. Called with a view to become saints—constituted holy ones.

### A Called Class

One of the prominent thoughts suggested by our text is that this class are *called*. They do not enter this company because of any inalienable right of theirs to do so. “And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God as was Aaron.” (Heb. 5:4.)

This is true even in respect to the head of this saintly class, for we read, “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.” (Heb. 5:5.) Thus the great and important lesson of humility is brought prominently to our attention in connection with the saintly class.

## Limitations of the Call

In Acts 2:39, the Apostle shows very clearly that this call has limitations and is not intended for every individual during this Gospel age, but only a special class, saying, “For the promise is unto you [Jews] and to your children, and to all that are afar off (Gentiles, see Eph. 2:12, 13) even as many as the Lord our God shall call” thus indicating that this call of God consists of an invitation proclaimed with a view to inviting attention on the part of those for whom it was designed, and that God *foreknew* these called ones as a certain fixed, limited number, 144,000 saints who would be associated with Christ as his joint-heirs in the glory of the Kingdom, and that he predestinated that standard of character that must be attained by each one who would obtain the inheritance promised. (Rom. 8:29.)

The word *call* as used in Acts 2:39 signifies “To call toward oneself, to summon or invite,” and it must be remembered that sinners are not called of God or invited to be saints. God *commands* sinners to repent from their wicked works and alienated condition and believe in him “whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood for the remission of sins that are past.” (Rom. 3:25.)

This command to repent, announced in the Gospel proclamation, influences only those who are Scripturally designated as having an ear to hear. Those who, like the Apostle Paul and others of the Jewish nation “delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22), and like Cornelius and the Gentiles “who seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.” (Acts 17:27.) Those in whom the remnant of the image of God given to father Adam asserts itself strongly crying out against the evil, iniquity and sin in themselves and their surroundings and longing to come into harmony with the great God and his righteousness, which they instinctively realize, is higher and better than themselves. (Psalm 84:2; 42:1, 2.)

The Scriptures assure us that God is not far from those who long after him and seek to know him. (1 Chr. 28:9.) Psalm 34:18, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

A broken heart is one which is overwhelmed with sorrow, disappointment, grief, etc., resulting from blasted hopes, afflictions, bereavements, etc., and constitutes a condition favorable to the consolation and comfort offered in the Gospel of peace. But unless a broken heart be accompanied also by a contrite spirit, the desired result would not be forthcoming for there is a sorrow of this world which worketh death, “but *godly sorrow* worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. 7:10.)

The mind, therefore, of individuals who are properly exercised by afflictions, grief, etc., is in that suitable humble condition, which when brought in contact with the command to

repent, realize that they are “Children of wrath even as others,” and a contrite heart or an honest heart enables them to acknowledge the truths of the gospel proposition recognized by the humble mind, resulting in the “hearing of faith.” Thus we might say that the necessary elements of a hearing ear are: (1) Humility of mind, and (2) Honesty of heart. Those who are thus drawn to Jesus Christ by the ministry of the Word are “justified by faith and have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.” [Comment: after their full consecration.]

These having been alienated from God are enemies in their minds by wicked works—enemies because of ignorance and being born into this world in a condition of alienation, yet when instructed by the Gospel they repent and believe and enjoy a condition of justification to fellowship or friendship with God, similar to that enjoyed by “Abraham who believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God.” and also the condition experienced by the disciples previous to the death and resurrection of the Lord, not a justification to life-rights because such could not be experienced until the ransom price had been laid down at Calvary, and appropriation of the merit made to justice on behalf of believers, but as our Lord said to the disciples before they were baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: (John 15:14, 15.) “Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” These are now proper candidates to be *called* or invited to an audience with the great Jehovah, to enter into his courts and draw near to him. We will now consider the manner, the terms and the conditions of the call.

### **Manner of Call**

Much confusion of mind has prevailed concerning the manner that God calls his saints, many maintaining that God in some mysterious, incomprehensible manner infuses some sort of spirit essence called faith into this or that individual whom he elects to salvation, arbitrarily determining and compelling him by the power of his Holy Spirit to come to Jesus Christ and be saved, without any volition at all on the part of such individuals who are represented as entirely passive in the matter and having thus been elected, they cannot be lost. But the Scriptural view is very different, showing that while God exercises his pleasure in extending the call by causing it to be proclaimed in whatever locality and at whatever time he pleases, nevertheless the matter of answering the call and receiving the blessing to be derived therefrom is in the hands or will of each individual who hears the call, to be acted upon or rejected as he may see fit. The chief agency used in extending this call is the Bible, and the method used is made very clear by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 2:13, 14: “God hath from the beginning chosen you unto sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he hath called you by my gospel, etc.” Thus by means of the ministry of the Word, in the “foolishness of preaching” God is pleased to save *them that believe*.

## Chosen

“Many are called, but few chosen.” The calling of God consists of his invitation to approach unto him, but this does not signify that all who are *called* will be *chosen* by the great King. The word chosen signifies “To select,” and is variously rendered—make choice, choose out, chosen, elect, selection, election. Psalm 65:4, “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee.”

Perhaps the matter can best be illustrated by referring to certain customs prevailing in Eastern countries. There no one can be admitted into the presence of a king or potentate without bringing some present with him. None are permitted to come in any dress that is not furnished from the royal wardrobe. Even foreigners of distinction, though decked in the richest costume of their country, are obliged to comply with the custom of the East. A king would be highly affronted if any presented themselves before him without these marks of his liberality. It is also customary for persons from the country desiring an audience with a king or great man, not to go to him first, but to find out the head servant or steward, secure his interest by a present, and ascertain from him the disposition and views of his master, so as to regulate their conduct accordingly.

An eye witness relates how that a certain tribe of Tartars sent a deputation to a king to acknowledge his sovereignty, and when granted an audience, they made their reverence at a considerable distance from the monarch, prostrating themselves several times on the ground, putting thrice their hands upon their heads, and as often letting them down to the earth. In this manner they slowly approached him, so near that the king might easily have taken their letters with his own hand, or held communication with them personally; but both were done through an omrah, or interpreter. They forthwith offered their presents, consisting of the *choicest productions of their country*; whereupon the king having declared himself satisfied with their generosity, intimated that they should have the honor of dining with him at noon.

If such reverence and carefulness must be exercised in obtaining an audience with an earthly king, how much more reverence, humility and carefulness should be exercised in approaching the Great Jehovah. None should deign to approach him except in his appointed way. None can have audience with him clad in the filthy rags of their own righteousness, but all who desire an audience must first come to the head servant or steward, “Christ” and obtain the royal robe of righteousness provided in him, and also seek instruction regarding the appointed means of approach to the heavenly Father, and the proper way of conducting oneself in his presence, as the Lord said.

“Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden ... take my yoke upon

you and learn of me,” etc. (Matt. 11:27-29.) Our Lord instructs such who come unto him concerning the calling or invitation extended by the heavenly Father to come into his courts, to have fellowship with him, to become an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, and in the words of the Psalmist exhorts, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, bring an offering and come into his courts.” (Psalm 96:8.)

Ah, yes! We cannot approach the heavenly King without bringing an offering, and as in the case of the ambassadors mentioned, their offering consisted of the choicest productions of their country, so the offering of these must consist of the choicest they have, their bodies, their lives, their hopes, their all; all they now are or hope to be. (Rom. 12:1.)

The choicest things we have being imperfect, require that we need the imputation of the merit of the perfect sacrifice offered by our Lord who as our Advocate makes up for our deficiencies having applied his merit to justice on behalf of this saintly class, and when we as individuals by consecration become members of this class, we become members of the great high priest, under his robe, under his merit. “We consecrate ourselves to be *willing sacrifices*, but we do not sacrifice ourselves. When our sacrifice takes place, the personal offering of the High Priest (Jesus Christ) having been accepted, we are counted in as a part of his sacrifice, and are accepted as his members and his under priests. From that time on, as his members, we have participation with him in everything, sacrificially and otherwise. But we have no personal identity in the holy, the new creature, that is in the holy, is a member of the Body of the High Priest, under his robe, under his merit, in the divine arrangement.

Our individuality as human beings is lost as we become members of the great High Priest and take his name.” Quotation from *The Watch Tower*, Aug. 1, 1911, page 234.

Thus the psalmist describes these: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered,” etc. (Psalm 22:1, 2.) These therefore, are now in Christ, and “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) Such are not begotten of the Spirit to newness of life and are chosen (elected) unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. They are now vessels unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.

As in the illustration, those accepted by the king were told they would have the honor and bliss of dining with him, so those now begotten of the Spirit are invited into the court of the Lord—into the holy place or heavenly condition of spirit-begetting. Psalm 65:4, “Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.”

## Holiness

The standard set before these called and chosen ones is a high one—a perfect standard of holiness. 1 Pet. 1:14-16, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior); because it is written, ‘Be ye holy; for I am holy.’” The question may be asked, “Does God expect these new creatures to be perfect in every respect; in thought, word and deed and, if so, how can imperfect beings ever expect to obtain the glorious inheritance promised?” The Apostle John answers the question, saying, “If we (saints) say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (John 1:8.) No, indeed. Perfection is not obtained in the flesh. “In our flesh dwelleth no good thing.” The Lord knew this well, and though giving us a perfect standard for our minds and hearts unto which we must attain, yet as concerns our bodies we are admonished to “Follow . . . after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14.)

The new creature—new will, is and must be perfect, pure, holy, because it is begotten of God and it sinneth not. (1 John 3:9) It cannot willingly practice sin, but the mortal body through which it operates, still weak, still imperfect, blemished, strives to fulfill its lusts and desires, which causes a warfare to go on, requiring the new creature to fight a *good fight* a successful fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, and to keep the body under. But as the new creature is responsible for the acts, etc., of the old, it requires the robe of Christ’s righteousness as a constant cover for it, and also Christ’s continued advocacy before the throne of grace, and it is necessary for a recurrence to the throne of grace, again and again to obtain forgiveness for the misdemeanors of the mortal body, and so God has arranged that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9.)

These sins, however, must be sins owing to the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh, and not sins of the new creature in the strict sense, except that the new creature is chargeable with the sins of the earthen vessel, owing to lack of proper watchfulness and care in not keeping the body under. But it might be asked, why has God arranged the matter thus? Because, we answer, God, being perfect could not give us anything but a perfect standard and also “We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of us.” (2 Cor. 4:7.)

Some might be inclined now to say, have we not been called of God? Have we not been accepted or chosen by him, and begotten with his Holy Spirit? What more is to be done? We answer, much more. The Apostle Peter exhorts, (2 Pet. 1:10.) “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling (invitation) and election (choosing) sure.” The glorious inheritance will be given only to the *called* and *chosen* and *faithful*.—(Rev.

17:14.) Again, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10.)

There is, therefore, much to be accomplished after we are called and chosen. We are only now beginning to run the race, to attain the mark for the prize of our high calling, and in running this race we need to look unto him who is the author and finisher of our faith, for his character constitutes the *mark* that we must attain. His mind, which is a sound mind, a holy mind, a perfect mind, must be in us if we ever expect to share in the glories promised.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5.), said the Apostle. The word mind in this connection signifying “to exercise the mind, *i.e.* entertain or have a sentiment or opinion, to be mentally disposed more or less earnestly in a certain direction.” In other words, let this inclination of mind, or disposition, be in you. Be mentally inclined to spiritual things. The same Greek word occurs in Col. 3:2, and is translated by three English words—“Set *your affections* on things above, not on things on the earth” or incline your minds to things above.

This we might term a *willing mind* (2 Cor. 8:12.) “For if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” The mind of the natural man is that which thinks, determines, wills, received impressions from without through the medium of the five senses, reasons upon them, analyzes and classifies them. It is the intellect or cognitive faculty as distinguished from the feelings (heart) and the will.

The soul through the mind is said to experience fear, apprehension, dread, abhorrence, turmoil, grief, etc., and feels anger, hatred, resentment, or peace, calmness, joy, etc. In the natural man the mind is unsound, unbalanced, ruled over and controlled by the sinful passions of the *old man*. (Rom. 7:5) “For when we were in the flesh the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

In the process of thought the mind passes through three general stages, viz.: (1) *Reasoning* upon knowledge received from without and taken in or understood by the intellect. (2) *Inclination* toward a certain conclusion or course of action desired by the affections. (3) *Decision* or determination, the making up of the mind, forming an opinion, or arriving at a conclusion, represented in the will.

Thus the mind of an intelligent being brought in contract with the message of the Gospel call or invitation. *Reasons* on it. *Inclines* toward it favorably, and *Decides*, wills to commit his way unto the Lord and submit to the will of God.

By the instrumentality of the Word of truth and his obedience thereto he is begotten of the Spirit, and thus renewed in his will or the Spirit of his mind, and by the exercise of belief and trust the foundation of faith is established and the individual now has the “Spirit of a sound mind.” But the Spirit of a sound mind is not a sound mind itself. It is the beginning of a perfect mind and consists of the desire, determination, will to obtain a perfect mind.

The race set before us is for the purpose of attaining the mark—a sound mind—as the Apostle Peter exhorts. “But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober (sound minded) and watch unto prayer.” The same thought is conveyed in Rom. 12:3 where he exhorts to “think soberly,” *i.e.*, with a sound mind.

How then is this sound mind, or mind of Christ to be obtained? Answering the question the apostle says in 2 Pet. 1:5-8, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue and to virtue, knowledge and to knowledge, temperance and to temperance, patience and to patience, godliness and to godliness, brotherly-kindness and to brotherly-kindness, love.” These things constitute a sound mind, the mind of Christ; and whosoever has added these qualities to his Faith, hath attained the mark of the prize. “If ye do these things ye shall never fall.” As the apostle said (2 Tim. 4:8), “Henceforth (from this time) there is laid up for me a crown of life.”

At the time of our consecration we are *Begotten of the Spirit*, receiving the spirit of a sound mind. Our names are written in “the Lamb’s Book of Life.” A *crown of life* is set apart for us. We begin to *run the race* toward the *mark*. The sealing of the Spirit commences and from this time on the impress of the Spirit of Christ. His sound mind, Holy mind is being deepened in us, and the love of God is (being) shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit given to us, until it takes full possession of us and we become filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:15-20) We now have a sound mind, “The mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. 2:16) The crown of life previously set apart for us is laid up—“Reserved in heaven.” (1 Pet. 1:4)

We have now attained the mark by the additions of the qualities mentioned by Peter, and the *sealing* of the Spirit is completed, as in the sealing of a document, first is the soft pliable wax ready for the impress, representing our consecrated pliable attitude in submission to the divine will. Next the seal is applied to the wax, first touching it and then the characters on the seal sinking deeper and deeper into the wax until a perfect impression is made, the sealing is complete and the seal is lifted away. This corresponds to the time when the *mark* is reached, when we are filled with the Spirit and have the mind of Christ. What more remains to be done?

After the impression is made and the seal lifted, the wax is permitted to set or harden that the characters impressed thereon might be retained. And so from the time we reach the

*mark* we are being strengthened, established, settled, confirmed in character, while being filled with the Spirit, our capacity to hold the Spirit will be increased, enabling us now to keep the body under, and we should now expect to produce and manifest the fruits of the Spirit of Holiness in our outward conduct—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc., so that we might be known by our fruits to the honor and glory of him who hath called us to holiness. “Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” And so Peter declares, “If these things (virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, etc.) be in you and *abound*, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

### Conditions of the Call

“For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21.) “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.” (Rom. 8:17.) These are the conditions attached to the call; that we should “Suffer with him” and follow in his steps; and we naturally inquire: “When do we begin to fulfill these conditions? At our consecration?” We answer “No! It is at the time we reach the mark of perfect love and attain a sound mind that we begin to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and suffer as a Christian.”

But it may be asked, “Do we not suffer as Christians before we reach the mark? Do not the consecrated suffer many times the persecution and contempt of their relatives, and ostracism from their former friends and companions, and is this not suffering with Christ as Christians?”

We answer “It is true that suffering is experienced in this way by many subsequent to their consecration and before they have reached the *mark*, but if we agree that God has set a mark or standard of character unto which all must attain before they can be accounted worthy of the prize, and if the promise is to them that suffer *with* him, they shall also reign with him, then any suffering done previous to attaining the *mark* is suffering *for* Christ, not suffering *with* him, and will not entitle an individual to a crown without his attaining the *mark*.” As the apostle explains, 1 Cor. 13:3, “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.” Even though one may be consecrated and give his humanity to be burned by afflictions and suffering, yet if the standard of love is not reached, it will count for nothing.

It is only when we reach the mark that we can “count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations.” It is only then that we have “learned in whatsoever state we are therewith to be content.” It is only then that we can “glory in tribulation” and “find his commands, not grievous,” but delightful, and it is now that the love of God is being perfected in us. (1 John 2:5.) “But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;

hereby know we that we are in him.” Love is unselfish and was exemplified in our Lord by his willingness to suffer for righteousness’ sake, and this example is placed before us. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind (state of mind).” (1 Peter 4:1.)

When we consecrated we agreed to the terms and conditions of the call. We agreed to suffer *with* him, and *said* we were willing to do so. When we attain the mark we are willing to suffer with him and walk in his steps, and our experience is expressed in the words:

*“I am his! O, blest assurance, how it thrills my soul with joy!  
How it brightens every moment that I spend in his employ!  
How it makes my days seem shorter,  
How it makes my tasks seem light;  
Makes my hours rosy-tinted; makes my songs abound at night.*

*“I am his! my time, my talents, to be spent at his sweet will,  
Subject to his wise direction, God’s great purpose to fulfill.  
What a sense of comfort fills me,  
What a sense of peace and rest.  
As I lean upon my Savior, knowing that his way is best.*

*“I am his! and he is Lord of all I am or hope to be;  
Lord of all my heart’s affections, Lord of all my mind is he;  
Lord of all my thoughts and wishes,  
Lord of all my strong desires.  
To be his, and his completely, how my longing soul aspires.*

*“I am his! and O, the richness of my joy and ecstasy  
As I sit low at his feet and hear his whispered words to me;  
Words of wisdom and instruction,  
Words so loving and so kind,  
Words revealing all the grandeur of the graces of his mind.*

*“I am his! and his forever, Oh, how precious is the thought!  
To be with him, to be like him, and to love him as I ought.  
To be in his presence ever,  
To be sharing in his joy,  
Blessing all, his blood has purchased, which shall be our blest employ.”*

“Having, therefore, these promises dearly beloved, let us purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 7:1.)