

*"These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful." Revelation 17:14.*

There is a sense in which these three words represent a graduation from one plane and sphere of probation to another. While we may be "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world," it is also true that in the matter of trusted service and honoured intimacy with God the choice is from those who "make their calling and election sure."

God begins all His dealings with us by a call. "The call of God," to be of any use, must be personally felt and realised by the inner man. The flesh may hear of it; yes, as with those who went with Paul, it may be struck to the ground by the glory of the revelation; the senses may witness some of the outward manifestations accompanying the call; but, as Paul says, "They heard not the voice of Him that spoke to me."

The call of God contains both grace and truth. Truth is the separating instrument. "Get thee out." Grace is the promise. "I will bless and make a blessing." Man often grasps at the grace, the "I will bless" of God, and fails to comply with the demand thereof - "Get thee out." Now this does not only apply in the matter of our salvation in its first steps, but it comes in new revelations and calls at different times in the Christian life. The call of God to some fuller and higher acceptance of truth and ministry; of testimony and witness; of surrender and experience, will undoubtedly come by one or another of the Divine forms of visitation to such as the Lord wishes to lead in grace. This will be timed, definite, and challenging. A messenger may come as out from nowhere; the nowhere of reputation, recognition, worldly fame or honour. He will deliver a message, only staying long enough to leave its essential implications with those who hear. Then, having passed on, things can never be the same for them again.

The "call" has sounded. The crisis has been precipitated. The issue is between the life which has been with its limitations known or unrecognised, and that which God offers. But, as usually is the case, this truth is going to call for a "getting out." Getting out, it may be, of a certain popularity, a comparative easy going. There may be a risking of reputation, a loss of prestige, a disfavour among men, a being labelled "singular," "peculiar," "extreme," "unsafe." It may mean a head-on impact of all the prejudice, tradition, and disfavour of the religious world. It may involve exclusion, ostracism, and suspicion. These are the accompaniments of all calls of God to advance with Him beyond accepted standards.

This is the cost of path-finding for souls. This is the price to be paid for the higher serviceableness to God and men.

One who paid this price as few ever will, and who was entrusted with superlative revelation and immortal and universal service said at the end of his life "There is no man like-minded with me." "No man stood with me." Did this mean that he was wrong? Who will ever dare say so?

The interrogation is, are we going on with God at any cost? Shall we refuse Him that speaketh? Are we going to respond to every call to advance, mean what it may? Shall we stand our ground when the price seems almost too much? Shall we "hold fast" in the probation of a "call," and having proved ourselves by the grace of God, be chosen for a work which only such can have committed to them?

Or shall we sink back to our easier path, and take a line of less resistance; keep our treasures, fear to lose, keep our place in the pleasantries and safeties of the shallows, and not "launch out into the deep."

The "Well done, good and *faithful* servant," will be reserved for those who risked something of loss and went beyond the obligation of duty and embarked upon the second mile at the "call" of the growing revelation.

Oh, beloved of God, let us go all the way and whatever it may involve - it will never be in advance of the apostolic suffering - aspire to be of "the called, chosen, and faithful."

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