

CONSECRATION AS RELATED TO PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS R5411

(See highlights at end of article)

CONSECRATION is another name for sanctification, and signifies a setting apart. Sanctification, consecration, is intimately related to justification, because, although there is a partial justification when one turns from sin to God, there could not be a *full* justification, a justification to *life*, until such time as the person had made a full consecration. It would appear, then, that from the time when one starts toward God, when he turns away from sin, and seeks to know and to do God's will, there is a certain degree of consecration, setting apart to God, as in contradistinction to following evil. Each step that he takes toward God is a step toward sanctification and toward justification.

Looking back to the picture in the type as illustrative of this, we see that a Levite or a priest when first approaching the Tabernacle, desiring to enter, would discern in the distance the wall of white surrounding the Court. With more or less knowledge of what was inside he would approach it. When he reached the gate, he would see that the Court was a sacred place, and that none would be received in any sense within its enclosure except as he recognized the sacrifice on the brazen altar just inside.

PROGRESSIVE STEPS OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

And so with a person who is in a semi-consecrated condition – a semi-justified condition. His first great lesson at the gate of the Court is that he is a sinner, that God accepts not sinners, and that only those who approach Him through recognition of the great Sacrifice will be received. Having recognized the Sacrifice, having trusted in the death of Christ for justification from sin, his next step would be a deeper consecration, and thus a fuller justification. If he proceeds, this would bring him to the brazen laver of the Court, which would represent a washing away of the filth of the flesh – the becoming more and more clean in life, doing all in his power to free himself from sin. This also is acceptable to God.

But still he is neither justified completely nor sanctified completely. As he presses on, earnestly desiring to come still nearer to God, he comes to the door of the Tabernacle. There he finds that he can go no further except by death – the death of his human will, the surrender of all human rights and interests. He recognizes, further, that this death must be a sacrificial death, and that he needs to be accepted of the High Priest, that the High Priest must make good for his imperfections by the imputation of His merit before the Heavenly Father will accept his full consecration.

His consecration takes place, therefore, before his justification to *life*. He must present himself in sacrifice before Jesus can accept him, before He can present him to the Father, that he may become one of His members. It is to be a membership in the earthly Body of Christ, for

suffering and death, and a membership also in the spiritual Body, for life and glory. The sealing of his consecration will be the Divine acceptance of that consecration, which is indicated by a begetting of the Holy Spirit. And begetting of the Holy Spirit is indicated by his appreciation of the deep things of God, as represented in the altar of incense and the table of shew-bread; in experiences of chiseling and polishing, and by opportunities to serve. In some cases these various steps are taken almost simultaneously.

After acceptance on the part of God, the consecration must be persisted in, maintained. We must ***abide in Christ***, in order to be sharers in the Royal Priesthood beyond the veil, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. If we in the present time suffer with him, then we shall also reign with Him in glory.

AS TO THOSE CONSECRATING SINCE 1881

Some have been concerned as to what evidence, if any, a person consecrating himself since 1881 would have that his consecration had been accepted of God. We would say regarding this that something would depend on how recently the person had made the consecration. If very recently, he would have no sure means of determining. If a year or two had passed, and he had not in the meantime received any evidences of the Holy Spirit's begetting – if he had not received increased ability to understand and appreciate the Truth; if he had not experienced a love for the Truth and a desire to serve it; if he had not found some opportunity for serving the Truth, and some experiences of trial – in such case he would have reason to doubt the Divine acceptance of his consecration.

But in such a case we would be inclined to wonder if the consecration had been properly made. Our thought would be that in one way or another God accepts every consecration, that a broken and contrite heart He will in no way despise. He did not despise those in ancient times who consecrated their lives to Him – the Prophets and the faithful Israelites of old. They were not despised nor rejected. They found opportunities for service and they had this testimony (Hebrews 11:7), that they pleased God; and they received a special blessing as a reward for their obedience and for all the sacrifices they had made. But this did not mean with them a begetting of the Holy Spirit.

We have every reason at present to believe that the number of the Elect is not yet completed, because of many crowns having been forfeited. We see coming in, day by day and week by week, some who give evidence of the Lord's acceptance, who evidence that the Lord is permitting them to lay down their lives in His service. But the time will undoubtedly come in the near future when the number of the Elect will be complete. Then only such vacancies as might still occur by some falling out would remain. In that case there might be a number in the consecrated attitude, whom God would accept to take the places of some who would drop out.

These would receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and would find opportunities for serving the Truth and for suffering for the Truth's sake.

The evidences seem to be that there are still quite a number of vacancies in the elect number, because there are people coming into Present Truth and consecrating who have come directly from the world. This would seem to indicate that there are not at present a sufficient number fully consecrated to complete the 144,000. If there were, these would be given the preference over those not consecrated.

THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT POSITION

It would seem that throughout Christendom we can see today a great many who have taken the steps of consecration to a greater or less degree and more or less intelligently. Some recognize the Redeemer and the necessity for His work of salvation, and the fact that He gave His life as an offset for sin. Some have gone further, and with more or less intelligence have "washed at the laver."

But it seems that the great majority have not gone much further – that they do not see the propriety of going further. The majority of professed Christian people today do not go any further than to live a moral life. They have not reached the point of consecration to God, and hence have not yet reached the point of vital justification. The majority have perhaps gotten to the laver, and are desiring to wash and be clean.

As such come to learn the Message of the Kingdom as it is now going forth – that a full consecration to death is the only condition upon which any may be followers of Jesus – some of them gladly avail themselves of this knowledge and offer. They gladly go forward to the extent of full consecration, full justification; and by reason of their surroundings, and the fact that the majority of professed Christian people in the various denominations are behind them as regards attainment, instead of being ahead of them, these are looked upon as peculiar. The majority do not discern that this peculiarity is the very thing that God requires of those who would be joint-heirs with Christ – of those who would follow in the path of devotion and faithfulness, that they may be accounted worthy of reigning with Christ in His glorious Kingdom.

THE GREAT COMPANY

A class mentioned in the Scriptures as the Great Company, who will come up out of great tribulation and wash their robes and make them clean in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), and who will eventually attain to the position of antitypical Levites, is worthy of consideration. These have passed the various stages of full consecration and Divine acceptance and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. They became New Creatures in Christ Jesus and entered

into the Holy. But through an insufficiency in the matter of zeal, and a lack of stamina, because of their unfavorable environment in Babylon, these are failing to go on, failing to see that a full sacrifice of earthly things is the only condition upon which they can gain the Heavenly things.

These are seeking to be followers of Christ and followers of Mammon, seeking to please the Lord and to please the world, having some of the Lord's Spirit and some of the spirit of the world, and in general not making progress, and not putting off the things of the flesh – anger, hatred, malice and strife, envy and evil speaking, the works of the flesh and of the Devil, and therefore are not putting on the fruits of the Spirit – faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, meekness, gentleness, love.

It must be admitted that these have not had the right instructors, and they have gotten wrong conceptions – misunderstandings of the Lord's Word. Nevertheless, we cannot but have faith that God will guide these who are really His children, and will, through suffering, lead them to take a positive stand.

We do not think we should understand the Scriptures to teach that the Great Company will attain to the same degree of spiritual development as the Little Flock. It is true that God has only the standard of perfection for any of His creatures; but there are many who demonstrate by their lives that, if everything were favorable, they would be very loyal to the Lord and very loyal to righteousness. It is merely because the narrow way is so steep, so up-hill and rugged, that they have not the courage to go on. They fail to display that love and zeal which the Lord has set as the mark for participation in the Royal Priesthood.

We believe that the Lord would probably expect no more from the Great Company class than He would expect from the angels – as though He would say of each of these, Doubtless this person, under favorable conditions, would prefer to be My child and to live in harmony with Me, and he would not think of living in sin, and would even suffer death rather than deny My name. If such be the test of the Great Company class, there might be a million who have demonstrated this degree of loyalty in the past, during this Gospel Age. Some of these probably have even suffered martyrdom, when they were put to the final test.

OPPOSITION OVERRULED FOR BLESSING

We think there is good reason to believe that a considerable number who have made consecration are still in Babylon. We do not *know* this, however. We are near to the Battle of Armageddon, near the time of the overthrow of Babylon; and we are seeking to give the Message of the Truth as wide a circulation as possible, to the intent that this class may

hear and come out, even though too late to win the great prize. That they are considerable in number is intimated in the 19th Chapter of Revelation, where we are told that when Babylon falls the number of those released at that time will be a great multitude, that the voices of these will be "as the voice of many waters."

We believe that at the present time there are a great [R5412 : page 69] many in the nominal Churches whose minds are gradually becoming more and more awake to the Truth. In various pulpits, where the Truth is opposed, many things of the Gospel of the Kingdom are being proclaimed; and this will have the effect of awakening and informing some of this class. Even though those bringing forward these truths declare them in spite and envy, nevertheless the Message of the Gospel is preached. (Philippians 1:15-18.) Many thus have their attention called to certain truths, which we would never be able to give them – many whom we could not reach.

For instance, some of these ministers mention that we believe the nominal Church to be Babylon; others say that we believe that our Lord is now present, in His Second Advent, and is gathering His jewels (Malachi 3:17); still others are telling that we believe the end of the Gentile Times will come in October, 1914. All these truths are being stated in a slanderous way. But we should not be surprised if the Lord will overrule for the good of His people many of these things.

Not long ago, to our great surprise, a brother told us that his first knowledge of the Truth came to him through a Morehead Tract. Another man heard his preacher say that we were the Anti-Christ. He wanted to see what Anti-Christ looked like, and he came to see and hear us, and got the Truth, just on account of slanderous statements. So we have to be a target, that the Lord's Message may go forth. We are not to think it strange, as though some strange thing happened unto us, that we are caused to be a gazing stock, and pass through fiery trials. Let us rejoice that we are accounted worthy to suffer with Christ, that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy. – 1 Peter 4:12-14; Hebrews 10:32,33.