**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 20. CONSECRATION (EXODUS 28:40-43)**

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Some years ago, when I resided in Toronto, I went one Sabbath morning to attend service at Knox Church, of which the Rev. Dr. Henry M. Parsons was pastor. I went to the service in a very comfortable state of mind, longing of course, for a new blessing, but without any special sense of the kind of blessing which I needed. God, however, understood my real need, and before the sermon was done that morning my comfort was past and I was in distress of mind and spirit. The sermon had been upon a theme connected with the new life in Christ, and the Lord had made such a personal application, of it to me that I felt wholly undone. My situation was similar to that of the bride in Solomon's Song who cried: "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me!" And in that state of heart, I returned to my home.

Immediately after dinner that day, I found a quiet place in our home where I might be alone with myself and God, for I needed to understand myself, and above all, to know God's purpose for me. And so I meditated and prayed, and prayed and meditated. Thus, there was brought to me, at last, the consciousness that I was wrong at the center of my life. Not that I doubted that I was saved, for I knew that I was a Christian; nor that I doubted God's acceptance of me as His servant, for I was being daily blessed and used in my work for Him; but that my life was an up and down one, sometimes in fellowship with God, and sometimes out of fellow ship with Him; sometimes praising Him for victory won, and more often confessing sin as a result of deplorable defeat. Thus it was that I saw that what I needed was a new consecration.

When I reached this point, I took up my Bible to study the subject of consecration. But not knowing where to turn, I sought the aid of the concordance, with the intention of working out a Bible reading on the subject. Here, however, I met with difficulty. There were few passages which referred to consecration. But I thought to myself that this did not matter, as consecration and sanctification are the same thing, and what I could not obtain under one word I should obtain under the other. But when I looked at the word sanctification, I was in the opposite difficulty, for there were so many passages that I knew not what to do with them. It was in this way that I turned to a passage which I had noticed, which spoke both of consecration and sanctification, namely, Exodus 28:40-43, and it was thus that I shut myself up to it and prayerfully meditated upon it. And I wish to say, that God taught me something from this portion of Scripture, that Sabbath afternoon, which has never been unlearned, and which has revolutionized my life. Not that since then I have never known spiritual inequality, and have ever walked blamelessly before God. Alas! my life has often been marred by failure and sin. Nevertheless, I say it to the praise of Christ, that things have been different from what they were, and that I have possessed a blessed secret of living which I had never possessed before. And it is because I have a longing to pass on to you the secret which God gave to me that I am writing thus personally, and that now, I shall beg to lead you in the study of the passage of Scripture referred to.

The first thing that I noticed in my study is, that consecration and sanctification are not one and the same thing. We are dealing, as I believe, with a verbally inspired Scripture, and I observe that the Spirit says, "consecrate and sanctify." This signifies to me that consecration and sanctification - I speak from an experimental standpoint - are separate things. It is clear that they are closely connected, that one precedes the other and leads to the other, and that the other follows the one and results from that one. Indeed, one may truly say that they are inseparable. At the same time, consecration comes first and sanctification comes second. To put it in the form of a picture, consecration is the initial act of going through the outer door of a palace, and the subsequent acts of passing through other doors in the palace in order to occupy the whole and to reach the throne-room of the king; and sanctification is the palace itself, the whole of which is the home of the king, and where the king may be seen face to face. Or, to put it more simply and plainly, consecration is an initial act and many subsequent, similar acts; and sanctification is the consequent and resultant state.

The second thing which I noticed is, that the one who was to be consecrated had to belong to the right family. There were many orders of people in the world at that time. First, there were the great nations without; then, there were the Israelites in an inner circle; then, there were the Levites at large in a more inner circle; then, there were the sons of Aaron still nearer the center; and, finally, there was Aaron himself at the very center. Now, consecration - in the sense used in this passage - was not for the nations, nor for the Israelites, nor for the Levites at large. It was only for Aaron and Aaron's sons, and the only way, therefore, that a person could reach the experience of consecration was by being born into that particular family. This suggests, of course, the idea of exclusiveness. At the same time, it is more inclusive than it appears. For who are the successors of Aaron and Aaron's sons? The answer comes from Rev. 1:5, 6, in John's ascription of praise: "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father." Aaron and his sons were priests. We who believe in Christ are likewise priests. Thus we also may be consecrated.

The third thing which I noticed is, that the person who was to be consecrated had to have the right dress on. Moses, before he came to the act of consecration, was commanded to make linen under and outer garments, and to put these upon Aaron and Aaron's sons. These were called the "garments for glory and for beauty." And notice the order of the words. If Moses, as a mere man, had been writing, he would have said, garments for beauty and for glory; but as a Spirit inspired man, he said, "garments for glory and for beauty." This is important, for the order of words gives us the clue as to what the garments signify. Man ever seeks to put the beauty before the glory, for he argues that a person must become beautiful in order that he may become glorious. But God, as it were, says no, for it is impossible for a man to become beautiful, and, therefore, it is impossible for him to become glorious, and hence, that he must become glorious in order that he may become beautiful. In other words, God sees only one beauty in this world; it is the glory of His Christ; and, therefore we must be clothed upon with His glory if we are to appear beautiful in His holy presence. These thoughts are amply confirmed by a comparison of Rev. 19:8, and 2 Cor. 5:21: "And to her [the bride] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." "For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." In short, if we have faith in Christ, we are clothed with the priestly garments, and hence, we may be consecrated.

The fourth thing which I noticed is, that Aaron and his sons, before they were consecrated, had to be anointed. From the following chapter, the 20th and 21st verses, we learn what this anointing was. First, there was a ram of consecration, which was slain in sacrifice. Then, its blood was put upon the priest's right ear, thumb and toe. And, finally, oil was put upon the blood. Note the emblems and the order. It was not oil, and no blood; it was oil and blood. And it was not oil and then blood; it was first blood and then oil. In other words, there was first the sign of ownership through redemption, and after this there was the sign of acceptance for priestly service and empowering for that service. But once more, the one who believes in Christ has gone through this process. The believer is sprinkled with precious blood, and he is anointed with holy oil, for we have been bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ, and we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body.

Having observed these preliminary conditions, I came at last, that Sabbath day, to the thought of consecration itself. And here I met with a great surprise. I had, as I thought, a fairly clear conception of what consecration was. It was going to a consecration meeting and there joining with others in giving one's self to God. Or, if that was not enough, it was shutting one's self into one's room, and there making resolutions and taking vows to put away this and that and to take on this and that and so forever be the servant of God. But I had glanced at the margin of my Bible and had seen opposite the word "consecrate" the three words, "fill their hands," and what filling the hands had to do with consecration I did not know. Thus it was that I read the context of the passage and came to the 29th chapter, the 22nd-24th verses. And thus it was that I learned what true consecration meant, and what it must ever mean. This was what I found. Moses, after clothing and anointing Aaron and Aaron's sons, took the inward parts of the ram and its right shoulder, and also a loaf of bread, a cake of oiled bread, and a wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread, and laid all of these in the hands of Aaron and Aaron's sons. Then Aaron and his sons stood and waved these in the presence of the Lord. And as they did this - nothing more and nothing less - they were consecrated. Do you wonder, when I read this, that I was surprised? How different it was from what I had imagined. And yet how simple it was. But, simple as it is, it is profoundly deep. That ram of consecration symbolized Christ, for those rich inward parts and that strong, right shoulder set forth His eternal deity, and those various portions of bread, made from wheat into fine flour, manifested His matchless humanity. In other words, as those priests stood there holding up these several tokens before God, they declared - whether they fully understood it or not - that their only right in holy presence was through the redemption and eternal merit of Another; and that it was in that Person's life and glory that they appeared and dedicated themselves to priestly ministry. And as God looked down from heaven and saw, not them, but the uplifted and interposed symbols of that Other, of the Christ, He accepted Aaron and His sons and consecrated them to holy service. And this is what is necessary now. Anything else is high presumption and sin, for this is the Divine way of acceptance, power and glory. In other words, the watchword of every act of consecration is this: "Jesus only!" And do you ask, what is the watchword of sanctification? It is still, "Jesus only!" only this time, it is longer drawn out and it covers the whole of life. Paul put it thus: "For me to live is Christ!" It is for us to put it in the same way.

But I almost hear someone say: This is old-time doctrine, containing old-time ideals; but as for me, I live face to face with new-time conditions, where such doctrines and ideals are not possible of fulfillment. My reader, I will not argue with you. But I beg to suggest to you that you are wrong. For first, our passage says: "It shall be a statute forever unto him, and his seed after him," and, since, as Christians, we are in the priestly line we are also within the privileges of the priestly succession. And also, God never repents of His gifts and callings, and what He has done once and of old He is able and ready to do again and now. Moreover, I have seen lives, in our own day, lived out wholly for Christ, and in the midst of most untoward circumstances, so that I am persuaded that such consecration as has been spoken of is quite possible for any saint of these present days, even amid the undoubtedly difficult conditions which the present times have produced. In closing, then, let me speak of some consecrated lives which I have personally known.

Mr. Hudson Taylor, while once traveling in China, came to a river, and hired a boatman to ferry him across it. Just after he had done this, a Chinese gentleman, in silks and satins, reached the river and not observing Mr. Taylor, asked the boatman to hire the boat to him. This the man refused to do, saying that he had just engaged the boat to the foreigner. At this the Chinese gentleman looked at Mr. Taylor, and without a word, dealt him a heavy blow with his fist between the eyes. Mr. Taylor was stunned and staggered back, but he presently recovered himself, and, looking up, saw his assailant standing between himself and the river's brink. In an instant Mr. Taylor raised his hands to give the man a push into the stream. But in an instant more, he dropped his arms at his side. Mr. Taylor then said to the gentleman: "You see I could have pushed you into the stream. But the Jesus whom I serve would not let me do this. You were wrong in striking me, for the boat was mine. And since it is mine, I invite you to share it with me and to go with me across the river." The Chinese gentleman dropped his head in shame, and without a word, he stepped into the boat to accept the hospitality thus graciously offered to him. Mr. Taylor was a man of naturally quick temper, but evidently, for him to live was Christ.

The well-known Rev. James Inglis was pastor of a large church in Detroit. He was a graduate of Edinburgh University and Divinity School, was very learned - he was afterwards requested to act with the American New Testament Revision Committee - he was unusually eloquent, and he was having a most successful ministerial career. Indeed, he was the most popular preacher in Detroit, if not in Michigan, having large audiences on Sundays, with people seated in the aisles and upon the pulpit stairs of his church, and with his listeners hanging upon his words. One week day, at this period, he sat in his study, preparing one of his sermons for the following Sunday, when a voice seemed to say to him: "James Inglis, whom are you preaching?" Mr. Inglis was startled, but he answered: "I am preaching good theology." But the Voice seemed to reply. "I did not ask you what you are preaching, but whom are you preaching?" My uncle answered: "I am preaching the Gospel." But the Voice again replied: "I did not ask you what you are preaching; I asked you whom are you preaching?" Mr. Inglis sat silent and with bowed head for a long time before he again replied. When he did, he raised his head and said: "O God, I am preaching James Inglis!" And then he added: "Henceforth I will preach no one but Christ, and Him crucified!" Then my uncle arose, opened the chest in his study which contained his eloquent sermons and deliberately put them one by one into the fire which was burning in his study stove. From that time on he turned his back upon every temptation to be oratorical and popular, preached simply and expositionally, and gave himself in life and words to set forth Jesus Christ before men. Later he became the editor of two widely read religious papers, and the teacher in the Scripture of such men as Dr. Brooks of St. Louis, Dr. Erdman of Philadelphia, Dr. Gordon of Boston, and Mr. Moody of Northfield. He died in 1872; but his name is still held in reverent and grateful remembrance by many of the most spiritual of God's saints in America and Europe. Mr. Inglis was by nature a man of proud and ambitious disposition; but it is manifest that it became true in his life that for him to live was Christ.

A friend of mine - whose name I will not give - was a business man in one of our great American cities. He was an able financier and had become wealthy. Thus it came to pass that he was living in a beautiful brown stone house, situated on a prominent avenue, and in luxury. At the same time he was a Christian, being an elder in a Presbyterian church and generally active in good works. It was thus, when Mr. Hudson Taylor visited his city in 1888, that my friend offered to entertain him. The arrangement was brought to pass, and Mr. Taylor was in his home for about a week. My friend was thus brought into close contact with a man of God, the like of whom he had never before seen. As the days went by he was increasingly impressed by the godliness and winsomeness of the life before him. Finally, after Mr. Taylor had departed to another place, my friend knelt down and said to God: "Lord, if Thou wilt make me something like that little man I will give Thee everything I've got." And the Lord took him at his word. From that time onward his spiritual life visibly deepened and developed. At last one day he said to his wife: "My dear, don't you think we can do with a less expensive house than this, so that we may reduce our living expenses and give more money to the Lord?" He then proposed that they should sell the property, build a cheaper house, and give what might thus be gained to foreign missions. Happily, he had a wife who was a true "helpmeet" to him, and she heartily agreed to the proposal. So the old property was sold, the new house was built, and the sum gained was given to God for His cause abroad. About two years later my friend spoke again to his wife on this wise: "Dear, I feel badly about this house. The architect got me in for more money than I intended to spend on it. What do you say to selling it? I have got a lot on an adjacent street, and we can build there a cheaper house than this, and then we can give the difference to foreign missions." My friend's wife was not a woman who liked changes. However, she loved the Lord, and again she gave a ready assent to the proposal. So the first transaction was repeated, a plainer, cheaper house was built, and all that was made by the change was given to missions. Meanwhile, my friend's general business continued to prosper. Indeed, everything he touched seemed to turn into gold. But his personal and family expenses, by his deliberate choice, were constantly being reduced. He never lived meanly. At the same time he lived more and more simply. Thus he made money, and thus he saved money. Yet all the time he gave and gave to causes at home and abroad. And this continued until his death. At the time of his death he and his wife were supporting some thirteen missionaries, and previously, they had sent to the foreign field, providing for outfits and passages, over one hundred new and older workers. Now my friend, by nature, was a man who loved money. It had a fascination for him, both in the making of it and in the selfish spending of it. But it is manifest that such greediness had been taken out of his life. His heart was where his treasure was, and his real treasure was in heaven. In other words, he too was able to say: "For me to live is Christ!"

Dear reader, whoever you are, the consecrated life is possible and practical. It was for the first century; it is also for the twentieth century. It was for early apostles and disciples; it is also for present day missionaries, ministers, lay workers and business men. In truth, it is for anybody and everybody who is the Lord's. As for you, therefore, but one thing is needed. Empty your hands of whatever you have taken up from the world, and then hold up these emptied hands to God. And as surely as God is holy, as surely as He is loving, as surely as He is gracious, He will fill your, even your, hands' with Christ. And when you find yourself standing thus, holding up Jesus between yourself and God, hiding yourself beneath Him, confessing Him to be your only merit, glory and power, you too will be consecrated.