

MANY INFALLABLE PROOFS

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS CONSECRATION?

Consecration is the duty of man. Sanctification is the work of God. Neither of these two parties can do the work of the other. God, having endowed man with a free will, cannot contradict himself, by compelling human actions. Nor would there be any merit in man's actions if he were compelled. Hence God cannot consecrate us nor can he consecrate us.

Consecration As the. free act of man. Since man is feeble and sin-tainted and has always failed in his efforts to cleanse himself from sin, since he has not the power to make his heart pure, only his Maker can purify his nature. One who could create such a being as man can certainly make him right again after he has fallen. Therefore God can sanctify the nature of man. These two facts kept before the mind will simplify and clear up much of the confusion that has been thrown around this subject. Man consecrates. God sanctifies. Most of the misunderstanding and false teaching on this subject originate right here. Some are expecting God to do their part, and others are endeavoring to do the divine themselves. Some think God will consecrate them. Hence they are singing the language of a well known hymn,

"Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord, By the power of grace divine."

But God will do nothing of the kind. He will neither repent for the sinner, nor consecrate for the saint. He never does for us what we can do for ourselves. Where-ever consecration is spoken of in the word of God, it is always declared to be the act of man-not the work of God. There are others who try to take the work of God out of his hands. As the result we have a great many people who are trying to sanctify themselves. This gives rise to the theory of sanctification by culture, growth, etc. God says, "present your bodies a living sacrifice," "yield your members as instruments of righteousness as those that are alive from the dead." But he never indicates that he will present our bodies or yield our members for us. We must do that. It is true that a struggling soul, seeking to get the consent of his will, may ask God to assist him, and give him strength not to falter until the work is done, but he - not God-must perform the act of consecration. When man has done his part and consecrated himself to God entirely, then God does his part and entirely sanctifies the entirely consecrated man.

The Bible employs the marriage covenant as a symbol and illustration of consecration. Jesus Christ is represented as the bridegroom and his people are the bride. In this and all true marriage covenants the parties give themselves entirely to each other. All attachments that in anyway hinder the affection or duty of each to the other are forever sundered. All other suitors are forever discarded. The bride covenants to become the property of the groom. This is precisely the case in entire consecration. The believer separates himself entirely from every thing or person that hinders his attachment for and duty to Jesus Christ. And Jesus gave himself up entirely to and for his people:

"Christ loved the Church and gave himself, for it." When this covenant is truly made by the believer, God keeps his part of the covenant and cleanses the soul from all sin. We are met by the objection that it is impossible to consecrate ourselves entirely to God. But such an objection is absurd. If a bridegroom and bride can give themselves up to each other to be loyal and true, we can as really and truly give ourselves to God.

If a soldier can take the oath of allegiance to the government, promising to be strictly obedient, to bear and suffer and endure whatever his superiors command, and rush into danger at the command of an officer who is liable to make mistakes and needlessly expose him to peril, and all because he has implicit confidence in the government, much more can we give ourselves into the hands of Him who never makes mistakes and who always knows what is best for us. We can do this if we believe

in the divine government as truly as the soldier believes in his country. And if we love our God as truly as a patriot loves his country we will devote ourselves entirely to Him. What we can do for men, we can more easily do for God, because he promises us divine power to enable us to do it.

The government furnishes arms, ammunition, clothing, food, etc., in order to make the consecration of the soldier effective. And God furnishes the spiritual equipment to make our consecration not only possible but gloriously successful. It is time that consecration be taken out of the realm of the awfully mysterious and shown to be a glorious privilege which a loving child longs to embrace. The subject has been represented as an awful thing even to think of, still more to accomplish. It ought to be just the reverse. We once heard a preacher at the close of an altar service when his people were seeking, to be wholly given up to God, say, "You have done a very solemn thing today." To our minds, it would have been more solemn if they had refused to give themselves entirely to God.

Consecration is what we would do if it were the last day of our lives. If you knew positively that before tomorrow morning you would be in, eternity, you would as a true Christian resign yourself wholly to the will of God. The language of your heart if not of your lips would be, "Into thy hands, Lord. I resign my spirit. I let go my grasp upon everything in this world." All those who get to heaven will have to be thus resigned to the will of God the last day of life. Now what a person ought to be the last of life, he ought to be every day. Will any one then maintain that we ought to be anything else every day? Who knows that he will live all of any one day? If sudden death would be sudden glory, it will take place only in the experience of those wholly given to God. There is no excuse then for failing to be entirely consecrated to God every moment. Whatever we ought to be we can be. We ought to be wholly the Lord's every moment, and as we ought to be, we can be. Impossibilities are not. We had a friend many years ago, who had a clear conversion, but was honestly perplexed over the subjects of consecration and sanctification. She was prostrated on a bed of sickness. The physician declared she must die and advised her husband to inform her of the fact. He entered chamber and announced the sad intelligence, "The doctor says you cannot get well." Just then the doorbell rang and he went out of the room to answer the summons. Parties had come on urgent business, detaining him for quite a length of time. This announcement came as a great shock to the sufferer who had expected to recover. She questioned, "Must I give up my husband and my friends? What will become of them when I am gone?" Then the thought arose, "God is taking care of them now and can take care of them just as well when I am gone." There was a great struggle of soul for a few minutes and then she yielded herself and all she possessed entirely to God. "Instantly," as she afterwards testified, I felt as light as a feather." This was the beginning of a richer experience than she had ever known before. She did not die. The doctor was mistaken. The writer visited her a few months later and she said, "I see now what you mean. We cannot carry the Lord in one hand and the world in the other." Here was an instance of entire consecration, by doing as if it were the last day of life. This is the secret of the triumphant deathbeds of many of the saints who had never heard the subjects of sanctification or justification definitely treated, yet who really consecrated themselves to God in the dying hour. Many sons and daughters have witnessed these deathbed scenes and asked themselves the question, "Why was not father as much given up to God every day as that last day?" Sure enough! Why not! Make the covenant with God today, reader! Make it regardless of your feelings! make it as you do a contract with any one in whom you have confidence in the business world! Make it whether God blesses you or not! If you will begin to do as you would if you knew it to be the last day of your life you will become entirely consecrated. A little boy once went to a camp meeting. As his mother was putting him to bed, he heard a noise in an adjacent tent. He asked what it was and his mother responded, "It is a man praying, and I judge by the way he prays that he wants to be wholly given up to the Lord." The little boy replied, "Why don't he then, mother?" We ask the same question of the many who say they want to be the Lord's, "Why not?"

CHAPTER II

WHO CONSECRATES?

It is sometimes asserted, "I consecrated myself to God at the time I was converted." This statement is sometimes sincerely made, but it is incorrect. No person who knows the scriptural definition of the term consecration will make such an assertion. Consecration is an act which can be performed only by a child of God. Take a reference Bible and turn to the passages that contain the words consecration, consecrate and their cognates and in the margin, in most instances, will be found the translation, to fill the hand. This refers to the method of consecration under the old dispensation. The worshipper came to the temple with his hands filled with something good to be used in the service of God -a sheaf of wheat, some of the fruits of the earth. Or he led a lamb, a goat, a heifer or a bullock. He solemnly laid his hands upon the victim and set it apart for the service of God and his sanctuary. He always brought something good for use in the service of God. This is what Paul means when he says, "Your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God." God will accept nothing that is not good as a sacrifice to His service. A sinner cannot offer such a sacrifice, because he is "dead in trespasses and sins." He must be made alive by being born again before he can offer "a living sacrifice." He has nothing to give but his sins. And God has no use for them. How can a dead man offer himself, a living sacrifice! He must forsake his sins by repentance, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he is born of God-made alive from the dead-and is in a condition to offer a living sacrifice. We hear men sometimes tell of giving their sins-their whiskey, tobacco, etc.-to God. How absurd! All sinful things are to be put away. They will do to burn on the devil's altar but not on the altar of God. The little slave girl in the days of oppression was ransomed from the auctioneer's block by a kind-hearted man. She fell at his feet exclaiming, "I will serve you all my life." She had been redeemed and then she consecrated to his service her redeemed powers. It is only redeemed men that have anything to consecrate. The sinner repents. The child of God consecrates. How absurd that hymn,

"All my doubts I give to Jesus."

He has no use for our doubts. Let them go where they belong. They had their origin with the devil. A sinner is never commanded to consecrate in all the Word of God. The constant command to him is, "Repent." A reference to the Word of God shows that consecration is commanded to the children of God only. In Paul's great exhortation to consecration he says ([Rom 12:1](#)), "I beseech you, therefore, brethren." He beseeches not the unconverted, but the brethren to entirely consecrate. The epistle to the Romans was written to the church at Rome. In [Rom 6:13](#), he repeats the same thought, "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Here the command to consecrate is given to those "that are alive from the dead," and not to unconverted men. If we keep this distinction in our minds,- repentance for the sinner, consecration for the child of God,- we shall avoid a fatal confusion that has hindered some good people. We must remember that every sinner is a rebel against the kingdom of heaven. And his first duty is to throw down his weapons of rebellion-in other words, repent. When people undertake to assert that repentance and consecration are the same thing, they are driven to some very absurd conclusions. We once met a brother who, in order to find an excuse for refusing to entirely consecrate himself to God, maintained stoutly that he was entirely consecrated to God before he was converted. If that was true, then he was a consecrated sinner, which is absurd. We once heard of a church that began a protracted meeting. For three nights the converted people were urged to come to the altar and consecrate themselves to God. Having started the meeting in this manner, the rest of the effort was an invitation to the unconverted to come to the altar and consecrate themselves to God. Both parties were exhorted to do the same thing and confusion settled down upon the minds of the people. Sinners inquired as to whether the church was unconverted, and Christians resented being asked to do the same thing that was urged upon sinners.

The assertion that we consecrate when we repent is both unscriptural and illogical.

Consecration meetings in our young people's societies are never held for unconverted people, but always for those who are Christians. Such meetings are never held for the purpose of converting sinners. To still further substantiate this truth we call attention to the hymnals of all the denominations. In these, repentance is always adopted as the language of sinners and consecration as the language of the children of God. The language of the sinner is

"Show pity, Lord! O Lord, forgive!
Let a repenting rebel live:
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?"

"My crimes are great, but don't surpass
The power and glory of thy grace.
Great God, thy nature hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found."

Such a man is like the ancient runner to the city of refuge with justice upon his track. He thinks not of the beauties of the city, but only to escape pursuing justice. Real conviction gives a man no time for anything except escape from the wrath to come. But the redeemed man expresses himself thus, as he consecrates himself to God:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

And the conclusion he arrives at as he reflects upon the salvation God has given him is:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

CHAPTER III

COMPLETELY AND ENTIRELY.

When Paul made his voyage to Rome a great storm arose which threatened the loss of the ship and the lives of those on board. In order to save the ship the sailors threw overboard the wheat and other articles that composed the cargo. But later they had to cast themselves overboard also and abandon the ship. This is the way many people consecrate to God. They proceed by degrees. They yield up the less important things first, rather than give themselves. They give up prejudices or habits or their associations, money, etc., etc. They begin on the outer circumference, but self in the center is still untouched. They keep drawing nearer to the center, the less important things are given first and then things of greater value, but still they are not consecrated, until they come to self and give that. Then the consecration is complete. They commenced at the wrong place. Had they commenced with self in the beginning everything else would have gone with it. Giving money, time and effort is only trying to get salvation by works until self is given. Then these things go with the consecration, just as the first link draws all the chain with it. Consecration must be complete, and it is never complete until the whole being is given to God.

Paul says, "Your bodies, a living sacrifice." We used to wonder why he said "your bodies" and said nothing as regards the soul. But we think we see the reason for it now. The body is the instrument through which the soul works. The soul is useless in this world without a body, and can accomplish nothing except through the body. A consecration that is simply in the mind is mere sentiment. And we have too much of that in our day. Consecration must be practical. It cannot be if the body is left out. There is more danger in sentimental consecration that leaves out the body than anything else as regards this question. A great many claim to be consecrated who are not, for this reason. The word of God teaches that consecration is to be intensely practical. We have a body as truly to be consecrated as the soul. The two cannot be separated and be of any use in this world. Disembodied spirits of men are of no use to God here below. It is only for the little season while we are in the body that we can be useful here. There is a legal instrument in the courts called the habeas corpus, meaning, "you may have his body." A man may by the granting of this writ be brought into court and allowed to show whether he has been justly shut up in jail or not. When his body is brought into court, his soul and spirit are there too, they all go together. The soul is not left behind in the jail. The whole man is there. It seems to us that the apostle meant all this; that the soul is of no use without the body in this world and the body is necessary to make the desire and purpose of consecration practical and complete. Otherwise consecration is of no account in building up the kingdom of God on earth. When the Jewish high priest was consecrated to his sacred office the blood of the sacrifice was touched upon his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot, to teach that his ears were to be attentive to hear the commands of God; his hands ready to do the work God commanded; and his feet quick to run on the divine errands. In this dispensation all believers are "a royal priesthood." Their bodies are to be given to a living service. The ears are to be attentive to the divine commands; the hands to do the bidding of God and the feet to run on His errands. The whole body is to be kept in such a manner that the soul can best serve the kingdom of God. Anything that weakens or impairs the body hinders the best service of the soul and is to be avoided, for our "bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost," and God says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Sloth, intemperance and unchastity are to be discarded that the soul may be unhindered in its duty and devotion to God. Jesus once dwelt in a human body and henceforth the body is to be prized as that abode in which he condescended to dwell. Those blessed eyes beamed with looks of love and tenderness towards the erring. They shed tears over the grave of Lazarus and the incorrigible city of Jerusalem. His ear was quick to distinguish his Father's voice when the dull ears of the multitude heard only an incomprehensible sound. His tongue spoke forth the praises of his Father. His hands were employed in doing good to mankind all through his ministry, and when he was received up into heaven his hands were spread in blessing upon a ruined world. But he is no longer in a human body upon earth. He has gone up to

heaven and we are to be his body. We are to have our bodies take the place of his body here upon earth. Hence the church is the body of which he is the head: He is now to work through our bodies. The world no longer sees him, but it sees us. He still manifests himself, but it is through his church. Our ears must be quick and ready to hear the divine commands; our voices must be tuned to speak forth the Father's praises, just as his voice once did; our hands must take his place in doing good; our feet must gladly run on errands for God; our whole body, as the expression of our entire nature, must be a living sacrifice to do, be or suffer the will of God, for we now take the place of Jesus as the representatives of God upon earth. How absurd in the light of this truth are those isms and fanatical notions that slight or neglect the body!

In later years there has arisen an absurdity that has captured some weak souls, called "Christian Science." (Was there ever a fanaticism that did not try to appropriate the name of Christ to find excuse for its existence?) Its fundamental philosophy is that there is no such thing as matter, that everything is mind. It is the old heathen notion of Pantheism revamped. But the inspired word of God declares that we have a body as well as a soul and spirit to be offered to God. Paul prayed that "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Another absurdity which has swept many weak souls to destruction is Spiritism, which makes a man good for nothing while in the body, but makes him very benevolently anxious to communicate with the living after he is dead. But no good ever came of these pretended communications. There never was a man made better by them or saved thereby from sin, which is enough to show that it is not of God. But God wants us to be good for something while we are alive and not merely after we are dead. He wants a consecration while in the body; a practical, complete offering only is of any consequence to God or man in its results. Christianity has given more honor to the body than any other religion because the body is the instrument of the soul, the temple of the Holy Ghost, and without it the soul can accomplish nothing. Hence instead of leaving it out of the question as being the grosser part of our nature, the consecration takes it in also. Thus the last and least of us is to be offered to God—a complete consecration of all our being.

CHAPTER IV

COMPLETED ONCE FOR ALL

Consecration is not only complete as embracing the whole man, but it is to be completed once for all. So it does not need to be done every day, but done once for all, like any other transaction that involves a contract. This may be seen in the very nature of Consecration. It is the marriage covenant between Jesus Christ and his church. A true marriage is a permanent contract between two parties. It is made once for all. And nothing but death or infidelity to the contract can break it.

The modern innovation of consecration meetings once a month is as absurd and as impotent as would be a marriage ceremony celebrated once a month between the same parties. In his word God speaks of nothing short of an everlasting covenant, never to be broken. He says, "I will make with thee an everlasting covenant." Until the believer understands this he will ever be at a disadvantage in contending against the temptations of Satan. Until he has got the matter forever fixed, as positively and definitely as a wedding day and its vows, he will be a prey to the temptations of Satan, who will tempt him on the point of his emotions and feelings. He will be tempted to think that he is not saved because he does not feel as at some other time, or as some one else feels, or as he expected he would feel. But when he has once settled the matter to be unreservedly the Lord's, he can in the fierceness of temptation declare that he is entirely given up to God since that day, he has taken nothing back and is wholly the Lord's, no matter what the enemy may say or suggest. We shall refer to this point again. We can never get quite to the point of a complete consecration until we get this covenant signed and sealed once for all, for a very good reason: when the same individuals come to the altar again and again for a consecration which they expect to go all over again at a stated interval, they never get the consecration complete, because "the old man" dies hard. If there be an idol we do not quite want to destroy, a Benjamin or Isaac that we do not wish to part with, the temptation is to defer the matter until "a more convenient season." This is in accordance with human nature: to put off disagreeable things as long as possible. The "old man" will put off entire consecration just as long as he can because it means death to him. We have heard leaders at camp meeting ask all who would consecrate themselves to God "for this camp meeting," to come to the altar for that purpose. How about the next week when the camp meeting is over? How about the time when the protracted meeting ceases? Ought we not to be entirely the Lord's all the time? Is it not presumption to even suggest the idea that God will accept short-time consecration? And yet there are many churches who feel the need of the Holy Ghost for the winter revival season, who consecrate for that brief period, as they suppose, but it is only a religious spasm and not a Scriptural consecration.

But it has been asked, "How shall we know when we have made this complete consecration?" We reply, when we have given ourselves to God the very best we know and are so anxious to give all we do not know, that we would be real glad to have God tell us what more we can be or do for him, then we are entirely his. The angels in heaven can do no more than to give up themselves as well as they know and be willing and eager for God to show them anything lacking so that they may yield it to him. When two souls stand before the altar and pledge their love and devotion each to the other, it is not only for the present but for all time, "for sickness or health, prosperity and adversity." It is for all the unknown future. The part that is unknown is bigger than that which is known. So with consecration, it is for the unknown future as well as the present. When new duties come up in the future or new leadings of Providence or new opportunities of being the Lord's, we are simply carrying out the covenant once and forever made. God will give us new light as we go along. We were not capable of receiving all the light at the start, but he accepts the will for the deed and opens new fields of privilege and opportunity and duty as fast as we can bear it.

When the expedition under General Butler sailed from New York during the late Civil War, sealed orders were given them, which were not to be opened until they had been several days at sea. On opening the orders on the appointed day, they found they were commanded to go to the mouth of the Mississippi and take New Orleans. There was no shrinking or drawing back, for the soldiers

had taken the oath when mustered into the service of the United States, binding them to loyalty and strict obedience. Therefore they went gladly to the task set before them. Every entirely consecrated Christian gives himself up to go and do and be and suffer as God says. He has sworn allegiance to the government of heaven, and he is ready for the unknown will of God as fast as God reveals it to him.

Here is where the "old man" draws back, afraid of being injured. But any shrinking here is for one of two reasons: either from a doubt of the goodness or the wisdom of God. Some doubt the wisdom of God and are fearful that he may call them to something that is not the very best thing for them after all. There is an element of self-conceit here in thinking they know better than God. Most unbelief comes from self-conceit.

Others doubt the goodness of God; they fear that if they give up to him unreservedly something terrible would happen. The devil tells many people that if they are wholly given up to God, they will be treated meanly. Somebody will die, or they will be sick or lose their friends. He makes them believe that God will punish them for being good and that the more obedient they are the more they must suffer. There are some people who actually seem to think that it is unhealthy and even dangerous to be very good. That it is a sign that we shall soon be called to die. Their idea of saintliness is a pale, bloodless face, a consumptive frame and a soul just ready to depart from this wicked world. The Sunday school books we read when a child had the unhappy custom of allowing the good boys to die young, and the idea is instilled in many minds too much that to be real good means to have a real sad, gloomy time of it. There are people still who believe that if we are real good and entirely submissive to God that he will take an unfair advantage of us and treat us meanly.

He who believes in the perfect wisdom and infinite goodness of Almighty God will trust his whole case in the divine keeping, for the present and the future, for time and eternity. He who wants to cling to unbelief and the self life will make excuses and find an excuse for keeping back part of the price.

Some pretend not to see any need of entire sanctification, after a man has been soundly converted, and stoutly maintain that we are entirely sanctified when regenerated. If we are entirely sanctified when converted, then there should not be the least shrinking from entire consecration. The very fact that men do shrink from being entirely given up to God proves that there needs to be another work of divine grace to remove this unwillingness to be or do or suffer all the will of God.

CHAPTER V

NOT TO THE CHURCH

We hear much said in many quarters about "loyalty to the church," but it pains us to hear very little said about loyalty to Jesus Christ. We do not believe in "Come-out-ism." God has blessed organized effort all through the ages, while "Come-out-ism" has ruined many souls. This ism pretends to disbelieve in sects, but is really one of the most intolerant and bigoted of all the sects, For it is a little partially organized sect of its own, that devotes itself to chastisement of the churches, to whom it owes all the religious light and life that it possesses. Had the world been dependent for its moral and spiritual light upon this absurd principle, it would have perished in ignorance of the gospel. The Bible, the Sabbath, the sanctuary and vital religion have come down to us through regular organized efforts of the people of God, banded together for this purpose. If the church is not all it should be, instead of drawing off from it we should remain in it and live a holy life and seek to make it better. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus, concerning his true people. Salt can accomplish its purpose best by remaining in contact with that which needs to be purified. "Ye are the light of the world," said Jesus. And again he says, "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." God wants all that are in his house - the church-to receive the benefit of every experience given by him to individuals. We have said this because we do not wish to be misunderstood when we say that there is great danger in these days in being consecrated to the church more than to the Lord. While church organization is a necessity and membership in it a privilege and a duty, there is great danger of being consecrated to the organization more than to God. There are strange ideas in vogue as to Christian work. We have been astonished to hear certain people called great Christian workers. When we came to investigate their special work it was the preparation of church suppers, the piecing of quilts and dressing dolls for the church bazaar. Many a so-called Christian worker is dumb in the social means of grace, knows little of the word of God and would not know how to pray with a dying man or how to point a sinner to Christ. It has come to pass that a person can be "a devoted Christian worker" and have no salvation at all, or if there is salvation in the heart there is no way of finding it out. Much that passes for Christian work is "serving tables" to keep alive five or six little denominations in a community where one could do all the work of God if it were "filled with the Spirit." We knew of a sister who was relating her experience of restoration to health. She declared that in her gratitude to God, she was now working specially for Him. Being questioned as to the special work she was now doing, she replied, "I am going around soliciting articles for a fishpond to be held at the parsonage next Thursday night." For the benefit of those of our readers who do not know what a fishpond is, we would say it is a kind of pious gambling. We have known of men who were very liberal to the church as long as they could have their way, but when things did not go to suit them, they backslid and left the church and went into the service of Satan. Their excuse was that they were "not appreciated" after all they had done for the church. They were laboring only for self or the applause of the people. Had they been consecrated to God, they would not have much that passes for Christian work that has no more of the spirit of Christ than of Mohammed. Many churches are run like a political machine, just to keep up with the others in the community without regard to the glory of God. Churches may be managed with such a spirit as to hinder true Christianity. Much so-called religious work may be done without one spark of spiritual life. We were pressing the claims of God upon a worldly professor of Christianity who was candid enough to acknowledge, "If I were as good a Christian as I am a Methodist, I would be getting along all right." Not that we would have people one whit the less devoted to building up the cause of God, we insist that consecration is to be to God first and then to his visible church. Soldiers are consecrated to the cause of their country first, then to their individual regiment. Otherwise petty quarrels and jealousies would destroy any army. Jesus first, then our denomination as the best method of building up the cause of Jesus upon earth. Paul says, "He is the head of the body, the church: that in all things he might have the preeminence." This being true, a man may be

consecrated to God and be misunderstood by the visible church. In fact the visible church has not usually in the past understood many of its best members, who were living for God. Sometimes they have been cast out because not comprehended nor appreciated. A fully consecrated man is like Jesus, willing to suffer reproaches even from those he is endeavoring to benefit. But being thoroughly consecrated to God, he does not waver. Here is where some weaken, they let their fear of man or desire for human applause weaken and nullify the voice of conscience. Instead of being consecrated to God they let other people control their consciences and mark out their duty and then wonder why they have so little religious joy and comfort. The difficulty is, they are not consecrated to God, but to the people. Here is where many draw back today. They have not given their reputations to God. They fear what people may say of them, especially good people. Sometimes we have ~o be misunderstood by good people. The church may misunderstand us. But our first duty is to God. We must be what he wishes us to be; not what the church wishes always. Jesus and many of the best of the saints have been misunderstood by the church. The churchmen of His day clamored for his crucifixion. And if they clamor for our crucifixion, we need not be astonished. A hymn is very popular that contains the lines:

"Let the world despise and leave me:
They have left my Savior, too."

But it may be equally true:
"Let the church despise and leave me:
They have left my Savior, too."

Good men, sincere men, may, through prejudice, misunderstand us, but we must go with Jesus just the same and keep sweet towards them. We are following a master who made himself of no reputation. Here is the point where many draw back and do not go through to God. They are trying to save their reputation. John Wesley was bitterly attacked by his enemies. His brother Charles told him that he had better write a tract showing the falsity of the charges, which he could easily do. He replied that he had made a series of daily appointments to preach the gospel in the north of England and in Scotland, and if he stopped at home to repel the attacks of his enemies, the people would not hear the gospel. "I gave my reputation to the Lord many years ago and he will have to take care of it now." He went right away and left his reputation in the hands of God and it has kept well for over a hundred years, because it had a good keeper. Would the reader dare to do that? Those who are so fearful about their reputation usually do not have a reputation worth worrying about.

Right here may be mentioned the reason so many have a weak faith in God. Jesus states it. He preached the most systematic of all his discourses, clearly proving his divinity. His Unitarian hearers said they did not believe it. He replied, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" It is impossible to trust God when we care more for the opinions of men than for his opinion. Here is the point where self centers, but if we get the consent of our hearts to die to the opinions of those who would hinder our supreme loyalty to God, we shall surely get great victory. Have you given your reputation to God or are you concerned about it when the question of loyalty to God presents itself?

CHAPTER VI

MORE THAN FOR SERVICE

Another popular notion is "consecration to work" in order to obtain "power for service." This idea dwarfs and belittles consecration, making it only human doing. Consecration is more than doing. In fact doing is a very small part of it. It means to be, to do, and to suffer the will of God—all three. Sometimes it is easier to do the will of God than to be what we ought to be, or to suffer the will of God. We have heard old soldiers say that it took more courage and firmness to lie still under the fire of the enemy than to rush into the thickest of the fight. It is easier to do than to suffer. God calls us to both. Those who are putting emphasis upon "consecration for work" do not recognize the fact that God cares more for what we are than for what we do. He is seeking to fully stamp his image upon the soul. He cares more for character than for conquest. He declares in his word, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Most people had rather take a city than rule their own spirit. It is more pleasing to be a great conqueror, whose name is exalted among the people, than to rule the spirit. It exalts the self-life to be called a great saint, a wonderful preacher, a noted evangelist. Many a man passes for a great spiritual leader who is far from being consecrated to God. There may be a great deal of self mixed with the thought of getting "power for service," with the idea of self-exaltation in it all; the desire to make ourselves some great one instead of possessing the lowly graces of a holy character. This was the case with Simon Magus. He wanted to buy the Holy Ghost power so that he could work miracles. He offered money, while some today offer their consecration to buy the power of the Holy Ghost. Some one says that seeking the Holy Ghost just to get power for service is like a man marrying his housekeeper not from love, but because it is cheaper and he can save by it. He who obtains the gift of the Holy Ghost obtains him first in his abiding fulness, not in order to get his help, but from a love that desires his constant companionship. There are thousands willing to be illustrious in the church, through the help of the Holy Spirit, who are unwilling to be holy through his abiding presence. God is seeking lowly character. He delights to dwell with him that is of a contrite heart. It may be the Lord wants you to be a perfect, patient Job to shame the devil and let him know that God has those who are ready to suffer his will. If consecration were only to do, and to have power for service, were we banished like John in Patmos, where we could do nothing, we would be tempted to think that we had lost our salvation. All John could do was to be "in the spirit" and listen to what God had to teach him. It requires a higher degree of grace to be in the nursery with cross children, as many a mother has to be, and keep patient, than it does to stand on the walls of Zion and blow a big trumpet. Holy character is the mightiest power in this universe. Paul declares that although he might have the eloquence of men and angels combined, the power to penetrate into all mysteries, the ability to move mountains because of his great faith, the possession of a liberality that sacrificed everything, and yet if he failed to be clothed with the lowly garment of perfect love, he would amount to nothing. Purity is power in itself. A holy man or woman has a character that penetrates and moves society wherever they dwell. Seeking for power amounts to nothing. No man ever got power by seeking it. And yet it is possible to get great crowds to come to the altar seeking power for service, while very few can be persuaded to seek purity of heart, the real condition of power.

The popular notion of power is entirely different from the power of purity. A great deal of the seeking for power is a seeking for a kind of misty, intangible something that is expected to come over the seeking soul and compel him to do certain duties which he is not quite willing to do, just as a tyrant has to drag a subject up to an unwelcome task. Some people think to be full of power is to be like a great reservoir full and slopping over, and that it puts a kind of gush in us that enables us to do hard, disagreeable things because of the gush. There never was a greater mistake. God does not want great reservoirs. He wants clear, empty channels through which he can pour himself out on a lost world. If we will keep ourselves clean, empty channels he will flow through us to the world about us. He wants insulated wires. If we will be insulated, separated entirely from the world, he

will turn his divine power through us on the world all about us. When we are wholly given up to him, we will do or speak or suffer or be, entirely regardless of any particular gush of emotion. We shall not stop to ask how we feel or whether duty is easy or hard. He has genuine power who is so yielded to God that God can shine through him upon the world. And many times he is accomplishing most when he himself realizes it least. Let us disabuse our minds of the idea that the froth and foam and bustle and noise are power. Sometimes they are tokens of feebleness. The power that keeps the locomotive on the track is mightier than the power that speeds it along the track. The latter is the power of steam. The former is the power of gravitation that holds the planets in their places. The power that can keep us from flying the track, that can keep us sweet and true to God, is greater than the power that helps us blow the whistle and ring the bell. There are many people who would like the power to suffer and be humble if some one could only know it and give them credit for it.

It may be objected here that we imply that it is not of importance that we are zealous workers for God. We intend to convey no such idea. We do mean that work is not of the most consequence. Character comes first in the teachings of the sacred scriptures. God gives us salvation; then we are to work it out. We are to be first of all, then we shall do. Being right is a great help to doing right. Christ died that he "might purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." We see here then that when our character is what he wants it, and he has purified us, then we shall be "zealous of good works." This then is the order-purity of character, then zeal for good works. The first command is "Be"---"Be ye holy." When we are what he wants us to be, we shall do all he wants us to do. Then he can take our little and feed a great multitude. There need be no fear of our being without power when we are wholly consecrated to be, do and suffer the will of God. Some one says that "God can thresh a mountain with a worm." This is true. The reason he does not thresh more mountains is because there are so few willing to be worms. So many want to be great. It is only when we get small enough and weak enough that God will use us. Here is where so many fall into the snare of wanting to be great. More evangelists and preachers have become powerless here than at any other point. They sought power in order to show off. If we would not be ensnared right here, let us be sure we are consecrated to be, to do and to suffer the will of God.

Then we shall not be elated by success, nor cast down by apparent failure, because we have given all the glory to God. God says he will not share his glory with another, and many are trying to rival him. The word of God does not command consecration for service or to work-but to God.

CHAPTER VII

NOT TO OUR FEELINGS

Many people are consecrated to their feelings and emotions more than to God. They have come to estimate their religious state by the amount of "good feelings" they have. When they feel bad, they think they have no religion; when they feel well they suppose it is an indication of the possession of very much grace. Some of these people think very little about their conduct and character but very much of their feelings. Whether they live right or not does not concern them very much, but they are very much disturbed if they do not "feel good." This is one of the weaknesses of modern religion. People are seeking forms and feelings more than God. Such religion is mere sentiment, and so far has it gone that the majority of seekers at the altars of religion, whether it be for pardon or heart-purity, are seeking more an emotional experience than a radical change of character. They want to feel good more than they want to be good. They object to radical treatment that destroys sin, because it requires too much self-abasement and crucifixion. A little boy of our acquaintance a few years ago fell out of a hammock and broke his arm. When the physician came to set the bones, the little fellow appealed to his mother saying, "Don't let him do it, mamma. Give me medicine; give me medicine." There are many in the church who had rather have soothing medicine than to have their bones set and made right. About all some preachers dare to deal out is soothing syrup. Many want to feel nice whether they are right or not. The result is a large class of religious weaklings. They seek the loaves and fishes of religion instead of righteousness. Feeling is not religion, but it is the result of true religion. Many want the results who do not desire the cause-salvation. Here is the great vantage ground of Satan. He harasses many good people right at this point and gets the advantage over them and destroys their souls. Perhaps there is no more common form of Satanic attack than right here. It is not too much to say that every Christian has had more or less trouble right at this point. The will is the only possession that man can call his own. God can touch and modify and destroy everything else. Property, friends, health, life are at his disposal, but our will is at our own disposal. He will never violate the freedom of our will. He will not break our will. We are our own governors when it comes to the freedom of the will. We can exercise the power of choice but we cannot control our feelings and emotions. He alone can do that. He can touch and thrill them as a musician controls the strings of his instrument. Hence the control of the will belongs to us. The state of our emotions and feelings belongs to him. It is our business to be firm in our determination to be entirely his and he will give us joy and peace or allow "heaviness through manifold temptations," to suit himself.

This is the last thing that many people give up who are trying to consecrate themselves to God. It is a common experience to hear people say, "I am all the Lord's but I do not feel any different." This very expression goes to prove that they are not wholly given up to God. If they were wholly given to him, they would be given up in the matter of their emotions, forms and feelings. When wholly given up to God, we shall be content to feel as he wishes. The desire for some remarkable manifestation in our experience comes from a willfulness, whereby we desire our own way instead of God's way. Many people linger about our altars seeking justification or entire sanctification who never obtain either because they want God to come to their terms and save them in their way and not in his way. And such people, although they may think they have consecrated a great many things to the Lord, are leagues distant from entire consecration because they have not given their feelings to him. Reader, if you have been seeking in vain "the fulness of the blessing" stop and ask yourself if the cause of your failure is not because you have expected God to save you in your own way instead of allowing him to save you in his way.

Taking this view of consecration we shall have great vantage ground to withstand the attacks of Satan. When he tells us that we do not feel as we should, we can reply, "I belong wholly to the Lord." When he asserts that we do not feel like other people, we can maintain that we "belong to the Lord wholly," and that we accept none of his suggestions and believe none of his suggestions and believe none of his insinuations: that he must bring forth facts or we will not believe him. Keep

declaring and maintaining, "I belong to God," no matter what may be your feelings or fancies. Go by your facts. You have made a covenant with God and have taken nothing back and are keeping your part of the contract the best you know. Act just as people do in the business world. They do not successfully do business on their feelings, but on their facts. A man who has sufficient money in the bank but stops his business because he feels poor is a fool. And are people much better who have truly given all to God and then allow the devil to persuade them to cast away their confidence because they do not feel after a certain way or manner! It is time people were taught to estimate the degree of their religion, not by their feelings, but by the spirit in which they endure the trials of life. We have dwelt at length on this point because here is the turning point in the spiritual experience of thousands. No man ever becomes a perfect Christian until he has learned the happy method of maintaining his contract in spite of his feelings. The way to become established is to let this become a habit.

Let no one suppose that we discount or disapprove of a religion of the emotions. We believe in and enjoy such a religious experience, but we enjoy it, not because we seek to be happy, but because we have the salvation from which flows the joy of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH CERTAINTY

"But how may I know when I am wholly consecrated to God?" is the question often asked. There are many who do not know whether they are entirely the Lord's or not. There is so much uncertainty in some quarters that it has actually voiced itself in this query of a hymn,

"Am I His, or am I not?"

We once asked a sister coming from a service if she was wholly the Lord's. The reply was, "I do not know." Being told that this was a matter that she ought to know for herself, she said, "Ask our minister."

A wholly consecrated soul will know that it is a fact without having to ask preacher, priest or bishop. If we do not know that we are wholly the Lord's, we are not wholly the Lord's. He who has settled this matter knows it, just as really as he knows anything in this world. He has two witnesses to his consecration.

First, he has the witness of his own spirit-the consciousness that the matter is forever settled, the great transaction is done. We know this the same way that we know we have decided on any other transaction. If we have been in doubt about buying a piece of property, but have finally decided to purchase it and announce ourselves as ready and willing to fulfill all the conditions and lay the money down, we know we have done it. If there are future conditions which we cannot now fulfill and are not required of us until some future time, if we have decided in advance to fulfill them, we know we have thus decided. And if we give ourselves thus to God-all we know and all we do not know-we certainly know we have done it. Consecration is a business transaction between us and God. Any one who knows how to do honest business, knows how to consecrate himself to God. And no one yet ever honestly made the full covenant with God, no matter if he did it without any emotion, just as he would do any business with a party in whom he had confidence, without finding it to be the gateway to a new, richer and more glorious experience.

Second, we may know it by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The object and end of consecration being entire sanctification (see next chapter), the latter should follow as soon as the consecration is made complete. To this work of entire sanctification the Holy Spirit witnesses. Thus he becomes a witness, not only to our entire sanctification, but naturally also to our consecration which precedes it. Consecration is our work; to this we have the direct witness of our own spirit. Sanctification is God's work to which he witnesses, and in thus witnessing to his own work, he witnesses to ours, for he cannot sanctify us till we are wholly consecrated. This is the completeness of the test. The first evidence (of our own spirit) must be supplemented by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. To think we had the testimony of our spirit, without the testimony of the Holy Spirit, is presumption based upon self-deception. To think we have the testimony of the Spirit, on account of some feeling or emotion, if we have not the testimony of our own spirit that we have given ourselves to God, is fanaticism. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to witness to every installment of grace that is given. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit was not only the Comforter, but the Comforter that witnesses. When Daguerre was perfecting the process of portrait making by means of the camera, which has revolutionized that art, he found it impossible to retain the picture upon the glass slide. As soon as it was drawn out into the light, the picture vanished. After experimenting for a time he spread a coating of chemicals upon the glass and then drew it out in a dark slide, and in a dark closet with other chemicals fixed the image on the glass to stay. There are a great many who waver in their consecration. They get there and stay a little while and then recede. What we need to do is to wait until God comes, sanctifies and seals us by the witness of the Spirit and enables us to make our consecration permanent. When Abraham made his covenant, he sat down and watched it, keeping away the unclean birds until the burning lamp and smoking furnace attested by their appearance that the sacrifice was accepted and hence complete. So Paul says we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice in order that we "may

prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." When we get this divine proof from God by the witnessing Spirit, then we know that the consecration is complete.

Many are confused over the witness of the Spirit. Some are looking for great manifestations of glory, rapturous visions, etc. But the witness of the Spirit is an inward persuasion, wrought by the Holy Spirit, that the work is complete. It may have no great, miraculous manifestations at all. This is indescribable. It is the white stone with the new name which no man can read save he who possesses it. Until we have this comfortable persuasion, we can never be sure that we are wholly consecrated to God. Reader, if you have not yet "proved what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," it is surely because you have not given up to him wholly. You are holding on to something. If you do not know what it is, then guess at it and ask God to help you in your conjecture. If you are honest he will show you, if you are real anxious to know.

Many are not wholly consecrated because they are seeking a blessing merely; others because they have marked out a certain way for God to come and bless them-in their way instead of his way. Some are thinking their consecration will buy sanctification and are trying to be saved by its merit. Very many are not consecrated because they fear what the people will say. They are trying to take care of their reputation themselves instead of giving it to God. Very few are willing to be of no reputation for Jesus' sake. If the holy fire has not yet fallen upon the sacrifice, find out at what point you have failed to put it all on the altar. If you really want to know at any cost, the Spirit will surely tell you. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

CHAPTER IX

FOR A PURPOSE

When God commands sinners to repent it is always for a definite purpose—that their sins may be forgiven, and he cannot consistently forgive sins unless there is real repentance. Peter said on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." Another day he said to the assembled multitude, "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." We have shown in a previous chapter that repentance is no more the duty of a sinner than consecration is the duty of the child of God. And the consecration of the child of God is as truly for a definite purpose as is the repentance of the sinner. The sinner repents in order to be pardoned. The child of God consecrates in order to be entirely sanctified—completely conformed to the will and image of God. When we are entirely consecrated to God then he entirely sanctifies us, because it is impossible to conceive of any thing or person belonging wholly to God and being impure. He has no impurity in his possession. All that is his is free from sin.

This is the reason so many people consecrate and consecrate (as they think they do) and it amounts to nothing. They get no uplift in their experience, no victory. Their consecration amounts to nothing. They do not have heart-purity as the definite end and purpose of their consecration. We find that talk of consecration is very popular today, but talk about entire sanctification is very unpopular. It is very common to hear people say, "I am wholly the Lord's, I am consecrated but I am not sanctified." There seems to be a delight, a kind of glorying in what they have done, but a hesitation to say anything about what God has done. It is as much as to say, "I have done it all. God has not done his part." Much of the talk about consecration is only self-glorification. This is the reason that consecration meetings are popular, while holiness meetings are unpopular. The carnal nature delights in what we do, but shrinks from that act of God whereby he makes us holy, because it means death to the old man. If the reader doubts this let him note carefully the testimonies he hears, how glibly the tongue will run over the term "consecration" and how it will hesitate at "sanctification," though the former word is used but a few times in the word of God, while the latter is constantly found in its pages. The consecration of those who do not thereby seek to be entirely sanctified amounts to little.

We see in this light the mistake of those who consecrate only for a good feeling or emotion, or in order to be more successful workers. We sometimes hear it said of consecration, "I did that when I had my call to the ministry. I consecrated myself to the ministry." That is another matter entirely. Many consecrations to the ministry are simply a yielding up of stubbornness and rebellion, a willingness henceforth to be obedient. But as we showed in Chapter VI, consecration is more than to do. It is to be and suffer also. God calls all men to consecrate in order to purity. He commands only a few to consecrate themselves to the special work of the ministry. When the seven deacons were chosen for their special work, they had already been entirely consecrated to God. They were men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Men may, and have been, consecrated to the ministry who were not consecrated to God. But a person who has once for all made a complete consecration of himself to God, and is then called to the ministry, recognizes the call to the ministry as only a part of the great final consecration he made at the beginning. We cannot see all the details, but as fast as God shows them we are to recognize them as part of the original contract, whether it be to be a preacher or fulfil the duties of a humble layman. The object of erecting an altar and placing a sacrifice upon it in ancient times was to have a fire upon it. All altars that have a true, complete sacrifice upon them draw fire from heaven. When the offering was wholly placed upon the altar at the dedication of the tabernacle then down came the fire upon it. So also at the dedication of Solomon's temple. And so, too, when our consecration is complete. Of what use is an altar without fire and of what use a consecration that does not draw fire from heaven? If we have not yet received the fire, depend upon it the consecration is defective.

CHAPTER X

WHY SHOULD WE CONSECRATE?

The first great reason given by Paul is because it is "your reasonable service." Not because you can be more useful (although that is true) but because it is a duty that is reasonable. It is reasonable that after God has done so much for us we should be entirely his. There is nothing more unreasonable than to keep anything back from him. Since he has redeemed us from the power of the enemy, and dignified us by allowing us to be called by his name, as his children, there is no good reason or excuse for withholding any "part or parcel" of our whole being from him.

Paul makes exhortation from the mercies of God. "By the mercies of God," he says. Mercy has so strewed our path in life with blessings. It has been as David says, a "multitude of tender mercies." As free as the air we breathe; as abundant as the light of the sun that bathes the earth; as freely flowing as the water we drink is the continued stream of divine mercies. Mercy grieved over our youthful sins and follies; mercy rejoiced when we came to God in repentance and sought forgiveness of sins; mercy wept when we made our "crooked paths and shortcomings"; mercy hung on the cross and died for us; mercy has ascended to heaven and pleads there for us. It has been mercy, mercy every day, since we first breathed the air of heaven. Yet some of us hesitate and make excuses for not being wholly consecrated to God! We want to keep back part of the price. We act in this matter as if it were an unreasonable, ungrateful task, when God says it is a reasonable service! Is it not strange! There is nothing more ungrateful in the universe than the human heart! After God has done so much for us! He has done more for us than for the angels, and yet we make all manner of excuses to avoid consecrating ourselves entirely to him!

A good many act as if they expected to be hurt, if they let God have them entirely. They say or think, "If I give up entirely to Him, something dreadful might happen. Some one in the home might die, or I might be laid on a bed of sickness, or lose my property or have some other affliction." How absurd! Will God punish us for being good? Is that the kind of God you worship? Can you take better care of yourself than God can? Can he not take away everything if you do not yield to him? Do you worship a God that is too wise to make any mistakes with you and too good to be unkind? or do you worship a God who is a creature of your own fashioning? Do you punish your children for being good and judge Him by yourself? The fact that you hesitate and make excuses for keeping back part of the price, refusing to yield up entirely to the care and keeping of your best friend, shows that there is something in you that needs to die. It is the carnal nature. God says it is "your reasonable service," but by your excuses, you seek to prove that it is unreasonable. If there were no other reason why we need to be entirely sanctified, we could see it in this inward disposition that shrinks and fears it will be hurt, if we let the dear Lord that bought us have us wholly. Man made in the image of God is the only creature on the face of the earth that refuses to do the will of God. And the most inconsistent of all men is the man who is trying to serve God and keeps back a part of the price.

It is a great consolation in adversity and trial to know that we are the Lord's property-his saints. He says in [Psa 1:5](#), "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Those who have given themselves to Him, a living sacrifice, are his saints. And there is great consolation in knowing we are his. There will be times when every true man will be called to take a stand for righteousness and holiness when he will perhaps be in the minority, misunderstood and maligned. What a consolation then to know that we are the Lord's property, and that he is taking care of his property; that nothing shall come to harm us except what he permits, and that he will never leave nor forsake his property. When consecration has become a reality to us then it will make no difference with us whether we live or die. If we live, we have the Lord's presence with us in this world. If we die, we go to dwell with him in "the more excellent glory." Living or dying we are the Lord's. We belong to ourselves no more. The United States government has provided national homes for the old soldiers who gave themselves for the defense of the nation. There everything has been done for the comfort of the veteran. His last days are free from care. He

need not worry about his food, raiment, shelter. They will never fail.

The great government is behind it all, caring for him. We have something better yet. The King of heaven undertakes to take care of all who yield themselves fully to him. He says, "Take no thought for the morrow, 'I will never leave nor forsake thee.'" And the resources and wisdom of the infinite are pledged to take care of us. Paul was so fully persuaded of it that he said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, unto that day."

When the billows would confound us,
Seek with foaming crest to drown us,
Tempests rage and war around us,
God is with us still

He will never, never leave us,
Though all human hopes deceive us;
And though trusted friends may grieve us,
God is with us still

For His mercy never faileth:
When the heart in anguish wailleth,
Humble faith in Him availeth,
God is with us still

Soon will come the dreadful hour
When we feel death's awful power;
Then our God shall be our tower.
God is with us still

Let us then be always trusting,
On His blessed promise resting;
Knowing sure, what'er the testing,
God is with us still

Give thy all unto His keeping!
Cease thy doubts and sinful weeping!
His watch care is never sleeping.
God is with us still

THE END