

## THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF CONSECRATION

(Pastor Russell, London, England, 10:30 A. M., Sunday, May 22, 1910  
Convention Report, bottom page 79.)

Brother Russell: Our text is found in the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians, 6th verse: "*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*"

We have seen in the Lord's word how important it is to receive his message in our minds, and that it is one thing to receive it in our minds, and another thing to appreciate his love and what he has done for us. Yet we might do all that, hear and appreciate his love for us and yet not be in Christ Jesus at all. It is an important matter that we realize that those who come to the Lord Jesus must make a full and definite consecration to him. I believe it is a matter that is only partially appreciated by Christian people in general.

I remember a dear Christian sister who had been worshipping with us for some time, and she said one day, Brother Russell, I feel deeply interested in all these matters, and now I want to be one with you as the people of God in every sense of the word, but what shall I do and how shall I do it? I said, Sister, you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes. You have accepted the terms of believing in the atoning blood and that it is a free offering now to all who have the hearing ear, and have accepted God's grace? Yes, But, she said, there is something else that is not quite satisfactory, there is something that I need to do. Yes, we said, there is.

Now, dear friends, this is an important thought. Many seem to fail to get the thought that after they believe, that there is then something more they must do in order to become of the people of God. Positive action must be taken on our part and it requires a great deal of faith. So I said to that sister, Have you entered into covenant relationship with the Lord? She said, That is what is the matter, I fear that I have not. I said, This is an important point. Let me illustrate it along the line of financial matters: You might know of property for sale, with a certain price upon it, and you might take knowledge of the fact that the price was very low, and you might have some money to invest, and your judgment might be that it was a good investment, that it was cheap, etc. You might do that day after day, month after month, and year after year, and that house would not be yours at all. So, in your relationship with the Lord, you might say, He is very gracious and he has opened a door during this Gospel Age for any who wish to come in, I hear the call, I *intend* to be one of his disciples, and I *intend* to make my calling and election sure. You might think this way for weeks, months and years, and yet never make a covenant with the Lord to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. That is the point exactly, she said, that troubles me. What shall I do? Well Sister, in the case of that property, you

would go to the agent and say, I will take that property, and make a payment on it, secure certain papers binding the contract, and the house would be yours.

So in this matter of covenant relationship with the Lord. The proper course is to go to the Lord and tell him that you accept his terms and conditions, and that you give yourself fully to the Lord, telling him so in so many words, binding our sacrifice and thus obligating ourselves to the Lord that we would pay down our consecration to him, and that we will patiently endeavor by his grace to carry out that consecration in all the affairs or our life. Until you do that you have not come into Christ, and he is not your Head. He is Head only to those who are members of his Body, and there is only one way of getting into the Body of Christ which is the Church. It is not by getting up before a certain people and subscribing to certain conditions. There is only one way of coming into fellowship with Christ, and that is the Scriptural way which the Apostle is describing in this text. It is this:

For some hours, days, weeks or months you may have been drawing nigh to God, and he drawing nigh to you. Perhaps some of us were born in this condition of relationship with God, not aliens, strangers; not battling against him, but possibly by reason of having been born of Christian parents with a mind in sympathy with righteousness. Some Christian people are greatly troubled over this matter. They say, I have not had the Christian experience some people have had; they tell how they have had a wonderful change, a revolution in their lives, but I have nothing of this kind.

A dear Methodist brother said this to me at one time: He said, What is it to be born again, to be a member of the Body of Christ? I have been a Methodist for a number of years, but I have never understood the matter. I talk very little of my experiences of the past, but I am continually reminded as others speak that I have never had such thrilling experiences and wonderful change of sentiments as they enjoy. How is it?

Brother, if you had been walking away from God and then turned around it would mean quite a change, an absolute turning upside down. But if born of Christian parents and taught to reverence God and as a child, like myself, had been taught the way of the Lord, then when you gave your life to the Lord it would not mean a revolution, but it would mean that you had definitely and positively fastened or clinched that which you had previously had in mind and loved up to some degree in your daily life. Well now, he said, that makes things different, for I see that I have been saved all my life.

Nevertheless, dear friends, even though that be our experience of having been born of Christian parents, let us not forget the necessity of a contract with the Lord. It is only then that he will draw near to you, as you draw near to him. He is sympathetic with every desire for righteousness with all mankind, just as you and I and all of God's people ought to be sympathetic with everything in harmony with righteousness and truth at all

times and in all places. It is not every person that has been adopted as a son. To be on friendly terms with God is not to be considered an adoption. If he adopts us we must make a very definite contract or covenant with him, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 50:5.

Brother Russell exhorted all the friends to faithfulness. He reminded them that, having made this covenant by sacrifice, they must be tested as was our Lord Jesus as to loyalty to the Father—to the Father's will—to the Father's way—to the Father's time—to all of the Father's arrangements. He reminded us that Jesus showed his own loyalty in that he ignored his own preference that in everything he might know and do the will of the Father who sent him. He pointed out that we needed to be rooted and grounded and built up in our Lord and Master in all these respects. He showed that the various tests permitted to come upon the Church of God from time to time, from first to last, will be tests of these various qualities of heart and mind—tests of heart loyalty.

Obedience to the Lord in thought as well as in word and deed means overcoming selfish propensities, which are ours in common with the whole world of mankind in its fallen condition. He pointed out that this involves a battle, a strife, and that the battle is not against the Father, nor against the Brethren, nor against the Truth, nor against the Lord, nor against the World, nor against the Devil. The fight is against the old nature with its perverted tastes, appetites and will. As New Creatures we are to fight the good fight of faith against our natural tendencies, and to keep ourselves in the Love of God, fully submissive to his will.

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[Comments by Brother T. A. Smith]

Due to certain misunderstandings and confusion on the subject of consecration, it is helpful to consider a few principles for our guidance during this time at the end of the ages. Some, because they think the time is past for entering into the narrow way, take it upon themselves to “warn” or “caution” those who are approaching God—“you must not expect a heavenly reward” they say, but “you must entertain only the hope of restitution.”

Right on this very point we have the example of our Pastor which we all do well to ponder carefully and take to heart, and not take it upon ourselves to hinder any who may be approaching God in the spirit of consecration.

Here is the example of our Pastor—he did not attempt to hinder any, but he conformed to whatever seemed to be suggested by the facts. Here is what he said: “Some of us were quite strongly convinced that the harvest would be ended by now, but our expectations must not be allowed to weigh anything against the facts. [All underlining is ours.] The fact is that the harvest work is going grandly on; it is not ended by any means. As far as our present judgment goes, it would appear that there is a considerable harvest work yet

to be done. This is not discouraging, but encouraging to us. We are glad to know of the grace of God reaching other heads and hearts and blessing them as ours have been blessed. [Comment—any hindering here?—surely not.] We are glad to know that others are daily coming into blessed relationship with the Lord under the covenant of sacrifice, and are giving evidence of having been begotten of the holy Spirit. We are glad to note their zeal, and rejoice with them that they, as well as we, can share in this glorious opportunity of making our calling and election sure by the character development which we are daily learning to appreciate as the prime essential of the ‘more than conquerors.’ All those must be copies of God’s dear Son, our Lord Jesus. We would have been glad to have entered upon our work beyond the veil; but we are better pleased to continue our labors on this side the veil, because such is the Lord’s will for us.” (Reprint page 5950 par. 1)

And “Similarly, we may expect that quite a good many will yet be gathered to the heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here.” It is a serious matter to attempt to interfere with any of God’s doings—hands off, should be our proper and reverent attitude. If God is drawing some to himself at this time, we should with gladness accept this and conform our thinking thereto, just as the Pastor did. (Reprint page 5951, top of first column.)

Here is another suggestion that should prove helpful to any who might be drawing near to God at this time: “If, therefore, we recognize the call that has come to us, we may know that God is willing for us to accept that call.” (Reprint page 4796, par. 3.)

If one has an understanding of the “deep things of God” this is an indication that he is in the race of the high calling: “...We may assume that, since the general call has ceased, none of these would be instructed in ‘the deep things of God,’ except [underlining ours] as they are permitted to take their places in the race.” (Reprint page 2942, second column, point “(2)” near bottom.)

Experiences to prove spirit begetting: “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.” (Reprint page 5411, par. 1. Succeeding paragraphs are apropos.)

An appreciation of the hope is another assurance: “Those who can grasp these precious promises and who have the desire to work in the vineyard have a strong evidence that they have been begotten of the spirit; for the human mind, even when justified, is unable to grasp the deep things intended by God for those only who have consecrated themselves and been accepted. (1 Cor. 2:6-16) And the Lord is too loving and too just to authorize in

the hearts of any hopes which could never be realized. To be begotten of the spirit, through the Word of truth, implies an ultimate birth to spirit conditions, unless the one so begotten prove himself unworthy—unfaithful. ‘Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.’” (Volume III, page 222, par. 2)

God does not trifle with anyone who is drawing near to him: “...Consistency seems to demand that the Almighty shall not even seem to trifle with his creatures by extending a single invitation which could not be made good if accepted.” (Volume VI, page 94, par. 2)

How to know the Spirit’s Witness is found on page 229 of Volume V:

“Was I ever drawn to Christ?—to recognize him as my Redeemer, through whose righteousness alone I could have access to the heavenly Father, and be acceptable with him?

“If this can be answered in the affirmative, the next question would be:—

“Did I ever fully consecrate myself—my life, my time, my talents, my influence, my all—to God?

“If this question also can be answered in the affirmative, the inquirer may rest fully assured that he has been accepted with the Father, in the Beloved One, and recognized of him as a son. And if scrutinizing his own heart’s desires and sentiments he finds it still trusting in the merit of Jesus, and still consecrated to do the Lord’s will, he may allow the sweet confidence and peace which this thought of harmony and relationship to divinity brings, to fully possess his heart...”