

Consecration, Sanctification and Glorification

*“It became him, for
whom are all
things, and by
whom are all
things, in bringing
many sons unto
glory, to make the
captain of their
salvation perfect
through sufferings.
For both he that
sanctifieth and
they who are
sanctified are all
of one: for which
cause he is not
ashamed to call
them brethren.”*
—Hebrews 2:10,11

JESUS WAS FAITHFUL IN

carrying out his Father's will in accordance with the divine program for the reconciliation of mankind back to God. This has resulted in a special invitation being tendered during this Gospel Age to become associated with Christ in bringing blessings to all the families of the earth during God's kingdom.—Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:25

In order for any of us to have the hope of participating in such a grand and glorious arrangement, we must make a full and unreserved conse-

cration of ourselves to do the will of God. This is a

voluntary act. God does not coerce anyone into making such a commitment. Through the dissemination of the Gospel, many have heard the call and have availed themselves of the privilege of consecration, with the desire that the Heavenly Father might accept them as followers of Christ Jesus. It is important to recognize that no individual can be successful in this undertaking unless one has accepted God's will in his life as his own will, and has done away with self-will.

CONSECRATION—BASED ON GOD'S DRAWING

The Scriptures indicate that the making of an acceptable consecration is based on one being first drawn to God. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) Several steps are involved with regard to God's drawing of individuals. They first recognize their undone condition, and that their life is not bringing them satisfaction. Looking toward God as a remedy for this, he begins to draw them to him. They begin to realize that through a relationship with their Creator a better and more soul-satisfying life might be theirs. As God's drawing power continues to be manifest, they begin searching diligently for a better understanding of his Word. When, through the providences of God, the "good news" of the Gospel is provided to them, and they have a hearing ear and a receptive heart, upon receiving the message, they are given a measure of understanding.

To the degree that they see their need for salvation, and come to appreciate the influence of others whose lives reflect godlikeness, they draw ever closer

to the Lord. They learn about the hope of the High Calling, and come to anticipate the joys of the kingdom and the prospect of a world that will be restored in the future under the reign of Christ. Then the desire to enter into a relationship with God awakens, so that they too might become part of the church that will bless the world when empowered from on high. Thus, they humbly respond to God's drawing in a favorable manner, and accept his invitation to make a full consecration of themselves to do his will.

Before making this commitment, however, prospective candidates who desire to be associated with Christ Jesus need to be educated as to what is required in order to be successful in following in his footsteps. The Master refers to "counting the cost" in advance of such a decision because it is a most serious matter. (Luke 14:26-33) Consecration will involve sacrifice, trials and testing, yet all of these Paul refers to as just part of a "reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1

BAPTISM INTO CHRIST

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:3-5

Here Paul is addressing the members of the church, and he reviews the process whereby they came into the body of Christ. It should be noted

that the focus is not upon water immersion even though that is the appropriate symbol for expressing such commitment. Rather, the apostle refers to the immersion of the human will into God's will as requisite for true discipleship as a follower of Christ. The Bible describes this "little flock" of believers as having the privilege, if faithful, of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 20:4) One of their characteristics is that they are "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God." While it is true that some saints were beheaded literally, all consecrated believers must be beheaded symbolically—that is, take direction only from their Head, Jesus Christ, and be obedient to his instructions as found in the Bible.—Eph. 5:23

SANCTIFIED CONDUCT

When we surrender our wills to the will of God and do Christ's bidding, it will dictate how we spend our time, our talents, what we will say, where we will go and what we will do. It will govern our entire being. If we have given our all, then it will be true that we are "dead" and our life is "hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3) That is our burial of baptism into Christ's death, and represents our renouncing of earthly aims, hopes and ambitions, and the putting on of sanctified conduct.

The Scriptures describe various elements of behavior which should reflect the lifestyle of believers who are being sanctified throughout their Christian walk. In one such passage, Paul says, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring

one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.”—Rom. 12:9-12

GENUINE LOVE

In the foregoing verses, Paul’s first admonition is that we should “let love be without dissimulation.” This means there should be no pretense of love towards one another, merely existing as a veneer. Rather, there must be a heartfelt desire to serve each of the Lord’s dear ones on every occasion as we come in contact with them.

This quality reflects godlikeness in our beings because “God is love.” (I John 4:8) This manifestation of God’s character quality of love, which comes to us through his Holy Spirit, should lead us to appreciate the privilege we have of bestowing that same quality on one another. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”—I Pet. 1:22

Let the thought of love for one another be ever present in our minds as we desire to see our Father face to face, knowing that all of Christ’s “body” members who prove faithful will likewise be in his presence. The spirit of this command was also emphasized by Christ near the close of his earthly ministry. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—John 13:34,35

HATRED OF EVIL

Throughout the Scriptures we are reminded of the need to repel all inclinations towards impurity of any type. Paul states, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”—II Tim. 2:19

This matter of abhorring that which is evil implies that we will not seek merely to avoid doing things that are sinful, but rather will have such a hatred for unrighteousness in any form that we will not bring ourselves, as far as we are able, into contact with any form of sin or impurity. The more we see and learn of God’s plan and visualize the high standard which is required for life on any plane, the greater should be our endeavor to distance ourselves from any abhorrent or repugnant kind of activity or circumstance. God’s blessings which we receive daily should stimulate us to exercise greater vigilance in our lives in this regard, so that we will continue to further cultivate in our heart those graces of the spirit which are pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Since it is our desire to be associated with Christ in the great work of helping to remove all traces of sin during God’s kingdom, let our attitude towards iniquity in any form imitate that of our Master. “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”—Heb. 1:9

CLEAVING TO THE GOOD

In this connection the thought should be that of becoming affixed to whatever represents godly

principles and righteousness. One of the most beautiful narratives in the Bible depicts the effect of godliness and goodness upon an individual who later had a prominent place in the genealogy of our Master when he came to earth. We recall that Ruth, a Moabite, was so impressed with the God and the religious influence of her mother-in-law, Naomi, she desired to stay with her. Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."—Ruth 1:16

Ruth cleaved to something which she found to be good. We, as spirit begotten children of God, should desire to do no less. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil. 4:9) Let us cling to the words of Truth that we receive and follow those practices in our lives that are set forth in the Scriptures.

"KINDLY AFFECTIONED"

This admonition implies that we should have those attitudes and thoughts for our brethren that would be helpful towards their spiritual advancement. It is as though Paul is underscoring further the matter of being loving, for without the development of perfect love, none of us can be acceptable to God. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."—I Pet. 3:8

In I Corinthians 13, there are several references to the love which we are to manifest. In some of those verses Paul speaks about the negatives, that

is to say, those things which we should avoid. These include such things as evil surmising, envying, behaving improperly or becoming easily provoked. (vss. 4,5) On the positive side the apostle speaks about those things which we would expect in terms of love welling in our hearts. It “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” (vss. 7,8) The sum of all the Christian graces is love, and much of what Paul says in this chapter, as well as other passages of Scripture, addresses the development of this attribute.

PREFER OTHERS, NOT SELF

This is an important aspect of the sanctification process developing in our lives as it relates to the quality of humility. The spirit of self is deeply engrained within us from a natural standpoint. As we mature spiritually, our concern also must be upon other consecrated believers who are likewise striving to make their calling and election sure.

Since we recognize that the body of Christ is made up of many members, it should be our desire that the spirit of unselfishness is fostered within us. We are to genuinely take pleasure in seeing the spiritual growth, advancement and prosperity of others, even if we ourselves may be failing along one line or another.

We should be of such a mind that we would not seek to condemn others or point a critical finger in a judgmental manner at their shortcomings which we may perceive. If God has begun a work in any of us, he will surely finish it if we are faithful in doing our part. (Phil. 1:6) It is our responsibility to cooperate wholeheartedly in assisting *(Continued on page 36)*

(Continued from page 31) our brethren, at whatever cost, towards making their calling and election sure. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."—Phil. 2:3

The foregoing text is not an exhortation to false modesty. On the other hand, if we are properly disposed and have spiritual discernment and humility, surely we should be able to discern, especially among those within our immediate fellowship, brethren who have some qualities which far exceed certain attributes of our own. This thought then should keep us humble and in the proper attitude of mind so that we can be acceptable to our Heavenly Father.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS"

This exhortation addresses all of the affairs of life in which we are engaged, both from a temporal, and more importantly, from a spiritual standpoint. We should do all of these things as unto the Lord. With such an attitude in our hearts, we will be very careful as to what we have our hands do.

There will be responsibilities which involve family obligations, those of the ecclesia, and also individual opportunities for service to the Lord's cause in one way or another. Consecrated believers must be zealous in all their affairs of life. A passage of Scripture that is addressed to the Laodicean church is reminiscent of the time in which we presently live. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not

that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”—Rev. 3:16,17

Each of us who has received God’s spirit must demonstrate that we are not taking the special privilege that we have for granted. We should not be “coasting along” in a way that does not manifest serious effort in making our calling and election sure. While the thrust of this text relates to the spiritual aspect of our lives, we are not to be slothful in any of our affairs, even with regard to temporal matters, and we should be diligent in doing all that our hands find to do.

With regard to spiritual concerns, we must be sure that there is no lukewarmness in our carrying out of these responsibilities. Rather, we must zealously direct our efforts in the service of the Lord in the promulgation of his truth, and the edification and encouragement of our brethren.

FERVENCY IN SERVING THE LORD

The Apostle Paul was eminently qualified to write about the kind of fervor of which God would approve. As we read his testimony in the Bible, we might concede that conditions today are somewhat different than they were when he was founding the early churches. Nevertheless, the spirit which made him labor to such an extraordinary degree is most worthy of our reflection.

“Are they ministers of Christ? ... I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been

in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ... If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”—II Cor. 11:23-30

We may believe that we are doing the very best that we possibly can. However, after considering the foregoing passage, we might reevaluate ourselves and consider whether we can do something further to demonstrate our appreciation for the privilege of discipleship.

“REJOICING IN HOPE”

Despite the vicissitudes of life, including trouble surrounding us on a global scale as well as stressful circumstances we encounter daily in our personal lives, our attitude should be vastly different towards such events from the world. In general, mankind is unaware that such conditions are temporary and will be eradicated when the body of Christ is complete and God’s promises for mankind are realized. (Rev. 21:1-4) May the following meditation be a source of strength as we await the time of future blessings for all.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”—Phil. 4:4

“We cannot have too many rejoicing Christians, nor can they rejoice too much, if they rejoice in the

Lord. This rejoicing is not necessarily boisterous, nor of necessity the reverse. It implies serenity, happiness, peace, pleasure of soul, however, and does not mean that noisy demonstration is essential, as some seem mistakenly to think. ... The only ones who can rejoice alway are those who are living very near to the Lord, and who can feel always their oneness with Him, and that His protection and care are over them, and that His promise is sure, that all things shall work together for their highest welfare, as New Creatures.”—*Daily Heavenly Manna*, February 26

“PATIENT IN TRIBULATION”

Patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit. As consecrated believers we are to cheerfully endure the adversities and afflictions that are permitted to come upon us. The English word “tribulation” is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which refers to a machine that was used for cleaning wheat and removing the husks or the chaff from it. We can thus see that it is for our good to have tribulation, because it enables us to remove the dross, that the gold might be refined.

The Scriptures affirm we will not be permitted to be tested beyond what we can bear. (I Cor. 10:13) Our Heavenly Father will direct our trials to the intent that they will help us to be rid of those things which pertain to the fallen human nature, and that our New Creature will grow and develop towards maturity. It is for this reason that we are told to set our affection upon the things that are above and not those that are here on earth. (Col. 3:2) “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for

when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—James 1:12

“INSTANT IN PRAYER”

One of the greatest privileges we have as consecrated believers is access to the Heavenly Father through prayer. Coming often and tarrying at the “throne of grace” are indispensable to our Christian development as we seek guidance in our Christian walk. (Heb. 4:16) How wise and loving is God in responding to our proper petitions. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”—Luke 11:13

We should also remember our brethren in prayer, as the apostle has admonished. (Col. 4:2,3) This means we should pray for our brethren in their efforts of spreading the Gospel, as well as prospering other activities in their capacity as servants of God. Prayers which seek only self-interests could not be acceptable to the Heavenly Father, for we are all part of one body.

One of the advanced evidences of discipleship was given by our Master. “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44) When we can do this heartily, without rancor, bitterness, vindictiveness or railing in our being, we surely will have reached a most favorable standing with the Heavenly Father.

THE GLORIOUS OUTCOME

Such was the kind of love that the Master had for all mankind. He gave his life willingly, even for

his enemies who opposed him, and who in God's kingdom after their awakening will be ashamed and mourn as they recognize the one whom they pierced. Let us, as followers of Christ, leave such a legacy that we truly walked with God, and did not retaliate against our enemies.

If we are faithful, our journey from consecration through our walk of sanctification will lead to an unspeakable outcome for us personally. We will receive the fruitage of our labors, resulting in glory, honor and immortality, as well as the privilege of assisting in the blessing of the entire human family. —Rom. 2:7; Gen. 22:18 ■