

CONSECRATION

By D. L. Clark.

Not all the world could pay for me
The debt to God I owe.
"Here, Lord, I give myself to thee;
'Tis all that I can do."

This may be poor poetry, but it is good theology and the true state of the case. And it describes consecration, which is "the act of separating from a common to a sacred use; or of dedicating or devoting ourselves to God." It is a solemn devotion to God of all we are and have to be His, and His alone, forever.

We very much fear the frequency with which many Christians, and especially young Christians, members of the Young Peoples' societies, in the churches, go forward and consecrate when the invitation is given—perhaps every month—has had the effect to produce a very light and frivolous, if not irreverent, estimation of the importance of true consecration. The act of consecration to God is certainly as important and binding as a marriage vow and contract, and should be as permanent and lasting, and need not to be repeated any more often than the marriage ceremony of two persons.

We certainly owe ourselves and all we are and have and "every service we can pay" to Him, and He has a rightful claim upon us. Indeed, He has a three-fold claim, for He has created and preserved and redeemed us for Himself. Well and truly does the poet say:

"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."

And He demands and commands, "Give me thy heart." Who and what are we that dare "refuse Him, that speaketh from heaven?"

This is a personal matter for each one of us and requires of each a personal consecration, and that means a purse and all consecration. Here is just where many fail and balk and back out. Most who try to consecrate and do not do so fully, seem to say, and their actions do say, "I am willing for God to have His way with all except my money, or my financial affairs." They should, like the good Baptist brother, who left his place at the riverside and went home to get his purse, say, "I want my money baptized too."

Reader, watch a weighing machine. You may step on the platform, but it moves not. Step on again and put in the money and you are instantly weighed. So, many try to satisfy God's claim by giving themselves alone, or their money only, but can not. We heard of a young lady whom God called to go as a missionary, and she told her pastor of it, saying, "Mother is not willing. Here is forty dollars." Her pastor took it, but said: "You can not buy God off." Within a short year she died and her mother had to let her go then, but the pastor said, "I thought she might have lived had she gone to God's work." "It is hard to kick against the goads," and it can only result in injury to us and our own undoing. No one ever succeeds well, or long, in resisting God, and it is worse than useless to try it. We know, for we tried it too often, sad to say, and we have seen

many others try it, but always fail. St. Paul wrote, "I beseech (exhort, entreat) you, therefore, brethren (they were Christians already), by the mercies of God (because God has had mercy on you in forgiving your sins and adopting you) that ye present your bodies (yourselves entire) a living sacrifice to God." Rom. 12:1.

And he says this will be a "holy, acceptable unto God" offering and we may infer nothing else, or nothing else would be wholly acceptable to Him. God will accept all we give Him in our consecration, to begin with, but sooner or later He will have all or nothing.

"It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of any man to be the right kind of a Christian." "We cannot serve God and mammon," however we may try to do so.

God wants our undivided heart, and will never be satisfied until He gets it. As Mr. Daniel Steele said, "The three chief mourners at the grave of every unsaved person are The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit." They are more deeply grieved and saddened than any, or all earthly friends can be.

"God has his plan
For every man,"

and only as we fall in line with His plan and work out His purposes can our lives be truly successful. We are not competent to plan our lives. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," nor his stops either.

But if we "yield ourselves unto God" utterly and be "as clay in the hands of the potter" He will mold and shape us into a vessel meet for His use.

As Brother Jos. H. Smith said, "Salvation is an eternal 'yes' to God. Damnation is an eternal 'no' to Him."

Let the worst of sinners say "yes" to God every time a demand is made and that will land him in heaven, though he start at the gates of hell. But let the ripest saint on earth, who is at the very gates of heaven, say "no" to God and if he continue that, it will land him in hell. When God says to the sinner, "Repent," let him say, "Yes, Lord, I repent, I'm done sinning." When God says, "Believe on Jesus," say, "Yes, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," and he will soon be converted.

Then when God says, "Be ye holy," "Be ye therefore perfect" in love let him say, "Yes, Lord, make me holy." "Make me perfect in love. I yield myself entirely to Thee in an eternal and irreversible consecration." "I'm in your hands for you to do this thing for me," (as Dr. C. A. Keen said): "I'll trust you to do it," and he will soon hear from heaven "It's done." Amen.

HOLINESS.

In considering the doctrine of holiness and God's command for us to be holy, we cannot fail to be impressed with the reasonableness of this command.

Sin is destructive, debasing, and utterly abhorrent to God. He can not look on it with the least degree of allowance. It cost Jesus his precious life blood. It has wrecked, ruined, and damned millions of souls. Back of every heartache and pain, all misery, crime, disease, and distress, is

sin. It fomented intrigues and jealousies, and plunges nations into cruel and devastating warfare. It is the one blot on the universe, the great moral cancer that is eating out the heart of individuals and nations.

And yet we have the sad spectacle of churches and individuals condoning and pleading for sin, arguing its necessity in the hearts of believers, and denying the possibility of its eradication. If there is no deliverance from sin, it proves one of two things: either God approves it, or is powerless to save the individual from it. To state such a theory is to prove its fallacy.

No, God's redemptive scheme is too broad, comprehensive and far-reaching for such limitations. Dare we say that His infinite love, and power, and wisdom can not bring the trusting soul into absolute harmony with the divine will and cleanse it from the pollution of sin?

God's standard for His children is holiness—complete wholeness. He is satisfied with no other; He will accept no other. He sees the latent possibilities wrapped up in each life—the strength, the beauty, the purity, and integrity that may be developed, and He lends every gracious influence of heaven to compass its complete salvation and mold it into His own likeness. Alas! that so few of us make the unconditional surrender into God's hands that His plan may not be marred or hindered.—Selected.

THE MEASURE OF GRACE.

The Bible abounds in promises, and to no one are they more certain than to the cheerful, liberal giver. The promise of the Word is that the more we give, the more will He increase our power to give. If we sow as He provides, He will supply and multiply our seed for sowing. Many people have little to give because they fail to give from that which God supplied them with which to give. The more we give the more will God increase our power to give. God intends that we shall have, but He also supplies it that we may sow bountifully. Nothing more surely narrows down the measure of His grace than our niggardly giving. He tells us the purpose of His giving unto us, II Cor. 9:8: "In order that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." God does not bestow wealth upon us that it may terminate upon ourselves. If we do not give or sow as He has supplied, He will cease to supply seed for sowing, and if we sow as He supplies, He will multiply our seed for sowing and increase the fruits of our righteousness.—Sel.

"God responds to the trust that is reposed in Him."

It is no trouble to open pocketbooks to advance the missionary work when its professed friends have a heart affection—a love for that work. King David gave the following reason for his liberality at one time: "Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God . . . I have given." Chron. 29:3. Love always finds a way.