

# How Is Holiness to Be Obtained?-Consecration-Faith

by Dougan Clark

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of consecration and faith in obtaining holiness and living a life of obedience to God.*

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:16

**Topics:** "Consecration And Faith", "Sanctification"

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## Description

Dougan Clark preaches about the importance of consecration and surrendering all to God in order to attain holiness. He emphasizes that without believing in the possibility of holiness and making a complete surrender to God, one cannot truly seek after sanctification. Clark highlights the necessity of earnestly desiring holiness, acknowledging one's need for a clean heart, and making an unalterable consecration to God. He explains that consecration is our act, while sanctification is God's act, and that faith is essential in receiving the blessing of a clean heart.

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## Transcript

If my reader has followed me through the preceding chapters, and if he has searched the Scriptures daily whether these things are so, he must already have decided in his own mind either that it is his duty and privilege, under the Gospel, to be holy, or that it is not. If he has adopted the latter conclusion, then he might as well close the book at this point, and, so far as he is concerned, I might as well not have written it. It is of no use to talk about how holiness is to be obtained to a man who does not believe that it can be obtained at all. The human mind is so constituted that it will not put forth a volition, nor an effort, nor feel under any obligation to do a thing which it believes impossible to be done, or to obtain a thing which it believes impossible to be obtained. A Christian believer may regard holiness as a thing to be very much desired, but if he regards it also as a thing not to be obtained, he is not likely to concern himself about the conditions on which it is bestowed, nor to determine to have it at whatever cost.

If, however, my Christian reader has been brought, by my feeble words or by any instrumentality whatever, to believe that holiness is required, and therefore possible, I trust that he has been brought also earnestly to desire it. A deep conviction of one's needs in this regard, is a preparatory state of mind very favorable to its reception. It is they that hunger and thirst who are to be filled; and if any one under a deep sense of his inward corruption is saying with David, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth

my soul after Thee, O God;" or, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;" or, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" or with the poet,

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin,

And fully set my spirit free;

I cannot rest till pure within,

Till I am wholly lost in Thee"

To such an one I believe it may be said, This full salvation is "very nigh thee."

If, then, a proper beginning has been made in a fixed belief that holiness is attainable, and an earnest desire for it, the next step which the seeking inquiring soul will find it necessary to take is an act of unalterable consecration to God. Consecration is, by some, confounded with sanctification, but I shall employ the term in its usual acceptation--that, namely, of entire surrender to Christ. Consecration in this sense is necessary to sanctification, but not identical with it. Sanctification implies consecration, but it also implies more. Consecration is our own act; sanctification is God's act. Consecration has the same relation to sanctification that repentance has to justification. It is a deeper repentance, a completer submission, a fuller and more detailed surrender.

Such an act of consecration in which we yield up ourselves and our all--body, soul, and spirit, time, talents, possessions, all that we have, and all that we are--in unconditional surrender to God, is necessary to everyone who would receive at His hands the priceless blessing of a clean heart. That blessing, like every other good thing promised in the Gospel, is to be received by faith; and it is only by entire surrender that we can come on to believing ground and be in a position to exercise faith for so great a boon.

We cannot, with any show of reason, believe that God will bestow upon us that wondrous blessing while we are living in a state of voluntary rebellion against Him. So long as we indulge any known sin, or omit any known duty, we cannot have faith to believe that God will sanctify us wholly; and without faith it is just as impossible for the believer to be sanctified, as for the sinner to be pardoned.

Christians are often complaining, and doubtless with justice, of their own lack of faith. There are comparatively few who have a faith so strong that, in the language of the Saviour, they can remove mountains. And if our faith is dim and weak, is it not because our consecration is imperfect? Is it not because we are keeping back part of the price? By retaining self-life in our hearts, are we not making it impossible to believe in God fully, and to trust Him confidingly, and to obey Him implicitly? Absolute and unconditional surrender to God is a necessary pre-requisite to the faith that staggers not at the promises of God through unbelief. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

In the sixth chapter of Romans, 13th verse, the Apostle clearly sets forth the consecration that is required of Christians: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. He is now addressing Christian believers no longer dead in trespasses and sins, but " alive from the dead." They had already come in repentance as sinners surrendering themselves to be saved or forgiven, but now he calls upon them as Christians to yield themselves and their members in unconditional surrender to God and His service. Consecration is not simply a mass offering, but a surrender in detail.

Are my readers willing thus to make an inventory of themselves, their members, and their possessions, and hand all over to the Lord, saying to Him from their inmost hearts, each one for himself, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Have Thine own way with me and mine in all particulars. " I am willing to receive what Thou givest, and to want what Thou withholdest, and to relinquish what Thou takest, and to suffer what Thou inflictest, and to be what Thou requirest, and to do what Thou commandest."

Where shall we begin? Shall it be with your intellect, your brain-power, your gifts, and talents, and accomplishments? What have you been thinking about since your conversion? Have you been thinking little of yourselves and much of God, or much of yourselves and little of God? Have you been planning and devising how to promote God's glory, or how to serve your own interests and pleasure? Have your talents been devoted to the service of Christ, or to the service of self? Has God been in all your thoughts, and are you willing now to give up your thinking powers to the Lord, and allow Him to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?" "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The eye and ear--those organs of sense through which Satan so often introduces his temptations from without--will you surrender them to the Lord? Will you say with Thomas Ellwood,

"Oh, let mine eyelids closed be

To what concerns me not to see!

Oh, let me ever shut mine ear

To what concerns me not to hear!"

So far as the things of this world are concerned, "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." But rather let the Christian say, "Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty;" or, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law;" and let him remember that " My sheep hear my voice." Give eye and ear unto the Lord.

The tongue also--that unruly evil which no man can tame. Nowhere can it be kept safely, except in God's hands. How have your tongues been employed, beloved, since your conversion? Have they been telling what God has done for your souls? Talking about His wondrous works? Teaching transgressors His ways? Praising Him who hath taken your feet from the mire and clay and established them upon the Rock? Many Christians are possessed of a dumb spirit. They are voluble enough in praising their earthly friends or possessions. Yes; they will be heard day after day praising horses, dogs, books, birds, the landscape, works of nature and of art, but never a word of praise is heard for Him who redeemed them. And just here is to many the stumbling-block, the hindrance in the way of their consecration. They are afraid to surrender themselves wholly to the Lord, lest they may have to speak of Him before the people; and there are those who would almost as willingly surrender up their natural life, as open their mouths publicly in the Lord's cause. Here is one of the strongholds of Satan in too many hearts. But now, as of old, when Satan is cast out, the dumb speak--nay, more, the tongue of the dumb sometimes sings. Did not the prophet say it would be so?

And again. The tongue that is mute in God's praise, is it not sometimes too busy with your neighbor's character? Is it more ready to confess other people's sins than your own? Does it never prevaricate? Does

it not sometimes conceal your real thoughts, instead of expressing them? Have you not found it really "unruly? "Will you not put it into the hands of Him who is alone able to control it? If Moses--that almost grandest character among the magnates of Scripture--instead of pleading his slow speech and slow tongue, had placed himself, without hesitation or reserve, tongue and all, into the hands of the Lord, might he not have been kept from that one sin with his tongue, which kept him out of the promised land? At any rate, the only safe place for our tongues is with the Lord; and let us give them to Him willingly and gladly, to be used by Him in any way that He may choose, or disused entirely if it be His will, to teach, to exhort, to testify, to pray, to praise, or to remain silent before Him.

And your hands, beloved, how have they been employed since you have been Christians? Working for yourselves? Accumulating the treasures of this world? Gathering together those things which please the natural man, but cannot satisfy the longings of the inmost soul? Give them to the Lord, to work for Him. Possibly, he might not change their employment at all; you may still pursue your lawful avocations; but you must make even your secular business religious business, and discharge it to the Lord, and not to men. And if He calls you to use your hands in another way entirely, they are His, let Him have his own way with them.

And your feet, which have been swift, it may be, to run upon your own errands, are you willing they should be both swift and beautiful to run upon God's errands. Surrender them to Him, and whether they are still permitted to carry you about in your lawful pursuits where you are, as heretofore, or whether He leads you far hence to bear glad tidings, or to wash His disciples' feet, or to minister in any way to His little ones, with firm and willing feet you are to follow "the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

Your money also, your farms and your merchandise, all your earthly possessions must be given to the Lord. The silver and the gold are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. And wealth is a good thing when it is dedicated to the Lord and used in His service. We may be glad that He does not leave all the silver and gold in the hands of His enemies. He has His faithful stewards, who are diligently and profitably employing their Lord's money, using it in promoting His cause upon the earth and in doing good to the bodies and souls of their fellow-men. He knows the hearts of His people--who of them can bear the peculiar temptations connected with great wealth, and who cannot--and he allows some to be rich and others poor. He doeth all things well; and we must leave our riches or our poverty just as we must leave our health or our sickness, our happiness or our suffering, entirely in His hands.

I do not lose sight entirely of second causes, nor do I undervalue a proper prudence and forethought in reference to outward affairs. The husbandman must prepare the ground and sow the seed; and this is not less essential, because he will, after all, have no crop, unless God sends the rain and the sunshine. In like manner it is doubtless true that there are laws of business, the observance or non-observance of which tends to success or failure in the accumulation of wealth.

But God is in all and over all; and how often does He thwart the best devised schemes for obtaining riches, leaving one man, whose business qualifications may be of the highest order, comparatively poor, and pouring wealth into the lap of another almost without effort or thought on the part of the recipient. Reader, if the Lord has entrusted thee with great wealth, remember that it is His gift. He that giveth can also take away. Do not grasp it too tightly. Do not let the love of money take root in thy heart. If He permit thee to keep it to the end of thy life, thank Him for it, and glorify Him with it. If He take it from thee, say "Thy will be done." Consecrate thy possessions and thy business to the Lord.

And your time must be the Lord's. How easily He can say to each of us, Time to thee shall be no longer. And yet there are a great many Christians who find it hard to spare time from their outward business to attend to the claims of God. "Friend," said Anthony Benezet to a man who pleaded that he had no time to hear him, "Dost thou think thou wilt ever find time to die?" Those who devote all their time, even at great sacrifice of their earthly interests, to the Lord's work, yet constantly find some, where they travel, who do not have the time to go and hear the message they have to deliver. Give your time to the Lord. Ask Him how to spend every hour to His glory. He may not take you away from your present mode of employing the moments that make up your lifetime; but if He should do so, remember that the time is His and He must have the direction of it. Spend your time to His glory here, and you shall spend your eternity to His glory hereafter.

You must leave your reputation in God's hands. A good name among our fellow-men, and especially among our fellow Christians, is not to be undervalued, but we must make it our first object to please our Father in heaven, and then trust Him for what men shall say of us, and what they shall think of us. It is not at all uncommon for the best and holiest men to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and maligned, not only by the unconverted but by other Christians, and sometimes even by those who are not less holy than themselves. When Jesus was personally upon earth He was followed at one time by hosannas, and at another with revilings by the fickle multitude. He was blasphemed, persecuted, and condemned to death by the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat, and He was never understood even by His own immediate followers, who were constantly in His presence and hearing the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.

One of the most eminent of England's Christian jurists, Sir Matthew Hale, in the conscientious discharge of what he regarded his duty as a judge, sent one of the most eminent of England's Christian preachers, (albeit, he was only a converted tinker,) to prison--the Bedford Jail--the den where he dreamed his immortal dream. Nor could either of these excellent and pious men understand nor agree with the equally excellent and pious George Fox, nor the latter with the no less excellent and pious Richard Baxter. It is, indeed, a somewhat melancholy thought that many, even of the salt of the earth, know each other in this world only as opponents. In the other world, doubtless, they will be companions, and sit down to the same feast.

We cannot command the good opinion of our fellow-men. Even if we could do so, there is no reason to believe that it would be a blessing, for the Saviour says, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." The one necessary thing for the believer is that if men speak all manner of evil against him it may be falsely. "But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Let us then seek the honour which cometh from God, and leave our reputation in His hands.

Our families and the objects of our tenderest affections--parents, children, husbands, wives, lovers, friends must be surrendered to the Lord. It does not follow that He will be more likely to take them from us because we yield them up unreservedly into His hands; possibly, the reverse is true. But here also, our wills must be in entire submission to God's will.

The following cases, illustrating this form of consecration, are taken, slightly abridged, from a valuable little work, entitled "Sanctification Practical," by Rev. J. Boynton:

1. "A lady, relating her experience in our hearing, said: "I had long prayed

'The dearest idol I have known,

Whate'er that idol be,

Help me to tear it from Thy throne,

And worship only Thee."

But I little knew what I was praying for, until God came and took my child and then my husband away, and I was left alone in the world. Then I was brought to see that I had been loving the creatures more than the Creator. Oh, how my wicked heart rebelled! Oh, how I murmured against God! How cruel I felt He was, to take my loved ones from me! Still I knew it was wrong to feel thus, and I struggled hard and struggled long to sink into the will of God, and to feel that the death of these loved ones was all right. Often before their death, as I would be praying for a clean heart, the thought was suggested, 'You must be willing to give up your family.' But I tried to believe that that was the temptation of Satan in order to destroy my peace, but when they died my eyes were opened. Then I could see what the idols were. Oh, how I wept! How I struggled none can imagine, but those who have had a similar experience! At length I was enabled to give up my loved ones, and say in reference to their death, 'Lord, Thou doest all things well.' Then my faith laid hold on Christ as my all-sufficient Saviour. Then, oh, what love, peace, and joy filled my soul!"

2. A minister, calling at a house where the husband and father was just dead, "found Mrs. Smith and her daughters and two neighboring women all quietly seated, as though nothing unusual had occurred. There was no consternation, nor any excitement, such as usually exists in families when visited by such a stroke. All seemed as calm as a summer evening. After a few moments' conversation, we said, 'Sister Smith, we understand you have met with a great affliction.' 'Yes, affliction it should be considered, I suppose. My husband is dead; but the struggle is all over.' 'How is that?' we asked. 'You recollect,' said she, 'I presented myself with many others, some months ago, as a seeker of the blessing of perfect love.' 'Yes, we know you did.' 'Well, you know, I had a great struggle.' 'Yes.' 'What the cause of the struggle was, I suppose you never knew.' 'We never did.' 'It was this: I had been praying a long time for the blessing. I thought I had given up all. I went to the Lord again, and asked Him to show me what, if anything, was yet lacking on my part, My husband was down the Mississippi in the service of our country, and was ill. The question was pressed home to me--Should your husband die in the south, and you see him no more on earth, could you willingly give him up and say, 'The will of the Lord be done?' My heart arose in rebellion at once. I felt to say No; that will be so cruel. I said, Lord, I can suffer anything else; but give up my husband to die away off there, I cannot! Then I would try to make myself believe that it was nothing but the temptation of Satan. But every time I asked for the blessing, that question was asked me. Over this, I struggled for weeks. At length I triumphed through grace, and felt to say, Yes, Lord, take my husband, my daughter, myself, my all; but give me peace and purity within! Then I believed, and entered into rest. Oh, how sweet and abiding has been my peace ever since! My husband is gone; I mourn his loss here, but I feel that it is all right. The language of my heart is, 'The will of the Lord be done.' Deeply afflicted as I am, I was never so happy in God before in all my life."

3. "A lady, after seeking for some time the blessing of entire sanctification, thought she had obtained it; but desiring to be fully satisfied, she went again to the throne of heavenly grace. Earnestly did she plead for the witness that she was accepted and wholly sanctified. She had not pleaded long, when God led her in a way she had not known. The question was presented to her as distinctly as if spoken by an audible voice--Should your child be taken away in death, could you say Amen; 'Not my will, but Thine be done?'

Her affections clung to her firstborn--a bright-eyed little boy. That boy was dearer to her than life. The thought of parting with him in death was heartrending. She felt to say, 'Take anything else, Lord, but give up my child I cannot.' Over this, she struggled for three long weeks. Every time she attempted to pray she met this question. Her desires for holiness grew stronger and stronger; but how to yield and give up her child she knew not. Finally, she felt the victory she must have or die. She began to cry, Lord, help! Help, Lord, or I die! Then she gained the victory over self, and could say, Lord, take my child, take my all if it please Thee, but give me full salvation. Then, said she, my load fell off; then I felt the blood of sprinkling applied, and that I was clean; then I obtained that peace which is like a river; and now I enjoy that 'perfect love which casteth out all fear.'

Well, that child did not die; he is alive yet. The mother had loved the child more than she loved God. Her will was opposed to God's will, in the event of the child's death. When she could willingly give the child to God for time and for eternity, her consecration was complete. She has no less love for her child and no less joy in him than she had before; but if he should be taken from her while she is thus fully given up to God, she will be able to say, 'The struggle is all over.'

4. "In the course of a conversation with a lady of rich Christian experience, she asked if we thought it would be right for a Christian lady to marry an irreligious man. We replied that as a rule we should say it would not, yet circumstances might be such that she might be justified in so doing. We told her we thought so weighty a matter should be made a subject of prayer, and if she married such a man she should be sure that it would be pleasing to God. She remarked that she did not know but some might do it; but if she should marry an ungodly man, she would lose her soul.

She then gave her experience in substance as follows: Several years before, her attention had been called to the subject of sanctification. She resolved to seek it. She was engaged to an irreligious young man. She had not been long seeking for the blessing, when, as she was earnestly praying, something seemed to say, 'If you would be a sanctified Christian, you must give up that young man.' Here she stumbled for two years and a half. Every time she prayed for the blessing, that thought was suggested. At this point she would always cease praying, and commence reasoning the case with Satan. She tried to make herself believe that that was not necessary; that it was the temptation of the devil to destroy her peace.

At length she went to a camp-meeting, feeling that she could not, and would not leave until she received the blessing. She could reach this point, but could go no farther. One afternoon she went into her room and wrestled till nearly night, but found no relief. She sat down and soliloquized thus: 'I came to this meeting determined to obtain the blessing of sanctification. I felt that I could not, and would not leave without it. It is now evening; and we leave tomorrow morning; and, O, must I go away as I came? I cannot!' A prayer meeting was in progress in a large tent on the opposite side of the ground. She determined to go there, hoping she might hear something that would afford her some relief. Arriving in front of the tent, she heard a man instructing those who were seeking perfect love. 'That,' said she, 'is just what I wish to hear.' As she listened to this man's remarks, she was brought to see that the impression that she must give up that young man was made by the Spirit of God, rather than the temptation of Satan. She then said, 'Lord, take him, if that is what is required; I willingly give him up; I will never marry him while the world stands!' Then she was willing to give up all for Jesus, and then she was enabled to lay hold of the blessing."

We must leave in the Lord's hands the decision of the question, What outward profession or calling shall I pursue? To illustrate this point, I abridge one more instance from the work already referred to:

5. "A young man came to a minister at eleven o'clock at night and asked what he considered the evidences of a divine call to the ministry. After much conversation on the subject, he said: 'Three weeks ago I heard a soul-stirring sermon on the subject of sanctification. I concluded that the blessing was for me, and I would seek it with all my heart. I had not sought long, when, as I was earnestly praying for a clean heart, I was asked this question, Are you willing to devote all your time, talents, and energies to the work of the Christian ministry? I have decided upon another profession, and I feel I cannot preach. The minister answered, 'That is just what we expected you would say. Now, it is useless for us to talk about the evidences of a call to the ministry. We do not say you will ever have to preach a sermon, but we do say that you will have to become willing to give up the legal profession and be willing to enter the ministry, or you can never receive the blessing you seek.'

The young man saw the point, accepted the teaching, made the consecration, and rejoiced in full salvation through the 'blood of the Lamb.' After walking upon the highway of holiness for a few months, having the testimony all the time that he pleased God, he died in triumph, and passed away. He was a conscientious, devoted Christian. He was determined to serve God and get to heaven. He had set his heart on being a lawyer. He had said in effect, I will live religion, and I will be a lawyer. And just there his will had to yield, that he might be wholly the Lord's."

When the late President Finney of America was converted, having retired into a forest to pray alone and aloud, and then finding himself so suddenly and completely relieved of the burden and guilt of his sins that he did not know what had happened to him, he said to himself as he was returning home, "If I ever am converted, I shall preach the gospel." He was a young lawyer, just getting into a successful practice, and with brilliant prospects; but like Paul, "immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood;" and when, a few days after his conversion, one of the deacons of the church in the village where he resided said to him, "Mr. Finney, my lawsuit comes off this morning at ten o'clock, and I hope you are prepared to attend to it;" his reply was, "I have been retained by the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His cause, and I cannot plead yours;" and he never entered the court-room again as a lawyer.

It does not follow from this that every Christian lawyer is to do as President Finney did--abandon the law, and go into the ministry--but simply that when God calls, we are to obey, and where God calls, we are to follow. He must have His own way in reference to our profession, or occupation, as He must have it in everything else.

Every one who enters in solemn earnest upon the work of consecration, will probably find more or less difficulty in surrendering one thing after another; but will come at last to the one thing over which his struggle will have to be made, and which is the very hardest thing for him to give up. Here self is entrenched as in a strong-hold, and when that point is surrendered, the whole citadel is surrendered. The thing most difficult to yield, will be very different in different cases, on account of the great variety of tastes, preferences, temperaments, and circumstances which exist among Christian people.

Sometimes the whole contest is over some comparatively trivial thing; and yet it is not trivial, if we hold on to it in antagonism with God's will. It may be only some ornament, or article of dress which is not quite in accordance with Christian simplicity. It may be some self-indulgent habit, indolence, reverie, novel-reading, or the improper gratification of some appetite, natural or acquired. Oftener, however, it is some duty to be done, or some cross to be borne, from which the individual shrinks. It may be to speak in public for the Lord; it may be to go as a missionary to some distant and undesirable place; it may be to be laid aside and not employed at all, prostrated by lingering disease, or rendered wholly incapable of active

service by the pressure of one's surroundings.

And on these occasions Satan seldom fails to be present, using all his arts to magnify the difficulties of entire surrender, or to induce you, if possible, to postpone the desired step to a more convenient season. He may even suggest obstacles which seem well nigh insuperable, and persuade you that they are likely, or certain, to occur.

A distinguished American evangelist, when trying to surrender himself to the Lord, was constantly harassed by the thought that, if he did so, he would have to go as a missionary to Africa, a thing which was peculiarly repulsive to him. At length he yielded, and said, "Yes, Africa or anywhere else; the Lord's will be done." Since then he has never had the slightest intimation that it was his duty to go to Africa; while the Lord has given him a very rich harvest-field, and thousands of seals to his ministry, in his own land.

Now, beloved reader, if the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, is showing you your idols; if you have become conscious of your obligation to give up all to the Lord, and what it is that is hardest to give up; then you know where your battle is to be fought, and your victory won. And do not fail to remember that, in this warfare, every victory is by surrender. Yield up all to the Captain of Salvation, and you shall be more than conqueror through Him that loved you.

Is anyone thinking, while perusing this chapter, that the view of consecration thus far presented, is a discouraging one?--that surrender to the Lord is represented as so very hard a thing to do, that many will shrink from making the attempt? I freely admit that such a consecration as I have been describing is no child's play. It does sometimes involve a fearful struggle. Self-will is strongly entrenched in the heart; and, of the man who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, persistently determines on its expulsion, it may often be said, as in the case of one of old, "The spirit rent him sore." I would not make the way easier or harder than the Bible makes it.

Consecration does mean actual business. It means cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye; it means crucifixion; it means death. And Jesus Himself tells us this in one of the beautiful gospel paradoxes, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life, for My sake, shall save it." "I lose myself that I may save myself."

Consecration, therefore, implies that the life of self, and the life of sin, are to be laid upon the altar of sacrifice; not to be kept alive, but to die. And let us urge upon every one who may read these pages, the importance of surrendering at once. Die suddenly! As the soldier who is shot dead in battle, experiences much less suffering than one who is only severely wounded, and who may survive through weeks, or months, or many years of physical pain; so, the soul that decides at once for full salvation, that surrenders now, that shrinks not from the sacrifice--even unto death--of its own self-will, knows much less of the struggle, and the conflict, and the torture, and far more of the rich joy and the abounding life, than one that hesitates; that lingers; that clings tenaciously and persistently to some darling idol, or darling sin; that withholds the severing-knife from some of the tendrils of the old nature; that refuses to die. May the Lord make a short work in our souls. May we yield at once, and entirely. May the contest be sharp, short and decisive, the victory, speedy and complete.

Thus far, I have been presenting to my reader the harder and sterner aspect of the subject before us; but I must not omit to state that there is another aspect, and that consecration is to the believer not only a duty, but the highest possible privilege. It brings with it a rest so sweet, a joy so full, a peace so abiding, that all we have to surrender is as nothing to what we receive. A boy may cling very tenaciously to the toys he is

holding in his hands, but he will readily relinquish them if you offer to fill his hands with gold sovereigns. Consecration is exchanging ourselves for Christ and making infinite gain by the transaction.

The very best thing that can happen to any of us is that the sweet adorable will of God should be accomplished in us, and by us, and through us, and concerning us. "He has the program of my best possible future," says one who has committed all into His hands. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ," says the Apostle, who knew, if any man ever knew, what it is to be wholly the Lord's.

"God's promises," as has well been remarked by another, "are always greater than His commands." The latter involve surrender, the former involve privilege. Jesus walks by the sea of Galilee and finds certain fisherman engaged about their calling. He first says, "Follow me." Here was surrender. They must leave families, business, means of living, all, that they might obey His command. But then he added, "And I will make you fishers of men." Ah, here was the glorious privilege! It is a vastly nobler thing to catch men than to catch fish. How unspeakable was the gain they made by the simple transaction of forsaking all and following Him. And so it will be with all who do likewise.

And thus if consecration is, in one point of view, like dying, it is, in another, wondrously like marrying. It is entering into everlasting covenant relations with the Heavenly Bridegroom. Even the earthly bride does not become united to a husband without making some sacrifices. She becomes dead to her kindred and to her father's house, in that if her husband's interests require she must leave kindred and father's house to go with him. She becomes dead even to her own name, and adopts the name of her husband. Many associations must be surrendered, many happy scenes abandoned, many joyous pursuits relinquished, that she may become a wife. Yet weddings are not usually regarded as very sad occasions. The bride does not usually go to the altar with a long face and a sorrowful heart. Some natural tears she sheds at the sundering of old ties, but she wipes them soon, and goes joyously, trustingly, unhesitatingly with the husband of her choice, and this because she loves him better than all.

And may we not count it a light thing, and even gladly surrender all else that we may enjoy the union, the indwelling, the companionship, the "everlasting love" of Him who condescends to call the Church His bride? "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me also to His banqueting house, and His banner over me was love."

But in order to enter into the "fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ," or to obtain as a rich gift from God a sanctified heart, it is necessary that the act of consecration be followed also by an act of faith. We must not only make the perfect surrender that has already been described. We must also believe that the surrender is accepted. The faith here alluded to is not a different kind of faith from that previously spoken of at length in the chapter on Regeneration, but the same faith applied to a different object. It is believing, not for the pardon of past sin, but for purity of heart. It is taking Jesus as a Saviour, not only from sins committed, but from heart-sin.

"And this is the confidence we have in Him," says the Apostle, "that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of Him." The teaching of such passages is this: In consecrating ourselves to God, and praying for those things which are in accordance with the will of God, and certainly sanctification, clean heart, or Christian perfection, is one of the things which are according to His will. We may be confident, sure, that it will be given to us, nay, that it is now given to us if we have full faith in God's promises. While

the result will not take place without our believing (because that is the condition on which it is offered), yet its certainty depends not on the fact of our believing, but on the veracity of Him that cannot lie. It is, then, the everlasting truth of God that forms the ground-work of our faith. Could it have a stronger basis to rest upon? Is there anything else so worthy of belief as the word of Him who is the Truth?

If, then, with entire and unreserved submission we lay ourselves and our all upon the altar of Christ, we are next simply to believe that the altar sanctifieth the gift. Consecrating everything we have and are to God, we ask Him to create within us a clean heart, and we must believe definitely for the thing we ask, and not for something else. If we ask for bread will our Father give us a stone? If we ask Him for a pure heart will he send us away with something else? "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive" them, and "ye shall have them."

And the same principles which are applicable to the seeking and finding of entire sanctification, are applicable to the seeking and finding of the particular graces that accompany it. These, also, are to be asked for in a spirit of entire consecration on the one hand, and of perfect trust on the other. It may indeed be said, in a general way, that whoever possesses a holy heart will possess also the subordinate Christian graces that constitute holiness. In whomsoever the Holy Spirit dwells--and with Him the Father and the Son--He will, necessarily, bring forth in that individual the "fruits of the Spirit." If any one is earnestly seeking for more humility, more meekness, more patience, more wisdom, the infallible direction to such an one is, "Get the Bridegroom, and you will get His possessions."

But, as there is an appropriate occasion for the exercise of each grace, if there should be, at any time, a special need of patience, or of gratitude, or of gentleness, or of humility, ask for it, submissively and believingly, in entire surrender and childlike trust, and, "according to thy faith it shall be unto thee." We should always make our approaches to the throne of grace in a spirit (1) of entire submissiveness--offering up petitions, but never demands, and (2) with an unflinching faith that God is willing to do, and that, if the present is in His view the appropriate time, He does now do that which He has promised, and which we desire.

#### Remarks

1. In consecration we give all; by faith we take all.
2. Consecration is the pre-requisite of entire sanctification; as repentance is the pre-requisite of justification.
3. Consecration is the voluntary act of a moral agent, having the power of choice. Sanctification is an act of God's grace.
4. The act of consecration will not be performed without Divine aid; but that aid will not be withheld from any one who chooses and wills to consecrate himself.
5. Consecration implies sinking entirely into the will of God. In submissiveness to Him, we must be willing to abandon every known sin, to do every known duty, to give up every idol, to bear every cross, to endure every affliction.
6. Consecration means an entire willingness on our part, to be, to do, and to suffer, all that God wills.
7. Consecration is death to self-life and self-will.

8. Consecration is the condition of entire and permanent soul-union with Jesus.
9. Consecration is the highest privilege, and the richest joy; because, the best possible thing that can happen to us is, that God's adorable will concerning us may be done.
10. The act of consecration is to be followed by definite prayer for a clean heart; and then the act of faith, by which we receive what we ask for, and not something else.

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