

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

" C O N S E C R A T I O N ".

An Address (revised) at

65, St. Mary Axe,

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by

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C O N S E C R A T I O N.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,
65, St. Mary Axe, E. C.
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CUTLINE:-

1. In Connection with Israel's Priests.
2. Parallels to-day with Thoughts on Much Devotedness unto the Lord.
3. Expressions that Need Pondering, - "Full Surrender". "My All is on the Altar" etc.
4. The Danger of Sinful Reaction from Disproportion, and Unwise Language.

Consecration is a vast subject. The English root is the same as that of the word "sacred", and suggests a devotion and a separation unto Him toward Whom there is that which is called "Consecration". Yet we are not primarily occupied with English words, but with those which the Holy Spirit has been pleased to employ: and the word "Consecrate" is brought before us in various parts of the Earlier Scriptures. One or two passages give exceptional usages. For example, Micah 4. 13 speaks of consecrating the gain of the earth to the Lord in the future. There the verb is that used also for a curse, and alludes as well to the utter removal of any "devoted" thing, to which the law refers. The idea is that the things of earth will be viewed as taken entirely away from men, and God will be earth's Supreme

Head. In connection with the Nazarite the verb "consecrate", used several times, is, literally, "To nazarite", - a word which as you know, implies separation from many things. We also find this word "consecrate", and the similar noun "consecration" used to translate the ordinary words for "holy" and "holiness". But these are the exceptional cases. The main use of the English word "consecrate" is for the rendering of two Hebrew words, and they are "To fill" and "the hand". In like manner the word "consecration", which is, I believe, always plural, is literally "Fillings". The same expression is strikingly employed for the setting of stones, both in the tabernacle and in the temple. Where we read of "Stones to be set" there is exactly the same word. So we are able, the Lord enabling, to approach this subject of consecration, - filling the hand, and we ponder what is said of Israel's priests.

The first occurrence is Exodus 28. 41. "And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, (margin - fill their hand), and sanctify them that they may minister unto me in the priest's office". Ch. 29. 9 "And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them; and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute; and thou shalt consecrate, (margin, - fill the hand of) Aaron and his sons". In this chapter moreover, we have the word "consecration" with respect of to sacrifice. Chapter 29. 22 "Also thou shalt take of the ram, and the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, ~~and~~ the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration". So again

in 26 "the ram of consecration", and 31 "the ram of consecration". Here then we have definite consecration with respect to Israel's priests. This is emphasised when we come to the book of Leviticus, and we are told that there was the literal fulfilment of that which was commanded in Exodus. So we have the stress on the ram of consecration once more. Look at Leviticus 8. 22 "And he brought the other ram, ~~and~~ the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right foot; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about". Afterwards the anointing oil was put where the blood was. Here then we have brought before us the consecration with a view to special service unto the Lord; for ch. 8. 33 reads thus "And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end; for seven days shall He consecrate you". "As he hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not; for so I am commanded. So Aaron and his sons did all things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel", and they were further brought into the privilege of service. "And

Aaron lifted up his hand and toward the people and blessed them,... and there came a fire out from the before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat". Consecration was accordingly with a view to special service. When there was a travesty of this, a man-made priesthood, we find, in Judges 17, that "Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons who became his priest,...And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah". We find that the wicked departure from God, among the ten tribes under Jeroboam, had something similar, - "Have ye not cast our the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of ~~the~~ other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself (margin, "to fill his hand") with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods". How deeply suggestive is the thought! God had said of Israel generally "None shall appear before Me empty", and the priests particularly were not to appear empty. They were to have filled hands. What a privilege was theirs to come to God, to serve Him, to bless the people! It was for them to have a filled hand. But could they have a consecration ram at FIRST? How could we think such a thing possible? The ram of the burnt offering precedes the ram of consecration, and the bullock of the sin offering precedes the ram of the burnt offering. The sin offering and ~~the~~ burnt offering first. THEN consecration, the consecration being linked with a ram and devotion, and with the blood upon the ear to listen, hand to work, ~~and~~ feet to walk in the way of the Lord. Immediately after

this consecration, the gifts that were in the basket were presented, or at least a proportion of them was presented upon Aaron's hands and upon his sons' hands, and waved for a wave offering before the Lord. Beloved friends, the lesson is plain. God desired a true occupation with the things which were His, and it was needful that those who came to Him should be those who had been cleansed and who were devoted.

May I just point out ere we leave this subject from the old Testament, that in 2 Chronicles 29. 31 in a time of reviving from the presence of the Lord, Hezekiah answered and said, "Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord (filled your hands), come near and bring sacrifices and thankofferings into the house of the Lord". Here we have all the people brought before us as those to be consecrated with filled hands of devotion to the Lord. And when they had filled their hands, they were able to bring further hands. 1 Chronicles 29 may also help us, (verse 5). David says "Gold for things of gold, and silver for things of silver, and the brass for the things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood, onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" - literally, "Who then is willing to fill his hand?" David had brought many things; who will bring other things? Who will fill the hand? Now the next verse explaining consecration reads thus, - "Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work,

offered willingly". There we have Divine emphasis. They offered willingly. There was a manifestation of God's gracious work. They came with full hands, "And gave for the service of the house of God, of gold five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy". There is the definite stress, and, in the future, Israel will again have a priesthood with the consecration unto Him, for we read in Ezekiel 43. 26 "Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves", or, as the margin puts it, "And they shall fill their hands".

Now, beloved friends, we come to consider "Parallels to-day, with thoughts on much devotedness unto our God". I suppose we agree that when we were first brought to our gracious God, we were brought as poor, ~~with~~ worthless, condemned sinners, we had nothing, we were only evil continually, we were dead in trespasses and sins. God in His rich love was pleased to quicken us, though we deserved nothing. The parable of Luke 14 was illustrated, - we were blind AND poor AND maimed AND halt. We had nothing to recommend us, everything to make us loathsome to God, if He had not been the God of ALL grace. How we ought to loathe ourselves, when we ~~rel~~ realise that in our flesh there is no good thing, and therefore could have been no good thing then. We were only evil continually, and the mind of the flesh was

enmity against God. We did not prepare ourselves for God; we did not look to God, our souls were against Him, our actions were against Him, we were corrupt, and did abominable things, but God was rich in mercy. We came with empty hands. We could not give our hearts to God. It would have been an insult to have offered them. We could offer nothing. God drew us, and our only argument was the Lord's everythingness and our nothingness. If we thought we had anything in ourselves we were in measure denying Him, and if we think now that we are anything in ourselves, we ARE denying Him. We were empty of hand, we were utterly worthless, utterly useless. ~~cha~~ Oh how bountiful was free grace. Now that we have been saved, everything is changed, we are a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is written, "My son, give Me thine heart". We can give our hearts to God now. It is our privilege so to do. We can continually give unto the Lord. We are able to present unto Him that which He will accept. The prayer of the wicked, like the sacrifice of the wicked, is an abomination, but our prayer is not an abomination, "The prayer of the upright is His delight"! God has put in us that which we can bring to Him. He has given us new desires, and we are to present them. Surely it is nothing strange to us that we give to God that which He hath given to us. We recollect some time ago a very learned lawyer, objecting to that view. I suppose his legal mind thought it strange that God should give faith, and that then we should give to God with the faith which He had given. I have not the slightest doubt that many dear children of God have had difficulties at times upon this point; but the more we know of God the more "natural" it ~~is~~ all seems. If there

is anything to be given to Him, which is worth giving, which is worth His accepting, it must have come from Him: - "Of thine own have we given thee" said David. "What hast thou which thou didst not receive?" is the question of the apostle; - "Who hath first given to Him?" We must be second. "It is more blessed to give than to receive", and God will always give more than He receives. He always has the position of greater blessing, but He gives in order that we may be able to give. I suppose even a parent knows what it is to give a child something, and the child happily goes forth to buy something for the parent. Affection turns in that direction, and our affection to our gracious God should be on that line. Whatever He gives us we should turn into praise and devotion. We have received so much, that surely our devotion cannot be a stream which runs dry. There are winter brooks in Palestine that only run in the rainy season. The rain of God's blessing is in season and out of season, and we should therefore have an overflowing of praise continually. There are earthly fountains which are intermittent, and OUR praise often seems variable. But the psalmist said, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in My mouth". He felt the need for filling the mouth with praises so that murmuring should be excluded, because it could not even find room. Thus there was a display of God's gracious work. It has been said that nature abhors a vacuum, certainly grace does. God's grace fills His people that they might be filled with praise. Now we want as those made near to God by the blood of His dear Son to illustrate the devotion of Israel's priests.

We want to have filled hands, because of the One Great Burnt Offering, the One Great Sin Offering. "None shall appear before the Lord empty", needs to be illustrated among ourselves. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" The psalmist adds, "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of the Lord", a most striking expression. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" I will ask Him for something more. Here is the confidence in God which honours His promises and accepts His own revelation of His own character of grace. The Lord delights to be asked to do more for His people, howbeit we must not ask for our own sakes, but for His glory. When Moses desired the deliverance of the people, He did not say simply for their comforts, but, "What wilt Thou do unto Thy great Name?" In other words, whereas some of us turn our devotion into selfish requests, Moses turned his requests into devotion, and thus everything became part of devotedness unto the glory of the Lord, and that especially enables us to plead with God and to enter into the privileges of supplications. I need hardly say the filling of the hand is not merely to be at a crisis, and not only to be when we come to a meeting. Israel's priests were to have filled hands when they began their work, that they might always have their hands occupied in the things of the Lord. The priest's hands are brought before us as filled, as washing, and as working. We need to enter into these three aspects. We want to be those who are ever bringing unto the Lord. I take it, beloved friends, that the first parallel with the priests is when a child of God realises his position. When one realises "I have been saved

by grace", I take it he comes to God in a different way from that in which he came when he felt a sinner. He comes with a desire that he might take his priestly position. Well, this is consecration, if one might so word it, using an Old Testament form. When the believer realises he is not his own, but he is bought with a price, then the ears are for the Lord, the hands are for the Lord, the feet are for the Lord. Now this consecration with Aaron's priests was once, but it had a continual effect. I say "once", unless there was a change to leprosy, and then if God cured, it took place again. It is interesting to realise that the leper who was cleansed was dealt with in the same way, and leprosy pictures sin, - sin that cuts off from the presence of God; and if we have at all wandered from God, we need like Abraham to go back to the place of the tent at the first. Where he had a tent he had an altar. In Egypt he lost both. The tent and the altar are together in Genesis 13, and there he called upon the Name of the Lord. He had to go back to the place where he put his tent at the beginning. And if we have at all departed from the Lord, we need not to be born over again, that is impossible, but we must enter into the position of absolute grace, which reached us when we were worthless, and from that standpoint to go on again with the Lord, and not trusting to ourselves. I have said there are parallels, but I take it we recognise that parallels, which are not Divinely declared to be types, must not be forced. We have to be very careful when we say "This in the Later Scriptures is like that in the Earlier Scriptures". If the Lord tells us so, we are satisfied; if the Lord does not tell us, we do not know if there is a parallel or a contrast. There are many

contrasts in the two ^{AGES} (dispensations) The principle is the same same thought ~~at~~ the principle of (sovereign) grace, the principle of the Lord's choice, and the principle of devotion unto Him, but there are appointed contrasts. What is our position with respect to the time in which we are now living, - our position and condition of devotion unto our gracious God? I mean, has there been a crisis in our lives since we were quickened? A further crisis? I know there are some who speak of a second blessing, - some of us feel the need for rejoicing beyond that, even in ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We seem to have nothing but blessing. We look at our lives, and realise that He hath been mindful of us, He will be bless us, for it is His characteristic to bless, and if He hath commanded to bless, who can reverse it, - wonderful blessing that cannot be reversed! The Lord's hand is not ~~exhausted~~ shortened, He deals with ALL our needs, ALL our emergencies

But, beloved friends, has there been recently a crisis in our lives? I am very much afraid of the undue and human emphasis on crises. To every believer every day is a crisis. Every day he should be going on to know the Lord. You will quite understand what I mean. There is such a danger of looking to a meeting for a blessing. Some people prepare for a ~~special~~ special mission, and they fix their hopes on the mission instead of fixing their hopes on the Lord, they rest upon some convention, upon some special arrangement, upon something, whatever it may be, to take away the glory from the Lord. For, what is the glory of the Lord? His absolute sovereignty. "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory". "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy". Absolute sovereignty, THAT is His glory. It is the glory of God, oftentimes, to conceal His reason

that it may be seen, / ^{that} He is not subject to any influences, - He Who is over all, God blessed for ever. We rejoice in the uninfluenced mercy, and unalterable power of our glorious God. You will therefore quite enter into my thought * that we have to beware of an emphasis on sudden changes that are brought about, seemingly, by circumstances. The Lord can work by a thousand little things. The Lord can work in the seclusion of the home. There should be a continual crisis. Nevertheless, do we have any specially marked crisis brought ~~fe~~ before us in the Later Scriptures? I would have you to notice first that every believer is viewed in Scripture as having died, ~~and~~ his life being hid with Christ in God. Every believer is viewed as one who has crucified the flesh with the affections ~~ad~~ and desires. To believers GENERALLY the statement comes, "Sin shall not have dominion over you", and more remarkably the apostle having addressed the believers as those who have passed through such a crisis, tells them to reach such a crisis, for we read, "Present your members", and "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." I think these words are sufficient to show that the Christian life is not simply one crisis, which is soon all over. On the other hand, I do find a stress upon crises also in the ~~the~~ life of the early ^{united} church, and an initial crisis was usually associated with willingness to obey and suffer for Christ, testified by water baptism. Yes, in baptism, Divinely appointed, ~~believer~~ believers set forth their willingness to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and further, their desire, in days of wondrous unity, for baptism ~~is~~ the Spirit, which was, as we know, into one body, and which was thus associated with unity and power. THESE are days of

word it. Let there be a crisis now in our lives, by grace; and let us never go back from the crisis, let every crisis be a stepping-stone to a further crisis- until in that great crisis we shall be exchanged in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

I have already referred, in passing, to certain expressions which need pondering. Words as to full and absolute surrender are common to-day. We have to be careful as to language which sometimes takes the place of Scriptural expressions, and to be careful not only as to the words we say, but as to what they suggest to other people. I suppose we all feel sad when men drag down Scripture into wrong surroundings. You take the beautiful name "disciples" - It has been made a sectarian title. But that will not hinder us keeping the word "disciples", yet it makes us very guarded lest we are misunderstood. But when men use expressions which are not found in Scripture, they are often associated with their own favourite theories and opinions. The child of God should seek to present his body, and to present his members to the Lord. He is not his own. He has been bought with a price. He should indeed yield himself to the Lord, but there still remains the flesh, and the Spirit wars against the flesh. The believer's life is not meant to be a life of peace in the sense of an absence of warfare, but it is meant to be a life of peace in the sense of realisation of, and anticipation of, victory, - a vastly different aspect. The words, "My all is on the altar" seem to be erroneous in connection with the earlier Scriptures. We find there that the leavened offering was not burnt on the altar, but only that which was perfect and

suggestive of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other expressions you may feel it to be the Lord's will to suggest afterwards.

My concern just now is lest we should cause some who have made a mistake in one direction to make a mistake in the other. We do need to cry unto God for grace respecting this. Some have with undue proportion spoken of the work of the Spirit, and forgotten the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; have spoken of the leading of the Spirit and forgotten to acknowledge the sinfulness and weakness of the flesh. There has been a lack of confession of sin. But we must not because of that ignore the fact that as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God, and that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and the Spirit of Christ dwells in His people. "If anyone have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". In like manner if any have spoken glibly of absolute surrender, we should not in revolt from this ignore the words of the Holy Spirit to which they have alluded, - "Present your bodies a living sacrifice". But it is our privilege to be those who, realising we are not our own, but have been made members of Christ, refuse to become servants of men, and glorify God in our body, making manifest that we would do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and that we would be those who seek by grace to put aside natural pleasures and natural choice. Whence come wars and fightings among you? says the apostle. And the answer is that they come of the pleasures that war in your members. How important therefore that the members should be devoted unto the Lord, and that OUR pleasures should be HIS pleasures, that we should be occupied with the

things of the Lord, and that we should, by grace, hate the thought of blessing ourselves; that we should please Him Who hath chosen us, and ^{hath} who placed us, that we might go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit might remain; that we might live lives of power, ~~and~~ blessing and victory, manifest in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, showing we are not of the world, even as Christ our beloved Lord is not of the world.

Q. The difference between priests and Levites?

A. Priests were of Aaron's family alone, brought into their position by birth. It was their privilege to attend to the sacrifices, and to have the food which God had marked out for the priests, and to receive a tenth from all the tithes. The Levites were the tribe that was marked off to assist the priests, they were given to the priests. If the priests failed, the Levites did certain portions of the work, as in the days of Hezekiah, when they were more upright in heart than the priests. On the other hand theirs was not to eat the shewbread, theirs was not to go into the tabernacle to minister, they were not to go in to see whether the holy things were covered; their work was rather the service of the people, and assisting in the mechanical arrangements; whereas Aaron's family represented Israel worshipping before God. The priest's lot was to burn incense. The priest's lot was to go in, having washed at the laver, to God's house. The Levite did not wash in the same way. The Levite did not go into God's house. He was in

measure in between the people and the priests, occupied in the necessary details and arrangements.

We are the Israel of God, in that as we are a holy nation, we are joined to the Lord, which is the word "Levite", we are a kingdom of priests, we ^{are} "in" the High Priest. We want to rejoice in all the four precious pictures. We are rich beyond all counting.
