

"TO THE JEW FIRST" – AND LAST.

We do not stop to consider all the reasons why divine favors were extended to the Jew first, before his Gentile brother: we will only consider one reason, and that to draw some conclusions therefrom. One of the main reasons for preaching the gospel of the high calling to the Jew first, was, that they as a people were already justified from sin and consecrated to God *typically*. Typically they were in embryo the holy nation, the royal priesthood (Exod. 19:6), through whom as his kingdom God had promised blessings upon the world. They were therefore better prepared to accept of the *realities* of which they already possessed the types or shadows, than would be the Gentiles, who even typically were without God and without any knowledge of his plan, or hope of sharing in it.

While typical justification, and consecration based upon it, would not serve the purpose of the true, it was but a short step for the Jew, who realized himself justified and harmonized with God yearly, by an atonement made with the blood of bulls and goats, to accept of the better sacrifices of which those were but types, and to realize a lasting atonement not requiring yearly repetition. And if he, trusting in the typical atonement for his sin, had come into harmony with God and *consecrated himself*, he would not need to *re-consecrate* when accepting of Christ: having already consecrated to God under Moses the *typical* Leader and Commander of the people, the Jew needed merely to accept of Christ Jesus as the *true* prophet, priest and king promised. (Acts 3:22.) The same consecration would serve – the better foundation of real justification being substituted under it, instead of typical justification.

It was for this reason that Peter made a difference with the Jews in speaking of baptism. He did not tell them to be baptized as a symbol of consecration, as Paul, the apostle to the uncircumcision, tells the Gentiles (Rom. 6:2-4), because as a people they were *already*

consecrated to God, and the whole trouble was that they had been and were still neglecting their consecration – sinning against the covenant they had made. Hence Peter said to them, "Repent [of having violated your covenant, repent of having rejected and crucified the real King and Mediator sent of God of whom Moses was only a type – turn back to covenant relations with God, accept of Christ Jesus, his son, the true Mediator who by the sacrifice of himself, the antitype of the bulls and goats sacrificed by Moses, has sealed and ratified the "new covenant" promised by the prophets, and is now, highly exalted by God, ready and willing to fulfill all the promises] and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...*for the remission of sins.*"

The entire nation consecrated to God's will, departed from its covenant so far, that when God sent the long looked for Messiah and true Mediator, all but a few were blinded by their sinful pride, so that they saw not in him the clear fulfillment of the prophetic record. Instead of **receiving him**, and crowning him, and obeying him, the consecrated nation rejected and crucified him; fulfilling the prophecies ignorantly. And of all this sin, says Peter, you as a nation are guilty and we urge you to repent. And with many other words did he exhort them saying: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," by faith in Christ, repenting for your sin in once rejecting and crucifying him, and show your repentance and faith by being immersed in his name. This will testify to your faith in Christ as the real Messiah, the real King whom God has sent to rule and bless you, and your **entire submission** to his rule, his will; and at the same time it will signify before God and men your repentance of once rejecting him, and **your return to all the original covenants and blessings** – For the promises are still open to you; you may yet become the joint-heirs of the kingdom, though our **nation** has been cut off from those promises as a nation: "For the promise [the 'high calling' etc.] **is unto you** and your children" [as well as to others afar off, not yet called], you are **already** in covenant relationship, therefore have every advantage, if you will realize it fully and return to it, believing in Christ Jesus, in whom all God's promises are to be fulfilled. You are the children of the prophets, and **of the**

covenant which God made with our fathers.... "Unto *you first* [therefore] God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his *iniquities*" – back to his covenant relationship, which now is established on a better basis, sealed by "the blood of the covenant" – everlasting. – Acts 2:38,39; 3:25,26.

Gentiles on the contrary had never been in covenant relations with God, and had no such sin of covenant-breaking to repent of, or symbolically wash away, and when after believing in Christ and coming into fellowship with him through faith in the ransom, they learned of the high calling or covenant, it then was proper for them to *make* a covenant of obedience to God and his Anointed Son, and to symbolize it by baptism, signifying the burial of their wills and their complete submission to God, in Christ, as taught by the apostle Paul in Rom. 6:2-4. It is for this reason that baptism never signified repentance to a Gentile, but did to the Jew. Baptism in water is the symbol of entire consecration, and Gentiles never having been consecrated, could not repent of having broken a covenant with God, and thus *re*-consecrate. But to as many Jews as had violated the covenant, it would imply a regret for that violation and a return to the original covenant. Our Lord though a Jew was not a covenant breaker, but as he was to take the place of the covenant breakers and suffer as a covenant breaker, it became him to [R952 : page 4] show his own consecration to God individually, hence his immersion.

The point however which we wish to have particularly noticed is that first stated: that the Jew already consecrated to obedience and service to God, needed merely to repent of his transgression of that covenant and accept of Christ, the true, as instead of Moses, the typical Leader and Head, in order to *make his covenant valid*. And thus his immersion signified this repentance or *re*-consecration.

To some extent the same principle is seen to apply to the children of believing parents during the Gospel age. From earliest infancy such

may come to God in prayer as fully reconciled through the death of Christ, even before they are able to comprehend the redemption through his blood for the remission of sins. Such are born in a justified, reconciled or forgiven state, as relates to God, and hence as they come to years of judgment, may ratify their parents' consecration and give themselves to God's service without becoming "converted" (turned), unless they have first turned from God, and from their early state of reconciliation. This is the significance of the Apostle's statement in 1 Cor. 7:14 – "Else were your children unclean [sinners, unacceptable with God], but now are they holy" [justified, reconciled, acceptable with God]. This will account to some for their not having experienced the special change or conversion that some do. Those born in this justified state, being the children of justified parents, and from earliest recollection endeavoring to live in harmony with God, never needed to be converted – turned from their course. Their course was a right one, and to be converted or turned from that, would be a turning *from* God.

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But another point is now due in this connection, and is therefore seen clearly: We have seen the Lord's arrangement – that with the close of the Gospel age the *call* of the justified to joint-heirship with Christ in the divine nature ceases. The call to consecration and its propriety does not cease, but the offer of the great prize as a reward ceases, that class being about complete – enough having already consecrated to fill the elect number of the body of Christ, as prearranged in God's plan before the foundation of the world.

We have seen too, that the calling ceases before all the consecrated ones are *tested* and proved worthy, and that the Lord warns these to take heed, lest others take their crowns (Rev. 3:11), showing that the number of crowns are limited, and [R953 : page 4] that there is danger that some of these who are *written* in heaven, as (probationary) crown-wearers, may come short and their names be blotted out. The question then arises, If the number is fixed and the members of that "body" can

be neither more nor less, and if no more are "called" from among the justified ones, and if all those called and consecrated, should they all so run as to obtain the prize, would make just the correct number – where would God find any to take the places of any who in the present trial should prove themselves unworthy of a crown? It will not do to say that God could make the truth clearer to some of the indifferent runners among the consecrated, so as to stimulate them to run effectually, for his arrangements already make the truth as clear and stimulating, as the runner is sincere and faithful to his consecration. And to do *more* would be to measurably *force* them. It is not a question as to whether God can *force* us, but as to whether his "call" will so stimulate us, as to lead us to force and crucify ourselves. God is seeking those who love to do his will, and who *delight* in it, and not to see whom he could force; for he could force all. The prize is a *favor*, which none will be forced to accept. So then the question stands – Who would take our crowns, if we should prove unfaithful, seeing there are not too many to fill the elect number, and no more are to be called?

We answer: God could fill the deficiency from among the Jews without violating any law or principle, and without forcing any will, in any degree. Suppose that an earnest Jew, desirous of doing God's will, had consecrated during the acceptable time – what barrier would there have been to his being received? We answer, one barrier only – his consecration was all right, but it had not a good foundation. It was BASED on a *typical* justification, made by typical sacrifices, instead of on the *real justification* accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ. If, then, the blindness of such, relative to Christ Jesus, were removed and their consecration moved from the typical to the real justification – from the sandy foundation to the rock – the same consecration would still hold good: it, if sincerely made, to God was always good, but unacceptable with God, because not made acceptable by an acceptance of Christ's death as the satisfaction for sins.

So, then, if a Jew should accept of the real Lamb of God, as instead of the typical, his *consecration* would stand firm and date back to its beginning, notwithstanding its originally unsafe foundation; and if made

in season – during the "call" – an acceptance of Christ would bring him fully into every favor enjoyed by Gentiles. And thus, as Paul declares, the broken-off branches may be grafted in again. (Read carefully Rom. 11:17-23.)

Here, then, is a *reserve* from which the Lord may select crown-wearers to take the places of such as prove unworthy among those already "written," whose names must be blotted out. But here again, none can be selected, but those consecrated before the end of the call.

Some may object, that the Jews are so blinded that it would require a special and almost miraculous interposition of divine providence to bring such to see Christ as their Redeemer, and that if we object to *forcing* Gentiles as being contrary to God's method, we must also object to the forcing of the Jews. We answer, that there is a wide difference between the two: The one would be forcing a man who has seen and consecrated, to fulfill his vows, while the other would be, forcing a man who has consecrated himself and is earnestly living up to his consecration, to *see the real basis* upon which his consecration should stand. The latter is no violation of the man's will, nor of God's law and arrangement in the matter. Paul, for instance, was consecrated and very zealous for God, but he was blind to the true foundation of consecrated service – redemption through the blood of Christ. God could and did miraculously open his eyes to this truth, because of his honesty in consecration. But had Paul ignored or despised his consecration, God would not have miraculously stimulated it, but as Paul himself declares, would have permitted him to take his course and become "a castaway;" for if he would not be influenced and inspired by the exceeding great and precious promises, he was unfit to be a member of the select, anointed body – all of whom must be overcomers.

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Another point needs notice in this connection, lest any should be discouraged who are called and faithfully running in this race, for this grand prize. It is this: If you are able to *see* this prize (with the eye of faith) and able to endure the reproaches of Christ and his truth and social

and financial losses for the same, gladly, then, you may recognize yourself as having the spirit of the priesthood, and you thus have good evidence both of your consecration and acceptance. Your zeal and sacrifice prove your consecration, while the fact that you can see the "deep things of God" and prize them above all else, is sure evidence of your being priests in the "holy," enlightened by the light of the golden candlestick and strengthened by the holy shew-bread of deep spiritual truth. Such, as called ones, should go on faithfully to the end of the course, that their names be not blotted out, and that no man shall be given their crown. Thus make your calling and election sure; work out your own salvation to this high calling with fear and trembling, letting God by his truth work in you, both to will and to do his good pleasure.

Many doubtless were consecrated long before they are now inclined to think, because they never saw until recently the fulness it implied. Our consecration dates from the moment we first sought to please God and do his will. We appreciate it more now, because of the morning light now shining upon our way. Remember too, that some of God's consecrated children, in their honest search for truth, got away among the swine, and would fain have eaten of the husks of Infidelity to their full, but could not, and finally by this route, because they were honest children of God, they were brought to see the truth they sought ignorantly in other channels. Remember that Paul, the persecutor for a time, was even then a consecrated child of God. It was because he was consecrated and earnest that he got the light. This was *proved* by the fact that as soon as he received the light he walked in it with the same zeal and consecration. In his case the light did not make him a child of God, but being a child of God was the reason for giving him the light, that thereby he might walk more perfectly; and so it is with us all.

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