

Taking a Second Look

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Taking a second look signified giving a closer examination. Are we living up to our consecration? Let us remember that the things we hope for are real and that we are not following cunningly devised fables. (# Romans 8:18) This should be our present feeling. We do not want to lose the real blessings that we do have, such as prayer. The question is "Are you consecrated?" and not "were you consecrated?" (# Psalms 19:12- 14) Secret faults are those that even we ourselves do not know about. (# Leviticus 5:17, 18) We must make trespass offerings for the faults we do not know about as well as for the faults we do know about. Presumptuous sins are the partially willful sins we do know about. Many of the best speakers in the early 1900's went out of the truth. We must be cautious always lest we should do the same. Is the carrying out of our consecration our chief aim? (# Philippians 3:13,14) Let us put forth all of our effort to win the prize. (# Matthew 6:33; # Co 3:23). What can we do to keep from losing the truth? Be sincere. In the morning resolve we find an expression which we should always have in our heart in order to carry out our consecration successfully. It reads, "Remembering the Divine Call, 'Gather my saints together unto me; those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice' I resolve that by the Lord's assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfill my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the Heavenly inheritance in joint- heirship with my Redeemer." A person in good physical health enjoys all the earthly blessings. This holds equally true to a person in good spiritual health. If we are in good spiritual health we will enjoy the spiritual blessings, of conventions, meetings, etc. (# 2 Corinthians 5:20). An ambassador is supposed to be a credit to the country he represents. Are we a credit to our Heavenly Father? Every place we go we should leave the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. This can be best done through thoughtfulness and love. Much trouble can be caused by blurting out things without thinking. We cannot be a good ambassador by saying one thing and doing another. Our mission is in helping our brethren understand the plan of the ages and helping them carry out their consecration. (# Acts 15:13- 17) There are two keys to understanding the plan. (1) The law of heredity which dictated that all could die through one man and that all could be redeemed through one man. And (2) The fact that there are two salvations.

"O! the rapturous heights of love,

The measureless depths of grace,
My soul all his fullness would prove,
And live in his loving embrace."

Hymn 9, verse 3 (DH9)

This should be the innermost feelings of our heart. What kind of ambassador are we in our homes? Paul was a good teacher in that he "showed" and not "told" the church what they should do. Are we as regular as we should be in attending meetings? (# Malachi 3:16) An artist will see beauty in fall leaves while a gardener will see only work in the same leaves. If we go to a convention and just look at the work we had to do in order to attend we will become depressed but if we look at the leaves of truth getting a different and more beautiful color we will become encouraged. (## Revelation 14:3) This shows us how the truth is such that we like to sing it over and over. Another reason we go to the meetings is because there is an unseen guest attending. (# Daniel 3:24, 25) There was not even the smell of smoke on the garments of the three Hebrews. Do we come as free of bitterness from our trials? The magnet that draws us to the meetings is love for the brethren. We see in their hearts the noblest sentiments. When you scratch a piece of veneered furniture the cheap wood underneath shows up while on a piece of genuine wood the scratch isn't so noticeable. How about us? One thing that reveals our veneer is sarcasm. Sarcasm is the language of the devil. (# Galatians 6:7, 8) We must watch our words and thoughts and doings. The desires of the flesh are like healthy, wild horses. If broken, they can be very valuable but left alone they will just wreck havoc. We must bridle our tongue. A good man makes mistakes but tries not to make them a second time. (# Matthew 5:48). Our goal should be to have our hearts perfect. Are we cutting corners to avoid sufferings and persecutions? Let us consider the three temptations of Jesus. (# Matthew 4:3- 10) The same pattern is followed in all three- that by following the temptation Jesus would be giving glory to God, would be acting in harmony with the scriptures and would personally gain by it. By turning stones to bread Satan implied that this use of power would surely give glory to God and he brought in scriptures about the Son of Man and it would surely be of personal benefit to our Lord. The public display from the pinnacle of the temple would have been greatly to the glory of God (according to Satan) and the scripture said that Christ would not dash his foot against a stone and then there would have been no need for Christ

to suffer as all would have followed him willingly. In the third temptation Satan made it appear as glory would have given to God because Christ would have gained even Satan as a convert and then there was the scripture in # Daniel 7:13, 14 and it would have made Christ's road an easier one. But to all three of these temptations Christ gave an emphatic "NO!"

Now let us take the examples of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and Judas Iscariot. (# John 12:1- 8) This was not an isolated act of Mary's but more of a climax to the love which she always bore the master. Judas had his climax in the betrayal of the Lord. Mary could not put Jesus on the throne but she could honor him as king in her own house; she could not sing his praises all abroad but she could sing them in her heart. Judas, on the contrary, was always looking out for himself. What shall be the climax of our lives? Let us take the example of a basement that has just been cleaned and is just the spic and span and then due to a heavy rainstorm the sewer backs up filling the basement with filth. If we are building to a good climax our clean hearts will not be filled with the filth of this world when something goes wrong, but if we have not been building correctly the sewers of bitterness and malice will overflow into our hearts when things are not going as we would have them go. (# Acts 20:24) Let the results of this self-examination be to renew our determination to carry out our consecration.