

Our Best! John R Gavazzoni

The following article, slightly edited, was written by John around 1981 along with "The Realm of Certainty," the very first article on the index of his web page, Both were penned especially for Union Life magazine (no longer published).

Have You Given Your Best to Jesus? John R. Gavazzoni

The old gospel song asked plaintively, "I wonder have I given my best to Jesus...?" And, "I wonder have I done my best for Jesus?" It went on to drive home the questions like a knife blade thrust deep and twisted, "since He has done so much for me." God didn't begin to bring about a change of mind in me regarding this until I despaired of ever finding in myself the wherewithal to get my all on the altar.

I began to feel a great compassion for other believers locked into the same frustrating cycle of "giving my all" and yet finding that it didn't seem, after all, that I had. Gently, but firmly, the Spirit of God led me to see and more consistently apply the great truth that Christ's life is the only life that is pleasing to God.

I understood, in a general way, that God was pleased with me since the pleasing life of Christ was my true life within, but I had not yet realized that, included in Christ's life, is His commitment, which has become my commitment by virtue of the fact--yes, I'm repeating myself--that Christ is our life, according to the Apostle Paul.

It was no longer a matter of me trying to work up enough gratitude toward Christ so that I would no longer withhold anything of myself from Him, but rather, I now understood and confessed by faith that Christ's commitment to the Father was an actual aspect of my inheritance in Him, so that I really shared His consecration to God as my consecration.

Every time a question arose concerning the purity or extent of my surrender to God, I simply stood by faith upon the fact that Christ within me was my consecration, my surrender, my yieldedness, my

commitment. This dimension of my life was complete in Him because He is my life in every dimension.

I should, though, hasten to say that the aeonian unfolding of that reality was not without the normal angst that occurs when inner reality---in the face of the opposition of our false persona---works itself out in everyday experience.

We really need to begin with God's commitment to us in order to understand the believer's commitment to God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment and personification of God's commitment to us. In Christ, God went all the way, withholding nothing to get to us and get us back to Himself. The Father is fully committed to His own love-plan, wherein He stops at nothing to bring us to the place where we are "filled with all the fulness of God." He is faithful to Himself in this, faithful to His own love-integrity, thus making Him always faithful to us.

God's commitment to His perfect love-plan returns to Him in the form of our commitment to Him, which is really Christ in us sharing His commitment to our Father and His wonderful will for us. God Himself is committed to us, in us, so that He is our commitment. His own perfect faithfulness returns to Him through us, giving us participation in His determination "that we should be to the praise of His glory."

Many of us have lived with the mistaken belief that the things of God only work for us proportionate to the extent of our consecration. We need to have the "eyes of our heart be flooded with light" to see that the things of God work for us in proportion to the extent of His commitment to us, which is His own faithfulness to His perfect love-Self. This is "the power that works in us" of which Paul spoke in Eph. 3:20.

It's the power of committed love poured into us and springing up in us to flow back to Him. "For out from the midst of Him and through the midst of Him and into the midst of Him are all things." (translation by Jonathan Mitchell).

When I really see the purity of God's commitment to me---a commitment to perfect love, which makes Him faithful to Himself and thus always faithful to me---I no longer ask the question, "Have I

given my best and done my best for Jesus?. Instead I confess by faith, "Jesus is God's best to and for me, and to and for God."

The famous 19th century evangelist, Dwight L. Moody once said, "The world has yet to see what God can do through a man wholly yielded to Him and, by His grace, I intend to be that man." May I be so bold--- while fully appreciating the cry of Moody's heart---as to attempt an improvement on that beautiful expression of Christian surrender?: The world HAS seen what God can do through a Man wholly yielded to Him, and by His grace we, in union with Him, are "living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God."

Our presentation of ourselves as such living sacrifices springs from our knowing that through union with Him, the Lord Jesus has laid us on the altar and we are acceptable! We hear much talk about making Jesus Lord of our lives. But the scripture says that "God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

We cannot make Jesus Lord; we can only confess that He IS Lord. So also, we cannot in and of ourselves present ourselves as living sacrifices.

Instead, we see, believe, and confess that the One whom we confess as Lord is the One who rose from the dead and ascended to the Father as a "sweet-smelling savour," and we, risen and ascended in Him, are equally sweet to God. At the heart of self-righteousness, that putrid counterfeit, is self-consecration.

For self to consecrate self is laughable. It produces nothing more than a self-centered consecration with a religious appearance of piety which stinks in the nostrils of God. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, before and after our conversion. Either Christ has consecrated us or He has not. If He has not, then let's be done with all of this religious pretense and go ahead and live a life for self. But if He has---and indeed He has---then let's believe it and go beyond our childish introspection concerning our commitment, and rejoice that we are His---spirit, soul and body.

We ARE living sacrifices in Christ. It is time to quit thinking that we can continually take ourselves off "the altar of sacrifice" and then have to put ourselves back on. In new covenant terms, THE sacrifice

is offered once for all, at which time it becomes wholly God's. We are His, and we simply need to recognize ourselves offered on the altar in Christ. It is not a question of doing something to become consecrated, but of recognition of what is already accomplished reality through union with Him. Repeatedly, the New Testament calls us saints---God's consecrated ones---and indeed we are!

John R Gavazzoni