

Holiness Rejected Makes Strange Bedfellows

by Aaron Hills

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness and the rejection of it by many Christians, leading to a union of those who reject it, and highlights the devil's opposition to the doctrine of sanctification.

Scripture: John 8:32, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 6:12, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Sanctification", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Aaron Hills addresses the conflicting theories surrounding sanctification, highlighting the various beliefs and attitudes towards attaining holiness. He emphasizes the importance of seeking purity of heart as a second work of grace after conversion, leading to sanctification through the baptism of the Spirit. Hills points out the opposition faced by those who preach sanctification as a second work of grace, illustrating the spiritual warfare and resistance against the truth of being cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus. He draws parallels between the ongoing battle of carnality against truth and the age-long struggle between good and evil, righteousness and sin.

Transcript

In my rounds in many states I have observed a remarkable spirit of union and fraternity among people who seemingly would have no bond of union whatever. Here are the conflicting theories of these separate classes.

1. There are those who proclaim very openly that there is no such thing as sanctification. It is a state impossible of attainment. The devil puts his finger to his nose at this announcement, and all the giddy and backslidden of earth nod their assent, and the tides of worldliness and sin roll on "merry as a marriage bell."
2. Another group rise and declare that they "got it all at conversion." Satan indulges in a little broader smile, and every imp of the pit is delighted, and all their confederates in the dead churches are serenely happy over the between class No. 1 and class No. 2.
3. Another company testify that they are of the opinion that somehow they must have missed it at conversion; but they hope they are growing into it, or would at least like to do so. Beelzebub, at this, laughs audibly; his confederates in the pit join in, and class No. 1 and class No. 2 open their ranks to welcome class No. 3. They all clasp hands and, without the slightest sense of inconsistency, sing, "How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity and love!"

4. Another large throng say that sanctification is a good thing, that would be very convenient to have around, if we could only get it in this life. It would truly be just the thing to help us through the tight places of our earthly pilgrimage. But the inbred sin of our natures is so deep-seated that the blood of Christ cannot reach it, nor the fire of the Spirit-baptism consume it. Therefore we must wait until the great physician, death, purges our hearts of the Satan loose a peal of laughter that makes the wreathing clouds of the ascending smoke of torment tremble with the waves of jubilant sound. All the demons of the pit join in to swell the chorus. All the careless and the backslidden of earth stop their card playing and dancing long enough to make a motion that classes No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 admit class No. 4 into fraternity. It carries unanimously, and they all join in singing, "The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."

5. A still larger throng rise and say "Yes, sanctification is a good thing. We must doubtless all have it to be for heaven. But it is beyond the possibility of either any divine grace or even death, to effect it; it is to be wrought in us by our purgatorial fire" This transfers the whole thing over to Apollyon's territory! And he rises amidst great applause, and moves that this view be celebrated by a carnival in hell. It is unanimously carried with a din of merriment that is indescribable. Meantime this mirth is catching on earth. Bishops and presiding elders and church officials smile and joke about this universal sanctification which, like the grace of God, leaves none out. The spirit of union grows wider, and the first four classes open to take in the fifth. They lustily sing: "Brothers, brothers all are we, A jolly confraternity."

It begins to look as if all humanity were going to be banded together in unity and love.

6. A little company rise and humbly say, with a heavenly radiance on their upturned faces: "After our conversion we sought, by faith, purity of heart as a second work of grace. The baptism with the Spirit came upon us with the suddenness of Pentecost. We are sanctified now; for 'the blood of Jesus Christ . . . a hallelujah of praise floats down from the skies. But quicker than a flash the devil leaps to his feet with a roar of rage that makes every cavern of hell quiver. Every power of darkness fairly howls his hate, every hell-bound bays his loudest. Meantime on earth every spiritual harlot and covetous moneybags and scheming ecclesiastic and carnal bigot and backslidden worldling, and all the other five classes, who were so lenient towards one another's divergent views, open up in a torrent of vituperation and rage. With consent they cry, "Down with this heresy!" "Put them out!" And all earth and hell pour out their hottest venom against these devoted people, reminding one of the enmity that once howled about the cross of Christ.

How is all this to be accounted for? How can all those other five classes tolerate one another so graciously as common bedfellows, while they rise in such a storm of hate against the testimony to sanctification as given in the blessed Word?

Candidly now, is not this the only explanation: that this doctrine is the truth, and the devil is determined that none shall testify that the blood of Jesus . . . cleanseth us from all sin"? He raises earth and hell to put this testimony down. John Wesley long ago said, "This is the word which the devil peculiarly hates, and stirs up his children against; but it is the word which God will always bless."

Let those who band together to fight holiness think on these things.

Let them ask how it is that the irreconcilable divergence of the first five views troubles nobody, and the adherents of them are in such sweet peace with one another; while they all unite in virulent opposition to the sixth view, by John Wesley and his spiritual descendants, and belch forth a common chorus of hate like that which raged about the Cross, springing from ever class and condition of men.

Is not this plainly the old war of carnality against truth and God? Is it not the same contest, age-long, between good and evil, light and darkness, righteousness and sin?

In a Texas conference some years ago three men preached on the subject of sanctification. The first held that it was gotten at the time of conversion. The second held that Christians grew into it after conversion. The third held that we obtained it at death. But all three of those ministers, and all the rest who did not care when they obtained it, or whether they received it at all, or whether there was any such thing, banded together and expelled from the ministry a fellow minister for preaching sanctification as a second work of grace, received by faith after regeneration!!

Truth forever on the scaffold,

Wrong forever on the throne,

Yet that scaffold sways the future,

And, behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow,

Keeping watch above His own.

What more pathetic passage is there in Christian literature than John Wesley's closing appeal, "On Christian Perfection?" "Who is he that will open his mouth against being cleansed from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit, or against having all the mind that was in Christ -- has the hardiness to object to the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body and substance to God? Let this Christian perfection appear in its own shape, and who will fight against it? It must be disguised before it can be opposed. It must be covered with a bearskin first, or even the wild beasts of the people will scarce be induced to worry it. But whatever these do, let not the children of God any longer fit against the image of God. Let not those who are alive to God oppose dedicating all our life to Him.

"We allow, we contend, that we are justified freely through the righteousness and the blood of Christ. And why are you so hot against us because we expect likewise to be sanctified wholly through His Spirit? How long will you who worship God in spirit . . . set your battle in array against those who seek an entire 'circumcision of heart' who thirst to be cleansed 'from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' and to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God?' Nay, we your enemies because we look for a full deliverance from the carnal mind, which is enmity against God? Nay, we are your brethren, your the vineyard of our Lord, your companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus."

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