

Eradication, Suppression, or Counteraction, Which?

by Charles William Butler

Charles William Butler delves into the theological terms 'eradication,' 'suppression,' and 'counteraction' in Christian holiness, emphasizing the need to base doctrines on the truths found in the Scriptures. While these terms are not directly from the Bible, the concept of dealing with indwelling sin is deeply rooted in biblical principles. Through various Bible verses, the sermon explores the idea of God purging, cleansing, and transforming believers, ultimately leading to a life free from sin and filled with righteousness and holiness.

Description

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Transcript

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 "" hasTranscript: true oneLinerSummary: "The doctrine of eradication is the best term to express the thoroughness of God's deliverance from indwelling sin, as seen in Scripture language." sermonType:
 "expository" topics: - name: "Christian Holiness" slug: "christian-holiness" - name: "Sanctification" slug:
 "sanctification" bibleRefs: - text: "Psalm 68:13" bookId: "PSA" chapter: "68" verse: "13" - text: "Isaiah 1:25"
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 "6" - text: "Romans 8:2" bookId: "ROM" chapter: "8" verse: "2" - text: "Ephesians 4:22" bookId: "EPH"
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 3:9" bookId: "COL" chapter: "3" verse: "9" - text: "1 John 1:7" bookId: "1JN" chapter: "1" verse: "7" outline:
 - heading: "I" points: - "Introduction to the topic of Christian holiness and the use of terms 'eradication',
 'suppression', and 'counteraction'" - "Definition of each term and its limitations" - heading: "II" points: -
 "Bible terminology for dealing with indwelling sin" - "Scriptural references to personal sanctification and the
 eradication of sin" - heading: "III" points: - "The eradication of sin as a moral condition, not a physical

entity" - "Illustration of sin as a fever that can be removed, but not destroyed" - heading: "IV" points: - "The blood-cure for sin and its implications" - "The importance of honoring the blood of Christ and glorifying God" faq: - q: "What is the difference between 'eradication' and 'suppression'?" a: "Eradication means to pluck or take out, while suppression means to stop or retard the growth of sin." - q: "Is sin a physical or material entity?" a: "No, sin is a moral condition that pervades every part of our human selfhood." - q: "Can we be freed from sin and still be human?" a: "Yes, sin can be removed, but not our humanity or capacity to be tempted." - q: "What is the purpose of the blood of Christ?" a: "The blood of Christ provides a salvation that cures sin and brings glory to God." - q: "Can we demonstrate the doctrine of eradication in personal experience?" a: "Yes, the doctrine of eradication is capable of demonstration in personal experience." quotes: - "If you wish to talk with me, define your terms." - "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." - "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;" applicationPoints: - "We can be freed from sin and still be human, but it requires the removal of sin's root and branch." - "The blood of Christ provides a salvation that cures sin and brings glory to God." - "The doctrine of eradication is capable of demonstration in personal experience." keywords: - "Christian holiness" - "Eradication" - "Suppression" - "Counteraction" - "Indwelling sin" - "Personal sanctification" - "Blood of Christ" - "Moral condition" - "Physical entity" - "Salvation" ---

It was Socrates who said, "If you wish to talk with me, define your terms." The three terms which caption this article have been used in the field of Christian theology to represent different facts with regard to the dealings of God with original or birth sin. The Wesleyan interpretation of the truth of Christian holiness has used, from time to time, the first of these three terms, "eradication." The Keswick Movement and those of the Calvinistic school have used from time to time, the term "suppression," and in other instances, the term "counteraction."

We are frank to confess that none of these terms are Bible terms. There is however a great body of truth in the Scriptures upon which to base the doctrine of Christian holiness. After defining each one of these terms, we shall turn to Bible terminology in dealing with the subject of indwelling sin and I trust we may be able to discover by this procedure which one of the terms best expresses the dealings of God with this phase of the sin trouble.

The term "counteract" is defined in Webster's New International Dictionary as follows: "To act in opposition to; to frustrate by a contrary agency or influence; as to counteract the effect of medicines. Synonyms are, to nullify, to neutralize." This is a fine definition and if it were God's method of dealing with indwelling sin it would mean the victorious life just as those who hold to this doctrine designate the best grade of Christian experience which from their standpoint is possible.

The term "suppression" is defined as "an instance of suppressing; state of being suppressed; as, the suppression of an insurrection, of truth, and so forth. In forestry it is defined as retardation or stoppage of growth in a tree or its branches caused by insufficient light or nutrition. In medicine the term is used to note a complete stoppage of a natural secretion or excretion. In psychoanalysis it is applied to the forcible exclusion of a mental process, an idea or desire, from conscious and overt activity; sometimes as equivalent to repression, and sometimes as a more conscious and deliberate process." For a good many years these terms were used more frequently than any other by those of the schools mentioned. It is good that at least in some places they changed from the use of this term to that of counteraction which is by all means the stronger and more meaningful term. Counteraction as defined comes much nearer to the truth than does suppression.

There has always been a battle in the field of religious thinking with regard to the use of the term "eradication." I feel sure that much opposition to this term has grown out of a misunderstanding of its true meaning. Let us therefore look to the same source for a definition of eradication. Webster says: "To pluck up by the roots; to root up or out; hence, to extirpate; as, to eradicate disease." Synonyms named are, "to abolish, destroy, annihilate."

Before proceeding to list the Bible terms designating this truth I want to remind my readers that if we find Scripture corresponding with the definition of any of these terms, the truth expressed does not mean to dehumanize the subject who receives this work. It is not a sin to be human. To associate mortality and sin as inseparable is to charge God foolishly of being the author of sin. God created mortal man, but God did not create sin. It is sin of which we are speaking when we use the terms we have been discussing. That there is a sin-condition inherent in fallen human nature no one who believes the Word of God or who rightly analyzes human experience will deny. The question is, how does God deal with this phase of the sin-problem?

Psalms 68:13 "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

"And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; but now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

"But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Add to these Scriptures the very definite New Testament Scriptures which refer to personal sanctification as a definite work in and for the believer. Then define the term sanctification in its personal, its largest and truest sense, namely, not only to set apart, to devote to, but to make clean, to make holy, to cleanse the believer from all sin subsequent to regeneration. It is very clear that when God refers to this inward trouble under the symbol of the stony heart, the remedy is to take it away. When he speaks of it as the "body of sin" he declares it is to be destroyed. When he uses the figure of "our old man," he is to be put off and we are to put on the new man which after God is created anew in righteousness and true holiness.

Since to eradicate means to pluck or to take out, I ask you, dear reader, if Bible language does not fit this thought better than that of either suppression or counteraction? The fact is that the term "eradication" defined and understood, is the best term of which I know in our English tongue to express the thoroughness which is constantly expressed in Scripture language for deliverance from the fact of indwelling sin.

There are many figurative terms used in Scripture. For instance, bitterness is spoken of as a root, and sometimes in ministering the truth we speak of the cleansing efficacy of the blood as taking sin out, root and branch. This language may mislead sometimes to the thought of sin's being a physical or material entity. It is not. It is a moral condition. The depravity of our nature which is purged and cleansed in the sanctifying gift of the Holy Spirit is a moral poison which pervades every part of our human selfhood. Total depravity means there is no part of our human personality which is pure until the cleansing blood is applied. We insist that when it is applied, we are then free from all sin, so that, to use the figure, sin is plucked up and rooted out. This is figurative language. The fact is a moral fact.

Let me illustrate. Here is an individual who is afflicted with some form of disease which causes fever. His temperature is 102. You cannot localize his fever. It affects the whole body. You can free this individual from the fever, removing its cause so that his temperature is 98.6. This does not destroy his humanity. It does not destroy the possibility or the physical capacity to be sick again, but it does remove the fever and leave him normal at the time.

The eradication of sin from our whole nature is like the removing of fever. It does not destroy our capacity to be tempted, or our capacity to sin, but it does destroy sin itself and leave our humanity free from sin and indwelt by the righteousness which is of God by faith. The same conditions upon which one is freed from sin will, if met, continue to keep him free from sin. It is not that the possibility of sin is removed, but it is that both the fact of and the necessity to sin are removed. This, we contend, honors the blood of Christ and brings glory to our holy God. That God should provide a salvation for man which fails to cure sin, when rightly viewed, is a reflection upon himself. If man cannot be saved from all sin, the limitation must be either in the ability of God to remove sin from his nature, or a lack of moral capacity on the part of man to be holy. Neither of these facts is thinkable in the presence of an omnipotent God who is holy and in the presence of a provision for the remedy of sin which cost him the supreme price -- the gift of his only begotten Son.

We insist there is a blood-cure that takes all sin out of our humanity, in the merit of which we are built in righteousness and true holiness, and that this is the true Scriptural doctrine capable of demonstration in personal experience.

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