

Why People Oppose the Doctrine

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon explores various reasons why people oppose the doctrine of entire sanctification, highlighting misconceptions and theological errors.

Scripture: Psalm 58:4, Isaiah 6:9, Matthew 1:21, John 3:19, John 16:17

Topics: "Entire Sanctification", "Holy Living"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin addresses the various reasons for opposition to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. Some oppose due to false ideas of holiness standards, while others fail to comprehend the concept despite clear explanations. Faulty theology, misled by skeptical teachers, focusing on men instead of God's word, and misunderstanding the breadth of redemption also contribute to opposition. Additionally, some resist holiness because they underestimate God's power to transform and prefer to hold onto sin, which opposes the holiness of God.

Transcript

Among the various reasons that might be given for the opposition to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification we will cite just a few as samples of the many, or as general reasons under which particular reasons might be assembled.

1. There is a class of persons who entertain false ideas of the standard of holiness and because of these false ideas are led to oppose. This may occur either when they place the standard too high or too low. Those who place the standard too high are apt to cry "impossible;" while those who place it too low cannot see any good that will come from its possession.

2. Another class of opposers are those who fail to comprehend. The subject may be presented with much patience and care and made never so clear, but when all is done they still fail to comprehend. "They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." -- Ps. 58:4-5. Concerning this class of persons the Lord said to Isaiah: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

3. Another fruitful source of opposition is faulty theology. Error is often at the foundation of a theological tenet and the person who accepts the dogma must force everything to bend to fit this ideal. Certain

theological writers have made the statement, and backed it with plenty of misapplied scripture, that it is impossible to be made holy in this life. Those who accept this view of things must either ignore or explain away the plainest declarations of scripture, and the testimonies of those who have been made holy; they must even quiet the convictions and desires sent by the Holy Ghost in their more honest moments and in place of them accept the things that their better judgment tells them are wrong.

4. Another class of persons is misled by skeptical teachers. They know nothing of theology and very little of the Bible. They will not trouble themselves to learn, but blindly follow their leaders. Their guides say the road they are traveling ends in heaven, and these persons, although they have the guide book, the Bible, will not trouble themselves to find out the truth. The guide declares that the Bible says, "There is none perfect, no not one," and the blind follower immediately repeats the news and excuses his shortcomings on the ground of a passage of scripture that does not exist. Surely "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." -- Matt. 15:14. "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." -- Matt. 23:16, 15.

5. Another reason why some oppose entire sanctification lies in the fact that they are prone to consider men instead of the word of God. It is not an exaggeration to say that where one man reads God's word nine men read the lives of professed Christians, and especially is it true that they read professors of holiness. If they would read them in the light of the word of God this would be all right, but instead they are apt to measure them according to their own self-conceived ideas.

6. Still others fail to catch the breadth and import of the work of redemption and hence fall to opposing holiness as an extreme and erroneous ideal. To many persons redemption is nothing more than deliverance from hell and the gift of a home in heaven. They fail to catch the meaning of the angel's message to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." -- Matt. 1:21. Such persons do not understand what Jesus meant when he prayed, "Sanctify them (not only His disciples, but all which should believe on Jesus through their words) through thy truth: thy word is truth." -- Jno. 16:17. See also Eph. 5:25-27.

7. Some persons consider their own hearts and their utter helplessness in the cruel hands of sin, and failing to comprehend the fact that God will help, declare that no man can be holy in this life. This is as absurd an argument as to reason that because a lizard is unable to fly nothing can. The happy birds would prove the fallacy of such a conclusion. When God changes our vile nature and "all things become new," new possibilities are given and impossibilities are changed to the possible. When sin is gone and righteousness reigns the happy saint can "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him."

8. Another fruitful reason for opposition arises from the fact that men are loathe to give up sin, and sin in the heart hates the holiness of God. Men still "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (margin, discovered)." -- Jno. 3:19, 20.

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