

Sanctification -- How It Is -- Confession

by J.H. Collins

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confession and testimony in the Christian life, highlighting the need to live and profess sanctification.

Scripture: Psalm 1:3, Psalm 66:16, Luke 9:26, Romans 10:10, Philippians 3:15, 1 John 4:17

Topics: "Sanctification", "Testimony"

Description

J.H. Collins preaches about the importance of testifying to God's work in our lives, emphasizing the need to openly confess Christ as our Sanctifier and share our experiences of justification and sanctification. He highlights that as Christ's witnesses, we are called to hold fast to our faith, glorify God, promote the welfare of others, and deepen our personal experience by sharing what God has done for us. Collins stresses the significance of giving humble, clear, and definite testimony to God's work in our lives, encouraging believers to boldly declare their faith and full salvation.

Transcript

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10).

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." (Philemon 6).

Many persons, in seeking to lay all upon the altar, are hindered by a secret unwillingness to confess Christ as their Sanctifier. The difficulty is the same in seeking perfect cleansing as in seeking justification. Many are desirous of the enjoyments of these states, but want to receive them secretly, and confess nothing through fear of the multitude. Now, in the one ease as in the other, testimony must be placed upon the altar.

We are Christ's witnesses. As such, Paul exhorts his brethren to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. We are to tell what the Lord has done for us. First, because to do so glorifies God. It declares the skill, power, and mercy of the great Physician who has so fully healed us. Second, it promotes the welfare of our fellow-beings; for how can they come to the knowledge of the full salvation unless we hold forth the light. Third, it is to increase our own personal experience to tell what God has done for us. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Besides, those who have obtained the grace of perfect cleansing have lost the witness by refusing to testify to what God had done for them.

For instance Mr. Fletcher, who had the experience four or five times, but lost it by failing to acknowledge the gracious work. The objections urged against a profession of sanctification may be held with equal force against a profession of justification. Praise the Lord that we have so many witnesses to the cleansing power of Jesus' blood! It is the part of a witness to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Testimony to perfect love should be given humbly. We are testifying not for self, but for God. Let us therefore guard against a spirit of self-adulation or self-importance. The heights of perfection are the depths of humble love. Instead of saying, "I am sanctified," it is better to say, "The Lord has sanctified me; praise his name!" We thus avoid needless offense.

Testimony should be clear and definite. Many say "the higher life," "rest of faith;" whereas it is better not to avoid the use of those words "sanctification," "perfect love," "dead to sin," "clean heart," etc., since they are words which are employed by the Holy Ghost; and, as Mr. Wesley has said, we do not wish to send the Holy Ghost back to school that he may find other words. Jesus says: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory." (Luke 9:26).

It is only a frank and definite testimony that will be satisfactory to yourself and helpful to others. All science has its terminology, and without definite words we may wrap up our meaning in faint or general terms until it is lost. A brother pastor tells me the spiritual condition of his charge is "tolerably good." Still I am left to fix the meaning of the phrase "tolerably good." You meet a man in the road, and inquire how far it is from here to San Francisco. "Oh," he replies, "it is not far." Then you do not know much more than you did before you asked the question. He was indefinite. If a person says that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin, he expresses a truth, but as yet does not express its personal relation to himself. If he says, "It cleanses me from all sin," then he is definite, and his testimony will be blessed. Paul was definite when he said: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." (Phil. 3:15). John was definite when he said: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17). Wesley was definite when he said: "We are saved from sin; we are made holy by faith. This I testified in private, in public, in print, and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses." (Vol. VII., p. 38). Mr. Wesley says: "One great means of retaining it is frankly to declare what God has given you, and earnestly to exhort all the believers you meet with to follow after full salvation." (Vol. II., p. 13).

Thank God, while the Methodists have been raised up to spread scriptural holiness over the lands, they have no "patent right" on the blessed doctrine of entire sanctification! The experience is spreading in other communions, and God is raising up everywhere witnesses to the truth of full salvation. The doctrine is destined to cover the earth and bring in the millennium. The time is coming when there shall be written on the bells of the horses, "Holiness unto the Lord." Amen.

Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,

And you, ye waters, roll,

Till, like a sea of glory,

It spreads from pole to pole.

We have often heard the remark that people ought to live sanctification, and not profess it. It is certainly true that we ought to live it, but this is only a part of our duty. When a sinner is converted, we expect him to profess Christ, as well as live his religion. As in justification, so in sanctification. To live a holy life is good; to profess holiness is good also. The life and the profession should go together; and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Upon one occasion our Saviour was traveling near Jerusalem, and he was hungry; "and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves." And Jesus cursed the fig-tree and said, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it." "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots." We observe this fig-tree had leaves, but had no fruit. The leaves may be considered the profession; the fruit, the life or good deeds of an individual. The leaves and fruit are both essential to the value of the tree. The leaves are not only for beauty, but constitute the lungs of the tree. When Jesus cursed the fruitless tree it soon withered away. Had the tree been deprived of its leaves, then it would have been already cursed, and have died as a consequence. The pattern is not a fruitless tree, neither is it a leafless tree, but a tree which has fruit and foliage together. He "bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:3). It is ours to praise the Lord by a life devoted to his service, and to offer to him the fruit of our lips continually. Like David, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." (Ps. 66:16).

So let our lips and lives express The holy gospel we profess.

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