

# Sanctification -- When It Is -- Our Standards

by J.H. Collins

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of sanctification as a distinct and vital experience in the Christian life, following justification and leading to perfect love.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 24:6, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:25, Philippians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Entire Sanctification", "Christian Perfection"

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## Description

J.H. Collins preaches on the concept of entire sanctification, emphasizing the need for believers to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, striving for holiness in the fear of God. Various testimonies from influential figures like John Wesley, William Bramwell, Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, and others are presented to support the idea that sanctification is a subsequent work after conversion, distinct from justification. Methodist preachers are shown to uphold the belief in going on unto perfection and being made perfect in love, with hymns from the Methodist Hymn Book reflecting this distinction between justification and entire sanctification.

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## Transcript

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1).

"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; and in multitude of counselors there is safety." (Prov. 24:6).

Having cited a few of those scriptures which teach that entire sanctification is a work which occurs subsequently to the conversion of the soul, we now present, upon the same point, the testimony of great and good men.

We call attention first to the language of Mr. Wesley, who, under God, was the founder of the great organization called "Methodists." He says, "I cannot therefore, by any means, receive this assertion; that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified. First, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. Second, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God. Third, because it is absolutely new -- never heard of in the world till yesterday. Fourth, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences; not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition." Dean Stanley has said no one has risen in the Methodist Society equal to John Wesley.

Rev. William Bramwell, one among the early and most successful Methodist preachers, writes: "An idea is going forth that when we are justified we are entirely sanctified, and to feel evil nature after justification is to lose pardon. You may depend upon it, this is the devil's great gun."

Dr. Clarke says: "I have been twenty-three years a traveling preacher, and have been acquainted with some thousands of Christians during that time who were in different states of grace, and I never, to my knowledge, met with a single instance where God both justified and sanctified at the same time." (Everett's Life of Dr. Adam Clarke). Dr. Clarke is recognized as one of the greatest commentators that ever lived.

Richard Watson says: "We proceed to another as distinctly marked and as graciously promised in the Holy Scriptures. This is the entire sanctification, or perfected holiness, of believers. That a distinction exists between a regenerate state and a state of entire and perfect holiness will be generally allowed. Regeneration we have seen is concomitant with justification; but the apostles, in addressing the body of believers in the churches to whom they wrote their Epistles, set before them, both in the prayers they offer in their behalf and in the exhortations they administer, a still higher degree of deliverance from sin, as well as a higher growth in Christian virtues." (Watson's institutes, Chapter 29, p. 611). Watson's Institutes is one of the standards of the Methodist Church, and her ministers are required to pass examination upon it as one of the books in the course of study.

T. N. Ralston says: "When we are justified we may from that hour go on unto perfection; and whenever we comply with the condition prescribed in the gospel -- that is, when we exercise the requisite degree of faith, be it one day or ten years after our conversion -- that moment God will cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (Ralston's "Elements of Divinity," pages 507, 541). Mr. Ralston was one of the most scribed in the course of study for Methodist preachers. It is a clear, plain, and valuable book.

Rev. John Fletcher says: "We do not deny that the remains of the carnal mind still cleave to imperfect Christians. This fault, corruption, or infection doth remain in them who are regenerated."

(Last Check, pages 507, 541). Mr. Fletcher was one of the most eminent of Mr. Wesley's coadjutors. It has been said of him that he was to Wesley what Melancthon was to Luther.

Bishop Hedding says that regeneration "is the beginning of sanctification, though not the completion of it, or not entire sanctification."

Dr. George Peck says that "the doctrine of entire sanctification, as a distinct work wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, is the great distinguishing doctrine of Methodism."

We now present the testimony of every ordained preacher of the M. E. Church and the M. E. Church, South. When he receives the ordination vows, the following questions are asked him: "Are you going on unto perfection?" "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?" "Are you groaning after it?" If he considers that he was made perfect in love when first converted, then why does he say he is groaning after it and expecting it? How can he expect what he has already received? These ministers render the same testimony at every reception of a member into the Church. They then say: "Brethren, we command unto you this person, whom we this day recognize as a member of the Church of Christ. Do all in your power to increase his faith, confirm his hope, and perfect him in love." Now, how can the minister exhort that this person be made perfect in love if he considers he was already made perfect in love when first converted?

We now present the testimony of the Methodist Hymn Book. Its contents are classified for the convenience of public worship, and under caption VII. -- "Christian Experience" -- is divided as follows: 1. Justification and the new birth; 2. Entire sanctification and perfect love; 3. Duties and trials. The Church here recognizes a distinction between justification and regeneration, a former, and entire sanctification, a later, work of grace. The distinction is more fully brought out by the teachings of the hymns. The sweet singer of Methodism has left these lines (Hymn Book, page 393):

Saviour of the sin-sick soul,

Give me faith to make me whole:

Finish thy great work of grace;

Cut it short in righteousness.

Speak the second time, "Be clean!"

Take away my inbred sin;

Every stumbling-block remove;

Cast it out by Perfect love.

Many other hymns of the Wesleys might be quoted which show that, while their hearts were rapt with poetic fire, they saw the gleaming of gates which many Christians have never entered -the gates of perfect love.

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