

Definitive Sanctification Part 2

by John Murray

John Murray's sermon explores the concept of definitive sanctification, emphasizing the believer's struggle with sin and the hope of future conformity to God's image.

Scripture: 1 John 3:6

Topics: "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the teachings of John in a positive direction. John emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus as the Son of God, which delivers believers from the influence of the evil one. The sermon also highlights the need for believers to live a life characterized by righteousness, love, and obedience to God's commandments. The speaker encourages the audience to have hope in the future manifestation of their conformity to the image of God the Father.

Transcript

O Lord, do thou grant unto us that we may ever be conscious of the gravity of all sin, and do thou forbid that we should ever be complacent toward it. May we never fail to be aroused to indignation and holy love against sin in ourselves and sin in every manifestation of it, that we may have that likeness unto thee and thy holiness. And do thou bless to us our studies to this end, grant that we may not only put off the works of darkness, but that we may also put on the armor of light, that we may love righteousness and truth, and that we may lay hold upon all the resources that are in Christ Jesus, and the attainment of that perfection to which thou hast appointed all those who have their hope in Jesus' name.

For his name's sake. Amen. Now I have been dealing with the teaching of Paul and Peter in connection with this definitive sanctification.

And I have the characters which are both definitively and that is found very largely exclusively in the first epistle of John, that we find this particular emphasis. Well, as you know, John is very decisive and incisive in his teaching. And on this particular question, he is so decisive and incisive in emphasizing the change that takes place in regeneration, that we might readily interpret his teaching to involve sinless perfection.

That is, sinless perfection for the believer in this life. And particularly incisive in this respect is 1 John 3, 6 through 9, 1 John 3, 6 through 9, and 1 John 5, 18. Do you remember 1 John 3, 9? I don't need to read the preceding verses, for 1 John 3, 9 points up the teaching very clearly.

Everyone who is begotten of God does not do sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. The tenses there are to be noted, of course, the perfect passive participle and the perfect passive. Again, amenos, and again in Italian.

Everyone who is begotten of God does not do sin, paraphrasing everyone who is in the condition of having been begotten of God does not do sin, because his seed remains in him, abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. That is, he is in the condition of having been begotten of God. And 1 John 5, 18 is very similar, as you probably remember.

We know that everyone who is begotten of... Again, amenos, again, perfect passive participle. We know that everyone who is begotten of God does not sin, but he who has been begotten of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him, very much to the same effect, although there is a slight variation in the actual terms. Now these texts have troubled a lot of people, especially those who are sensitive to the fact that they cannot claim sinless perfection in this life, but the teaching of John himself, in this very epistle, clearly indicates that he did not mean sinless perfection in these passages.

He did not have in view sinless perfection. It is necessary for us, however, to examine this question, because it is by the examination of John's meaning that we discover the angle from which he teaches this claiming fact of definitive sanctification. Well, the following considerations meditate against the notion of sinless perfection.

First, if John meant sinless perfection, then he would prove too much in terms of his own teaching. If John means sinless perfection, then every regenerate person would be sinlessly perfect, and only sinlessly perfect persons would be regenerated. That, of course, is inescapable, because he says everyone who is begotten of God does not do sin.

In our language, every regenerate person, every born-again person does not do sin. But on John's own assumption, that is not his conception of the believer's condition. In 1 John 2.1, 1 John 2.1, he makes very clear that a believer may sin, and that provision is made for the sins of the sinful.

He writes, if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And John, of course, is not speaking to unbelievers.

He's speaking to believers. And he says, part of the verse, these things which I say unto you, that ye sin not. That also, these things which I say unto you, that ye sin not.

Furthermore, in the first chapter, it is difficult, if not impossible, to suppress the idea of the continuously cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ. The continuously cleansing. When John says in verse 7, The blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Cleanseth us, is cleansing us from all sin. Now, I'm not saying, in the use of the present tense, with absolute necessity, involve the progressiveness of what, of the cleansing to which you refer. But that is the natural interpretation.

That it is continuous, it is progressive. Continues to cleanse us from all sin. Then, second, and second, we choose why we must conclude that John does not mean sinless perfection, is that he says expressly, in 1 John 1.8, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Now, if in that instance, John were thinking simply of past sin, we would have to wonder why he uses the present tense. Particularly when, in verse 10, he uses the perfect tense.

In any case, if John meant sinless perfection in 1 John 3.9, it would be inappropriate and misleading for him to have used the present tense in 1 John 1.8. And that consideration, derived from the present tense, in verse, in 1.8, is strengthened by the use of the present tense in verse 7, 1.7. The blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. The two tenses, the two present tenses, in immediate sequence, build up to the conclusion that John speaks of the sin that still inheres in and attaches to a believer. But thirdly, thirdly, John also says in this epistle, and in the same chapter where these other expressions occur, it has not yet been manifested what we shall be.

It has not yet been manifested what we shall be, 1 John 3.2. And that is defined in the context as likeness to the Father fully proceeds when it shall be manifested. We shall be like Him, or we shall see Him as He is. And likeness to the Father means full conformity to His image, such as will be achieved when this that we shall be will be manifested.

Shall be. You see, it goes without this cause. It has not yet been manifested what we shall be.

But we know that when it shall be manifested, we shall be like Him. We shall see Him as He is. The sequence clearly establishes this thought.

That what we shall be, in the view of John, is this conformity to the image of God the Father. Because God the Father is the personal view in these three verses. Now, anything short of that conformity is not sinless perfection.

But anything that falls short, anything that falls short of complete conformity to the image of God is sin. Furthermore, this conformity of which John speaks is set forth here as a hope. As a hope.

Everyone that has this hope in him that is in the Father, not within him, but in him that is in the Father. Everyone that has this hope, what hope? The hope spoken of in the preceding context. Namely that which will one day be manifested and has not yet been manifested.

If this were already realized, it would no longer be a hope. Again, that most conclusive of all is the next statement of John in that very passage. Everyone that has this hope in him purifies himself.

So you see, according to John's teaching, there is a process of self-purification. Self-purification, but if sinless perfection has already been achieved... ..perfection, what place is there for self-purification? You don't purify what's something that is already perfectly clean. The assumption.

That which we find in 1 John 1, 7 and 8 and 1 John 2 and 1. That there is sin which needs to be cleansed. And the criterion that is being applied in that process of self-purification, just as the goal contemplated in that self-purification, is conformity to the likeness of God the Father. Conformity to the likeness of God.

John had well learned the injunction of his Lord, that He shall be perfect, your Father in heaven. It is now important, refuting this notion of sinless perfection, in 1 John 5, 16. 1 John 5. John implies that there is a sin that may be committed by a believing brother that is not unto death.

Committed that is not. For he says there is a sin not unto death. Sin not unto death.

And that sin becomes the occasion, or preferably the reason, for intercession. Intercession. Which in turn is effectual to the importation of life.

Not unto death I do not say. So if all these concerns are carried in this very discipline, they simply demonstrate that John's very decisive and incisive teaching, in 3, 6 through 9, and in 5, 18, must not be interpreted in terms of sinless perfection. But now we come to the question which is the real question.

What does John have in view? And it is the answer to that question that provides us with the perspective from which John is saying definitively perfection, definitively sanctification, which we find in the other writers of the New Testament. Can one who is begotten do sin? Or his seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God? The begotten of God does not sin. He was being begotten of God.

Well, we have in the text by John an index to John's name. And this I think is a very interesting usage. This is in line with these passages.

These passages, the Gospel of John, are very interesting. These passages, the Gospel according to John, no, no, pardon me, not 1 John, but John 9, 9, 3, John 9, 41, and John 15, 22. John 15, 22, all the words of our Lord are performed by God.

Now in John 9, 3, Jesus says, with respect to the man who hath been born blind, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but in order that the works of God might be made manifest. Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. Did Jesus mean that the parents and the son himself were sinlessly perfect? That they were completely perfect? Ridiculous.

But did he? None of them had committed some specific sin for which the blindness was a penal infliction. Or he had not committed some specific sin for which the blindness was a penal infliction. The assumption in the question asked Jesus was that some one of these, either the parents or the son, but came a sin, an assumption, which the question was based on.

And Jesus refused that assumption by establishing this truth, that it wasn't a particular affliction for some particularly heinous affair. And that's all. So the index to the mean is some sin.

Now again in John 9, 41, same chapter, Jesus said to the Pharisees, If ye were blind, ye should not have sinned. But now ye say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth. If you were blind, you should have not sinned.

Did Jesus mean that these Pharisees would be completely free of sin if they were blind? Again Jesus, namely the great sin of self-infatuation, of self-righteousness, of pride, of self-complacency, which made them immune to the claims of Jesus and to the provisions of his book. But Jesus is saying, in fact, is what Paul says in another connection, professing to be wise they were fools, and excluded from the way. Jesus is laying his finger on the cat.

If you were blind, you were not infatuated with your own selfishness. So it's the same idea. Again in John, 50, in a similar situation to that of John 9, 41.

But now they have no cloak for this. I don't need to elaborate. The same thought applies.

Jesus is speaking of the great sin of rejecting both him and the Father. I have not come and spoken unto them. They had not had sin, this.

John in his gospel, by which to interpret his own statement, John 3, 6, 9 and 1 John 5, namely, that it is specific, some specific kind, a little more broadly, some specific kind of sin. Idea, sure. And John himself in this epistle, provides us with examples of what this specific, in 1 John 4, 2 and 3, propounds the criterion of Christian faith.

The criterion of Christian faith. And it is the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

Christian orthodoxy, that is its universe of discourse. The heresy which denies that Jesus, and within that universe of discourse, the test, the criterion of Christian orthodoxy, is to confess that Jesus Christ, the Christian, the true Christian, the true Christian cannot deny that Jesus Christ is come. And consequently, that to some extent, gives content to this specific complex, specific complex that John has in view, in 1 John 3, 6 through 9, and 5, 18, gives a certain content.

Mainly, the denial that is come in the flesh, the denial of Jesus Christ, and exemplifies the kind, and so I don't suppose, that we could find any particular, any particular, exemplifies the sin John has in view, more than denying Jesus in that identity by which he is to be characterized. I repeat, denying Jesus in that identity, by which he is to be characterized, does not do, in other words, the person who is born of God cannot, John gives us another example of this, in 1 John 5, 16, speaks about the sin that is unto death. He says, I do not say that you would fail.

There is a sin unto death, and although it is very, very difficult to be decisive as to what this particular sin is, it isn't unreasonable to associate it with that very principle that we find in 1 John 4, 2 and 3, namely the sin of denial, apostatizing, and if it isn't unpardonable, and it's very close to that situation which we find in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 6, again in chapter 10, chapter 6, 2 through 6, and chapter 10, 29. ...templing in the fruit the Son of God did, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified and unholy, and doing despite to... Master Rio runs out at this point a loss of possibly one minute in the tape. The tape will run approximately an hour and 45 to an hour and 50 minutes, necessitating a 120-minute cassette.

We would have to look in a more positive direction, wouldn't we all, if we are going to find out what John would mean by this. This is negative, but what does John teach in a positive direction? This would give content with the truth of holiness and righteousness and love. John doesn't fail us on this score.

We are not talking in this positive direction. Take, for example, 1 John 5, 4 and 5. 1 John 5, 4 and 5. The faith of Jesus is a faith that overcomes the world. It overcomes the world.

Therefore, because everything that is begotten of God, here it's neuter, there's more in the abstract. Everything that is begotten of... Everyone that is begotten of God, that's right. Everything that is begotten of God overcomes the world.

Overcomes the world. And this is the victory which has overcome the world. Our faith.

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes? You know, you have here a new element that fell upon the confession that Jesus has come in the flesh. Now, the emphasis falls upon and it is that faith delivers from what in 5.18 John thinks of as the dominion of the evil one. The evil one.

Expand that a little further. 16, 1 John 2, 13-16 It is the faith that delivers from the world the flesh and the devil and also in that same passage from the lust of the flesh the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. And

you can go a good deal further than that in this positive direction and find that this is characterized this kind of thing is characterized by the doing of righteousness.

1 John 2, 29 The love and knowledge of God. 1 John 4, 7 The doing of the will of God. 1 John 2, 17 Love for those who are begotten of God.

1 John 4, 20-21 The keeping of the commandments of God. 1 John 2, 3-6 1 John 2, 3-6 1 John 5 Do you see that half a lot of fractions both negative and positive fall away? And it is in these terms that the Apostle John would define what we are calling definitive, definitive, definitive sanctification. And I'll just say a little more, a few words more about that at the beginning of the next hour in order to relate it.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID1290.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-murray/definitive-sanctification-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net