

Definition of Sanctification

by Samuel Alexander Danford

Sanctification is God's act of setting a man free from the carnal nature and setting into operation within him a law through the Holy Spirit, whereby he can fulfill the requirements of God's holy law.

Scripture: Romans 8:1

Topics: "Holy Living", "Sanctification"

Description

Samuel Alexander Danford preaches on Sanctification, emphasizing the importance of understanding what it truly means. Sanctification is not sinless perfection but a life where one can abide in Christ to live holy lives. It is not angelic or heavenly perfection but being unblamable and faultless in God's eyes. Sanctification is God's act of setting a person free from the carnal nature and operating through the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's requirements, making one perfect in love.

Transcript

Sanctification, What Is It?

"When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him." Rationalism, higher criticism, etc., like a flood, are sweeping, the pulpits of our land; and a body, ever enlarging, is being raised up from among God's children who are professing a deeper spirituality than has held in the church for a long time. In England they call it "the deeper life," "the Spirit-filled life," "the life of faith," etc. But in America, where Methodism is the sphere in which it mostly prevails, it is called "Sanctification," or "Perfect love," as Wesley styled it.

All these names are meant to designate a certain type of spiritual life different from the ordinary regenerated life of the average Christian. And while the definitions of this life, and the degree of attainment in it may vary somewhat; while some extremists may stand stoutly for their peculiar shibboleth, their pet definitions and terms for this life, it is in substance the same as is called Sanctification, or the Spirit-filled life. The one phrase regards the result in the Christian, making him holy; the other has regard to the source of the life -- God's Spirit.

There are two schools of theology in God's church; and their systems and their preaching, whatever other ear-marks they may have, are characterized by this: The one looks at its system from the divine, the other from the human side. One says, "Work out your own salvation." The other says, "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do." So the two terms used above of this life will be preferred by the respective

schools.

Great harm has been done the cause of sanctification by indiscreet professors -- often not possessors -- of the life. As one expresses it, "I used to have my religion north of my collar button" (in his head), "but now I have it south of the collar button" (in the heart). A noted city missionary has long had the reputation of being a "holiness fighter." Yet it was the writer's privilege to see him baptized of the Spirit recently. He says he saw only such advocates of sanctification as flocked to his mission to flaunt their self-righteousness, and to fling at the churches. But when God sent some truly Spirit-filled workers there, led by a wondrously converted and sanctified actress, he appointed a service for the reception of God's Spirit, and he, with several others swept into the experience.

How important, then, that we really know what sanctification is, and what it is not.

1. It is not sinless perfection, so that one cannot be tempted, and cannot sin.

The sanctified are tempted, may sin, if they will, and will sin if they do not abide in Christ. But it is life wherein they can abide in Christ so as not to sin, if they wish. The "prone to wander" having been changed to "prone to abide," they can, and if genuine, do live holy lives, as Paul did. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:10.) "In Him is no sin; whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not."

2. It is not angelic, Adamic, or heavenly perfection.

It is unblamable, yet may not be faultless. See 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Jude 24: "preserved blameless" now, "presented faultless" at Christ's coming.

3. We may err in Judgment.

Sanctification affects the heart directly, the head indirectly. Therefore, we may unintentionally break God's law, and be blameless, though not faultless. The sister gave poison for quinine. She killed her sister; was right in her heart and motives, erred in judgment, was blameless, yet not faultless -- it was her fault.

It is an experience necessitated by the fact that regeneration, while implanting in the Christian a divine, sinless nature (1 John 5:18), yet does not eradicate the Adamic, carnal nature. Hence Paul, writing to the Corinthians, calls them "the Church of God," "called saints," yet recognizes many of them as "babes in Christ," as carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1), "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." He recognizes them as "in Christ," "brethren," yet carnal. This carnal nature brings divisions, strifes, vain glorying I-am-of-Paul Presbyterians, I-am-of-Peter Romanists, I-am-of-Christ "Christians," etc., thus producing schism. This, too, leads to that awful struggle within the Christian portrayed in Romans 7:7-24, till we cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul, who had taught in Romans 6:1-13 the deliverance by faith, and showed in 7:7-24 how it could not be by works, tells us in Romans 8:1-8 that it can be by the Spirit: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Sanctification, then, is God's act, setting a man free from the carnal nature left in him by degeneration, and setting into operation within him a law through the Holy Spirit, whereby he can fulfill the requirements of God's holy law; that is, he is made perfect in love, so that, freed from the carnal mind, which is enmity to God (Romans 8:5-8), he loves God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself.

(a) God the Father sanctifies. Jude 1; 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 23. It is God's will for us: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; Ephesians 1:4; 5:26, 27.

(b) Our sanctification was included in the atonement, even as our justification; hence it is the blood that is said to sanctify us.

"The blood, the blood is all my plea; Hallelujah! it sanctifies me." (Hebrews 9:13, 14; and 10:10, 14, 29, etc.)

(c) It is in Christ. We are chosen in Him to be holy (Ephesians 1:4), sanctified in Him; hence all God's true, persevering children are in the eternal purpose regarded as sanctified. (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30.) In Christ all our redemptive rights were wrought out, secured for us.

(d) It is by the gift of the Holy Spirit in His baptismal power that secures to us our sanctified state. He sanctifies us (2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans. 15:16.)

(e) It is upon the Word, through the truth we apprehend the will of God to be our sanctification, we see the possibility and desirability, yea, even necessity of our sanctification, and the promises upon which faith can rest and obtain this sanctification. (John 17:17, 19; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.)

(f) It is not by growth, or works, or resolutions, or cries, or groans, or shouts, or "exercises," or anything that we do that sanctifies us. It is by faith: 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 26:18.

Regeneration is preceded by a sense of our sinful lives; sanctified by a sense of our sin in the heart.

Regeneration is sought, that we may escape hell and enjoy heaven. Sanctification, that we may escape sin in the soul and be holy.

Regeneration grows from a desire to be with Christ; sanctification, from a desire to be like Christ.

Regeneration is preceded by surrender of our rebellious lives and hearts and wills to Christ Sanctification, by a supreme consecration to Christ of all we are and have for time and eternity. The unsaved is a condemned rebel -- all is forfeited to God's Justice. He cannot consecrate, for he owns nothing; the regenerate is an heir of God, and to God he devotes all that is in him; the bad to be rooted out, consumed by holy fire, the good to be salted with Holy fire, as a whole burnt offering to God. Then he reckons himself "dead indeed unto sin," because in Christ sin was put away. (Romans. 6:1-13.) He lays all on God's altar, God says "the altar sanctifies the gift," Christ being the altar, all yielded to Christ, He just sets to his seal that God is true, and so it is done, feeling or no feeling. He is not seeking to "feel happy like you all." He is seeking to be made like Christ, his will God's will; and he believes it is done, because he has met the conditions, and God said so. But will he not know it? Most assuredly. How? By such witness as the Holy Spirit sees fit to give.

It certainly will bring victory over heart sins, purity of heart. Yet some do not get the same complete victory that others do. Some camp further up the country by stronger faith, but all get over Jordan. -- Selected.

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