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What is the Baptist View of Sanctification?

The Baptist view of any Christian Doctrine is simply the interpretation of the Bible teaching on that doctrine. What does the Bible teach that Sanctification is?

If we could divest ourselves of preconceived notions and turn to the Bible as if for the first time the way to an answer would be easy. Look first into the Old Testament:

We meet the word there in Gen. 2:3. What does it mean?

"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Evidently the import here is the simple thought of Separation and Dedication—separation from the other days and dedication to a special use. The same simple idea is the word in Exod. 13: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Sanctify unto me all the first-born both of man and beast: it is mine." It is in this sense that people are said to sanctify themselves: "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify, now, yourselves." 2 Chron. 29.

This root idea, of separation and dedication, running through the Old Testament, is also the basis of the New Testament meaning of the word:

John 10: "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, etc."

John 17: "Sanctify them in the truth." For this cause I sanctify myself."

Here is the Old Testament thought of setting apart for a special service. This is true both of the master and the disciples; for He says of them: "As the Father hath sent me so send I them." Ver. 18.

In 1 Thess. 4 the word is found with the single idea of separation. "This is the will of God even your sanctification that you abstain from fornication." And Peter uses it with one thought of "setting apart" when he exhorts the suffering brethren "to sanctify Jesus as Lord in their hearts."

Sanctify is clearly marked off from washing, cleansing, justification, purification, growth in Christian character; e. g., 1 Cor. 6: "Such were some of you but ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified." So in Ephes. 5, speaking of the church, the Holy Spirit says:

"Even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water and the word." Rev., Ver.

The "cleansing" precedes sanctification; then the development, or character-building (growth) follows. "That he might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, that it should be holy and without blemish." With the thought in mind that sanctification is separation and dedication all this is plain.

Sanctification, then, is not a process in the biblical meaning. It is an act of God, complete. Purification and character building are gradual; sanctification is instantaneous, at the moment of salvation. We grow in sanctification; but not into it. It is for this reason the Apostolic writers speak of all the saved as also sanctified—even the corrupt Corinthians.

1 Cor. 1: "Unto the Church of God at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."

1 Pet. 1: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God in sanctification." Also in 2 Thess. 2:13.

With this meaning in mind, we can understand the writer of the Hebrews when he says,

speaking of the covenant of grace:

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ." "For by our offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

We may think of sanctification as the whole process of separating a child of God from everything contrary to God and contrary to his fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light. This is the theological sense of the word. But the Bible use of the word is more simple.

"Should a Christian seek sanctification?"

No, he should seek "to walk in the 'Spirit'" so as not "to fulfil the lusts of the flesh" that he may actualize a sanctification already completed by his Heavenly Father. He should do with sanctification what the beloved Apostle says of purification: "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." John 3.

Every one who has placed the blessed hope "in pure" in God's reckoning and therefore, John affirms, purifies himself, i. e., actualizes in life what is a fact in the divine plan. So in regard to sanctification: We must seek the power of the Holy Spirit to live "as become saints," or sanctified ones. We are called to be saints, i. e., sanctified persons. We are to walk worthy of our high calling. He who you are already reckoned. Actualize on the human side what is true on the divine side of the picture.

"What is entire sanctification?"

A QUESTION RE ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

The only text that would suggest such a division of sanctification as entire and partial is found in 1 Thess. 5:23:

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly and may your body, soul, and spirit, be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The text as it stands in our English translation seems to teach degrees of sanctification. But the Apostle's prayer is not for degrees of sanctification for soul or body; but that all parts of the individual, the whole of him, body, soul and spirit, be consecrated to God. He desires that they may be kept from dissolution (entire) until Christ comes; that they (the three parts) might be blameless when He comes. Paul recognizes only this division in sanctification, viz., that one may be sanctified, that is, set apart to God, in soul, but fail to realize that the body too must be for God. And the spirit, the highest part of human nature is for God. When all is dedicated to God and used for His service, all is blameless. Each child of God should be thus wholly sanctified—body, soul and spirit given up to God. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies living sacrifices," etc. Rom. 12:1.

Rev. F. B. Meyer presided recently at a great meeting which was held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. The meeting was called to pray for: Divine guidance in the education fight, "an I through every part," says the *British Weekly*, "there rang the clear note of coming triumph." There were many well-known men beside Mr. Meyer on the platform, including Revs. Charles and Thomas Spurgeon, Arthur Mursell, and Rev. J. R. Wood. Mr. Meyer asked that special prayer should be made for those who were to appear before the magistrates at Alnwick on the next day. If they went in the spirit of the Winksworth men, it would, he said, be an act of devout and holy consecration to God. Some of those men, Mr. Meyer told the audience,

were local preachers, and they were preaching the greatest sermon they had ever preached. Before we went to the magistrates," Mr. Meyer continued, "we all stood together in prayer, and asked that God would use that Act to kindle a flame to burn right through the North of England. . . . I believe that this turning of men's minds upon the great principles of Non-conformity as against priestcraft is going to bring about the revival of that old spirit of our fathers." Mr. Meyer spoke of an old lady of ninety who had been consulting him as to the course to take in refusing the rate.

It is related of Richard Burke that when found in a deep meditation after listening to one of his brother's splendid speeches in Parliament, he excused himself by saying, "I have been wondering how Ned has contrived to monopolize all the family; but now I remember, when we were at play, he was always at work." The natural talents of Richard Burke were scarcely inferior to those of the great statesman; but while the one sleeps in Westminster Abbey and is held in grateful remembrance by an admiring country, the other is forgotten. When opportunity knocked on their door, one said, "come in" the other said, "please wait until I am ready."

Nothing could be more commonplace and incidental than that of a thirsty man asking a woman for a drink of water, and yet by means of this apparently insignificant incident, Jesus was enabled easily and naturally to turn the attention of the woman to the greatest of all subjects. The wise soul-winner need never be at a loss either for an opportunity or of a method of introducing the great subject of salvation to sinners. A cup of water is a good enough text. God does not require great things with which to accomplish His testimony. A sling and a stone, an ox gourd, a lamp and a pitcher and trumpet, even a shepherd's crook, is good enough for Him to use in bringing His people out of Egypt. It is not the instrument, the words, or the occasion, but the power of God that makes weak things mighty.

It is common for the unthoughtful to be surprised at the term Jesus used toward His mother when he addressed her as "woman." The term woman was not one of disrespect. It is only so with those who have allowed this noble word to be abused and made to mean something less and lower than it does. Indeed, this term is the noble one by which either wife, mother, or full grown maid can be addressed. What can be nobler in this world than a true "woman"? Every true woman is a lady in the best sense of the word, but there are many "ladies" in the world's sense of that word, who are by no means "true women." When Jesus was on the cross in the last hours of His agony, His filial thought and love turned toward His mother, and when He committed her to John's care, He used this term of high respect and endearment: "Woman, behold thy Son." When we speak of our mother we do not say, "She was the best lady that ever lived;" but, "She was the best woman that ever lived." We are glad that Jesus sanctified, by the use of it to His mother, this noblest term by which we designate ours.

There is a duty of prayer, most sacred and holy, but prayer is by no means the only duty. The answer will never come while we stay on our knees, but only when we rise up and go forward.—J. R. Miller.

Watchfulness keeps us prayerful, and prayerfulness keeps us watchful.—Maclaren.

God's promises are stars that are always shining for the eye of faith.—Exchange.