

Entire Sanctification: A Second Work of Grace in the Life of a Believer

by D.S. Warner

D.S. Warner's sermon emphasizes the necessity and attainability of Entire Sanctification as a transformative second work of grace in the believer's life.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 4:23, Colossians 3:10, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 13:12, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Christian Perfection", "Entire Sanctification"

Description

D.S. Warner preaches about the call to a higher state of grace beyond just being born again, emphasizing that this elevated Christian experience is received by faith through the Holy Spirit, not by works. He highlights the importance of entire sanctification as a distinct experience subsequent to justification, essential for the salvation of souls, the purity and power of the church, and the glory of God. Warner explains that Christian perfection is the complete moral restoration of man, reinstating the divine likeness in the soul and freeing it from sin, a state entered through the work of sanctification.

Transcript

Being born again is not all that there is! God's Word calls us to a "higher state of grace," "a higher plane of Christian experience" that cannot be attained by our works and efforts, but simply is to be received by faith through the Holy Spirit

The church is God's appointed means of saving the world. ... Having, therefore, a clear conviction that upon the preaching and testimony of entire sanctification as a distinct experience subsequent to justification, more than upon all else besides, depends the salvation of immortal souls, the safety of converts, the purity and consequent power, peace, and prosperity of the church, and glory of God; and perceiving that this "second grace" is the ultimate end of Christ's death, and the great burden of the apostolic ministry, I was constrained to dedicate forever unto the Lord all the energies of my being for the promotion of this great salvation.

Perfection, as applied to redeemed souls, denotes the complete moral restoration of man from the effects of the Fall. Not physical or mental restoration, for that will not be until the Resurrection. And as the fall of man effaced the image of God from the soul and sent a current of depravity down through the entire race, the perfect restoration of the soul must, necessarily, reinstate its former purity and divine likeness.

Christian perfection is, therefore, in kind and not in degree. In other words, it is perfection of our moral nature, and not the development or full growth of our powers. This position is well established in Hebrews 10:14-15: "For by one offering He [Christ] has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."

The state of perfection, we are here told, is entered by the work of sanctification. And we read that Christ sanctifies "the people with His own blood" (Heb. 13:12). And the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Hence perfection is the state of being free from sin.

Surely, no one ever received the testimony of God's Spirit that he was perfect in degree, or had reached the summit of Christian growth, beyond which he could never become more wise, strong, or fruitful. But thousands have received the Spirit's witness of perfect heart purity. It is generally believed that our moral and mental powers are susceptible of endless development.

But the Bible teaches a perfection in this life that can never be improved upon: "He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." Conybeare and Howson render as follows: "By one offering He has perfected forever the purification of them whom He sanctifies."

Perfection, then, as attainable in this life, is confined to man's purity and what is necessarily therein included. Consistent with the Bible and universal experience it cannot be otherwise defined. While our physical and mental defects remain until the Resurrection, our moral nature alone is susceptible of perfection now, and that only in quality, leaving all the powers of the soul free to enlarge in magnitude. Being made free from sin and renewed in the image of God, as first created, the soul cannot become more pure, and is therefore perfected forever (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23-24; 5:26-27; Col. 3:10).

Growing into sanctification is a ... fatal delusion. Every newborn soul, sooner or later, discovers a great want in his heart. From the day of their conversion grace had led the newborn souls to hunger and pray for and expect a better experience, a deeper work, a complete salvation from sin. But having no Joshua to lead them into the desired rest of soul, they finally conclude that they must give up seeking a better experience and become pure by growth.

Growth, in no instance, changes the nature of anything; it only increases its size, or degree; while cleansing is a process of diminishing. The first is natural and progressive, the second done at a stroke.

I hope you can see that the implanting of a new life and new nature is one thing (done at regeneration); the removal of every obstruction and antagonism to the new nature another (accomplished by the blood of Christ in entire sanctification); and that the growth of that plant is still another thing.

The whole is analogous to the implanting of seed; the removal of all noxious weeds, roots, and plants from the soil; and the growth of the plant. The first and second are instantaneous works, produced by an extrinsic agent; the last a gradual and natural process commenced in the first state, but greatly accelerated by the work of purging away of the old nature, or inbred sin.

Thirteen years of experience, observation, and conversation among faithful believers in this initial grace clearly evince to me that there is an underlying sentiment, quite common, that the Bible is not altogether practical; that it is a pure and perfect standard which all should aim at, but no one can expect to measure up to in this life. This crops out in expressions as follows: I am striving to do the will of God; I am trying to live as near right as I can; I want to obey God just as far as it is possible. These and similar expressions,

very common, all betray a half-suppressed conviction that the requirements of the Bible are somewhat beyond our capacity in our present situation.

Now whether we attribute this discrepancy to the impracticability of the Bible or the incongeniality of our condition of life we impeach the goodness and wisdom of God. We either cast upon Him the blasphemous reflection that He did not know the circumstances to which we are necessitated in this world, or lacked the ability to give us a religion adapted thereto. But the more grace solves the difficulty. It shows us that the trouble is not in the Bible, nor external surroundings, but a want of internal conformity to God and His holy laws.

Now, as old and young in the merely regenerated state find it impossible or extremely difficult to measure up to this divine rule, we are forced to conclude that the Bible is not quite practical, or there is a higher state of grace that perfectly adjusts us to the yoke of Christ and makes all Christian duty easy. The latter fact is clearly established by the Word of Truth and the testimony of all who have perfected holiness in the fear of God.

Glory to the God of all grace! When raised into this purer atmosphere, this holy mount of full assurance, we no longer view the Sermon on the Mount and sublime precepts of the epistles as a standard to be admired, but never realized, but as lines along which the soul moves with the utmost ease and ecstatic delight.

To deny the higher plane of Christian experience is, therefore, to contradict Christ's representation of His service and impeach the wisdom and goodness of God. To acknowledge and embrace it is to vindicate the highest and purest precepts of the Lord and to magnify His super-abounding grace that fulfills them all in us to the praise of His glory.

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