

Andrew Murray:

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate"-Heb. xiii. 12.

"Cleansing through the blood" was the subject of our last chapter.

SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE BLOOD must now occupy our attention.

To a superficial observer it might seem that there is little difference between **CLEANSING** and **SANCTIFICATION**, that the two words mean about the same thing ; but the difference is great and important.

CLEANSING has to do chiefly with the old life, and the stain of sin which must be removed, and is only preparatory.

SANCTIFICATION concerns the new life and that characteristic of it which must be imparted to it by God. **SANCTIFICATION**, which means union with God, is the peculiar fulness of blessing purchased for us by the blood.

The distinction between these two things is clearly marked in Scripture. Paul reminds us that "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it" (Eph. v. 25, R. V.). Having first **CLEANSED** it, then He **SANCTIFIES** it. Writing to Timothy he says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use" (2 Tim. ii. 21). **SANCTIFICATION** is a blessing which follows after, and surpasses **CLEANSING**.

It is also strikingly illustrated by the ordinances connected with the consecration of the Priests, compared with that of the Levites. In the case of the latter, who took a lower position than the Priests in the service of the Sanctuary, no mention is made of **SANCTIFICATION**; but the word **CLEANSING** is used five times (Num. viii).

In the consecration of the Priests, on the other hand, the word "to **SANCTIFY**" is often used; for the Priests stood in a closer relationship to God than the Levites (Exod. xxix; Lev. viii).

This record at the same time emphasises the close connection between the sacrificial blood, and **SANCTIFICATION**. In the case of the consecration of the Levites-**RECONCILIATION** for sin was made, and they were sprinkled with the water of purification for **CLEANSING**, but they were not sprinkled with blood. But in the consecration of the Priests, blood had to be sprinkled upon them. They were **SANCTIFIED** by a more personal and intimate application of the blood.

All this was typical of **SANCTIFICATION** through the **BLOOD OF JESUS**, and this is what we now seek to understand, that we may obtain a share in it. Let us then consider :

I. WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS.

II. THAT IT WAS THE GREAT OBJECT OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

III. THAT IT CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE BLOOD.

I. WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS.

To understand what the **SANCTIFICATION** of the redeemed is, we must first learn what the holiness of God is. He alone is the **HOLY ONE**. Holiness in the creature must be received from Him.

God's holiness is often spoken of as though it consisted in His hatred of, and hostility to sin; but this gives no explanation of what holiness actually is. It is a merely negative statement that God's holiness cannot bear sin.

Holiness is that attribute of God because of which He always is, and wills, and does what is supremely good; because of which also He desires what is supremely good in His creatures, and bestows it upon them.

God is called "The Holy One" in Scripture, not only because He punishes sin, but also because He is the Redeemer of His people. It is His holiness, which ever wills what is good for all, that moved Him to redeem

sinners. Both the WRATH of God which punishes sin, and LOVE of God which redeems the sinner, spring from the same source-His holiness. Holiness is the perfection of God's nature.

Holiness in man is a disposition in entire agreement with that of God; which chooses in all things to will as God wills: as it is written:-"As he is holy, so be ye holy" (I Pet. i. 15). Holiness in us is nothing else than oneness with God. The Sanctification of God's people is effected by the communication to them of the holiness of God. There is no other way of obtaining SANCTIFICATION, save by the Holy God bestowing what He alone possesses. He alone is the HOLY ONE. He is the Lord who sanctifies.

By the different meanings which Scripture attaches to the words sanctification, and "to sanctify"-a certain relationship with God, into which we are brought, is pointed out.

The first and simplest meaning of the word SANCTIFICATION is "separation." That which is taken out of its surroundings, by God's command, and is set aside or separated as His own possession and for His service-that is holy. This does not mean separation from sin only, but from all that is in the world, even from what may be permissible. Thus God sanctified the seventh day. The other days were not unclean, for God saw all that He had made and "beheld it was very good." But that day alone was holy, which God had taken possession of by His own special act. In the same way God had separated Israel from other nations, and in Israel, had separated the priests, to be holy unto Him. This separation unto SANCTIFICATION is always God's own work, and so the electing grace of God is often closely connected with SANCTIFICATION. "Ye shall be holy unto me . . . I have separated you . . . that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx. 26). "The man whom the Lord shall choose shall be holy" (Num. xvi. 7). "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee" (Deut. vii. 6). God cannot take part with other lords. He must be the sole possessor, and ruler, of those to whom He reveals and imparts His holiness.

But this separation is not all that is included in the word SANCTIFICATION. It is only the indispensable condition of what must follow. When separated, man stands before God in no respect differing from an object without life that has been sanctified to the service of God. If the separation is to be of value, something more must take place. Man must surrender himself willingly, and heartily, to this separation. SANCTIFICATION includes personal consecration to the Lord to be His.

SANCTIFICATION can become ours only when it sends down its roots into, and takes up its abode in the depths of our personal life; in our will, and in our love. God sanctifies no man against his will, therefore the personal, hearty, surrender to God is an indispensable part of SANCTIFICATION.

It is for this reason that the Scriptures not only speak of God sanctifying us, but they say often, that we must sanctify ourselves.

But even by consecration, true SANCTIFICATION is not yet complete. Separation and consecration are together only the preparation for the glorious work that God will do, as He imparts His own holiness to the soul. "PARTAKING OF THE DIVINE NATURE" is the blessing which is promised to believers in SANCTIFICATION. "That we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. xii. 10)-that is the glorious aim of God's work in those whom He separates for Himself. But this impartation of His holiness is not a gift of something that is apart from God Himself; no 1 it is in personal fellowship with Him, and partaking of His divine life, that SANCTIFICATION can be obtained.

As the Holy ONE, God dwelt among the people of Israel to sanctify his people (Exod. xxix. 45, 46). As the Holy ONE, He dwells in us. It is the presence of God alone that can sanctify. But so surely is this our portion, that Scripture does not shrink from speaking of God dwelling in our hearts in such power that we may be "filled unto all the fulness of God." True SANCTIFICATION is fellowship with God and His dwelling in us. So it was necessary that God in Christ should take up His abode in the flesh, and that the Holy Spirit should come to dwell in us. This is what SANCTIFICATION means.

Let us now notice :

II. THIS SANCTIFICATION WAS THE OBJECT FOR WHICH CHRIST SUFFERED.

This is plainly stated in Hebrews xiii. 12: "Jesus suffered that he might sanctify his people." In the wisdom of God a participation in His holiness is the highest destiny of man. Therefore, also, this was the central object of the coming of our Lord Jesus to earth; and above all, of His sufferings and death. It was "that he might sanctify his people" and "that they might be holy and without blame" (Eph. i. 4).

How the sufferings of Christ attained this end, and became our **SANCTIFICATION**, is made plain to us by the words which He spake to His Father, when He was about to allow Himself to be bound as a sacrifice. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). It was because His sufferings and death were a **SANCTIFICATION** of Himself, that they can become **SANCTIFICATION** for us.

What does that mean? Jesus was the **HOLY ONE OF GOD**, "The Son whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world," and must He sanctify Himself? He must do so; it was indispensable.

The **SANCTIFICATION** which He possessed was not beyond the reach of temptation. In His temptation He must maintain it, and show how perfectly His will was surrendered to the holiness of God. We have seen that true holiness in man is the perfect oneness of His will with that of God. Through all our Lord's life, from the temptation in the wilderness onwards, He had subjected His will to the will of His Father, and had consecrated Himself as a sacrifice to God. But it was chiefly in Gethsemane He did this. There was the hour, and the power of darkness; the temptation to put away the terrible cup of wrath from His lips, and to do His own will came with almost irresistible power, but He rejected the temptation. He offered up Himself, and His will, to the will and holiness of God. He sanctified Himself, by a perfect oneness of will, with that of God. This sanctification of Himself has become the power by which we also may be sanctified through the truth. This is in perfect accord with what we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, speaking of the words used by Christ, we read, "I come to do thy will, O God," and then it is added, "By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 9, 10). It was because the offering of His body was His surrender of Himself to do the will of God, that we become sanctified by that will. He sanctified Himself there, for us, that we might be sanctified through the truth. The perfect obedience in which He surrendered Himself, that God's holy will might be accomplished in Him, was not only the meritorious cause of our salvation, but is at the same time the power by which sin was for ever conquered, and by which the same disposition, and the same sanctification, may be created in our hearts.

Elsewhere in this Epistle to the Hebrews, the true relationship of our Lord to His own people is even more clearly characterised as having **SANCTIFICATION** for its chief end after speaking of how becoming it was, that our Lord should suffer as He did, we read:-"For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one" (Heb. ii. 11). The unity between the Lord Jesus and His people consists in the fact, that they both receive their life from one Father, and both have a share in one and the same **SANCTIFICATION**. Jesus is the sanctifier, they become the sanctified. **SANCTIFICATION** is the bond that unites them. "Therefore Jesus also suffered that he might sanctify his people with his own blood."

If we are willing to really understand, and experience what **SANCTIFICATION** by **THE BLOOD** means, then it is of the utmost importance for us, to first lay fast hold of the fact that **SANCTIFICATION** is the characteristic, and purpose of the entire sufferings of our Lord, of which sufferings the blood was the fruit, and means of blessing. His **SANCTIFICATION** of Himself has the characteristic of those sufferings, and therein lay its value and power. Our **SANCTIFICATION** is the purpose of those sufferings, and only to attain that purpose do they work out the perfect blessing. In proportion as this is clear to us, we shall press forward into the true meaning and blessing of His sufferings.

It was as the holy **ONE** that God foreordained redemption. It was His will to glorify His holiness in victory over sin, by the sanctification of man after His own image. It was with the same object that our Lord Jesus endured, and accomplished His sufferings; we must be consecrated to God. And if the Holy Spirit, the holy God as Spirit-comes into us to reveal in us the redemption that is in Jesus, this continues to be with Him, also, the main object. As the Holy Spirit He is the spirit of holiness.

RECONCILIATION, **PARDON**, and **CLEANSING** from sin, have all an unspeakable value; they all, however, point onwards to **SANCTIFICATION**. It is God's will that each one who has been marked by the precious blood, should know that it is a divine mark, characterising his entire separation to God; that this blood calls him to an undivided consecration to a life, wholly for God, and that this blood is the promise, and the power of a participation in God's holiness, through which God Himself will make His abiding place in him, and be his God.

Oh, that we might understand, and believe that:

"Jesus also suffered, that he might sanctify his people, with his own blood" (Heb. xiii. 12).

III. HOW **SANCTIFICATION 13Y **THE BLOOD** IS TO BE OBTAINED.**

An answer to this question, in general, is that every one who is a partaker of the virtue of the blood, is also a partaker of SANCTIFICATION, and is in God's sight a sanctified person.

In proportion as he lives in close and abiding contact with the blood, he continues to experience, increasingly, its sanctifying effects ; even though he still understands but little of how those effects are produced. Let no one think that he must first understand how to lay hold of, or explain everything, before he may, by faith, pray that the blood might manifest its sanctifying power in him. No; it was just in connection with the bath of cleansing-the washing of the disciples' feet-that the Lord Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." It is the Lord Jesus Himself who sanctifies His people "by His own blood." He who heartily gives himself up to believing worship of, and intercourse with, the LAMB, who has bought us with His blood, will experience through that blood a SANCTIFICATION beyond his conception. The Lord Jesus will do this for him.

But the believer ought to grow in knowledge also; thus only can he enter into the full blessing which is prepared for him. We have not only the right, but it is our duty to inquire earnestly what the essential connection is between the blessed effect of the blood, and our SANCTIFICATION, and in what way the Lord Jesus will work out in us, by His blood, those things which we have ascertained to be the chief qualities of SANCTIFICATION.

We have seen that the beginning of all SANCTIFICATION is SEPARATION to God, as His entire possession, to be at His disposal. And is not this just what the blood proclaims ?that the power of sin is broken ; that we are loosed from its bonds; that we are no longer its bond-servants; but belong to Him who purchased our freedom with His blood? "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price" this is the language in which the blood tells us that we are God's possession. Because He desires to have us entirely for Himself, He has chosen and bought us, and set upon us the distinguishing mark of the blood, as those who are separated from all around them, to live only for His service. This idea of separation is clearly expressed in the words we so often repeat, "Jesus, that he might sanctify his people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach." "Going out" from all that is of this world, was the characteristic of Him who was holy, undefiled, separate from sinners; and it must be the characteristic of all His followers.

Believer, the Lord Jesus HAS SANCTIFIED you through His own blood, and He desires to make you experience, through that blood, the full power of this SANCTIFICATION. Endeavour to gain a clear impression of what has taken place in you through the sprinkling of that blood. The holy God desires to have you entirely for Himself. No one, nothing, may any longer have the least right over you, nor have you any right over yourself. God has separated you unto HIMSELF, and that you might feel this He set His mark upon you. That mark is the most wonderful thing that is to be found on earth or in heaven THE BLOOD OF JESUS. The blood in which the life of the eternal Son of God is; the blood that on the throne of grace is ever before God's face; the blood that assures you of full redemption from the power of sin; that blood is sprinkled upon you, as a sign that you belong to God.

Believer, I pray you, let every thought about the blood awaken in you the glorious confession, "By his own blood, the Lord Jesus has sanctified me, he has taken complete possession of me for God, and I belong entirely to God."

We have seen that SANCTIFICATION is more than separation. That is only the beginning. We have seen also that personal consecration and hearty and willing surrender to live only for, and in God's holy will, is part of SANCTIFICATION.

In what way can the blood of Christ work out this surrender in us, and SANCTIFY us in that surrender? The answer is not difficult. It is not enough to believe in the power of the blood to redeem us, and to free us from sin, but we must, above all, notice the source of this power.

We know that it has this power, because of the willingness with which the Lord Jesus surrenders Himself. In the shedding of His blood He sanctifies: Himself, offered Himself entirely to God and His holiness. It is because of this that the blood is so holy, and possesses such sanctifying power. In the blood we have an impressive representation of the self-surrender of Christ. The blood ever speak of the consecration of Jesus to the Father, as the opening of the way, and supplying the power for victory: over sin. And the closer we come into contact with the blood, and the more we live under the deep impression of having been sprinkled by the blood, we shall hear more clearly the voice of the blood, declare that "Entire surrender to God is the way to full redemption from sin."

The voice of the blood will not speak simply teach us or to awaken thought; the blood speaks with a divine and life giving power. What it commands, that it bestows. It works out in us the same disposition that was in our Lord Jesus. By His own blood Jesus sanctifies us, that we, holding nothing back, might surrender ourselves with all our hearts to the holy will of God.

But CONSECRATION itself even along with any; following SEPARATION is still only a preparation, Entire Sanctification takes place when God takes possession of and falls with His glory the temple that is consecrated to Him. "There will I meet with the children of Israel, and they shall be sanctified by my glory" (Exod. xxix. 43j. Actual, complete SANCTIFICATION consists in God's impartation of His own holiness-of Himself.

Here also the blood speaks:-It tells us that heaven is opened, that the powers of the heavenly life have come down to earth, that every hindrance has been removed, and God can make His abode with man.

Immediate nearness and fellowship with God, are made possible by the blood. The believer who surrenders himself unreservedly to the blood, obtains the full assurance that God will bestow Himself wholly, and will reveal His holiness in him.

How glorious are the results of such a SANCTIFICATION! Through the Holy Spirit, the soul's intercourse is in the living experience of God's abiding nearness ; accompanied by the awakening of the tenderest carefulness against sin; guarded by caution and the fear of God.

But to live in watchfulness against sin does not satisfy the soul. The temple must not only be cleansed but it must be filled with God's glory. All the virtues of divine holiness, as manifested in the Lord Jesus, are to be sought for and found, in fellowship with God. Sanctification means union with God; fellowship in His will; sharing His life; conformity to His image.

Christians-"Wherefore Jesus also . . . suffered without the gate that he might sanctify his people with his own blood. Let us go forth unto him without the camp." Yes; it is He who sanctifies His people. "Let us go forth unto him." Let us trust Him to make known to us the power of the blood. Let us yield ourselves wholly to its blessed efficacy. That blood, through which He sanctified Himself, has entered heaven to open it for us. It can make our hearts also a throne of God, that the grace and glory of God may dwell in us. Yes; "let us go forth unto him without the camp." He who is willing to lose, and say farewell to everything, in order that Jesus may sanctify him, will not fail to obtain the blessing. He who is willing at any cost to experience the full power of the precious blood, can confidently reckon that he will be sanctified by Jesus Himself, through that blood.

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Amen.