

A Biblical-Theological Critical Review of Michael Allen's *Sanctification*  
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Bible Faculty Summit  
August 1, 2018

Michael Allen's *Sanctification* (Zondervan, 2017) caught my attention this Spring, particularly his treatment of sanctification through the prism of Dogmatics.<sup>1</sup> My critical review will proceed in four parts: 1) a brief characterization of *Sanctification*, 2) an overview of Allen's theological method in chapter one, 3) summary, affirmation, critique, and ways to extend chapters two through eight,<sup>2</sup> and 4) a sketch of how a biblical theology of sanctification through a Wesleyan-Arminian lens might look.

*Sanctification* exhibits a laudable intersection of biblical and systematic methodology. Its rich dogmatics develop around ten *loci* of Christian theology: God, creation, covenant, incarnation, in Christ, justification and sanctification, grace and nature, grace and responsibility, and grace and discipline. Allen ranges the theological landscape to avoid reducing sanctification to mere exemplarism or mere substitution (33). He demarcates what he regards as wrong readings of this doctrine: "neonomianism, higher life, or an addition to the apparently insufficient work of Jesus Christ," (which one might construe as a dismissal of Wesleyan-Arminian formulations) (22). He targets Radical Lutheran dichotomies between law and gospel (30-33), the category of carnal Christian (39), and the phrase 'irresistible grace' (244-45), to name a few.

Occasionally he serves a dollop of sanctification with a 3-shot theological espresso, rather than the balanced sanctification macchiato I had hoped for.<sup>3</sup> Most chapters, however, were sanctification-soaked all the way through. Statements throughout the book seemed to suggest that a chapter on sin was intended but didn't make it into the book.<sup>4</sup> This lacuna leaves the book's portrayal of the challenges and struggles of progressive sanctification a bit unbalanced.

Nonetheless, Allen argues cogently for the necessity of real and ongoing transformation by grace through the Spirit in consequence of union with Christ. Two and three readings of

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<sup>1</sup> I am teaching and developing a graduate course titled "Biblical Theology of Holiness." As currently designed, students first study the semantic domain of holiness in both Old and New Testaments inductively and then explore Scripture's ethical demands, its diagnosis of the fallen human condition, and its prescription for the cure. Against the backdrop of that biblical data, students evaluate systematic and historical treatments of sanctification. The final paper requires them to integrate the four domains of theology (biblical, systematic, historical, practical) both methodologically and practically in articulating a biblical theology of holiness.

<sup>2</sup> I had virtually nothing to offer by way of critique or extension for chapter 10: Grace and Discipline. It was excellent. By the time I got to Chapter 9: Grace and Responsibility the review was already too lengthy. There would be plenty to engage there, but it will have to be deferred to another time and place.

<sup>3</sup> Allen himself seems to have been aware of the imbalance in chapter 8 which concludes with, "We do well to conclude by specifying our argument into terms directly related to our overarching theme" (224).

<sup>4</sup> "We do well to ... [give] attention to these key dogmatic *foci*: God, creation, covenant, sin, incarnation, ..." (46). "We must consider how the doctrines of sin and triune grace relate to our theme of human holiness" (113). "We have considered how [Christ's] work addresses not only the problem of sin but also the need for glory" (128). "We have ... looked to the ways in which creation, covenant and sin shape our story" (140). Between pages 113 and 128 there is no focused engagement with the problem of sin or sin in general. Allen's engagement is limited to discussing sin as a twofold problem met by God's twofold grace.

various chapters have illumined and thereby sanctified me. If my experience is a guide, you'll find fresh insights on well-worn topics in virtually every chapter.

## Theological Method: Sanctification and the Gospel (Chapter 1)

As a committed biblical theologian, I was keen to observe Allen's theological method. He outlines and argues for his four-part approach in chapter one, "Sanctification and the Gospel." He first asserts that the Bible will serve as the source of his theologizing and the judge of its legitimacy.<sup>5</sup> Second, he identifies the common inadequacies of merely exegetical doctrinal formulations:

"Exegetical reasoning can easily be construed [too] narrowly, ... offering literary and/or theological reflection upon those ... passages ... that employ the idioms of holiness and sanctification alone" (28). Such an approach offers "more of an annotated lexical index of the terminology of sanctification than a full-dress theology" (28).

Third, he defines what dogmatic theology does and how he intends to locate the doctrine of sanctification within the theological loci he's chosen.

"Dogmatics ... offer[s] an orderly exposition of the gospel and its implications" (46). It shows "not only what the Bible says about [a topic] but also about how to think regarding this element of the Christian witness and its relation to other strands of scriptural testimony: ... God, creation, covenant, sin, incarnation, Spirit, and church" (46).<sup>6</sup>

Fourth, he delimits from his study 1) attempts "to offer an encyclopedic account of every biblical utterance regarding particular biblical terms," 2) "the theology of sanctification in the life of ancient Israel or of the earliest Christian communities," 3) "religious history" and 4) "scriptural excavation." His goal is to "expound the logic and shape of the gospel attested in [the] Scriptures, inasmuch as it addresses the reality of the holy and the life of the holy" (46). *Sanctification* attends, therefore, not to holiness in general but to evangelical or gospel holiness.

In general, Allen sticks to this theological method and offers some excellent exegesis along the way. In some cases, I would assign to Biblical Theology (BT) features Allen reserves for Dogmatics.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, I resonate with Allen's complaint that BT treatments can be too narrowly focused and just be an exercise in scriptural excavation. I appreciate and affirm the

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<sup>5</sup> "A Christian consideration of ... sanctification seeks to do justice to ... the Holy Scriptures. Exegetical reasoning, then, serves as a barometer of any claim regarding sanctification. If an approach cannot pass muster as an exegetical reflection upon texts like 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, then it will not count as a truly Christian approach to the subject (27-28).

<sup>6</sup> Although Allen lists the Spirit here, he offers no sustained attention to the Spirit's role in sanctification.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Allen distinguished dogmatic reason by saying it listens "to ... exegetical reason, reflects on [the] breadth, coherence, and emphases [of specific texts], taking in not only their particularities but also their proportions" (146). I would assign these features to exegetical reasoning.

value of bringing BT into productive conversation with Systematic, or as he prefers, Dogmatic Theology. On the other hand, the breadth of the BT data on this topic makes it likely that selective exegetical excavation will yield results that are at best partial and at worst owe more to theological speculation than to scriptural revelation. Happily, Allen's grounding in scripture, as well as patristic, medieval, and modern theology guards his work from flights of fancy or philosophy. Nonetheless, with nearly every chapter I observed uncharted regions of BT whose exploration would have enriched his work. For example, by delimiting his study to evangelical holiness, and thus excluding holiness of things, of unsaved persons, and of corporate entities, Allen bypasses opportunities to enrich "thinking the holy"<sup>8</sup> in gospel contexts. But more on this later.

## Chapter 2: God

Chapter 2 critiques classic, modern, and confessional definitions of divine holiness.<sup>9</sup> Allen turns instead to the category of metaphysical singularity or uniqueness found in Bavinck, Vos, Barth, and Colin Gunton and seeks to extend it (50-51). His twin thesis is that divine holiness expresses "the transcendent singularity of the triune God" and that "the metaphysical facets of divine holiness shape and condition the moral aspects of the doctrine" (53). He argues that Yahweh's holiness means He is incomparable, "set apart in a class of his own" (60), first in his singularity (appealing to Deut. 6:4), second, in his transcendence and life-giving presence and word (appealing to Rev. 22:9; Exod. 15:17; Hos. 11:9; 62-65), and third and consequentially, in his moral, covenantal character (66-68). Essential to his account is the claim that "God's ontological singularity grounds and implies God's moral incomparability as the canon and rule of ethical purity, righteousness, and goodness" (68-69).

### Affirmation

There is a great deal to affirm in Allen's treatment of divine holiness: his recognition that divine holiness is metaphysical as well as moral; his connection of God's metaphysical holiness to the first three of the Ten Words and the Shema of Deut. 6 (57-61), his observation that sinless seraphim veil their faces and feet in the presence of the Holy One, thus highlighting the "incomparable singularity of the transcendent LORD" (66-67), his note that metaphysical incomparability both illumines moral impurity and responds graciously to confession bringing both expiation and atonement (67).<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps most commendably, Allen does not allow the reality of believers' remaining sinfulness to overshadow their grace-enabled capacity for personal holiness. Allen unapologetically asserts, "We cannot imitate God's singular role as the moral register and

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<sup>8</sup> Allen's idiolectic includes turning adjectives into substantive objectives of the verb "think": "think the holy", "think the human," "think the gospel's gracious character"; etc. He occasionally reverts to standard syntax, such as "think about holiness," suggesting he enjoys playing with language at times more than ensuring clarity.

<sup>9</sup> Classical theologians equate divine holiness with righteousness, justice, or moral purity, e.g., Aquinas, Turretin (47-48). Moderns identify holiness with "causality that legislates in the corporate life of man" (Schleiermacher), divine jealousy (von Rad), or merely narrational radical otherness (Brueggemann; 48-50). Allen even rejects the Westminster Shorter Catechism's tethering of divine holiness to the moral sphere (52).

<sup>10</sup> Although Allen doesn't note this, Isaiah 6 exemplifies the principle articulated in Isa. 57:15 "For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *in* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite."

foundation of covenantal life ... However, we are called, and we are capable—with God's grace—of mirroring God's moral standards, materially speaking. ... we can be conformed to a patient and gentle character by God's grace." This assertion resounds throughout the book, strikingly without caveat or confessional mitigation.<sup>11</sup>

### Critique

First, throughout the book Allen correctly reverts to "set apart" language as the basic sense of holiness. Nonetheless, exegetical grounding of that language would have been helpful and theologically fruitful. For example, attention to sanctification as separation from the common and ordinary as well as from the sinful and defiling has implications for human sanctification. God calls His people away not just from sin, but also at times from ordinary pursuits, e.g., personal convictions addressing the idiosyncrasies of individual fallenness.

Second, although Allen invokes trinitarian language and asserts the necessity of trinitarian theologizing,<sup>12</sup> he doesn't press into the implications of God's tri-personal nature for divine holiness or the doctrine of sanctification.

Third, the chapter's key weakness is that Allen makes holiness a "central character trait that takes in God's singularity" (54) or regards it as an "ingredient in the divine fullness" (64). This problematizes the relationship of other "central character traits" such as transcendence and immanence or love and righteousness, given Allen's affirmation of divine simplicity. Worse, cross-grain to Scripture's presentation, it seems to make divine moral holiness one among many attributes to which we must conform.

All these problems resolve when we recognize that divine holiness, both metaphysical and moral, is a consequential category. By that I mean what sets Yahweh apart transcendentally, incomparably, and singularly from all others is the unique excellence of His being and character. Holiness is therefore a term that denotes first God's transcendent metaphysical separateness as a consequence of all that He is: infinite, eternal, immutable, self-sufficient, omniscient, etc. Another way to say this is that God's holiness *metaphysically* encompasses everything that sets his being apart, including such "comparative" attributes such as singular, unique, incomparable. God's holiness *morally* denotes his moral separateness due to the unique excellence of his ethical character. In other words, divine moral holiness encompasses, sums up, gathers in one, everything that sets his character apart ethically.

For God to be 'majestic in holiness' is to say that the awesome splendor effulgent from the totality of the Most High King is a component of His holiness. It would follow then that

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<sup>11</sup> For example, WLC 149 or WSC 82 are common Reformed caveats: "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? A. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed." Allen no doubt affirms this assertion, but his characterization of the Christian life reflects the terminology and emphasis of Scripture admirably. For example, in reference to the Corinthians, Allen writes, "Paul has already addressed these ecclesiastical misfits as those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... These saints or holy ones suffer many maladies - they were 'foolish' and 'weak' (1:27), 'low' and non-existent (1:28). They continue to struggle with respect to schisms (3:1-4), sexual immorality (5:1-2), and any other number of issues involving liturgical, moral, communal, and theological error. Yet they are called saints and are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus'" (29).

<sup>12</sup> "Trinitarian theology must orient both [ecclesiology and ethics] in an operative way" (26).

divine holiness is a component of nothing else. There is no descriptive category larger than holy.<sup>13</sup> All that sets God apart is comprehended in his “holiness.”<sup>14</sup>

#### Extension

Three dimensions of divine holiness which I could not discern in Allen's work are: 1) Yahweh's self-sanctification (Ezek. 28:23; 36:23), 2) human sanctification of Yahweh (Num. 20:12; Isa. 29:23), and 3) worship as a response to divine holiness (Psa. 30:4 “give thanks”; 105:3 “glory in”; 145:21 “bless”). Each dimension is rich with gospel holiness import. For example, Yahweh's sanctification of himself in Ezekiel alters nothing about himself, but it does alter how he is perceived by others. His reputation or name is seen as it is in fact—truly transcendentally separated from all contenders for greatness due to the unique excellence of his character and being exhibited in his mighty works. This perceptual sanctification links divine glory and sanctification, providing a basis for understanding how God is sanctified by us when he is glorified by us. The holy God who graciously sanctifies us generates in us the appropriate response of our grateful sanctification of God. Sanctification begets sanctification, though our responsive sanctification certainly differs in many ways from God's sanctification of us.

### Chapter 3: Creation

Chapter three begins with human creaturehood. Allen rejects Barth's incarnational anthropology and concludes that we should “think the doctrine canonically,” and then christologically (77). Allen then takes up the implications of “imaging of God.” He critiques four standard views of the *imago dei*<sup>15</sup> as 1) limiting the divine image to “one facet of human existence” rather than seeing that “it is the totality of the human that images God” (81), and 2) wrongly regarding “similarity between humanity and God” as the primary implication of the term image (82). Rather, the *imago dei* underscores the Trinity's “intrinsically self-communicating” nature and highlights man's difference from and dependence upon God (82). The implications of his view of the *imago dei* for “thinking sanctification” are first, creation attests to “the participatory nature of creaturely holiness” (85), and second, “all creaturely holiness is communicated holiness in the same way that creaturely life is communicated life” (87). “Holiness is gift. Holiness is the generous blessing brought about ... by the Triune God, who makes himself productive of and present to the human self” (88).

#### Affirmation

The simplicity and power of Allen's analysis of the *imago dei* as necessarily implying difference and dependence stunned me. One need not dismiss the standard analyses of this topic to appreciate the value Allan's insight provides. His exploration of the implications of difference and dependence for sanctification are worth the chapter: “When one's existence comes from the

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<sup>13</sup> For a more extended argument for this understanding of divine holiness, see my 2010 Chamberlain Holiness Lecture “Divine Holiness and Sanctifying God: A Proposal” available online at [http://www.academia.edu/2996945/Lecture\\_1\\_Divine\\_Holiness\\_and\\_Sanctifying\\_God\\_A\\_Proposal](http://www.academia.edu/2996945/Lecture_1_Divine_Holiness_and_Sanctifying_God_A_Proposal).

<sup>14</sup> I take God's moral holiness to be essentially his set apartness due to the presence of all good and the consequent absence of all non-good.

<sup>15</sup> The four views he critiques are that we image God in our 1) spiritual/rational capacities, 2) ethical character and behavioral righteousness, 3) appointed status as God's vice-regents, or 4) relational interdependence.

outside and one's identity is centered upon another's relation to oneself, then one's trust surely ought to be ec-centric as well" (89). Well put!

I also found Michael Allen's linking of creation and redemption particularly compelling. He argues from 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Romans 4:17 that because "the new act is likened to a great act already completed, the new act is shown to be doable by divine standards. If God can create why not again? If God can set things in motion, why not set them apart? If this is the logic of the biblical reasoning from creation to new creation, then it might apply likewise to the doctrine of sanctification" (85-87).

### Critique

First, even if we start with Genesis 1-2 surely John 1:1-3 should be brought to bear on the question of how creation intersects with divine holiness. God the Son is the One through whom all creation came into being. Seeing anthropology christologically seems, on a canonical 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, therefore, to be a Scriptural way to approach the subject. A helpful doorway into such an anthropology may be found in Dennis Kinlaw's theological offering, *Let's Start with Jesus* (Zondervan, 2005).<sup>16</sup>

Second, despite engaging substantively with the interplay between the image of God and sanctification, Allen left Col. 3:9-10, arguably the classic NT text on the topic, untouched. Yet, it certainly has wealth that deserved to be mined.<sup>17</sup> Creation in the image of God means sanctification involves our new man's renewal in knowledge after the image of Christ our Creator. The epistemological implications of such sanctification are important. In particular, the fact that self-presentation as a holy sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) is followed by a call for ongoing transformation of the mind (Rom. 12:2) that flows out in faith-motivated, love-guided self-conception (Rom. 12:3-8) and others-orientated affection, submission, and service (Rom. 12:9-15:7) highlights the importance of our mind's sanctification.

Third, to treat of creation without mentioning the only place where sanctification occurs in the creation account seems odd. In Gen. 2:4, God sanctifies the seventh day and blesses it. I would suggest that the sanctification of the seventh day teaches us three things about the nature of holiness itself: 1) holiness is initiated by God; 2) holiness is always separation to God, that is, to relationship with God in some way; and 3) holiness has as its fruit the well-being, the life, the good of the ones encompassed within it. To put a finer point on it, we might argue that the holiness of non-personal things is always instrumental,<sup>18</sup> creating space, time, or means for personal relationship with God.<sup>19</sup>

The instrumentality of non-personal holiness also points to a truth about holiness of persons: God sanctifies persons both in terms of status/position and in terms of moral character

<sup>16</sup> Allen's author index suggests he is not aware of Kinlaw.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Derek Tidball's brief homily on this passage in *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice* (InterVarsity Press, 2014), 23-32.

<sup>18</sup> I'm indebted to Don J. Payne's 2017 ETS paper "Sanctification: Neglected Aspects and Implications" for helping me see the instrumental function of sanctifying inanimate objects. Allen's comment, "The Levitical holiness code guides human practice ... to set apart persons, places, and possessions for divine indwelling" (119), opens a door to this observation, but he doesn't explore it further.

<sup>19</sup> In his chapter on sanctification and covenant, Allen comments, "... in the Sabbath gift of the seventh day ... we see that human beings are made for life with God. And by implication, we might say that God is intent upon sharing the triune life with us" (95). This appears to be as close as Allen comes to leveraging the sanctification of the sabbath in Gen. 2:30 for dogmatic reflection.

for ultimate ends—His glory, our good, His kingdom. The end of holiness is not fellowship with God alone but also entails service with and for God in His eternal kingdom, where even the pots and bridle bells will be instruments of knowing Yahweh (Zech. 14:20-21; Jer. 31:34).

#### Extension

Since the God we image is a tri-personal unity, we are most like Him when we also live in others-centered unity. Holiness is, therefore, communal, both as a descriptor of divine singularity and of human godliness. Pushing further into the *imago dei*'s trinitarian nature exposes its corporate and communal dimensions, dimensions that keep one's conception and practice of sanctification from going individualistic or monastic. Individual holiness is formed, manifested, and measured in inter-personal engagement. To paraphrase John Wesley, there is no sanctification but social sanctification.<sup>20</sup> We are renewed in God's image primarily in and through interpersonal interaction. We often seek to avoid such community because we think it makes us less holy, when in fact God intends it both to reveal the distance we have to progress in holiness (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:1-3; Phil. 4:2; Jam. 4:1-4) and to strength our stride on the holiness marathon (Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25; 12:12-13).

## Chapter 4: Covenant

Allen surveys Rudolph Otto's phenomenological and Mary Douglas's cultural anthropological approaches (91-93). He tips his hat to their potential benefits but insists we must read Scripture as "instances and instruments of divine action--as the very word of God" which "bears a prescriptive force and not merely a descriptive opportunity" (93). Scripture teaches that "fellowship or communion with God is the fundamental basis and goal" and the "canon's central episode. Jesus is Immanuel." (94, 96). While fellowship is the *telos* of the gospel, covenant frames that communion. Within Reformed tradition, the "covenant of works" describes "this relational order and vocational *telos* of human existence before God" (100). Consequently, James Torrance's seven critiques of federal theology are addressed at length (101-110). He concludes that the covenant of works informs our understanding of the course of creaturely holiness and sanctification in four ways: 1) Humans were created for fellowship with the triune God; 2) God designed this communion to involve a corporate head; 3) communion with God is bound by the commands of God; and 4) communion is based upon humans entrusting themselves to their Creator (110-12).

#### Affirmation

Allen's work with covenant as a category for reflecting on sanctification helped me by shifting what had seemed to me an alien intrusion to a central feature. Allen's dialogue with Torrance et al. crystallized my essential objection to the classic formulation of the "covenant of

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<sup>20</sup> This statement is found in Wesley's preface to the 1739 edition of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. "Directly opposite to this is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. 'Holy solitaries' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness."

works” while moving me closer to seeing an Edenic covenant or covenant of creation as theologically viable.<sup>21</sup>

I resonate deeply with Allen's articulation of faith in the relationship between unfallen humanity and God: “The deepest calling of the covenant of works is the summons to consistent and perfect, unceasing and constant trust in the God who created, who promised, and who gives again and again. ... This covenant does include other commands ... yet we do well to note that the heart of its call is a matter of trust” (112).

### Critique

The role and significance of love is present but muted throughout the book. Its muting here is acute. The nature of our fellowship with God as loving intimacy in marriage and family is noted, but its implications are undeveloped.<sup>22</sup> In Scripture, grace-inspired love is the dynamic of human holiness. It is the center-piece of divine-human fellowship. It is a central feature of inner-Trinitarian life and thus of divine holiness. This chapter is poorer for its omission.

### Extension

Holiness as the condition for fellowship, the context of fellowship, and the consequence of fellowship could be addressed. Allen does present covenant as defining the path toward human holiness. Yet, holiness is also a prerequisite for covenantal relationship, within which the path of holiness is trod. We cannot be in relationship with God without first being set apart to Him. In theological terms, status holiness grounds personal and progressive holiness.

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<sup>21</sup> Allen uses the phrase “covenant of creation” and “covenant of works” interchangeably. He recognizes the weakness of the standard formulation of this covenant—that God promised Adam life on the grounds of his perfect obedience—but sticks to traditional Reformed terminology. I find the standard “covenant of works” construct so flawed as to be unusable. First, John defines eternal life as knowing God, that is, being in right relationship with God and His Son (John 17:3; cf. 1 John 5:20). Adam and Eve were created with and in right relationship with God. As creatures of the Holy God and part of God's very good creation, they naturally possessed both the holy status necessary for fellowship and the character capable of holy fellowship. Eternal spiritual life was not something they did not have or needed to achieve. They had life in relation to the Son, their Creator. This seems to be the necessary implication of the warning, “You shall surely die,” and is supported by Genesis 3's statement that the sound of Yahweh walking in the garden was recognizable, which implies previous experience of his presence and communion. Second, since the tree of life was given to them for food, there was no condition that needed to be met for their appropriation of immortality. Thus, immortality is not a promised covenantal benefit. Third, what the implied covenant of creation made explicit was that the perpetuity of life was contingent upon persistence in faith that manifests itself in loving obedience. In this regard (faith working by love), the Edenic “covenant” is, at least on an Arminian reading, indistinguishable from the Mosaic and the New Covenants. The difference resides not in works vs grace as means of obtaining life. The difference resides in how union with Christ fulfills and empowers covenantal faithfulness. Adam and Eve's being was upheld in Christ, but being unfallen, they would not have been united with Him in his death, burial, and resurrection. Perhaps it could be argued that the implied reward of persistence in obedience for Adam would have been glorification, but the text itself gives no warrant for this argument. That Christ obeyed perfectly, was perfected through suffering, is now glorified, and will bring all things into subjection to the Father via His reign in the kingdom of God fulfilled all that the first Adam was to do. Thanks to Brian Collins for pointing out that Thomas McComisky raises these objections as well in *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 218-19.

<sup>22</sup> Dennis Kinlaw's explorations of these metaphors in *Lectures in Old Testament Theology* (Warner Press, 2010) are helpful.

## Chapter 5: Incarnation

The first Adam both fell and failed, committing sins of commission and omission, and thus broke the covenant of creation. The second Adam “fulfills the two-fold need of those who have broken the covenant of works”: cleanness and holiness. He accomplishes not only “the work of purification but also the task of sacralization” (140). Allen identifies the exegetical roots of this Christological tenet in Leviticus and its fulfillment in the gospel of Matthew. The dogmatic components of Christ’s work include distinguishing the active and passive obedience of Christ which takes the form of humiliation and exaltation. Christ’s humiliation redeems nature, and His exaltation glorifies it.

### Affirmation

Allen’s reading of Leviticus is marvelous (118-123). He puts together cleanliness and holiness beautifully. For example, “Leviticus portrays a world whereby one must be actively set apart by consecration even after one has avoided impurity or had one’s impurities purged by atonement” (120). He concludes that we can infer from Leviticus that

“Purity and sacrality matter greatly for life with God. ... Notably, Leviticus does not declare these laws to be accomplished apart from divine grace. Leviticus functions as a part of the covenant of grace. ... While there are limits to the grace of Leviticus, we must first appreciate that the cultic and moral parameters of the text are gracious, that is, they are a divine gift. God provides for atonement, God instructs for making sacred, and God makes his presence known and near” (121).

I couldn’t agree more heartily with Allen’s assertion that the New Testament’s testimony to greater grace “may never be a denunciation of the Old Testament epoch as nomistic or devoid of grace” (121).

“We must interpret Paul’s contrasts of law and grace in a more nuanced manner than either sheer equality of law and incarnate Lord ... or sheer juxtaposition, which has characterized new covenant hermeneutical approaches in baptistic tradition as well as some Lutheran hermeneutics. ... Paul discerns not only divine expectations and demand, but also the proleptic declaration of divine provision in the Pentateuch itself” (122).

### Critique

Although Allen captures the need and provision for cleansing and consecration well, he appears to overlook that Leviticus connects holiness to love for others (Lev. 19 *passim*; esp. 19:18, 34). Cleansing and consecration have as their end goal not just fellowship with the Holy One of Israel. Grace-powered loving service to fellow, faulty pilgrims marks those who are holy as Yahweh is holy (Lev. 19:2). Christ perfectly enacts and models this others-centered love that does nothing from strife or empty conceit but considers others more important than oneself, sacrificing his life for the well-being of his friends (Phil. 2). In the language of James 2:22, the double grace of cleansing and consecration is “perfected” by faith-filled, Spirit-led, loving service to other image bearers (cf. Gal. 5:13).

### Extension

Allen introduces this chapter with the question, “What does it mean to say that Jesus is holy?” (115). I was disappointed not to find a satisfactory answer provided. Rather, by p. 118, the focal question changed to “How it is that Jesus fulfills the covenantal and in what way he resolves our covenantal conundrums that mark human life this side of Eden.” Johannine texts that the Father sanctified the Son (John 10:36), who is the Holy One of God (Luke 4:34; John 6:69), who also sanctified himself that we may be sanctified in truth (John 17:19) offer opportunities for more extended reflection on the pre-incarnate, incarnate, and post-resurrection holiness of Jesus. Surely such reflection has gospel implications!

## Chapter 6: In Christ

Allen surveys the biblical data, metaphors, and broader canonical themes which inform the doctrine of union with Christ only briefly (143-47). Calvin's synthesis of this biblical data receives extended attention (147-55).<sup>23</sup> Allen then turns to the wider Reformed evaluation of union with Christ, noting particularly the idea of participation in God and giving special attention to the Westminster Confession's treatment. Karl Barth and T. F. Torrance's critique of Rationalistic vs Evangelical Calvinism serve as foils for his argument for a traditional understanding of particular redemption. He concludes by affirming that all blessings as well as the being of believers come through union with Christ. “In that gracious and life-giving union, ... all he has is ours: his name, his inheritance, his glory, his righteousness, and even his holiness.”

### Affirmation

My agreement here is both wide and deep, as befits the reality that Wesleyan-Arminianism shares a great deal of common ground with Reformed theology, Dordt notwithstanding. One need not be a Calvinist to affirm that the salvific benefits of the atonement apply solely to those in Christ nor Barthian to affirm that election is primarily covenantal and corporate, and secondarily individual. While I part company with Allen regarding the intent of the atonement, I find that does not hinder my ability to affirm all he says regarding union with Christ.

### Critique

Two features of this chapter struck me as peculiar, though it may be just my theological ignorance. First, it seemed odd, given the standard Reformed *ordo salutis*, that Allen insisted that justification precedes sanctification logically (157), yet includes regeneration within sanctification (149).<sup>24</sup> Is the Reformed tradition widening on this *ordo*? Second, Allen asserts that participation, which he has defined throughout in terms of union with Christ, is “the goal but not the basis of the Christian life, and [is] the end but not the entryway into the gospel” (157).

<sup>23</sup> Allen argues that “Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ ... remains governed by the catholic rules of the Creator-creature distinction, the Trinitarian grammar of inclusion in God's family specifically in and through the incarnate Son, the christological distinctions of the divine and human natures along the lines of Chalcedon, and the Reformed rule of distinguishing justification and sanctification as well as expressing their indissolubility in union with Christ” (153).

<sup>24</sup> “The twofold grace can be described in various ways: forgiveness of sins and regeneration, primarily, or justification and sanctification” (149). His later comment, “God's regenerative work serves as the precursor to his sanctifying action” doesn't adequately clarify his position for me (200).

Perhaps I am misunderstanding him, since he concludes, “Union with Christ provides the context within which all gracious blessings are enjoyed” and “John Murray claims rightfully that ‘union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.’” Additional clarification here would be helpful.

#### Extension

The relationship between sanctification and our union with Christ deserves more attention. Answers to questions such as How are we sanctified through union, What is the nature of our sanctification through union (positional, personal, progressive), What is the relation of corporate and individual union with regard to sanctification, and How does one appropriate Christ's holiness for progressive sanctification, would enrich this chapter.

## Chapter 7: Justification and Sanctification

Chapter 7 focuses on “the distinction between the justification and the sanctification that we possess in [Christ]” (170). Allen traces Calvin's “double grace” of “reconciliation through Christ's blamelessness” and of “sanctification by Christ's Spirit” (171-75), and then briefly notes that the Reformed tradition's twofold-grace language has roots in Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria (175-76). He explores this new covenant distinction in Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36-37, and Hebrews 8. He deploys Romans 6 and 12 in particular against various Reformed challenges to the distinction between justification and sanctification. He wraps up with a fascinating application of Hebrews to the topic.

#### Affirmation

I appreciate that Allen notes that Scriptures speaks of justification in ways other than *dikaiosisune* terminology (forgiveness, pardon, reconciliation) and warns against narrowing our consideration of this topic to forensic language texts only. Similarly, he calls us to see the range of Scriptural sanctification idioms, including purification, transformation, “God working in us,” and even equipping (Heb. 13:20) language.

#### Critique

I found little to critique in Allen's exegetical arguments, saving his handling of Romans 6. He starts well, handling 6:1-6 nicely. He detours into a dubious reading of δεδικαιώται in 6:7 as “has been justified” that takes a personified “sin” as “accusation and temptation to doubt” (186-87).<sup>25</sup> Sadly, he never returns to articulate the passage's application of union with Christ to sanctification. He comes close when he says that “acknowledgement of the indicative agency of God precedes the imperatival call to action by God's people” (194). But he doesn't apply this to Rom. 6:11-22.

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<sup>25</sup> Other instances of δικαιοῦν + ἀπό don't offer prima facie support for Allen's reading. E.g., Sirach 26:29 .... οὐ δικαιοθήσεται κάπηλος ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας “and a tradesman will not be declared innocent of sin” (RSV, NRSV), “nor a shopkeeper free from sin” (NAB), “and an huckster shall not be freed from sin” (KJV). English versions are split on how to translate Acts 13:38-39 ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιοθῆναι, <sup>39</sup> ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται. and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses (NASB, ESV). “from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, <sup>39</sup> by this one everyone who believes is justified!” (LEB).

### Extension

By way of extension, let me sketch out briefly how I think his observation plays out in Rom. 6. Rom. 6:1-16 trumpets a marvelous feature of our union with Christ: sin has as much power over us as death has over Christ. Yet, position must be personalized. Status must be applied. Just as surely as we are united to Christ by faith, we appropriate the benefits of union with Christ by faith. This is the logic of Rom. 6:11-16. In the same way as Christ died to sin once for all time, we must regard, reckon, consider ourselves dead to sin for all time and alive to God. This is grace-inspired, grace-enabled faith that what is true of us in Christ mystically and spiritually may also be true in our present relationship with Christ. This is not a death that needs to take place. We are not actualizing our death to sin. We are accepting as true what our union with Christ provided.

Obedience always follows faith. A trusted-Christ is always a followed-Christ. The two-sided obedience (μηδὲ παριστάνετε ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε) Paul commands matches the two-sided faith he enjoined (λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Don't allow sin to rule you. Allow God to rule you. Don't present your bodies to sin. Present them to God. We comply with the former by submitting to the latter. We resist sin's reign by presenting ourselves as slaves to God. Our bodies which were formerly dominated by sin, can be, should be, may be instruments of righteousness to God, if we will respond with faith and obedience, i.e., if we will trust and obey.

Rom. 6:1-16 is a two-edged sword. In contrast to whatever theology regards sanctification as a "addition to an apparently insufficient work of Christ," Romans 6 denies that union with Christ is not sufficient to produce the holy fruit of righteous service. It denies we need a second work to complete an insufficient first work of grace. Freedom from sin, enslavement to God, and "fruit unto holiness" are spiritual benefits available to be appropriated by faith and applied by grace for every person who has been united with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 6 also belies all misshaped claims that holy people cannot help but be ruled by sin. Union with Christ crucified our old life (Rom. 6:6a<sup>26</sup>), set us free from sin and the power of the flesh (Rom. 6:6b-7; Gal. 5:16, 24), made us slaves of God (Rom. 6:22). It empowers on-going presentation of ourselves to righteousness (Rom. 6:16) and enables fruit that leads to sanctification and eternal life (Rom. 6:22).

## Chapter 8: Grace and Nature

Chapter 8 considers "two realities: the promise of the new creation and the nature of the new creation" (200). Allen addresses "how the grace of new creation relates to the nature we have been granted, namely, how regeneration pertains to and informs our thinking of the relationship of grace and nature" (200). He concludes that "the dynamic of biblical sanctification ... can only be described fittingly in eschatological terms: the moral tension involved here is neither sequential (as if holiness means the simple transversal from sinfulness to righteousness, with no remainder), nor partitive (as if some portion of the self were holy, with others remaining depraved), but redemptive-historical (wherein the Christian is marked by the sign of the pilgrim, no longer captive in Egypt yet still sojourning to Canaan)" (211).

<sup>26</sup> Romans 6:6 τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ· "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;" (NASB).

### Affirmation

Allen uses Hebrews 3-4, 8, and 12 to frame a realized eschatology in terms of Israel's journey to Canaan. I applaud his avoidance of typologies untethered from the text and his refusal to let past typological excesses scare him away from following what the text endorses. The people of God do journey between freedom from bondage and entrance into perfect rest. Trials and temptations beset them, but perseverance in faith will see them through.

### Critique

Allen's approach to evaluating views of Romans 7:14-25 struck me as even-handed. However, the two reasons he offers for rejecting the pre-conversion view are weak. His first reason is "certain claims speak of a struggle that is itself a sign of growth and transformation, and by extension, not fitting one who has yet to be yoked to Christ" (210).

Three texts, I believe, demonstrate that signs of growth and transformation are indeed fitting for one not yet yoked to Christ (Mark 12:34; Acts 17:17; Phil. 3:5-6). In Mark 12:34 Jesus tells a scribe he is not far from the kingdom and that he has properly discerned the chief principal of the law. Nearness to the kingdom may imply movement or growth. In Acts 17:27 Paul asserts unregenerates are given revelation "that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him." I affirm with Allen, Kathryn Tanner's analogy:

"We are opened to God by our nature in no more than the way in which the essential properties of large bodies of water make them ... open to the pull of the moon. At issue here is a purely passive capacity and not an active orientation toward anything. Although it makes a very big difference to us when its effects are felt, we do not seek out God's grace of ourselves any more than the ocean seeks out the moon that produces its tides." (Christ the Key, 118-19; cited in Allen, 219)

Yet, since God built grace into nature (Rom. 1:18ff) and conscience (Rom. 2:11ff), grace's pull is responsible for any seeking of God. Our heart's rising tide is a response to grace's gravity. Again, growth and transformation are fitting for those being drawn to Christ by the Father.

Perhaps most tellingly, in Phil. 3:5-6, Paul parades his pre-conversion passion for the law, zeal in persecuting the church, and blamelessness in the righteousness found in the law. All this gain he discards for the righteous of God in Christ. Phil. 3:5-6 displays a level of nearness to grace that should be read in concert with Rom. 7:14-25.<sup>27</sup>

Allen's second reason for rejecting a pre-christian reading of Romans 7 is "The pre-christian reading struggles mightily at a rhetorical level when read in context: why on earth would Paul, at this point in his argument, turn to describe his pre-christian self?" (211). In addition to the standard contextual reasons for a pre-christian reading, I see at least four rhetorical reasons for a turn to describe Paul's pre-christian self: 1) In Rom. 7:1, Paul continues his epistle-wide rhetorical pattern of addressing Jewish concerns (Rom. 2, 4, 7, 9-11); 2) Paul has already introduced his pre-christian self in verses 7 to 13 as an explanation of our changed relation to the law because of our marriage to Christ (7:4-6),<sup>28</sup> 3) Verses 14-25 fill out the experiential dimension of what Paul means when he says that he was alive prior to the law but

<sup>27</sup> An OT example transformation prior to justifying faith is Abraham's faith response to Yahweh's call in Gen. 12 prior to his justification in Gen. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Allen rightly rejects the "corporate Israel" reading of the "I" in Romans 7:7-13 (208-209).

when the law came he died (Rom. 7:9), and 4) The description of 7:14-25 sets up a contrast on which Paul capitalizes as he pivots to the Holy Spirit's role in our sanctification.

## A Sketch of Sanctification through a Wesleyan-Arminian Lens

In conclusion, I would like to offer here a brief window into how transposing sanctification into a Wesleyan-Arminian key might alter the orchestration of the biblical data. Or, to put it differently, how a biblical theology of sanctification looks when viewed through a Wesleyan-Arminian lens.<sup>29</sup> I will first identify areas where such a biblical theology would overlap with Allen's presentation and where it would differ from his presentation.

1. Areas a Wesleyan-Arminian Biblical Theology of Sanctification overlaps with Allen's Presentation
  - 1.1. union with Christ as the ground of all salvific benefits, including sanctification.
  - 1.2. positional sanctification through union with Christ.
  - 1.3. progressive sanctification—one's character becoming increasingly like Christ and the potential for increasing relational intimacy to God
  - 1.4. the ongoing sanctification of those who have been made perfect positionally (τετελείωκεν Heb. 10:14).
  - 1.5. the NT describes believers as holy ones who testify on the basis of a good conscience (2 Cor. 1:12; Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:19) rather than describing them with terms that focus on what remains to be transformed (e.g., "sinners"; "sinners saved by grace").
2. Areas a Wesleyan-Arminian Biblical Theology of Sanctification differs from Allen's Presentation:
  - 2.1. Seeing divine love and human love as central to sanctification: as motivation, goal, and method in familial (adoption, regeneration), nuptial (participation, indwelling, communion, consecration), and body motifs
  - 2.2. Affirmation that believers can be teleios (Phil. 3:15) though believers will not be made τετελειώμενος personally until we are resurrected (Phil. 3:12).<sup>30</sup>
  - 2.3. Distinguishing intentional and unintentional sins, culpability and non-culpability, confidence/security on the grounds of Christ's sufficiency and observable faith-evidencing fruit (obedience, love, Spirit's presence; cf. 1 John).

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<sup>29</sup> Allen mentions John Wesley only once in the book and that in a footnote noting that "even John Wesley observed the crucial distinction between the justifying grace of God and the sanctifying grace of God" (189). I wasn't sure what to make of this lack of retrieval from Wesley. Despite differences, Wesley and Wesleyan-Arminian theologians have a good deal to contribute to understanding sanctification. For an accessible entry into Wesley, Tom Oden's four-volume *John Wesley's Teachings* is a good starting point. Wesley's 52 Standard Sermons is a good entry point for primary source reading. Additional contemporary articulations that I recommend include, John Oswalt, *Called to be Holy* (Evangel Publishing House, 1999) and Thomas Noble, *Holy Trinity, Holy People* (Cascade Books, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Notice the complete omission of reference to Phil. 3:15 on p. 234 where Allen discusses Phil. 3:12-16.

- 2.4. Affirmation that the entire sanctification of 1 Thess. 5:23 is a relational development possible prior to death.<sup>31</sup>
- 2.5. Denial that Romans 7:14-25 describes a post-conversion experience, though this denial is hardly unique to Wesleyans.<sup>32</sup>

By way of helping my non-Wesleyan-Arminian brothers see how the doctrine of sanctification can be articulated in scripturally derived categories, can differ markedly from Wesley at various points, and yet still be Wesleyan-Arminian, I offer the following brief list of ways in which such a biblical theology would be distinct from standard published Wesleyan and Nazarene systematic articulations and definitions of sanctification.<sup>33</sup>

A biblical theology of sanctification through a Wesleyan-Arminian lens would affirm the following:

1. Post-conversion consecration and God's entire sanctification of believers is grounded in and flows from union with Christ (Rom. 6, 12).
2. Regarding Sin
  - 2.1. Sin is any violation of God's word regardless of knowledge or intent, incurs guilt, and requires atonement (Lev. 4-6). Personal culpability is based on knowledge, intent, and capacity (Deut. 19:4-6; Num. 9:6-8; Num. 35:23).
  - 2.2. Sin as a principle (i.e., original sin, inherited depravity) is the depravity of self-centeredness (Luther's *homo incurvatus in se*) as a consequence of loss of relationship with God occasioned by Adam's fall.
3. Regarding NT Post-Conversion Calls to Consecration
  - 3.1. Attention to and emphasis on the motivations offered as reasons to answer post-conversion calls to consecration: gratitude (Rom. 12:1), freedom from sin's control (Rom. 6:11-16), freedom from fulfilling the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). Such BT attention to the motivations given in the text contrast to appeals to become aware of one's carnal heart, to confess and repent of it, and to seek a heart cleansing that will eliminate internal struggle with temptation.
  - 3.2. Attention to the grounds offered for post-conversion calls to consecration: prior mercies of God (Rom. 12:1), already available benefits of union with Christ (Rom. 6:11-22).
  - 3.3. Calls to voluntary slavery (Rom. 6), self-sacrifice (Rom. 12), submission to the Spirit's leadership (Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; Eph. 5:18), all share a shift from default self-centered or self-in-control living to consciously God-centered or Spirit-in-control living.
4. Regarding the Results of Full Consecration
  - 4.1. Denial of arrivalism (Phil. 3:12-14), of freedom from the need for ongoing purification of ourselves (1 John 3:3; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 10:14), of sinless perfection (1 John 2:1-2; 5:16), or of automatic maturity as a consequence of entire sanctification.
  - 4.2. Denial that "perfection in love" terminology references entire sanctification (1 John).

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<sup>31</sup> For a defense of this position vis-à-vis Warfield's critique of perfectionism, see my paper "Is a Wesleyan Interpretation of 1 Thess. 5:23 Exegetically Tenable?: Responding to Reformed Critiques" Available online at [www.apbrown2.net](http://www.apbrown2.net).

<sup>32</sup> Reformed theologians who regard Romans 7 as describing Paul's pre-conversion state include: J. A. Bengel, H. A. W. Meyer, F. Godet, M. Stuart, Sanday and Headlam, J. Denney, J. Oliver Buswell Jr, A. Hoekema, M. Lloyd-Jones, Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1127. Douglas Moo.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 1 for examples of published statements.

- 4.3. Affirmation that full consecration as love slave (Rom. 6) and living sacrifice (Rom. 12) is met by God's sanctification of the entirety of the person on the grounds of theological inference from Exod. 29:37 and Matt. 23:19.
- 4.4. Affirmation that "entire sanctification" is quantitative sanctification of the entirety of our person. Denial that a qualitative entire sanctification is in view in 1 Thess. 5:23-24.
- 4.5. Post-conversion consecration addresses conscious self-centeredness as opposed to affirming cleansing of all self-centeredness, both conscious and unconscious, chosen and habituated.
- 4.6. Affirmation of empowerment for service, freedom from fulfilling the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16), heart united to fear and love God (Psa. 86:7; James 4:8).
- 5. Regarding Remaining Needs after Full Consecration and Entire Sanctification
  - 5.1. Affirmation that the "flesh" is distinct from inherited depravity. The flesh, though crucified (Gal. 5:24), remains throughout the sanctification journey, and walking in the Spirit is the solution.
  - 5.2. Affirmation of remaining potential for intentional sin (1 John 2:1-2), the presence of unintentional sin and sins of ignorance (1 John 1:7; James 5:16) and remaining unChristlikeness or unconscience self-centeredness after full consecration (Rom. 12:2; 13:14); all of which need the ongoing provision of Christ's once for all sacrifice and the cleansing of his blood (1 John 1:7).
- 6. Regarding Progressive Sanctification after Entire Sanctification.
  - 6.1. Affirmation of the ongoing presence of crucified flesh (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13; 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11), necessity of walking in, being led by, and following the Spirit to avoid fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-18, 25) and to live out the presentation / consecration of Romans 6 and 12.

For the gift of grace imparted to me through Allen's volume I am genuinely grateful. Thank you for this opportunity. I welcome your constructive feedback.

# Appendix 1

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## **Adam Clarke, *Christian Theology***

“The whole design of God was to restore man to his image, and raise him from the ruins of his fall; in a word, to make him perfect; to blot out all his sins, purify his soul, and fill him with holiness; so that no unholy temper, evil desire, or impure affection or passion shall either lodge, or have any being within him; this and this only is true religion, or Christian perfection.” Adam Clarke and Samuel Dunn, *Christian Theology*, Second Edition. (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1835), 207.

## **Wiley, *Introduction to Christian Theology***

“Entire sanctification is a second distinct work of divine grace subsequent to regeneration. ... sanctification begins in regeneration but is completed as an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to regeneration. ... The term *holiness* ... describes a state of moral and spiritual purity, or complete soul health in which the image and spirit of God are possessed to the exclusion of all sin.”<sup>34</sup>

## **Bible Methodist Discipline (2014)**

“Though its control over the believer is broken, inherited depravity continues to exist in the nature of the regenerate until the heart is fully cleansed by the filling with the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification. ... Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is cleansed from inherited depravity and empowered for more effective service through faith in Jesus Christ. It is subsequent to regeneration and is accomplished in a moment of time when the believer presents himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. The Spirit-filled believer is thus enabled to love God with an undivided heart.” Bible Methodist Discipline, Statement of Faith (2014).

## **The Wesleyan Church Discipline**

Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire.

We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is separated from sin unto God and is enabled to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless. Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification which is wrought instantaneously when believers present

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<sup>34</sup> H. Orton Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1946), 297–298.

themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, being effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification perfects the believer in love and empowers that person for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The life of holiness continues through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and evidences itself by loving obedience to God's revealed will."

### **Church of the Nazarene Manual (2013)**

We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God's grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> <http://2013.manual.nazarene.org/paragraph/p10/>. Accessed July 26, 2018.