

IV.

**Sanctification and Justification (Continued).**

“He that is holy, let him be holy still.” —*Rev. xxii. 11.*



The divine Righteousness, having reference to the divine Sovereignty, in one sense does not manifest itself until God enters into relationship with the creatures. He was glorious in holiness from all eternity, for man's creation did not modify His Being; but His righteousness could not be displayed before creation, because right presupposes two beings sustaining the jural relation.

An exile on an uninhabited island can not be righteous nor do righteously; he can not even conceive of the jural relation so long as there is no man present whose rights he must respect, or who can deny his rights. The arrival of other men will necessarily create the jural relation between him and them. But so long as he remains alone, he may be holy or unholy, but he can not be said to be righteous or unrighteous. In like manner it may be said of God that before creation He was holy, but could not display His righteousness simply because there were no creatures sustaining toward Him the jural relation. But immediately after the creation the display of righteousness became possible.

Still the illustration can be applied to God only to a certain extent. Essentially God is not alone, but Triune in persons; hence there is between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit a mutual relation. This relation, being the highest, tenderest, and most intimate, contains from eternity the completest expression of righteousness. And even with reference to the creature, the divine righteousness did not originate until after the creation, but finds perfect expression in the eternal counsel. That counsel not only determines every possible jural relation between the creatures and the Creator, and the creatures themselves, but indicates also the means whereby this relation must be restored when broken or disturbed.

Hence His righteousness is as eternal as His Being; yet, in order to express clearly the difference between holiness and righteousness, we may say that as His holiness was glorious from eternity, so is His righteousness displayed and exercised only *in time, i.e.*, since the creature began to exist. It did not originate then, but became perceptible then. Whatever may be said on the subject, the fundamental difference remains that God is holy even tho considered alone by Himself; while His *righteousness* begins to radiate when He is considered in relation to His creatures.



God is holy essentially; before the least impurity existed, there was in Him vital pressure to repel all foreign mingling with His Being. But only as Sovereign could He determine the right, maintain the violated right, and execute righteousness upon the violater.

In its fundamental features this applies to us as men. Even in us righteousness is entirely different from holiness; the former has exclusive reference to our relation to and position

before God, man, and angel; while holiness refers, not to any relation, but to the quality of our inner being. We speak of righteousness only when it concerns our relation to God or man. Noah is said to have been a righteous man “in his generation,” which indicates not his essential quality, but his relation to others.

Righteousness implies right, which is unthinkable but as existing between two persons in connection with the qualification of either one or of a third to determine that right. Hence man’s righteousness with reference to God has a twofold aspect:

*First*, it implies the acknowledgment of God’s sovereign qualifications to determine man’s relation to God and man.

*Second*, it implies reverence for the divine laws and ordinances enacted with regard to man’s service of God.

A man may keep strictly some of these ordinances, not from the motive of reverence, but because he is compelled to approve them. In some respects he gives God His due; but His position is wrong. He fails to honor God as his sovereign Ruler, to acknowledge God as God, and to bow before His majesty.

Or he may reverence the divine authority in the abstract, but in practise constantly rob God of His right.

Therefore *original* righteousness, which has reference to man’s status before God as a creature, and *derived* righteousness, which refers to the act of honoring the divine ordinances, are two different things. Both are righteousness—*i.e.*, the act of occupying the position divinely ordained. But the first refers to our personal standing in the position determined by God; the second to the act of conforming our thoughts, words, and deeds to His divine requirements.

It is unnecessary to speak particularly of righteousness with reference to men. Whatever we do in relation to them is righteous or unrighteous according to its conformity or non-conformity to the divine ordinance, and every transgression against the neighbor becomes sin only because it is in non-conformity to the righteousness of God.

Briefly, man’s righteousness consists of two parts:

*First*, that his status be what God has determined.

*Second*, that his *thoughts, words, and deeds* be conformed to the divine ordinances. Hence our righteousness *need not be the product of our own soul’s labor*. The original righteousness of Adam and Eve lacked nothing, altho they had not done anything to it personally. They simply stood in the right position before God a position not self-assumed, but divinely determined. And so may the right, after it is disturbed, be restored independently of the violator, by a third person. The question is not *how* the right relation was restored, but whether it agrees again with God’s sovereign will.

He that delivers a debtor from imprisonment by paying his debts restores him to his right relation to his former creditors, even tho the prisoner himself did not pay a farthing

of the debt. Because righteousness has reference to mutual relations, the right is satisfied as soon as the disturbed relation is restored and the lost position recovered. How it was accomplished is immaterial.

This gives us a deeper insight into the profound significance of the cross, and why it is that our righteousness can not be increased nor decreased, altho it does not affect our essential character.

Entirely different is the soul's holiness, which touches directly the quality of person and character; as our ancient theologians correctly expressed it: "Justification acts for man; sanctification *inheres in man*."

The ungodly is justified, *i.e.*, the very moment that he believes; before sanctification has begun to operate in him, he knows that he stands before God perfectly right. He is not merely beginning to be right; partly right, to be a little more right tomorrow, and perfectly right when he enters heaven; but perfectly right now, henceforth, and forevermore. He is righted not only for the present and for all eternity, but also for the past. He is assured of standing before God in flawless right, as tho he had never been wrong, nor ever could be wrong again.

Hence the consciousness of being justified is instantaneous and at once complete, and can not be increased nor decreased. And this is possible because this righteousness has nothing to do with his being, but has exclusive reference to the relation in which he sees himself placed. This relation was miserable and wholly unrighteous; but another, outside of himself, has restored that relation and made it what it ought to be. Hence he stands right, without any reference whatever to his personal being. This is the deep significance of the confession that he who is justified is always *an ungodly person*.

But this is not the case in regard to man's holiness; that touches his person and can not be effected outside of his inward being.



V.

**Holy Raiment of One's Own Weaving.**

“I dwell in the high and holy places.” —*Isa. lvii. 15.*

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Holiness inheres in man's *being*.

There is *external* holiness, *e.g.*, that of the Levitical order, effected by washing or sprinkling with sacrificial blood; or official holiness, denoting separation for divine service, in which sense the prophets and apostles are called holy, and church-members are called holy and beloved. But these have nothing to do with the sanctification now under discussion.

Sanctification as a gift of grace refers to a man's *personal holiness*. As the divine holiness is God's exaltation above, and angry recoil from all impurity and defilement, so is human holiness man's essential disposition by which spontaneously he loves purity and hates the unclean. Victory over temptation after a long and painful conflict, in which our feet had wellnigh slipped, is not holiness.

Holiness signifies a disposition, an inherent quality, or, by another manner of speaking, a tint or shade adopted by the soul, so that the heart's evil manifestations and Satan's wicked whisperings fill us with positive horror. As the musically trained ear is painfully affected by a dissonance as it vibrates along the shuddering auditory nerve, while the unmusical ear never perceives the offense against the purity of tone, so is the difference between the sanctified and the unsanctified. Whatever the world's moral dissonances may be, they fail to affect the ungodly, who even praise the music; but they distress the saint whose soul delights in the harmony of holy concord.

This holy or unholy disposition includes our entire inward being: it inheres in mind, conscience, understanding, will, feelings, and inclinations. Evil and impure speech affords pleasure or pain to all these.

Yet this is not the final token of being holy or unholy. Something more is required. Do not many of the unregenerate shudder at much that is evil, and delight in much that is good? Sympathy for the good may be called holiness only when it possesses this essential feature, that it wills the good *for God's sake alone*.

God alone is *holy*. There is no holiness but that which descends from Him, the Fountain of all good, hence of all holiness. Mere human holiness is a counterfeit, an attack upon God's honor of being the sole and only Fountain of all good. It is the creature's effort to be equal with God, and as such essential sin. Nay, man's holiness must be the divinely implanted disposition, stirring his entire being to love what God loves, not from his own taste, but for His Name's sake.

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Being planned after the divine image, Adam and Eve possessed this holiness; hence discord between them and their Maker was impossible. Their holiness was not in *germ*