

## CHAPTER III

# THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

### A. INTRODUCTION

Our study of the holiness of God has led us to understand that God is essentially a moral Being. That is, He is, according to His self-revelation in propositional terms, holy and not unholy, He is righteous and not unrighteous; He is good and not bad; He is true and not false. Hence God's perfect morality is the ethic of His associated characteristics. So, notwithstanding man's understanding being morally polluted, the love of God is always a righteous love, the sovereignty of God is always a righteous sovereignty, the wrath of God is always a righteous wrath.

1. While the origin of evil is not without its profound problems, especially insofar as finite and sinful man is concerned, yet it is the very antithesis of the righteousness of God. The following summary comments are concerned with this reality of sin and the implications of its existence in the human heart along with its manifestations.
  - a. In spite of the difficulties that are involved in contemplating evil in ourselves and the world we live in, to deny the existence of objective evil, based upon a universal standard, is an infinitely greater difficulty than facing the ugliness of its reality within their own hearts. Of course subjective evil, which is strictly according to the definition of an individual or certain individuals, results in relative morality whereby right defined by one person is defined as wrong by another person. Within this perspective there are also various shades of "morality" as well. The end result here is a fearful society in which to live that cannot provide overall law enforcement; the populace is subject to the tyranny of "anything goes" because virtually anything can be right or wrong! However, to accept the existence of objective evil in this world calls for an objective standard before which evil and its antithesis are measured. Hence, if objective evil and badness exist, then so do their antithesis, that is objective righteousness and goodness, to which all of humanity is subject. In this universe, the objective standard of righteousness and goodness is the righteousness of God.
  - b. The entrance of personal sin into the created order takes us back to the fall of Lucifer, his rebellion amongst the angelic hosts from heaven (Isa. 14:12-14), it being prior to the fall of Adam and Eve. This must have been of divine consent without divine culpability; here is a mystery even if the reality of sin is not. We read in the KJV, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). However the NASB more

accurately translates, "I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these" (Isa. 45:6-7). Consider that in Genesis 1:2-5, God creates light which is declared to be good; darkness simply exists (but cf. Isa. 45:7), in the midst of which light is created and arises. Also consider that in the eternal realm, before the creation of the angelic hosts and the first emergence of evil, sin was always a theoretical opposite and within the realm of God's contemplation and certain rejection.

- c. Evil is the seed and root of which sins are the fruit with all of their variety. In the mystery of evil's origin, we affirm with John Owen: "God was pleased to permit the entrance of sin, both in heaven above and in earth beneath, whereby this whole order and harmony was disturbed."<sup>1</sup> However, although God is wholly opposed to evil, yet it allows the display of His justice and grace. This is not to suggest that God was not gracious before the entry of sin into the universe since His mere contemplation of sin, as antithesis, would engender both a just and gracious response. Yes, evil, though a profound mystery, nevertheless finds its clearest exposure in the Bible as being of spiritual origin and not merely the result of raw volition or material and environmental causes (Eph. 6:11-12).
- d. Evil being such a blight on the whole human race, yet the Bible promises that God shall finally vanquish and abolish it with the result that righteousness will prevail (Rev. 20:10-22:5). Again Owen explains:

Divine wisdom was no way surprised with this disaster. God had, from all eternity, laid in provisions of counsels for the recovery of all things into a better and more permanent estate than what was lost by sin. This is . . . the revivication, the restitution of all things (Acts 3:19-21), the . . . gathering all things in heaven and earth into a new head in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:10).<sup>2</sup>

Surely the supreme manifestation of human sin was the raging of the world against the holy, harmless, undefiled Son of God (Ps. 2:1-3). Never was any human thought and action more vile than this. Yet wonder of wonders, God designs to have the wrath and foulness of man to praise Him (Ps. 76:10) by means of His saving holy righteousness (Rom. 3:21-26).

- 2. But now we focus on the positive side of God's moral being, or His positive holiness. It is no exaggeration when Dabney declares, "We have now reached that which is the most glorious and at the same time, the most important class of God's attributes;

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<sup>1</sup> John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, I, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2.

those which qualify Him as an infinitely perfect moral Being.”<sup>3</sup> These aspects of holiness are:

- a. God’s *righteousness*; His moral being or positive holiness. Here is the ground of any moral imperative, any ethical standard, any oughtness.
  - b. God’s *justice*; His moral administration with equity or fairness. Here is the application of God’s righteousness upon human behavior
  - c. God’s *veracity*; His moral integrity or truthfulness. Here is the upholding of His reality in the face of a world where non-reality is promoted.
  - d. God’s *faithfulness*; His moral consistency, loyalty or dependability. Here is the integrity of His character that even sinful man is able to rely upon.
3. To the natural man, the ungodly, hostile, guilty sinner, God’s moral attributes are found to be disturbing, aggravating and offensive. Although divinely communicated to him (Rom. 2:15), man has no intrinsic delight in them, even though he may respond to their influence legalistically, externally, socially, unwittingly. However to the authentic Christian, God’s communicated moral attributes, especially enhanced through the regenerating Holy Spirit, are admired, adored, and responded to with desire and delight.
- a. Consider the hostile sinner.
    - (1) He shuns *the righteousness of God*. Boasting in evil, he loves it more than good, this happening even within the environment of the lovingkindness of God (Ps. 52:1-3). Although the wicked is shown favor, he does not learn righteousness or perceive the majesty of the LORD (Isa. 26:10).
    - (2) He does not understand *the justice of God*. Being evil, he does not understand righteous law administration (Prov. 28:5). He turns from listening to the instruction of God; even his prayer is an abomination, though he will eventually fall into his own pit (Prov. 28:9-10).
    - (3) He suppresses *the truth of God* (Rom. 1:18). Hating the revealed truth of God, especially as manifest in the person of His Son (John 14:6), he willfully and deceitfully exchanges it for the lie of man and creature worship (Rom. 1:25). Man becomes the focus of attention, not the blessed Creator.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 165.

- (4) He despises *the faithfulness of God*. While Israel has only contempt for its holy Messiah, he will be exalted before kings and princes because of the faithfulness of the Lord in His election of Israel (Isa. 49:7; II Thess. 3:1-3). Steadfast, pro-Israel loyal love is offensive to the world today (Rom. 11:28).

b. Consider the genuine Christian.

- (1) He delights in and embodies *the righteousness of God*. There is an attraction to the moral purity of God. So Jesus Christ declared: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6). God's precepts, that is His righteousness, is desired (Ps. 119:40).
- (2) He upholds and reflects *the justice of God*. Abraham is to do "righteousness and justice" even as an example to his children (Gen. 18:18-19). Micah similarly exhorts man: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8).
- (3) He pursues and embraces *the truth of God*. David is delivered from Saul by the lovingkindness and truth of God, which he adores (Ps. 57:1-3, having continually studied it (Ps. 119:97). So Solomon exhorts his son to follow after this same truth from the heart (Prov. 3:1-6).
- (4) He proclaims and manifests *the faithfulness of God*. God's lovingkindness is His loyal, covenant love, as revealed to Abraham and David (Ps. 89:1-2). So God is dependable, the result being assurance and rest for the believer" (Ps. 92:1-2). Hence the Christian learns faithfulness from God (Rev. 2:10).

## B. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS - HIS MORAL BEING OR POSITIVE HOLINESS

### 1. The righteousness of God defined.

- a. It is the full measure and standard of God's positive holiness, specifically who He is morally as distinct from who He is not; it is the full specification of His ethical purity; it is His objective moral essence; it is the regulating behavioral standard for the universe that calls for unqualified submission; it is the gold standard for virtue.
- b. The meaning of "righteousness" in Hebrew involves two concepts, first, predominantly that of moral integrity, loyalty, rightness, צַדִּיק, tsaddiq; second is the meaning of "straight," like a pathway, יָשָׁר, yosher, so that in Hosea 14:9, "the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous [morally straight] will walk in them." In Greek, δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosunē, means "upright, upstanding, just."

- c. God is *essentially* righteous, positively holy. "O LORD [Yahweh/Jehovah] God [Elohim] of Israel, You are righteous [צַדִּיק, tsaddiq], for we have been left an escaped remnant, as it is this day; behold, we are before You in our guilt, for no one can stand before You because of this" (Ezra 9:15). Ps. 129:4). Like the Old Testament, New Testament "righteousness" is the perfect standard of God's moral nature, it being true, ethically straight and not crooked.

Hence, the righteousness of God is the one and only standard for all moral creatures; it is the basis of all objective rights and rightness, not human claims and protestations. God's righteousness is not governed by any standard or law external to Himself since, being God alone, He cannot be measured by anyone greater or a higher standard (Heb. 6:13). He is righteous in Himself, not arbitrarily, but according to His own consistent, pure, eternal standard.

- d. God is *actively* righteous, administering justice, communicating moral truth, with consistency He is righteous in all His deeds (Ps. 145:17). He will "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24). All of His activity, His creating, His maintaining, His judging, His saving of sinners, is righteous. In the light of the presence of sin and human wickedness, God is jealous for the upholding of His righteous administration. So His righteous son exhorts His disciples: "[actively] seek first His [heavenly Father's] kingdom and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

## 2. The righteousness of God revealed.

If Jesus has exhorted His disciples, in a world so saturated with unrighteousness, to give priority to questing after the righteousness of God (Matt. 6:33), it might be wondered where such righteousness can be found. The good news is that it has been revealed by God Himself, though it requires serious, sober, and singular focus so as to behold it. The world of unrighteous will do everything it can to obscure it.

- a. In the Word of God, as *inscripturated* righteousness. The judgments or testimonies or words or precepts or law or commandments or statutes or ordinances of God are righteous, and this is an everlasting righteousness (Ps. 119:137-152). Hence "the word of Christ" (Col. 3:16) is righteous (I John 2:1).
- b. In the Son of God, as *incarnate* righteousness. A branch from the roots of Jesse will have a belt of righteousness about His loins (Isa. 11:1-5). He is the righteous Judge (II Tim. 4:8), "the Word made flesh" (John 1:14), also an Advocate with the Father for believing sinners, that is "Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).
- c. In the law of God, as *codified* righteousness. "You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness" (Ps. 119:138). "All Your commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:172). However, "the requirements/righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in believers in Christ (Rom. 8:4).

- d. In the covenants of God, as *promised* righteousness. God chose Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and covenanted with him to give his seed the land of Israel. "And you have fulfilled Your promise, for you are righteous" (Neh. 9:6-9). So to David was this covenant confirmed (II Sam. 7:1-29; Matt. 1:1, 17).
  - e. In the atonement of Jesus Christ, as *justifying* righteousness (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26). This idea of "saving righteousness," that is the righteous redemption of sinners, draws heavily upon the same truth described by Isaiah (Isa. 11:4-5; 45:8, 19, 23-24; 46:12-13; 51:5, 6, 8; 56:1; 59:15-17; 61:10-11; 62:1-2).
3. The righteousness of God communicated.
- a. As God *is* righteous and *does* righteousness, so by gospel transmission his genuine children *are* righteous and *do* righteousness, in His likeness (Ps. 15:1-2). God reveals His moral character, and it is inevitable that the child of God will do the same through the righteous Holy Spirit. Both Psalms and Proverbs place emphasis on this matter of God being righteous (Ps. 7:9, 17; 11:7; 119:142; 143:1) and His children reflecting righteousness (Prov. 8:20; 11:5-6; 15:9; 21:3, 21).
  - b. God transmits "the gift of righteousness" (Rom. 5:17). This is "by His doing" (I Cor. 1:30), so that the Christian obtains a declared, judicial righteousness through faith alone in the righteous Christ crucified by unrighteous man (Rom. 3:21-22; 4:1-25; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 11:7). This is a received righteousness.
  - c. The Christian is accountable for manifesting the righteousness of God by means of the life of God in his soul that results in glad obedience to His commands (Rom. 6:11, 16, 19; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; I Pet. 2:24; II Pet. 1:3-4; I John 3:7). This life of gospel sanctification is one of reflected righteousness.
  - d. By way of illustration, we read in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." In his exposition on the *Sermon on the Mount*, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, comments on this verse:
 

The world is seeking for happiness. That is the meaning of its pleasure mania, that is the meaning of everything men and women do, not only in their work but still more in their pleasures. They are trying to find happiness, they are making it their goal, their one objective. But they do not find it because, whenever you put happiness before righteousness, you will be doomed to misery. That is the great message of the Bible from beginning to end. They alone are truly happy who are seeking to be righteous. Put happiness in the place of righteousness and you will never get it.

This is equally true, however, of many within the Church. There are large numbers of people in the Christian Church who seem to spend the whole of their life seeking something which they can never find, seeking for some kind of happiness

and blessedness. They go round from meeting to meeting, and convention to convention, always hoping they are going to get this wonderful thing, this experience that is going to fill them with joy, and flood them with some ecstasy. They see that other people have had it, but they themselves do not seem to get it. So they seek it and covet it, always hungering and thirsting; but they never get it.”

Now this is not surprising. We are not meant to hunger and thirst after experiences; we are not meant to hunger and thirst after blessedness. If we want to be truly happy and blessed, we must hunger and thirst after righteousness. We must not put blessedness or happiness or experience in the first place. No, that is something that God gives to those who seek righteousness. Oh, the tragedy that we do not follow the simple teaching and instruction of the Word of God, but are always coveting and seeking this experience which we hope we are going to have. The experiences are the gift of God; what you and I are to covet and to seek and to hunger and thirst for is *righteousness*.<sup>4</sup>

### C. GOD’S JUSTICE – HIS MORAL EQUITY OR FAIRNESS

1. The justice of God is the administration and maintenance of His righteousness.

A holy God governs His universe according to His righteous will, statutes, and ordinances. “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne” (Ps. 89:14). So concerning the promised Christ, the Prince of Peace, “there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness” (Isa. 9:6-7; cf. Jer. 23:5). So the justice of God, as the administration of His righteousness, must be comprehended in view of the totality of His holy being. “Around God is awesome majesty. The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power and He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness” (Job 37:22-23).

- a. The preservation of God’s righteousness in His kingdom requires:

- (1) God as *judge*, the only moral Arbiter, the Upholder of His righteousness. “God is the Judge, He puts down one and exalts another” (Ps. 75:7), and so is His Son (II Tim. 4:1, 8; Rev. 19:11), Who yet has delegated “all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22, 26-7). So, “He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).
- (2) God’s *justice*, the distribution and execution of His righteousness. So, for this cause, 1God takes His stand in His own congregation; He exhorts in rulers: “<sup>2</sup> How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the

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<sup>4</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, I, pp. 75-6..

wicked? Selah. <sup>3</sup> Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked" (Ps. 82:1-4; cf. 89:14). This is according to His decree, statute, and delegation.

- (3) God's *judgment*, the pronouncement of His righteousness. "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments" (Rev. 16:7). "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous" (Rev. 19:1-2; cf. Ps. 19:9; 103:6; 119:7, 30, 75, 160). So He appoints both penalty for the guilty and vindication for the innocent. Such righteous pronouncements assume God's authority and power for their execution.
  - (4) God's *justification*, the pardon or acquittal of unrighteousness according to a righteous ground. "By His knowledge the Righteous One, My servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities" (Is. 53:11) "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness (Rom. 4:5). This one is "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (3:24).
- b. By way of application, justice demands a moral standard by which it can operate, and for the Christian this benchmark is the righteousness of God. So whenever there is a loosely expressed call for justice in the world today, "I want my rights!" we ought to enquire as to the specific moral standard that is presupposed.
- (1) The frequent call today in the different parts of the world for "economic justice" needs to be qualified. Is this a cry for the righteous justice of God, or for man's relative, flexible, ideological, political justice?
  - (2) When today there is a call for "justice in our courts," is it a request for the implementation of righteous laws derived from the Word of God, or man's humanistic, relativistic, democratic, cultural laws?
  - (3) When men and women cry out in agony of soul, "Where is there justice in the world?" we ought to be able to direct them to the justice of God that will transcend man's injustice (Gen. 18:25; Isa. 9:7).
- c. Through justice, God perpetuates and vindicates His righteousness, restrains unrighteousness, and thus upholds His moral standards in the universe. "The LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us" (Isa. 33:22). So there is "the day when according to my [Paul's] gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Rom. 2:16; cf. 1:18; 2:2-3).



However it needs to be appreciated that the enforcement of justice in a court setting does not generate a change of heart in either the plaintiff or the defendant.

## 2. The justice of God in operation.

In a time-framed world, it is both present and intrinsic with regard to sin committed (Rom. 1:18, 24, 26-28) as well as future in terms of God's eschatological day (2:16; 14:10; Acts 10:42; 17:31)

### a. It is by means of His just judgments.

(1) God has made just moral declarations called His judgments, laws, statutes, commandments, precepts, testimonies, word. "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12; cf. Ps. 119:1-176).

(2) God has codified His righteousness and engraved His justice:

(a) Objectively, upon two tables of stone (Ex. 20:1-17; 34:1; Deut. 5:8-21), clay, papyrus, parchment, paper, given to Israel (Ps. 147:19-20), Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-7:29), along with His other discourses and parabolic teaching.

(b) Subjectively, upon all human hearts, but especially those of the Gentiles, "who do not have the Law [on tables of stone, but] . . . show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness . . . accusing or else defending them" (Rom. 2:14-15).

b. It is by means of His distributive justice, both positively and negatively. Often the Bible speaks of both aspects together, that is God's remunerative and retributive justice, His vindictive and punitive justice. "Say to the righteous that it will go well with them, for they will eat the fruit of their actions. Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him. For what he deserves will be done to him" (Is. 3:10-11; cf. Rom. 2:5-8; I Cor. 3:11-15).

(1) God's positive, remunerative, vindictive justice.

(a) By way of illustration, in contemporary civil law it is often declared that, "the law awards and the law punishes" (cf. I Pet. 2:14). In our society the law awards damages, vindicates and protects the innocent, frees the oppressed, upholds integrity, delivers the accused, encourages the law abiding citizen. "Do not anxiously look about you,

for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

- (b) So God's justice establishes peace, deliverance, the vindication and upholding of the righteous. "I will hear what God the LORD will say; for He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; but let them not turn back to folly. Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that [righteous] glory may dwell in our land" (Ps. 85:8). "Hate evil, you who love the Lord, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked" (Ps. 97:10).
  - (c) God awards, not on the basis of obedience that seeks a merited reward, but according to the obedience of faith (Deut. 7:9, 12-13; Psa. 58:11; Rom. 1:1-5; 16:25-27), the acknowledgment of faithful service (Matt. 25:14-30; II Cor. 5:10). Concerning the rewards promised to Israel because of obedience as a redeemed people, the true basis for Israel's keeping of the law was to be the principle of faith, not human merit. However, at this point Israel failed (Rom. 9:30-33).
- (2) God's negative, retributive, punitive justice.
- (a) God punishes, that is He establishes appropriate penalty, so as to meet or satisfy the demands of His violated, offended righteousness. In a sinful universe, this upholding of His justice is also intended to restrain the transgressor, even if it does not renew his heart.
    - 1) It upholds and vindicates God's holy integrity. It is a sober truth that God is glorified through His just disposal of the guilty wicked to incarceration in hell since by this means His righteousness is satisfied.
    - 2) It proclaims God's desire for moral government. In a world permeated by sin, God's justice enables the orderly operation of a free society that would otherwise be chaotic. In other words, there is liberty through enforced, punitive law.
    - 3) It deters, restrains unbridled sin, but does not regenerate. When justice is properly promoted, when it is not only done but seen to be done, then there is some deterrent effect when a tempted sinner weighs certain consequences.
  - (b) God's punishment is not simply deprivation of blessing or separation from Himself. It is a positive penalty that expresses God's wrath and

results in the guilty sinner's anguish. It is not merely separation from God, but imposed chastisement.

- 1) God does withhold blessing because of sin, but He further extracts a penalty (Matt. 25:46). Lazarus wanted to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue; so he cried out: "I am in agony in this flame" (Luke 16:24).
  - 2) God does separate Himself from sinners, but He further punishes those who are separated (Isa. 59:2). They are consigned to "the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13: 42).
- (c) God's negative punishment of unrighteousness involves the maintenance of His moral consistency, that is His holy character. This, above all else, is at the heart of His moral government. In a court of law, the character of the judge is of supreme importance.
- 1) If God, having denounced sin, does not deal justly with it, then He participates in that sin or is culpable of it. So a parent lacks integrity who refrains from punishing a child even though a warning has been given.
  - 2) It is a further solemn thought that a sinner being punished in hell's "lake of fire," according to the God's consignment from His "great white throne" (Rev. 20:11-15), yet glorifies God by means of this display of His unswerving justice.
- (d) God's justice demands that sin be judged and punished in one of two ways. Here we enter into the wonder of contrast between God's judgment upon a sinner involving direct penal justice, or a gracious, substitutionary penal justice for a sinner.
- 1) There is justice in the sinner as a transgressor, in which case God's righteousness is upheld and grace is denied (Rom. 1:32-2:6; II Thess 1:8-9).
  - 2) There is justice in an acceptable substitute, even Jesus Christ, in which case God's righteousness is upheld and grace is provided (Rom. 5:1-11, 17; Col. 2:13-14; I Pet. 2:24).
- c. It is by means of His satisfactory justice. It satisfies and saves. "Lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"

(Ps. 85:10). So Jesus Christ is “just and endowed with salvation” (Zech. 9:9); God is “just and the justifier” (Rom. 3:26); “He is faithful and righteous” (I John 1:9); “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous” (Rev. 19:1-2). Hence it is His justifying justice that, now considered in detail, goes to the very heart of the Christian gospel.

### 3. The justice of God and justification.

- a. The gospel distinctively and gloriously displays God’s moral excellence, His justice and justification in such a way that the believing sinner is led to praise Him rather than fear Him. Notice that the New Testament words “just/right/righteous” (δίκαιος, dikaios adjective), “justify/justifier” (δικαιόω, dikao verb), “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosunē noun), “justice/judgment” (δίκη, dikē noun), “justification” (δικαίωσις, dikaiōsis noun), all have the same δικ-, dik- root. Collectively we have aspects of the moral essence of God.
- b. In human terms, God’s moral problem was how He might maintain His inviolate justice and yet fully show mercy and grace to the sinner. The answer to this seeming dilemma is found in Christ’s satisfactory atonement fully described in Romans 3:21-26. Here is God’s unique gospel resolution, through righteous grace, of man’s hopeless predicament. In all the religions of the world there is nothing comparable; either “God” is perfectly moral or immoral. If God is perfectly moral, he can only deal with man in terms of unremitting judgment, in which case man is eternally lost. If in some way He should compromise His perfect morality, then His integrity is forfeited and He ceases to be God. Only righteous grace can bridge the gulf between God and man.
- c. “Justification,” as the very terms suggests, is God’s right or just way of saving sinners. It is His means by which He judicially pardons with full integrity (Rom. 4:25-5:1; 5:18). If God should pardon a believing sinner, of what consolation and assurance is it if He does not maintain perpetual honor in this transaction, if His former word of saving promise is subsequently made conditional or negated.
- d. By way of illustration, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones comments:

How can God be just and justify the ungodly? The answer is that He can, because He has punished the sins of ungodly sinners in His own Son. He has poured His wrath upon Him. ‘He bore our chastisement.’ ‘By his stripes we are healed.’ God has done what He said He would do; He has punished sin. He proclaimed this through the Old Testament everywhere; and He has done what He said He would do. He has shown that He is righteous. He has made a public declaration of it. He is just and can justify, because having punished Another in our stead, He can forgive us freely. And He does so. . . . On Calvary God was making a way of salvation so that you and I might be forgiven. But He had to do so in a way that

will leave His eternal consistency still absolute and unbroken. Once you begin to look at it like that, you see that this is the most glorious, the most staggering thing in the universe and in the whole of history. God is there declaring at the same time His own eternal greatness and glory, declaring that 'He is light and in him is no darkness at all'. 'When I survey the wondrous Cross . . .', says Isaac Watts, but you do not see the wonder of it until you really do survey it in the light of this great statement of the Apostle. God was declaring publicly once and for ever His eternal justice AND His eternal love. Never separate them, for they belong together in the character of God.<sup>5</sup>

- e. By way of illustration, Jonathan Edwards recounted the last days in his home of David Brainerd, engaged to his daughter Jerusha. Although dying of tuberculosis, there is clearly evident sole trust in the clothing of Christ's imputed righteousness as well as, by his whole demeanor, evidence of the communication of God's righteousness reflected in the godly virtue of his life.

HE expressed himself thus; "Oh, the glorious time is now coming! I have longed to serve God perfectly: now God will gratify those desires." . . . He often used the epithet, *glorious*, when speaking of the day of his death. . . . "Near night, while I attempted to walk a little, my thoughts turned thus; 'How infinitely sweet it is, to love God, and be all for him!' Upon which it was suggested to me, 'You are not an angel, not lively and active.' To which my whole soul immediately replied, 'I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God, as any angel in heaven.' Upon which it was suggested again, 'But you are filthy, not fit for heaven.' Hereupon instantly appeared the blessed robes of Christ's *righteousness*, which I could not but exult and triumph in; and I viewed the infinite excellency of God, and my soul even broke with longings that God should be *glorified*.'"

I thought of dignity in heaven; but instantly the thought returned, 'I do not go to heaven to get honor, but to give all possible glory and praise.' Oh, how I longed that God should be glorified on *earth* also! Oh, I was *made* for eternity, if God might be glorified! *Bodily pains* I cared not for; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier. I felt willing to *glorify* God in that state of bodily distress, as long as he pleased I should continue in it. The *grave* appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it: but oh, that God might be *glorified*! *This was the burden of all my cry*.

Being asked, how he did? He answered, "I am almost in eternity. I long to be there. My work is done: I have done with all my friends: all the world is nothing to me. I long to be in heaven, *praising and glorifying* God with the holy angels. All my *desire is to glorify* God. . . . I longed to be *with him* [God], that I might *behold his glory*. I felt sweetly disposed to commit all to him, even my dearest friends, my dearest flock, my absent brother, and all my concerns for time and eternity. Oh that *his kingdom* might come in the world; that they might all love and glorify him, for what he is in himself; and that the blessed Redeemer might 'see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied!' Oh come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen."

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<sup>5</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans - Atonement and Justification*, pp. 107-8..

- d. The righteousness and justice of God are at the heart of the Christian gospel, as Paul well emphasizes in Romans 1:17; 2:13; 3:4-5, 20-30; 4:2-13, 22, 25; 5:1, 9, 16-21; 6:13-20; 8:10, 30; 9:30-31; 10:3-10; 14:17. Modern perversions of the gospel, that are in fact other gospels (Gal. 1:6-9), usually neglect the centrality of the righteousness of God; it is similarly the case with regard to contemporary Christian music. More often the words speak in relational terms of “inviting Jesus into the heart,” “Jesus knocking at the door of your heart which you need to open,” “receiving Jesus as Lord in your life,” “following in the steps of Jesus rather than your own,” etc. In so much of this we have an atonementless “gospel” that ignores the immoral essence of man’s estrangement from God, that is his unrighteousness.

#### 4. The justice of God communicated.

The justice of God is administered not only directly (Gen. 18:25; Rev. 20:11-15), but also indirectly by means of human agency, which at times is unjust “<sup>1</sup> God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. <sup>2</sup> How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? <sup>3</sup> Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked” (Ps. 82:1-4).

##### a. The human agency of Israel

As the Old Testament people were to “be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44), so they were to manifest justice since the LORD God is just (Isa. 56:1). “<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD, ‘Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word <sup>2</sup> and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on David’s throne, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates.’ <sup>3</sup> Thus says the LORD, ‘Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place’”(Jer. 22:1-3; cf. 7:1-7; 21:11-12; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Zech. 7:8-10).

##### b. The human agency of civil government.

As God administers His creation with justice, so the creature is to administer his dominion with identical justice (Prov. 25:2-5). “<sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right” (I Pet. 2:13-14; cf. Rom. 13:1-7).

c. The human agency of the corporate Church.

As Jesus Christ justly administers the church, as head over His body, so the Christian member is to be just one toward another (Heb. 3:13). <sup>7</sup> “For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup> holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Tit. 1:7-9; cf. Matt. 5:13-16; Gal. 6:10; I Thess. 5:15; I Tim.).

d. The human agency of the individual Christian.

- (1) Christian justice is the personal reflection of the righteousness of God in active daily life (I John 2:29; 3:7); it is to “live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Tit. 2:12), but especially at a most practical level that contrasts with the injustice of this world, making “the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger” (Amos 8:4-5).
- (2) Christian justice must not be confused with humanistic justice or expedient political justice that ignores the righteousness of God. Such justice is man centered, man serving and relativistic in which case injustice is substituted for justice. It is distinguishable by means of contrast with the justice of the only true and living God of Abraham (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 4:8).
  - (a) Humanistic justice is that which is a reflection of situational human consensus; it is that which sinful man believes to be right for the times in which he lives. This is the standard when man has become a law unto himself.
  - (b) Expedient political justice is that which is a reflection of humanistic, social ideology and engineering; it is often the whim of an elite ruling class that strengthens its grip on society. Its hermeneutic concerning a constitution is not “original intent,” but “fluid meaning.”
- (3) Christian justice is a reflection of the biblical Christ and his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God His Father. His reign is “on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:7). So He “became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (I Cor. 1:30). Hence Christian justice is sourced outside of man in the objective, incarnate

Word of God. Consequently the Christian walks in His just steps (I Pet. 2:21).

- (4) Christian justice is that promoted in the Christian's society.

Whatever his employment or vocation, the Christian can be relied upon to justly apply the principles of the righteousness of God to every situation. He can also be relied upon to protest when injustice shows its ugly face. Why do Christians pursue such causes of justice? Because, like the constraint of the love of Christ (II Cor. 5:14), so the righteousness and justice of God, rightly understood, must find similar, spontaneous expression. Consider some examples.

- (a) The example of John Bunyan, 1628-88.

Just before his death, Bunyan was approached in Bedford by a young man who asked for help so that he might become reconciled with his father. John rode on his horse to Reading, accomplished the reconciliation, and then rode on to London through bad weather and consequently caught a fever. At London a friend warmly received him, though Bunyan nevertheless died within several days. An elegy written in memory of Bunyan declared:

"He in the pulpit preached truth first, and then  
He in his practice preached it o'er again."

- (b) The example of William Wilberforce, friend of John Newton, 1759-1833.

This wealthy Cambridge graduate became a member of the British Parliament. Converted under the ministry of George Whitfield, he sought advice about entering the ministry from John Newton, who suggested he remain as a parliamentarian. Influential in the early ministry of the Church Missionary Society and the Bible Society, his greatest concern was the abolition of slavery, eventually accomplished in 1807.

- (c) The example of the Earl of Shaftsbury, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 1801-85.

This aristocratic Oxford graduate, as an evangelical Christian and member of the British Parliament, became concerned for the terrible working and living conditions of his time. He took up the cause of London slums, of women and children in mines and collieries, as well



as young chimney sweeps. He also supported the London City Mission, the British and Foreign Bible Society, Jewish restoration, and the Y.M.C.A.

#### D. GOD'S VERACITY - HIS MORAL INTEGRITY OR TRUTHFULNESS

1. God is true in Himself, genuine, faithful, dependable, having perfect integrity. So Jesus Christ is "Him who is true" (I John 5:20; cf. Rev. 3:7) according to His holy uprightness (Rev. 6:10). Hence God is trustworthy because He "is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).
  - a. All reality, material and immaterial, visible and invisible, actual and theoretical, external and essential, totally corresponds with He who is the ultimate, principal reality. Thus He is the "LORD, God of truth" (Ps. 31:5).
  - b. He is the center and origin of all truth. "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it (Ps. 24:1; Col. 1:16-17). Every element of truth, physical, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, is sourced in Him.
  - c. He is uniquely and exclusively true, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3) whom He sent. All other gods are not the true God (Jer. 10:6-10), whereas He is the "living and true God."
  - d. He is the God of truth who delights to deal in truth while hating every false way (Ps. 119:104, 128). Error is everything which does not correspond to His reality. At the same time He is "abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Ex. 34:6).
  - e. He is the triune God of truth.
    - (1) God the Father is genuine and truthful. "But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King" (Jer. 10:10; cf. Dan. 4:37).
    - (2) God the Son is genuine and truthful. He is "full of truth and grace" (John 1:14); He is "the truth" (John 14:6; cf. I John 5:20; Rev. 3:7).
    - (3) God the Holy Spirit is genuine and truthful. He is "the Spirit of the truth" (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13; I John 5:6), especially concerning God the Son.

- f. He communicates His truth using various media.
- (1) The good Angels. They are especially concerned with the coming of Messiah (Dan. 9:20-27; Luke 2:8-14; I Pet. 1:12).
  - (2) The creation. The loud speech of the voiceless heavens proclaims the truth concerning the glory of God (Ps. 19:1-6).
  - (3) The written Word. Scripture is God-exhaled, objective truth, particularly the wisdom of gospel truth (John 17:17; II Tim. 3:15-16).
  - (4) The spoken Word. It was also preached, heralded, taught, discussed, reasoned, defended, read (Acts 19:8-10; 20:20; II Tim. 4:2).
  - (5) The Incarnate Word. He is "the Word made flesh" (John 1:14) and named "the Word of God" (Rev. 19:13).
  - (6) The living epistles. The Christian is "a letter of Christ, . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God (II Cor. 3:2-3; cf. John 17:17-19).
    - (a) They know the truth (I John 2:21). That is, "they are established in the truth which is present with you" (II Pet. 1:12).
    - (b) They love in the truth. This affection, not based on mere emotion and sensation, extends to "all who know the truth" (I John 1:8; II John 1).
    - (c) They are indwelt by the truth. It agreeably inhabits the whole Christian being, not the intellect alone (II John 2).
    - (d) They walk in the truth. In other words, truth as embraced orthodoxy is expressed as evident orthopraxy (III John 4).
    - (e) They speak the truth. Paul spoke "words of sober truth" (Acts 26:25-29); at the same time he was "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).
- g. By way of conclusion, it should be noted that all of the preceding categories presuppose a commitment to objective as opposed to subjective truth, that is "true truth" according to the expression coined by Francis Schaeffer. He also considered capitulation in this area as, "the great evangelical disaster—the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth. There is only one word for this—namely *accommodation*: the evangelical church has

accommodated to the world spirit of the age.”<sup>6</sup> Hence Christian truth, of whatever kind, does not have its *source* in universities, libraries, the scientific method, or human reason, but only the self-revelation of the true God. While these other sources may at best discover or mediate some truth, the God of truth and the truth of God are the grounds of the Christian’s world-view. “In the beginning God . . .” (Gen. 1:1). It is “the fear of the Lord [that] is the beginning of knowledge [truth] (Prov. 1:7).

## E. GOD’S FAITHFULNESS - HIS MORAL CONSISTENCY OR DEPENDABILITY

### 1. The faithfulness of God by definition.

If God is true in Himself and speaks only truth, then His being *proven, demonstrated* as true speaks of His faithfulness and dependability. In the O.T. the main word is אָמֵן, aman, to be certain, enduring, hence qualified to be trusted, from which is derived the strong affirmation, אָמֵן, amēn, hence “amen.” Thus in Deuteronomy 7:9, “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and His lovingkindness” (cf. Deut. 32:3-4; Ps. 33:4). In the N.T. the main word is πιστός, pistos, meaning to be trustworthy, reliable, dependable (I Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Heb. 10:23; 11:11; I John 1:9). However it is the righteous moral character of God that is at the foundation of His faithfulness. Unfaithfulness is the fruit of immorality.

#### a. He is the faithful triune God.

- (1) The faithful God the Father, whose absolute independence and uniqueness distinguishes Himself in the midst of a world of unfaithful polytheism. “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments” (Deut. 7:9; cf. Isa. 49:7; I Cor. 1:9).
- (2) The faithful God the Son, especially in his loyalty to the will of His Father. “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17; cf. Is. 11:1-5). So He is “the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5).
- (3) The faithful God the Holy Spirit, the guarantor of faithfulness to His people, here Israel”<sup>3</sup> ‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former

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<sup>6</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, p. 37.

glory [under Solomon]? And how do you see it now [following return from exile]? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? <sup>4</sup> 'But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>5</sup> 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!'" (Hag. 2:3-5).

- b. He is unable to be unfaithful, even in the midst of unfaithfulness on the part of His people. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19). "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (II Tim. 2:13).
  - c. He is demonstrably *the* faithful God in contrast with other unfaithful gods. "For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. . . . The Lord . . . is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His Faithfulness" (Ps. 96:5, 11-13, cf. Ex. 3:15-17; 18:8-11).
  - d. His faithfulness is great because it does not fail; He does not abandon His cause as His creation and providence indicate. "Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations" (Ps. 119:90). "The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23).
2. The faithfulness of God demonstrated in His covenants or big promises.

Linked with the veracity and integrity of God is His covenant steadfastness, His loyal love that is true to His word. "My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me" (Ps. 89:34-36). So Thomas Olivers has written concerning God's covenant oath to Abraham.

He by Himself hath sworn,  
I on His oath depend:  
I shall on eagle's wing's upborne,  
To heaven ascend.

- a. He will keep his covenants and promises in general.

The unilateral covenants made with Noah, Abraham, David, and preeminently the New Covenant, are reflective of God's faithfulness in spite of man's disobedience.

- (1) The promised providence of God to Noah and his seed, signified with the rainbow. <sup>9</sup> For this is like the days of Noah to Me, When I swore that the waters of Noah Would not flood the earth again; So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you Nor will I rebuke you. <sup>10</sup> For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the LORD who has compassion on you" (Isa. 54:9-10; cf. Gen. 8:20-22; 9:11-16; Acts 14:15-17).
  - (2) The promised exile and return of Israel, based upon God's promises to Abraham and on through David. Israel will be dispersed "in all the lands where the Lord your God has banished you. . . . "[Then] the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed. . . . Moreover the LORD will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God" (Deut. 30:1, 5-6). "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your on land. . . . You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers. So you will be My people, and I will be your God Ezek. 36:26, 28).
  - (3) The promise of salvation through Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, the Mediator of the New Covenant. <sup>1</sup> Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. 1:1-4; cf. Gen. 3:15; 22:15-18; II Sam. 7:8-16; Mic. 5:2; Isa. 7:14; 9:1-2; 52:13-53:12; Jer. 31:27-37; Matt. 1:1, 18-23; 2:1-11; 4:13-16; Luke 1:67-79; Heb. 8:7-13).
- b. He will keep his covenants and promises in particular.
- (1) To strengthen saints when Satan assails, arousing depression and faithlessness. "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9); But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord concerning you" (II Thess. 3:3).
  - (2) To cleanse from sin in the life of a Christian. "If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). "I [David] said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and You forgave the guilt of my sin" (Ps. 32:5; cf. Prov. 28:13).

- (3) To do away with suffering. "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (I Pet. 4:13). "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God, shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (I Pet. 4:19, cf. vs. 12-13).
- (4) To take His elect to glory. "<sup>1</sup> Knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you. . . .<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." (I Thess. 1:4; 5:23-24).
- (5) To finally save rebellious Israel. "The house of Israel [surrounds Me] with deceit . . . even against the Holy One who is faithful. . . . I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely" (Hos. 11:12; 14:4). "<sup>28</sup> From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;" (Rom. 11:28).

### 3. The faithfulness of God practically considered.

God's faithfulness, when rightly comprehended, that is apart from presumption, is especially productive of stability, assurance, and rest in the believer's life. So Arthur Pink writes:

The apprehension of this blessed truth will *preserve us from worry*. To be full of care, to view our situation with dark forebodings, to anticipate the morrow with sad anxiety, is to reflect poorly upon the faithfulness of God. . . . The apprehension of this blessed truth will *check our murmurings*. The Lord knows what is best for each one of us, and one effect of resting on this truth will be the silencing of petulant complainings. . . . The apprehension of this blessed truth will beget increasing *confidence in God*. . . . When we trustfully resign ourselves, and all our affairs into God's hands, fully persuaded of His love and faithfulness, the sooner shall we be satisfied with His providences and realize that "He doeth *all* things well."<sup>7</sup>

‘Great is Thy faithfulness’, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

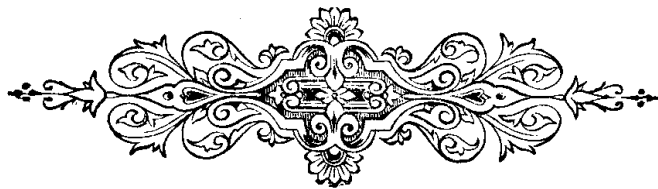
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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Pink, *The Attributes of God*, p. 56.

4. The faithfulness of God communicated to and reflected in His children.

As God is faithful, so His children reflect the faithfulness of He who has begotten them. "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead [exhorts]: . . . Do not fear what you are about to suffer. . . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev. 1:5; 2:10).

- a. In their faithfulness toward God. "For you have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name. . . . So I will sing praise to Your name forever, that I may pay my vows" (Ps. 61:5, 8; 66:13; cf. Eccles. 5:4-5; I Cor. 4:17; Col. 1:7).
- b. In their faithfulness toward man. "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight. . . . The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them" (Prov. 11:1, 3; cf. Josh. 9:16-21;).



Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through these I am  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

The holy, meek, unspotted Lamb,  
Who from the Father's bosom came,  
Who died for me, e'en me to atone,  
Now for my Lord and God I own.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,  
Which, at the mercy seat of God,  
Forever doth for sinners plead,  
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

Lord, I believe were sinners more  
Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,  
For all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise  
To claim my mansion in the skies,  
Ev'n then this shall be all my plea,  
Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

This spotless robe the same appears,  
When ruined nature sinks in years;  
No age can change its glorious hue,  
The robe of Christ is ever new.

Jesus, the endless praise to Thee,  
Whose boundless mercy hath for me—  
For me a full atonement made,  
An everlasting ransom paid.

O let the dead now hear Thy voice;  
Now bid Thy banished ones rejoice;  
Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness.

*Nikolaus L. von Zinzendorf,*