

Holy Raiment of One's Own Weaving

by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)

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I dwell in the high and holy places."--Is. 57:15

HOLINESS inheres in man's being. p. 448, par. 1, [WEAVING]

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. p. 448, par. 2, [WEAVING]

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 well-nigh slipped, is not holiness. p. 448, par. 3, [WEAVING]

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. p. 448, par. 4, [WEAVING]

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. p. 448, par. 5, [WEAVING]

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 p. 448, par. 6, [WEAVING]

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for the good may be called holiness only when it possesses this essential feature, that it wills the good for God's sake alone. p. 449, par. 1, [WEAVING]

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. p. 449, par. 2, [WEAVING]

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 merely, but complete, for everything in them was in perfect accord with God. And the redeemed in heaven are holy; in death they are severed completely from the internal source of sin; they are essentially in full and warm sympathy with the divine holiness, whose every feature attracts them. p. 449, par. 3, [WEAVING]

But the sinner has lost this holiness. It is his misery that every expression of his being is naturally in collision with the will of God, whose holiness does not attract, but repels him. And mere regeneration does not sanctify his inclination and disposition; nor is it able of itself to germinate the holy disposition. But it requires the Holy Spirit's *additional and* very peculiar act, whereby the disposition of the regenerated and converted sinner is brought gradually into harmony with the divine will; and this is the gracious gift of sanctification. p. 449, par. 4, [WEAVING]

But this does not imply that a man who dies immediately after conversion enters heaven without sanctification. This would be a very comfortless doctrine, and would unintentionally encourage Antinomianism. God's child entering heaven is completely sanctified; not in this life, but after it. p. 449, par. 5, [WEAVING]

According to Scripture there is in heaven a difference between the spirits of the redeemed; they do not resemble each other as do two drops of water. In the parable of the talents Christ teaches clearly that in heaven there is a difference in the distribution of talents. He who denies this robs himself of the positive promise that "the Father who seeth in secret shall reward openly." The p. 449, par. 6, [WEAVING]

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heavenly state which we preach is not based upon the principles of the French Revolution; on the contrary, in the assembly of just men made perfect we shall never ascend to the rank of apostle or prophet, probably not even to that of martyr. Nevertheless there is in heaven no saint whose sanctification is incomplete. In this respect all are alike. p. 450, par. 1, [WEAVING]

But there will be room for development. The complete sanctification of my personality, body and soul, does not imply that my holy disposition is now in actual contact with *all* the fullness of the divine holiness. On the contrary, as I ascend from glory to glory, I shall find in the infinite depths of the divine Being the eternal object of richest delight in ever-increasing measure. In this respect the redeemed in heaven are like Adam and Eve in

Paradise, who, though perfectly holy, were destined to enter more fully into the life of the divine love by endless development. p. 450, par. 2, [WEAVING]

It should therefore be thoroughly understood that at the moment of their entering heaven the sanctification of the redeemed *lacks nothing*. Nevertheless their sanctification will receive fullest completion when, risen from the grave, in the glory of the resurrection body, they enter the Kingdom of Glory after the day of judgment. Until that hour they are in a state of separation from the body, resting in peace, awaiting the coming of the Lord. p. 450, par. 3, [WEAVING]

Since sanctification includes body and soul, exhaustive treatment requires that we call attention to this point. Not as though this intermediate state were sinful, a sort of purgatory; for the Scripture teaches clearly that in death we are *separated* from the body. The fact that the body remains impure until the day of glorification does not affect the holy state of the departed saint. Being freed from the body, he is no more affected by it. And when, in the notable day of the Lord, the body shall be restored to him, it shall be perfectly holy, pure, and glorified. p. 450, par. 4, [WEAVING]

That which belongs to Jesus enters heaven perfectly holy. The slightest lack would indicate something internally sinful; would annihilate the glorious confession that death is a dying to all sin, as well as the positive declaration of Scripture, that nothing that defiles shall enter the gates of the city. Hence it is the unalterable rule of sanctification that every redeemed soul entering heaven is perfectly sanctified. p. 450, par. 5, [WEAVING]

This applies to the infant who being regenerated in the cradle is carried thence to the grave, in whom, therefore, conscious exercise p. 450, par. 6, [WEAVING]

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of holiness is out of the question; and to every converted person who dies suddenly; and to the man who, hardened all his life, in his dying hour repents before God, and departs one of the redeemed of the Lord. p. 451, par. 1, [WEAVING]

The supporters of the ordinary Arminian doctrine consider this representation impossible. They believe that sanctification is an effect of the saint's own exertion, exercise, and conflict. It is like a beautiful garment of fine linen, very desirable, but it must be of one's own weaving. This labor is begun immediately after the saint's conversion. The loom is set up, and he begins to weave. He continues his spiritual labor with but few interruptions. The piece of linen gradually increases under his hand, and assumes form and shape. If not cut down in early life, he expects to finish it even before the hour of his departure. p. 451, par. 2, [WEAVING]

The pulpit must oppose this theory, which comes, not from Arminius's books, but from man's wicked heart. For it is not only very *comfortless*, but also *wicked*. p. 451, par. 3, [WEAVING]

It is comfortless: for, if true, then all our precious little ones who died in the cradle are lost, for they could not put one stitch in this raiment of their glory; comfortless: for if the saint should happen to be behindhand with his weaving, or be taken away in the midst of

his days before he could half finish it, he would surely be lost. Nor is it less comfortless for him whose deathbed conversion is utterly useless, for it came too late for the weaving of this garment of sanctification. p. 451, par. 4, [WEAVING]

And it is also *wicked*: for then Christ is no sufficient Savior. He may effect our justification and open the gates of Paradise, but the weaving of our own wedding-garments He lays upon us, without insuring us sufficient time to finish them. Yea, wicked indeed is it; for this makes the weaving of the fine linen our work, sanctification *man's* achievement, and God is no longer the only Author of our salvation. Then it is no grace, and man's own work is again on its feet. p. 451, par. 5, [WEAVING]

In thus subverting the very foundation of holy things, thoughtless Ethical theologians ought to consider the destruction they bring upon Christ's Church. Our fathers never believed this doctrine, and always opposed it. "There is no Gospel in it," they said. It is the concision of the Covenant of Grace; laying upon God's saints the fear and distress of the Covenant of Works. p. 451, par. 6, [WEAVING]

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Christ Our Sanctification

Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification."--1 Cor. 1:30.

THE redeemed soul possesses all *things* in Christ. He is a complete Savior. He lacks nothing. Having Him we are saved to the uttermost; without Him we are utterly lost and undone. p. 452, par. 1, [WEAVING]

We must earnestly maintain this point, especially with reference to sanctification; and repeat with increasing clearness that Christ is given us of God not only for wisdom and righteousness, but also for *sanctification*. p. 452, par. 2, [WEAVING]

It reads distinctly that Christ is our righteousness and sanctification. This translation is perfectly correct. The Greek does not read, "dikaiosis," which is justification, but "dikaiosisune," which never refers to the act of *making, righteous*, but to the condition of being righteous, therefore righteousness. So it does not read, "*hagios*" or "*hagiosisune*," which might refer to holiness, but it reads distinctly, "*hagiosmos*," which points to the act of *making, holy*. p. 452, par. 3, [WEAVING]

What the apostle distinguished so clearly should not be confounded. p. 452, par. 4, [WEAVING]

St. Paul and the Church of Corinth are believers. They are justified in Christ already, once for all; for Christ was made righteousness unto them. But this is not the case with sanctification. "Even the holiest men have only small beginnings of this obedience, which constrain them to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God" (Heidelberg Catechism, q. 1 14). But the work is only just begun. Compared to former times, there is a holier love and spirit in them, but they are by no means *wholly* sanctified. They are under the treatment of the Spirit, their Sanctifier. They become more and more conformable to the image of God (q. 15). Hence there are

degrees of progress in holiness. In those but recently converted, sanctification has progressed but little; in others it has made glorious progress. So there are in the Church holy, holier, and holiest persons (q. 114). p. 452, par. 5, [WEAVING]

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Since the justification of the ungodly is at once finished, and the sanctification of the regenerate proceeds but slowly and gradually, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians with perfect precision that Christ is to him and them no more righteous-making, but righteousness; on the contrary, He had not yet become to them holiness, but only *holy-making*. p. 453, par. 1, [WEAVING]

This being well understood, it is impossible to be mistaken. If the apostle had intended to enumerate in the abstract all that a lost sinner possesses in Christ, he would have said: "Wise-making, righteous-making, *and holy-making*"; for a lost sinner walks still in his foolishness, is not yet made righteous, etc. But he describes his own experience, saying, that like a star the wisdom of God had arisen in his dark soul; that for Christ's sake he has obtained pardon and satisfaction, wherefore he stands perfectly righteous before God: and that now he is being made *holy* and *being, redeemed*. He is not yet redeemed entirely; the Greek "apolutrosis" denotes also here a *continued* action of being made free from inward and outward misery. p. 453, par. 2, [WEAVING]

The Heidelberg Catechism (q. 60) describes the righteous standing of the soul before God in the following striking manner: p. 453, par. 3, [WEAVING]

Q. How art thou righteous before God? p. 453, par. 4, [WEAVING]

A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ: so that, though my conscience accuse me that I have grossly transgressed all the commands of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil; notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and *holiness* of Christ; even so as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yes, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me; inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart." p. 453, par. 5, [WEAVING]

The fact that this answer makes righteousness to include holiness has led less thoughtful men to infer that sanctification and justification are the same thing. Discussed at the Synod of Dort, this question was settled by inserting into article 22 of the Confession the following clause: "Jesus Christ imputing to us all His merits, and so many holy works, which He has done for us and in our stead, is our Righteousness." p. 453, par. 6, [WEAVING]

What does justification then include? Not the sanctification of our persons, but the sum-total of the holy works which we owe God according to the law. Question 60 calls this "our *holiness*." p. 453, par. 7, [WEAVING]

The difference between the two is clearly seen in Adam and Eve p. 453, par. 8, [WEAVING]

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in Paradise. They were created *personally* holy; there was nothing unholy about them. But they had not yet fulfilled the law. They did not possess holy works. They had not acquired a treasure of holiness. Personally, one can be holy without having a single grain of accomplished or acquired holiness; and, on the other hand, one may have a perfectly fulfilled law without having the slightest function of personal holiness. Christ in the manger was perfectly holy, but He had not yet fulfilled the law, hence He had not an acquired holiness to present to us in our place. But in the hour of his justification the child of God receives (1) the complete remission of his punishment on the ground of Christ's *atonement*; (2) the complete remission of his indebtedness on the ground of Christ's *satisfaction*. And this satisfaction is but a perfect fulfillment of the law; a complete presentation of all good works; hence a perfect manifestation of holiness. Between questions 114 and 115 there is, therefore, not the slightest conflict. p. 454, par. 1, [WEAVING]

Sanctification and holiness are two different things. Holiness, in the 60th question, has reference, not to personal dispositions and desires, but to *the sum-total of all the holy works* required by *the* law. Sanctification, on the contrary, refers not to any work of the law, but exclusively to the work of *creating, holy dispositions in the heart*. p. 454, par. 2, [WEAVING]

If one asks, Is Christ your holiness as much as He is your *righteousness* and in the same sense? we answer: Yes, indeed, bless the Lord; He is my complete holiness before God, just as much as my perfect righteousness. The one is just as absolute and certain as the other. The performance of all the holy works required by the law of every man, according to the Covenant of Works, is a vicarious act of Christ in the fullest sense of the word. Wherefore we confess that the holy works which Christ has done for us are just as positively an imputed holiness, as we stand right before God by an *imputed* righteousness. Nothing can be added to it. It is whole, perfect, and complete in every respect. p. 454, par. 3, [WEAVING]

And that which is done for us in our stead is not again required of us. This would be morally absurd. According to the Covenant of Works, neither the law nor the lawgiver has anything more to demand of us. It is a finished work. The penalty is suffered, and the holiness required by the law is presented. We are perfectly righteous before God and our own consciousness, inasmuch as we receive this unspeakable benefit with a believing heart. p. 454, par. 4, [WEAVING]

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But all that has nothing to do with our *sanctification*. In addition to the imputed righteousness and holy works, our sanctification comes next in order. p. 455, par. 1, [WEAVING]

From sin proceed guilt, penalty, and stain. From these three we must be delivered. From the penalty by Christ's *atonement*; from guilt by His satisfaction; and from the stain by sanctification. After God has redeemed us from the everlasting doom, we are still unholy, downtrodden in our unclean blood. Adam's inherent, holy disposition and desire are not yet restored to us. On the contrary, the stain of sin is there still. We delight in the law of God after the inward man, but we also find sin present always and everywhere in the sin-

stain of body and soul. And God wills that this shall not continue. For the stain of sin He will substitute a holy disposition. He resolves to reform us inwardly, to renew us after the image of His dear Son, i.e., to sanctify us. p. 455, par. 2, [WEAVING]

It is only now that He begins to make us *personally* holy. As His children, we are dear to Him as the apple of His eye; He has engraven our names in the palms of His hands. We neglect things indifferent, but we polish the precious jewel. An old garment is cast aside, but we remove the stain from the costly silken gown. The housewife adorns the beloved homestead, and the gardener pulls the weeds from his garden-beds. In like manner, compelled by His love, God wills that His child, body and soul, be made bright until sin's stain be wholly removed. p. 455, par. 3, [WEAVING]

This is the work of sanctification, aiming exclusively at our personal sanctification, to restore unto us the holiness of Adam before he had performed any holy work. p. 455, par. 4, [WEAVING]

In *Adam*, *personal holiness* came first, then holiness consisting in the fulfillment of the law; but to God's child, the latter, imputed to him for Christ's sake, is imparted first, and his personal holiness follows. As Adam was *created* holy, so the regenerated is made holy. p. 455, par. 5, [WEAVING]

The personal sanctification of the regenerated and converted sinner begins after the quickening of faith; continues with more or less interruption all the days of his life; is finished, so far as the soul is concerned, in death, and, regarding the body, at the coming of the Lord. And since this is wrought by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, the Scripture confesses that Christ is not only our Righteousness, but also our Sanctification. p. 455, par. 6, [WEAVING]