

The Holiness of God

by Edward Davies

The sermon emphasizes the essential nature of God's holiness and its implications for worship and moral living.

Scripture: Psalm 99:9, Isaiah 6:3, Matthew 5:8, Hebrews 12:10, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Gods Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

Edward Davies preaches on the holiness of God, emphasizing that holiness is an essential attribute of God's nature. God's holiness is demonstrated in the moral universe through His laws and commandments, promoting the well-being of those who obey them. The gospel reveals God's eternal abhorrence of sin and His love for purity, offering a way for humanity to be sanctified through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The holiness of God, reflected in the Trinity, serves as the foundation for all human holiness, flowing infinitely from the divine source.

Transcript

"I am holy."

"There is a God -- all nature speaks

Through earth, and air, and sea, and skies;

See -- from the clouds his glory breaks,

When earliest beams of morning rise."

The mighty fact of the Divine existence the Book of Revelation [The Bible] never undertakes to prove, but simply takes it for granted; for, as we open the sacred treasure, we read, "In the beginning God Created the heavens and the earth." So God was before the beginning, before angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, before the existence of the starry heavens and the flowery earth. His mighty fiat [decree] spake them all into being. For he "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." I stand and look, when, behold! God stretches out his omnipotent hand, and I see dropping from his fingers those vast orbs that bestud the vault of heaven. I look again, and I see arising from the chaos of matter a beautiful earth, all fitted up and furnished for the abode of man. I look again, and light springs out of darkness, and order out of confusion.

But what is the character, and what are the attributes of this mighty First Cause of all creation?

"I am holy," says this great Jehovah, and this attribute stands out in bold relief, the all-essential attribute of his nature. The Hebrews called him "Elohim," gods, or adorable ones; "El," strong, powerful; "Ehiah," I am, I will be, self-existence; "Shadie," [sic] almighty; "Rochum," the merciful being; "Channum," the gracious one.

If we inquire as to the nature of God, we read, "God is a spirit;" as to the duration of God, "he is from everlasting to everlasting;" and while he is inflexible in justice, almighty in power, infinite in goodness and love, he is spotless in purity, the Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.

Holiness in the creature is the outward and inward conformity to the immutable laws of God; but when we speak of God, we speak of a being who is a law unto himself. He has no higher authority by which his conduct may be tried. It accords, therefore, with his own self-existent justice.

Holiness in God is an essential attribute of his nature, it is a part of his existence, and we cannot think of God without associating the idea of holiness with the thought. And with our present constitution, we cannot think of offering worship to a supreme God who is not holy.

God's holiness is manifest in the laws of the moral universe, in which he has enjoined certain affections and actions upon moral agents, and prohibited their contraries. And, as we look around, we see that those who observe these precepts, promote thereby their moral and spiritual well being; yea, their present and eternal interests. While those who will not obey them, according to the constitution of nature, are miserable; for happiness flows from rectitude, and misery from vice, and all this shows that the God of nature is a holy God.

We shall reach the same conclusion if we look at it from another standpoint, for the very gospel itself is instituted to establish, or set forth, God's moral purity, showing his eternal abhorrence of sin, and his infinite love of purity. To save him from moral pollutions a fountain is open, in the blood of his only Son; then there is a sanctifying influence extended to follow him from the ever-blessed Spirit. The mission of the spotless Lamb of God is to "destroy the works of the devil," and purify unto himself "a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle." All this shows that "the Lord loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity."

Again, this holiness in God is the fountain from whence all our holiness flows. Thank God, it is an infinite fullness, and cannot be exhausted. Well has the poet said,-

"Holy as thou, O Lord, is none;

Thy holiness is all thine own;

A drop of that unbounded sea

Is ours, -- a drop derived from thee.

And when thy purity we share,

Thine only glory we declare;

And, humbled into nothing, own,

Holy and pure is God alone."

We hardly need observe that this holiness belongs equally to each person of the adorable Trinity, Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Ghost, One in Three, and Three in One,-

"Thou, Holy Father, we confess:

Thou, holy Son, adore;

And thou, the Holy Ghost, we bless,

And worship evermore.

Hail! holy, holy, holy Lord,

Our heavenly song shall be;

Supreme, essential One, adored

In co-eternal Three!"

This is the attribute that God ascribes to himself, -- "I am holy." And angelic choirs, as they chant their heavenly lays, in the vision of the prophet exclaim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts, the whole world is full of his glory." And mortals, catching up the strain, cry out, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou art holy."

From this fountain of holiness in the Deity there flows two mighty streams, Justice and Truth, which are sometimes treated as separate attributes.

"Justice, in its principle, is holiness." It may be legislative justice, which has its foundation in God's right to govern his creatures. It may be "distributive justice," which has its foundation in God's right to reward or punish. In all respects it is impartial, for God is no respecter of persons; he regardeth not persons, neither taketh reward."

The truth of God, by the sacred writers, is set forth in "two great branches, veracity and faithfulness." "His mercy is great to the heavens, and his truth to the clouds." "The strength of Israel will not lie." God is at the utmost distance from all possible unfaithfulness. "He keepeth truth forever."

Objections

1. "If God is so infinitely holy, and so utterly opposed to sin, why does he suffer so much sin to be committed by individuals, states, and nations, without apparent punishment? Yea, we find that great offenders often have much temporal prosperity."

First, This is a state of probation, not of destiny, and the justice of God is appeased by the constant offering of the great Sacrifice for the world's redemption, and the sprinkling of his own blood upon the mercy-seat. Hence God can melt hardened sinners by his goodness, and can reserve the impenitent to the day of judgment to be punished.

Secondly. The administration under which man is placed is one of justice in harmony with mercy, and admits of great variety; to some he gives five talents, to others two, to others one, according to their several ability, and holds them responsible for the use and improvement of the same, and this perfectly harmonizes with his holiness.

Thirdly. We find in the history of the world that God has always vindicated his holiness and justice, for he drowned the world with a flood; destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone; destroyed Jerusalem, and scattered the Jews to the ends of the earth; and made Babylon and Nineveh a habitation for wild beasts, For as nations and states have no existence, as such, in the world to come, God metes out their punishment in this world, for he has fully declared, "Sin shall not go unpunished."

2. Others say, "If God is holy, how is it that the saints suffer so much in this life?"

First. Their suffering may arise from hereditary causes, from the violation of natural law, before or after they are converted, and they must suffer the natural consequences, although they are Christians, or God must work a miracle to save them therefrom. God is not pleased to work a miracle, and so they are left to suffer.

Secondly. Though their afflictions remain, God gives them strength to endure them. The thorn may not be removed from the flesh though they pray thrice, but God gives them strength to endure it; so they can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Thirdly. God may see that they need afflictions to make them humble, to exemplify his grace, and to magnify his name.

Fourthly. Their short-comings may need his chastisements, for "whom he loveth he chastiseth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Reader, if God is so infinitely holy, surely we ought to study his character more fully. And if through the atonement it is possible for you to become holy, ought you not to esteem it your highest privilege to bear this impress of divinity? If God is so holy, it is impossible, in the nature of things, for the wicked to dwell in his presence.

If God is so holy, then he must love those most who are most like himself.

"Blest are the pure in heart,

For they shall see our God:

The secret of the Lord is theirs;

Their soul is his abode.

Still to the lowly soul,

He doth himself impart,

And for his temple and his throne

Selects the pure in heart."

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