

Believing unto Righteousness

Ellet J. Waggoner | The Present Truth | August 16, 1894

The difference between a righteous man and a sinner is much more than a mere difference of belief. It is more than a mere arbitrary reckoning on the part of God. It is a real difference, and one that is exactly expressed by the difference in the terms by which they are designated. When God calls a man a sinner, he is a sinner; and when He calls a man righteous, he is righteous in reality, as much so as if he had never sinned. There is no virtue in mere intellectual assent. God never declares a person righteous simply because he makes an acknowledgement of the truth. And there is an actual, literal change from the state of sin to righteousness, which justifies God in making the declaration.

It is with the heart, and not with the mind merely, that man believeth unto righteousness. (Rom. 10:10). Heart belief represents not only an acknowledgement of the truth, but a love of it. And love of the truth is but another expression for love of God; for all truth is a manifestation of God, and all truth culminates in Him. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." To love the truth which God has revealed is to love Him; and to love Him is to open our hearts to Him so that His will may have free course in our lives. When the heart is open to God freely, He comes and dwells in it; not by a figure of speech, but actually, and His presence there is made manifest by love, for God is love, and love has no other source. "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

"With God is the fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9). Hence that heart in which God dwells has in it the fountain of perpetual youth; so that "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). **The inward man is the new creation, which is wrought by the presence of God, wherever, and whenever His will has free course.** We are exhorted to "**put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**" (Eph. 4:24).

Though our outward man perish, and give no indication of any difference between us and those who know not God, there is nevertheless a new creature with which we are identical, and **that new creature is righteousness**, as are all creatures when they come from the hand of God. **Therefore by opening our hearts to God we become truly and literally righteous, so that it is no figure of speech on the part of God to pronounce us so, and no fact is set aside by His declaration. He is the Creator; and as such He can create us new within, even though the new creature be not visible to human sight, as easily as He could create man at the beginning.**

And when Christ shall appear again in the clouds of heaven to receive His people, this mortal will put on immortality, and in the twinkling of an eye these bodies will be changed to correspond with the new creation within, which has been made in righteousness and holiness. That will be a change of the outward man, by the same power which has wrought the invisible change within, and it will make the righteous to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.