

## THE WEDDING GARMENT

The wedding garment is the end and object of Christian effort.

If Christians are represented as running a race, it is that degree of swiftness which enables them to secure the prize, if, as fighting a battle, it is that ability which secures to them the victory. It is, in short, that preparation which renders them fit for the kingdom.

Some teach that it is the creed, written or otherwise, the articles of faith to which men subscribe, that constitutes that covering. Hence the degree of purity of a man's belief would be the index to his fitness for the kingdom. But it is written, „Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Such teachers must then define holiness as a perfect theology.

Others teach that the wedding garment is a character „without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” such as God will build in us if we hold our hearts in obedience to Him.

Both sides must agree that the wedding garment is *righteousness*. The Bible so defines it. Rev. 19:7-8. What then is righteousness? The word means a condition of being right. Humanity naturally is in a condition of being wrong, and because faith has power to change that condition and make them right, it is accounted for righteousness. Thus Abraham was justified by faith, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Although, perhaps, not blameless in character at the time, yet Abraham possessed that which would result in holiness, and God counted the work begun in him, as already finished. „To him that worketh not, but believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.” Rom. 4:5. That is, the seed sown is viewed in the light of its unailing results, and the possessor is thus freed from guilt.

Articles of belief differ from faith, In that faith describes a condition of heart as well as mind. The one *may* produce fruit; the other *must*. If truth be believed and *obeyed*, it becomes faith, and is therefore a means of obtaining righteousness. Truth sanctifies, Truth cleanses. It does not cleanse *itself*, but *us*. „Now ye are clean through the *words* I have spoken unto you,” said Christ. Hence the cleansing of the church is not the cleansing of its *theology*,

but of its *members* by means, perhaps, of its theology.

I think the statement not too broad, that the entire purpose of Revelation is to purify, elevate and establish the character of God's children. Truth is the great means used in the attainment of righteousness. The word of God is profitable ... that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3:17. Thus holiness is still the object and must not be confounded with the means; for truth must be obeyed to make us righteous, and it is not the amount we believe, but the amount we obey that benefits us. Hence we cannot make a man's creed the index to his character, for God above can read the heart.

Righteousness is Godliness, or God-likeness, and Christ has said, „Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Christ came to illustrate to our bedimmed conscience the Father's perfection, and in Him is fulfilled all righteousness. Does not His *life* thus amply define and illustrate the subject? It gives us an idea of what Godliness is, of what God is, of His relations toward us and of what our relations are toward Him and toward our fellow-beings. Righteousness, however, is more than *right doing*. It is *right being*, which includes the other, and this is the wedding garment, for „to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

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