

ward very far, the atmosphere through which prophets looked should in some measure distort the object seen. This could no doubt have been prevented, but only at the cost of making the mode of revelation quite different from what it is, and banishing the experiences of life and the activities of the human mind from all share in its production. And a fair criticism will not refuse to admit that an Old Testament writer may have had in his mind the Messiah, even in cases where his description does not quite agree with the Messiah's history as it has actually occurred. All that such discrepancies prove is that the writer, though referring in his own mind to that distinct coming King, was not enabled in all respects to conceive Him as He came, but conceived Him rather as coming in relations resembling those of his own time. A. B. DAVIDSON.

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### RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTIFICATION.

*Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, and Δικαιοῦν.*

THE old Hesiodic myth did not greatly err when it made Dikè the daughter of Zeus and Themis: Zeus, the embodiment of deity, Themis—a divine being, too, the daughter of heaven and earth—the personification of eternal unchanging law, embracing the whole order of nature, the apotheosis of the *fitness of things*. Dikè, less abstract in its conception, more human and personal in its relations, was in a narrower and intenser sense *the principle of universal right*. Thus Dikè and Themis were not one and the same: Dikè was *right*, but Themis was *right* and *might* too; she was the “nature of things” with power. By Themis kings

governed and subjects obeyed; Themis it was that brought darkness in the wake of death. When Penelope shed natural tears for her lost Ulysses, when Antigone dared not obey Kreon and leave unburied the body of her brother Polynices, they yielded to the demands of all-powerful Themis, the voice of nature. And so, when the ancients spoke of Dikè as born of Themis, their fable told of the distinction between *natural law* and *absolute right*. The mother had been a nature-power, the daughter was the moral principle alone. Dikè—a word whose root is akin to, if not identical with, that of *δεικνύωαι*, to *shew*—came as a *revelation* to mortals of the principle on which the deity acted who, through Themis, preserved the harmony of the universe, and who had Dikè at his side to attend and counsel him; and in her person also was set forth that rule of life by which the earth-born might attune themselves to the “music of the spheres.”

But though Homer and Hesiod and those who came after them held the gods to be the founders of *right*, they regarded the *δίκαιος* (the *righteous man*) not so much in the light of one who imitated as of one who feared the powers above. Zeus was rather the protector than the pattern of *rightness* or *righteousness*; righteousness was, so to say, an accident, not the essence, of the godhead. Man, after all, was its measure, fixed custom gave the model of right, and the divine furnished no more than a dim and vanishing background. *Δικαιοσύνη* (*right* as a personal quality, that is, *righteousness*) was pre-eminently a *social* virtue; and *δίκαιος* described the man who responded to the established claims of the community and at the same time asserted his own, whose motto was *sum cuique*

for his fellows and for himself. (The frequent sense of *δίκαιος εἰμι*, "I have a right" to do this or that, will support us in including the non-Christian element in the conception.) At a much later date we find the idea of right still regulated by social considerations. The notion which Socrates had was essentially social and political (*cf.* Xen. *Mem.* iv. 4); and even the religious background was not free from a social colouring, as we may gather from Xenophon's phrasing of the accusation against his master: "Socrates offends against right (*ἀδικεῖ*) by not paying respect to those gods *whom the state respects.*" It is true that philosophy here and there gropes after a deeper meaning. Plato, in one place (*Legg.* 4, 716c), sets up deity, and not humanity, as the measure of all things, and speaks of the self-controlled man as a friend of God, because he is like (*ὁμοιος*) Him, while the man without self-control is unlike God, and *unrighteous* (*ἄδικος*). But while deity is thus somewhat vaguely made the measure of righteousness, even Plato falls short of the Biblical idea of a *personal relation* to God as the groundwork and aim of being "perfect, even as he is perfect."<sup>1</sup>

In short, for the heathen conception of *δικαιοσύνη* we may fairly accept Aristotle's definition: "The virtue whose effect is that each and all have what belongs to them, in accordance with the law;" while the effect of *ἀδικία*, its opposite, is that "they have what belongs to others, *not* in accordance with the law." A notion like this, essentially juridical and social—our "justice" in the ordinary sense—founded on custom and law, written and unwritten, had little practically to do with the gods; and though there could be an *ἀδικία πρὸς θεοῦς*, "un-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Cremer's *Biblich-theologisches Wörterbuch* (second edition).

righteousness towards the gods," unrighteousness was not, *per se* and in every case, looked upon as an immediate outrage of their authority; much less did deity furnish the measure of righteousness: least of all did the beginning and end of righteousness lie in an intimate personal relation with the gods.

But the religious background of the classical *δικαιοσύνη*—producing such parallelisms as *δικαίος* and *εὐσεβής* (*righteous* and *pious*), *ἄδικος* and *δυσσεβής* (*unrighteous* and *impious*)—paved the way for the deeper meaning of the word in the sacred books. The belief was in the world already that "righteousness," in its narrow sense, had been born of the gods; it was felt, though not always or everywhere or with equal distinctness, that "unrighteousness" was an act of irreverence towards Heaven: but, till the "righteousness of God" was revealed, men could not and did not conceive that righteousness, in its widest meaning, was the essence of the Godhead, and the Alpha and Omega of the close relations between God and man.

In the times of the Old Covenant this revelation was only partial; a "veil" softened the dazzling brightness till the eyes of man, in the fulness of the years, were able to bear "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The chosen people, the law, and righteous men whom God had taught "in divers manners," and who had breathed the spirit of the law, were in various degrees the medium of the Old Covenant manifestation of God's righteousness. But, whatever still remained to be revealed, there was no mistake now about God being the standard of righteousness. "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. xix. 2). "Shall mortal

man be just before God?" (Job iv. 17.) Even in the common business of daily life the righteousness of *God* laid its claims upon his people. "Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and just hin, shall ye give: *I am the Lord your God*" (Lev. xix. 36). But the *δικαιοσύνη* of the Old Testament, while it includes the narrower classical sense, goes infinitely deeper than mere rectitude in social dealings. The profounder meaning of "righteous" in Sacred Literature is the consequence of the antithesis of sin, of the guilt of which Homer, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had no adequate idea. God Himself is represented as righteous and holy ["His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, *just and right* is he" (Deut. xxxii. 4)], and we have seen from Leviticus xix. 2 how He had determined righteousness and holiness as a relation between Himself and his creatures. But this relation did not exist *in fact*; sin had entered in, and had ruptured the bond of union between Creator and created. "There is not a just man (*δικαιος*) upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20; *cf.* Rom. iii. 10). While therefore *δικαιος* and *δικαιοσύνη* as applied to God in the Bible are *absolute*, as applied to men they are *relative*, not implying *perfect* "straightness" (for such, in all languages probably, is the fundamental sense of the word for *righteousness*), but rather a "straight" attitude of mind towards the will of God. The closeness of this conformity and the standard of the *δικαιοσύνη* would, in the nature of things, depend upon the knowledge of God which was from time to time within the reach of men. But the conformity *in principle* could be there, even in the most primitive ages of revelation. Thus Noah (Gen. vi. 9)

was "a *just* man, being perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with (LXX., 'was well-pleasing to') God." This justness (or righteousness) and perfection were no more absolute than that of Abraham (Gen. xv. 6), whose faith in God was "counted for righteousness." Both Noah and Abraham had by their faith found the normal relation of sympathy and harmony with God's character and claims. They stood in a relation, so to speak, not to *sin*, but to *righteousness*, according to the *principle* to which St. John refers (1 John iii. 7), "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." The application in the Old and New Testaments of the word τέλειος ("full-grown," usually translated "perfect" in our Version) to men striving after what they have not yet attained, has often been the cause of perplexity, and perhaps at times of peril. And therefore it is interesting to notice one special rendering of δικαιοσύνη in the LXX., which illustrates the unity of God's plan in both the Jewish and Christian economies. In thirteen places this Version renders the Hebrew words *Tsedek* and *Tsedakah* (=δικαιοσύνη, "straightness" and "righteousness") by ἔλεος or ἐλεημοσύνη (= "mercy," "compassion," and, at a later time, "almsgiving").<sup>1</sup> For instance, Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar (Chap. iv. 27, Ver. 24, LXX.), "Break off thy sins by righteousness (LXX., ἐλεημοσύνας, benevolent acts), and thine iniquities (*ἀδικίας*, acts of unrighteousness) by shewing mercy to the poor;" where, even in the Hebrew, the parallel clauses certainly imply a parallelism of signification in *righteousness* and *mercy*. It was probably a mistake to translate *Tsedek* by anything but δικαιοσύνη; but this

<sup>1</sup> Compare Girdlestone's "Old Testament Synonyms," chap. xiv.

rendering, though erroneous, brings out in relief the great truth that, just as God manifests his own righteousness "chiefly in shewing mercy and pity," so faithful men, under both the Old and the New Dispensations, could "fulfil all righteousness" by a spirit of love—on the one hand towards God, and on the other towards their neighbour. "For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

But perfect righteousness is not only the essence of the Godhead. God is the *giver* of it, as a *principle*, to those who are willing to receive it from Him. And this leads us to speak of *δικαιοῦν*, commonly translated "to justify." It is to be regretted that the English language is not so fortunate as the Hebrew in possessing one single root whose modifications are able to express the three words, *δίκαιος*, *δικαιοσύνη*, and *δικαιοῦν*. "Justice" is, according to its common acceptation, but one sphere of righteousness, and "to justify" does not by any means cover the full force of *δικαιοῦν*, which we shall now endeavour to unfold.

It is not to classical Greek, but to the Septuagint and the New Testament, that we must go for the meaning of the verb. Of its etymological signification, "To *make* right, or righteous," no certain instance can be found. Even in the fragment of Pindar, in which law, "the monarch of all, be they mortal or immortal," is spoken of as *δικαιῶν τὸ βιαίωτατον ὑπερτάτη χειρί* ("making right by its supreme power the sheerest violence"), it cannot be safely affirmed to have any sense of inner purification. Psalm lxxiii. 13 (LXX.) is the only passage in the LXX. or New Testament which would bear this interpretation; and even here it is more probable that the usual sense obtains, and that

we should translate, "I have vindicated the purity of my heart in vain, and have washed my hands"—(compare the action of Pilate)—"in innocency." "To think, deem right," is the prevailing meaning in the classical writers, and this is the foundation of that signification which may be said, broadly speaking, to be universal in the Scriptures. *Δικαιοῦν* is used in the LXX. in the judicial sense—to *acquit*, to *declare innocent*, judicially. *Οὐ δικαιοῶσεις τὸν ἀσεβῆ, κ.τ.λ.*—"Thou shalt not declare innocent the wicked for a reward" (Exod. xxiii. 7). Again: "If they shall have declared the righteous man righteous, and condemned the wicked man" (Deut. xxv. 1—*Δικαιώσωσι τὸν δίκαιον, καὶ καταγνώσῃ τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς*). It is also used of judgment which is not so strictly judicial. "The Lord alone shall be justified" (*δικαιωθήσεται*—"shewn to be righteous"). Similarly, in the New Testament (Matt. xi. 19), wisdom is said to have her righteousness manifested (*ἐδικαιώθη*). The usage requires no further demonstration, but an illustration or two ought to be given from the Epistles of St. Paul, seeing that the word occurs in them quite as frequently as in all the other books of the Bible put together. In Romans viii. 33, *ἐγκαλεῖν* ("to accuse") absolutely demands that the subsequent *δικαιῶν* should be rendered "acquit;" and this interpretation is confirmed by the presence of *κατακρίνων* in the following verse: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God, who declares them righteous? Who is he that condemneth?" In Romans iii. 4 (an exact quotation from Psalm li. 4, LXX.) the Apostle applies *δικαιωθῆς*—"That thou mayest be declared righteous in what thou sayest, and may win the cause when thou art judged." St. Paul, moreover, explains his own use



of *δικαιούν* at Romans iv. 2, 3, in the words of the LXX., Gen. xv. 6: "If Abraham had been declared righteous (*ἐδικαιώθη*) on the ground of works," &c. "But Abraham trusted God, and it was *counted* unto him for *righteousness*;" that is, God took count of his faith, so as to attribute righteousness: God regarded sin as not there.

How could God do this?

There are hints in the Old Testament, besides what we gather from the story of Abraham, that justification could be obtained by God's mercy. The words in Romans viii. 33, "God who justifieth," have their foundation in Isaiah l. 8: "He is near that justifieth me (*δικαιώσας*): who is it that will contend with me?" The same prophet (Chap. liii. 11) sees in the far future how the "servant of Jehovah," by his knowledge of sin and sorrow, should justify many: "and it is he that shall bear their iniquities." The gospel sets forth the substance of this prophetic foreshadowing; for the gospel was, in the Messiah, the revelation of "the *righteousness of God*" (Rom. i. 17). By the constantly recurring *δικαιοσύνη*, and its correlates, in this connection, the Apostle does not imply a proper *quality of God*. For he calls it elsewhere (Phil. iii. 9) *δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ* ("coming from God"), as opposed to *δικαιοσύνη ἐκ νόμου* ("righteousness coming from the law"). Moreover, we could not attain to such a quality of God by faith in Christ, as the Apostle (2 Cor. v. 21—"that we may become the righteousness of God in him") affirms that we do. Nor, again, could righteousness, as a proper quality of God, be set forth historically, "through the medium of faith in Christ, to all that believe." On the other hand, it cannot be a *quality of man*—moral

conformity, on the part of man, to the will of God. The form of the phrase is opposed in itself to such an interpretation, and such a quality, though it might be realized, could not be *revealed*. Rather is it a *gift* of God, δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης—Rom. v. 17—"the free gift of righteousness," that is, "justification" (*cf.* Rom. iii. 24), which is "revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. i. 17), that is, comes to man as a result of a first faith, and with the intent and result of "increasing our faith from more to more." The gift is trustfully accepted, and an active living faith is thereby awakened. This view of the phrase in Romans i. 17 is further confirmed by the tense of ἀποκαλύπτεται, which depicts a process going on—the gift to one man and one generation after another; and likewise by the antithesis, in Verse 18, of the revelation of wrath. The wrath is an objective power external to man, and brought to bear upon him; similarly, the "righteousness coming from God" is an objective principle to which man is called to subject himself (Rom. x. 3: "For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness that comes from God"). Thus the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is the "true relation between God and man, which, being ordained by God, presents itself to the consciousness of man as a new religious principle, as a new regulator of religious behaviour, and to which man has to submit himself, by allowing his attitude towards God to be determined by this divinely-ordained principle."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pfeleiderer's *Paulinismus*. (English Translation. Williams and Norgate.) While some of this writer's conclusions cannot be accepted as final, the keenness of his exegetical insight is unmistakable, and has been of no little service in this part of the present article.

It is important to grasp firmly this objectivity of the Pauline *δικαιοσύνη*, and it may be well therefore to clinch what has been said by further illustrations. Two passages will suffice. In 2 Corinthians v. 21, God is said to have "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Now, nothing can be plainer than that the sin is not subjective sin; neither, therefore, can the righteousness be subjective righteousness. Further, Verse 19 explains this "righteousness" by the phrase, "not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and here the same word (*λογίζεσθαι*, with the dative, "to count as belonging to a person") is used as when it is said, "God counted faith to Abraham for righteousness." But Romans v. 12-21 is undoubtedly the crucial passage. Here St. Paul contrasts the conditions of the two races founded, the one by Adam, the other by Christ. When he says that death passed upon all men, for that all sinned [in Adam], the objectivity of the sin is obvious. All men did not actually and individually sin in their first parent; yet (*δι' ἑνὸς εἰς πάντας*) "through one to all" sin and death passed at once as an established status, without personal co-operation of Adam's descendants. By this is to be explained Verse 18, where the antithesis is stated: "By the righteous act of one" (the work of Christ being looked upon as a single act, like that of Adam) "the free gift came upon all" (without individual co-operation; nay, *ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων*, "under the presupposition of many transgressions," like those of Adam) "for the purpose of a justification conferring eternal life." Both the condemnation and the acquittal are, with St. Paul, *acts of God*.

But though this freely given and undeserved status is, in the intention of God, conferred upon all, it remains objective and external until it is made subjective by the individual appropriation of faith. Not that faith is a work; it is only a passive state of receptivity and subjection. The submissive reception of the righteousness that comes from God is naturally followed by a sense of peace and reconciliation; the spirit is no longer in an abnormal relation to the "Father of spirits;" it has assumed an attitude of trustful humility, and is in waiting for that larger faith which leads on to spiritual oneness with the Being trusted and loved. The *act of God* must be supplemented by a continuous process in man; but the process is called by St. Paul, not δικαιοσύνη, but ἁγιασμός, "sanctification." Romans vi. 19—"Yield your members servants to δικαιοσύνη" (God's righteousness conferred upon you by favour), "with a view to sanctification," where the order is noticeable—is only one of the many passages in which the Apostle warns the "called" to be consistently persevering in responding to the new relation. The act of God in conferring righteousness through the expiatory death of Christ has given, in colloquial language, a "fresh start" to man's moral nature; but this "fresh start" is not imperative upon the individual, nor will the course that should lie before him necessarily extend to the goal. Paul held himself forth to the "saints" as a personal example of unceasing watchfulness, in order that the objective righteousness of faith might be put in operation and maintained in perpetual activity, so as to secure progressive righteousness of life; lest those who ran the race should in the end be disqualified (ἀδόκιμοι) for the prize (1 Cor. ix. 27).

And thus we reach the practical sum of the whole matter. While the establishment of the new relation cannot be a *process* by which a man is "declared righteous" according to the "stage of his Christian development from time to time," and while the moment of the Divine acquittal is logically distinct, and that acquittal, appropriated by faith, is the *ground* of the new spiritual life; yet the act of acquittal and the entrance and continuance of the spiritual life are so indissolubly blended together, that it is impossible fully to state or comprehend the one without reference to the other.<sup>1</sup> The righteousness which was originally a power without us, for our acquittal, becomes, by faithful acceptance, at once a power within us—a moral force infinitely transcending the Dikè of the old myth—effecting our gradual sanctification and our final redemption from the burden and bitterness of sin. Christ is to us (1 Cor. i. 30) "righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,"—all three in their fitting order; and when Christ, who "loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water by the word," has "presented to himself the church in glorious beauty, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish," then, and not till then, will the "righteousness of God" have finished its work, and have received the righteousness of man as its reward.

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<sup>1</sup> Girdlestone, "Old Testament Synonyms," chap. xiv.

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