

THE RELATIVE CLAIMS OF LOVE AND JUSTICE.

Though love and justice stand very closely related to each other, they are nevertheless distinct and separate elements of moral character. Justice is the exact weight and measure of righteousness, but love is the overwhelming measure of benevolence, pressed down, shaken together, heaped up and running over.

Justice may be dealt out without love's overwhelming measure, but love cannot be dealt out without justice. The measure cannot overflow until it is first filled. Justice, therefore, is the foundation on which love is established. If we make professions of love which are not backed by justice, our conduct is open to either one of two adverse criticisms, either that we are ignorant of the operations of justice in certain particulars, or else that we are unfaithful in our professions. The former probably is most generally the case where the profession lacks the substantial foundation.

This principle of justice, the Scriptures declare, is the very foundation of God's throne – "Justice and judgment are the prop of thy throne." (Psa. 89:14.) And the great value which God placed upon this principle was manifested in the great expense at which he maintained it inviolate, notwithstanding his overwhelming love for the race which it condemned to death and which he planned to redeem. Though it cost the sacrifice of his only begotten Son, he freely gave him up for us all – as a satisfaction to the claims of justice against his human children. If God is so scrupulously careful to maintain justice, how careful we should be to study and apply the same principle in all our dealings. As justice is the very foundation of all God's dealings with his creatures, so it should be

the foundation of all our dealings – in our business relations, in the family and in society.

In the life of every Christian strict justice should be manifest. He should be fair in his judgment of values, willing to pay the just equivalent for that which he receives if he is making a purchase, willing also to give to his employer a just equivalent in labor for wages received. If a competitor in business with others, he should not seek to undersell his fellow tradesman below a living price for his commodities. If a parent, he should recognize the individual rights of his children, male and female, when they come to maturity. Parental control is a necessity until that time, but is an injustice when insisted upon beyond it; and if yielded to, becomes a fetter to future usefulness and interferes with their individual relationship and responsibility to God.

Justice in parents recognizes the right of a matured son to leave the home nest and carve out his future course for himself; and likewise of the daughter. Justice on the children's part also recognizes the claims of filial obligation – of reverence, love, the grateful consideration of the maturer wisdom of parents, and the tender care for their age and infirmities and declining years.

When justice is thus established in these various relations of life, there is little room left for the weeds of hatred, malice, envy, evil-speaking, etc., to spring up. On the contrary, the conditions are ripe for the development of every virtue and every grace, especially if love's overflowing measure of benevolence overleaps the bounds of simple justice in its desires and efforts to bless.

Let us then see to it that we are always just before we attempt to be generous, and when sure that all our actions are squared by justice, then let us manifest the love unfeigned, not necessarily by showers of professions, but rather by the loving ministry of kindly deeds, deeds of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness. Such love should be markedly manifest among the consecrated sons of God

– not a love which merely worketh no ill to his neighbor, but a love which worketh good. And let no one deceive himself into the idea that his heart is filled with the love of God while he is unjustly depriving another of his rights, either of property, or reputation, or aught else.

But love will go still further: it will not only spare a neighbor's property or reputation, but it will seek to protect them. Love will cover a multitude of sins, even, from the eyes of others, though it will endeavor to show them up to the offender. Let justice with love's overflowing measure abound in all the saints.

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