

5. The holiness of God

In the Scriptures the idea of holiness appears to have two basic areas of meaning.

On the one hand the holiness of God is that characteristic by which God is distinct from and infinitely exalted above all of His creatures in glorious majesty. On the other hand the holiness of God is that characteristic by which He is free from all moral impurity and characterized through and through by moral perfection.

Charles Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology* (Washington: Scribner, 1871), Volume One, pp. 413-414, says:

Holiness of God. This is a general term for the moral excellence of God. In 1 Sam 2:2, it is said, "There is none holy as the Lord;" no other Being absolutely pure, and free from all limitation in his moral perfection. "Thou Holy One of Israel," is the form of address which the Spirit puts into the lips of the people of God. "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is Holy." (Ps. 99:9) "Holy and reverend is his name," (Ps. 111:9) "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (Hab. 1:13) "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for Thou only art Holy." (Rev. 15:4) Holiness, on the one hand, implies entire freedom from moral evil; and, upon the other, absolute moral perfection. Freedom from impurity is the primary idea of the word. To sanctify is to cleanse; to be holy, is to be clean. Infinite purity, even more than infinite knowledge or infinite power, is the object of reverence. Hence the Hebrew word QADOSH, as used in Scripture, is often equivalent to *venerandus*. "The Holy One of Israel", is He who is to be feared and adored. Seraphim round about the throne who cry day and night, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, give expression to the feelings of all unfallen rational creatures in view of the infinite purity of God. They are the representatives of the whole universe, in offering this perpetual homage to the divine holiness. It is because of his holiness, that God is a consuming fire. And it was a view of his holiness which led the prophet to exclaim, "Woe is me for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Is. 6:5)

Augustus Hopkins Strong, in his *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1907), Volume I, pp. 269-274, states: