

SIN OR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS A STATE OF BEING

Sin is a crime against the law of God. The Church says it is not merely breaking a rule but also doing damage to yourself and making yourself a threat to God and others. Some Christians say that sin is relational – about relationships. If so because we cannot really have good relationships with everybody that we are prone to accidental sin a lot. Relationships depend on laws even if those laws are not stated. The trouble with a relationship with God is that God is not like a human person and thus to have a relationship with him is to pretend he is. It is not a relationship with God at all but creating a projection. It is virtually a relationship with an imaginary version of God that suits yourself. This God is about you pretending it is not about you.

Being unrighteous is a condition and does not mean you actually injure other people. You can be unrighteous if you would rob a bank if you could. If you can be called righteous then, then you may say that a bank robber who failed to break into the bank is righteous!

The doctrine that the sinner and the sin must be separated so that you love the sinner and hate the sin (if you really separate them then why do you call the person a sinner?) is really a denial that sin is a condition or state of being. Love the sinner and hate the sin is popular among the Catholics. Protestants would say it is an example of how the religion pretends to oppose sin but actually encourages sin by warping people so that they fail to recognise sin properly. Protestantism teaches you must see sin in all its reality before God can save you from it. So Catholicism then leads people to Hell forever.

What about the view that righteousness should be put before everything? If righteousness comes before happiness then it follows that it is best for all humanity to suffer everlasting misery than for them to be unrighteous. For example, if the Devil asked us to worship him for being evil and we knew we could be happy forever if we did it and unhappy if we didn't do it, even then it would be forbidden by the righteous. Some might say that under those circumstances, it would be righteous to worship the Devil! The other option is to argue that under those circumstances, you would have no choice but to worship the Devil so you are not to be blamed if you do. But we said worship the Devil! That would not be worship at all. It would be like forcing somebody to love you - it simply cannot be done.

You may reply that it is righteous to try and make people happy so it is foolish to argue that righteousness matters more than happiness. But even if righteousness seeks to make happiness it is distinct from happiness. And it is clear that righteousness leads to happiness only by accident. Righteousness is following an informed conscience and happiness may or may not be the result. A wife may love her husband and this love could be the bane of her life. Righteousness is not about happiness but about trying to make an environment that produces it. It is a treadmill.

Doctrines such as the supreme and absolute importance of righteousness take away any pleasure in religion.