

The Three Eternal Destinies #167 *Secondary Righteousness, Part 1*

2 Tim 3:1 — In these perilous days a man's secondary righteousness is at stake. The strength of man's secondary righteousness is in peril because there is less and less support for his conscience in this depraved society with its depraved leaders and role models such as politicians, teachers, preachers, presidents and kings, sports stars, rock stars. There is tremendous negative peer pressure and the dangers of television and the Internet full of pornography. Furious, fierce days are ahead of us all.

Perilous #5467, from #5465, to lower, bring to a lower level, reduce in strength or quality.

According to Augustine, Adam and all his offspring after him would be in a deprived state, a state of *depravity*, having lost their *humanity*. That is, his *original righteousness* was taken away — removed, put an end to, destroyed, divested of, not a trace left that God would ever take notice of. He could never be truly kind or humane, genuinely caring for his fellow man without having some evil motive. Nothing good that he did would matter with God. Man was deprived of all hope of eternal life. Augustine thought that any good man might do was only in vain since it came from a deprived or depraved creature. Total depravity is man's eternal state unless regenerated by the sovereign influence of God, as Calvinism recognizes only two eternal destinies of man.

It is true that man's original (primary) righteousness has been injured and is now in its fallen (secondary) degree, since man sinned and experienced separation from his original intimate communion with God (Rom 3:23). In these days even what remains of man's original righteousness, his secondary righteousness, is in jeopardy of being lost altogether (Rom 1:18 – 2:16) through committing such sins as violate the second covenant, which is in his conscience. In this way he is reduced to a state of depravity (Rom 1:28-29), "being filled" and becoming something else than righteous (Rev 22:11).

Man is born into the state of secondary righteousness and can go down or go up in this life — down to depravity or up to holiness. He can go down by his own will, or up by hearing the Good News. If a righteous man, or even a man on the brink of destruction, wills to do God's will, he will *know* the difference between truth and error (1 Jn 4:5-6) and be able to take on holiness (2 Cor 5:15,21).

Secondary righteousness is the next below the first — second place, as man has *fallen short* (Rom 3:23). The *secondary* is derived from or dependent on that which was original or *primary*. It needs the auxiliary support of the conscience, which gives aid, assists, explains the details, distinguishes between right and wrong (Gen 3:22), enables him to show compassion or kindness, as God's vice regent (since God cannot be there to "walk with man in the cool of the day").

Secondary means next below the first, performing in similar but inferior function to what is primary. "Wheresoever there is moral right on the one hand, no secondary right can discharge it." Since man could not carry out Gen 1:28 in his original righteousness, he must, in a lower degree, carry out Gen 3:16-19 and 9:1-7 in his secondary righteousness. Gen 1:28 was for man to fulfill in his sealed position in the state of eternal life, having eaten from the tree of life, but is in abeyance until man is *restored* to his original condition.