

Christ — the End of the Law

W. Kelly.

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Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The two righteousnesses are then contrasted. Moses describes the one, saying, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." The law was man's righteousness; it was God's perfect rule for a creature. It required man to give a righteousness to God; if he did, he lived by it.

The righteousness of faith, on the other hand, brings a righteousness to man. A man has not to ascend up to heaven, to bring Christ down from above; He has come down even to death. A man has not to go down into the deep, to bring Christ up from the dead; He has risen: God has raised Him. A dead and risen Christ is set forth as the display of God's righteousness, in direct contrast to human righteousness, which would be keeping the law. We have seen what the righteousness of faith does not say; now let us see what it does say: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." With the heart man believes unto righteousness; with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, as scripture says.

Man confounds human and divine righteousness together; God distinctly divides them. We have seen man's righteousness is, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." Christ, as man, fulfilled it; but that is not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God, or the justice of God (for it is the same word), is His own character as such, displayed in His own acts, viz., the death and resurrection of Christ (see also Psalm 71: 19, 20), and handed over in Christ to the sinner who lays hold of it by faith, and is justified by it. Truly, O God, thy righteousness is very high; as high as heaven: no one can reach it! But God Himself has come down to settle His own claim: Christ has been delivered for our offences, and God has Himself judged sin itself, in the person of His Son, on the cross. He has shown Him great and sore troubles on account of man's sin. I look at sin; I look at the dread darkness; I bear the bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I see the blood gush forth; I ask, Why is this? The only answer is, sin is the cause. God there judged sin in the flesh on the sinless One. I say, That is righteousness! It is the Judge passing judgment. God's righteousness against sin is displayed. I look again: I hear a great earthquake; the stone is rolled away from the sepulchre; the guards become as dead men: I see a holy, spotless One — holy and spotless as ever He was — rising from the dead. I ask, Why is this? I hear the answer, Righteousness requires that that man who has glorified God in every way, whether in life or death, should be given the first place in the glory. Who is that man? It is Christ, the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven. He of God is made unto us righteousness. God and man are linked together in one person, even in the person of the Christ. They were ever together from the incarnation, but in one man. There is no such place for us except in resurrection. (John 12: 23.) On the cross I see the sinner's substitute- marvel of marvels — forsaken of God. The veil is rent, and access is given to every sinner who believes in Jesus, into the very holiest. The believer's position is now Christ before God. Thus God is for us, as revealed in His own acts in Christ. Faith appropriates it all, and gets Christ's position before God. Is Christ dead? the believer is dead. Is Christ risen? the believer is risen. Is Christ the righteousness of God? the believer is made the righteousness of God in Him. With his heart he believes unto righteousness; with his mouth confession is made unto salvation. He believes, he is not ashamed; he calls on the name of the Lord, he is saved.