

RIGHT RELATIONS i.e. RIGHTEOUSNESS

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'THE CHRISTIAN FAITH'

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Righteousness is an old fashioned word but it just means right relationship, which is a very important thing. Right relationship with the environment means we should care for it, tend it, bring it to its perfection. The Bible "as always" gives us the key. In the Garden of Eden God created Adam to enjoy the beauty of the garden and its fruit and to tend it and bring it to its potential. We have all been placed by our creator in this beautiful world and we are not only to enjoy it but also to look after it, and to bring out all its possibilities of beauty and perfection. We are not to destroy our environment for selfish short term objectives. In this way we are in right relationship with our environment. Right relations with other people includes caring for them but it also means treating them as persons, giving them what is due to them, being fair, just, true and so on. This is righteousness in the ethical sphere, and right relations with regard to God means giving Him what is due to Him, honouring Him as God and creator. And firstly it means being thankful to Him for all the good things we have received through His creating us, it also means putting our faith in Him because He is trustworthy and giving Him our love and obedience because of His love for us and His wisdom in all that He commands us to do.

Unfortunately our right relations have been ruined by sin. We are hostile to our environment, we are suspicious of other people. Instead of caring for their interests we treat them as objects to advance our own interests and

with regard to God our relationships are anything but right. We ignore Him most of the time, disobey Him whenever that is convenient for our own objectives and never pause to give Him thanks. Our unrighteousness on all three levels of environment, fellow man and God is very deep and how do we get back to righteousness, to right relations in these areas? Well we must start at the top, get right with God. We stand in need of God's forgiveness and if we admit this and ask Him for it He will forgive us and restore us to friendly relations with Him because Jesus the Son of God bore our sins on the cross and triumphed over them in the resurrection, and that is why a man who lived 1900 years ago is very relevant now. Jesus provided then what we need now - forgiveness. Our relationship with God must always be a forgiven relationship. Are we conscious that ours is? If we are right with God through forgiveness, we will find that we will be in right relationship with one another and with the world at large.

Righteousness is important and God alone can give it. He can put us into right relationship with Himself through forgiveness and through His Holy Spirit's presence in our lives help us to live in right relationship with one another and with our environment, for His Spirit will quench our selfishness, which otherwise upsets relationships.

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