

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF GOD VIEWED IN
ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS**

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The Righteousness of God Viewed in Its Various Aspects by William Adamson

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WILLIAM ADAMSON

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BY
WILLIAM ADAMSON,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



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P R E F A C E .

THE best defence which can be set forth for the divinity of Christianity, in these days of doubt and denial, is an exposition of its fundamental doctrines. External evidence has its use and sphere, but its power to convince is largely borrowed from the nature of what is to be proved. The historical arguments for the life, miracles, words, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, are conclusive, and yet their power over many minds is not great. And they never will be effectual for the end desired until they are associated with a somewhat comprehensive and harmonious expiscation of the nature and relations of the facts proved.

Every effort, therefore, honestly and reverently made for the elucidation of Christian doctrine, should be encouraged by all lovers of the Bible and the Gospel. The feeblest may be of service to the cause of truth. Under this conviction we issue the following essay on a subject which lies near the foundation of a sound evangelical theology. The views advocated are those which

after years of careful study, have approved themselves to the writer's mind as in harmony with the Word of God and with Christian experience. They were not hastily adopted. They have been calmly considered in the light of the inspired volume, and the teachings of the master-minds of the Christian Church. They are not new views but old views. They have been received in all ages as true by theologians of all sections of the household of God. And we are especially delighted that we have been able to quote so largely from Dr. Martin Luther in support of the doctrine of righteousness advocated. Of all theologians who have ever lived there are few from whose works profounder and more scriptural ideas of the essence of the gospel can be obtained. This is the reason why we have enriched our pages with so many gems from this mine of spiritual wealth. There are others we are indebted to for aid in this and other directions to whom our gratitude is too great for words.

The essay now presented to our readers was, in the substance of it, prepared about four years ago, and read to a Pastoral Association in the north. This will account partly for its didactic style, and the brief treatment of certain important aspects of the subject. It was originally written more to suggest than exhaust the various

topics introduced, that they might be discussed by the brethren assembled. And it has been published at the request of many who heard it read in its original form, with the view of directing attention to what is believed to be fundamental in the Christian system.

The subject has recently been brought before the public by men who occupy very different standpoints. The Rev. John Forbes, LL.D., has an essay on it in his recent work published two years ago, "*Analytical Commentary on the Romans*," which contains in every particular the doctrine which we have endeavoured to expound. So much do we agree that unconsciously to one another we use in many cases not only the same arguments but also almost the same words. We have incorporated a few quotations from Dr. Forbes's volume in our essay, which will be read with interest. The Rev. Joseph T. Goodsir in his work, "*The Patristic and Scriptural Doctrine of Salvation*," has considered the subject, but with his ideas we do not agree. His fundamental doctrine is, that salvation and justification are commensurate, and that the latter must consequently be partly ethical. His works, however, though prolix in some parts, deserve more attention than they have received. Matthew Arnold, in his essay on "*Paul and Protestantism*," has also discussed the doctrine of righteousness, but with

little success. His proclivities are too anti-evangelical for him to understand the theology of the apostle as contained in his epistles. At the same time his words cannot be passed by without consideration, because they have a weighty influence with many inquiring minds.

When thought is being directed to the subject, we have ventured, with much diffidence and knowledge of its imperfection, to issue this small treatise on "The Righteousness of God," with the hope that it may aid some reader to realise more perfectly that the Christian system is true, and that the gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation.

EDINBURGH, *April*, 1870

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