

their situation, he would very likely have acted exactly as they did. God had commanded many sacrifices to be offered on account of sin, Lev. iv. xvi. 2—28, and these were all intended to point out that one great sacrifice which the Saviour was to offer, when he laid down his life, Heb. ix. 6—14. x. 1—4: they were meant to teach the people that God could not be pleased with them, or with their prayers, unless they were trusting in the blood of Christ to wash their sins away. But there was not a word of this in the pharisee's prayer. It seemed as if he thought God could see no fault in him; nay, he went on to mention some things he did, which he thought were so good that they certainly deserved to be rewarded.

Now, my youthful readers, I do not think it very likely that you ever prayed as the pharisee did; but yet I fear that some of you may have had thoughts and feelings much the same as his. Perhaps you are accustomed, every evening, to repeat a prayer which you have been taught, in which you say, "O pardon every one of my faults, and be not angry with me:" or something to the same purpose. Now, when you say such words as these, do you feel ashamed and grieved that you should have offended God so many times through the day; and are you really desirous that he should forgive you? Or do you say such words, only because they happen to be in the prayer you have learned? And if any one were to ask you what faults you had committed, would you not sometimes answer, that you did not know of any? that you had been attentive to your lessons at school, and obedient to your parents at home, and now you had said your prayers, and were going to bed like good children? and surely no one could find any fault with you?

Perhaps you have been present, when your teacher has reproved and punished one of your school-fellows for telling a lie. When this was the case, did you feel very sorry for that

poor boy or girl that had been so naughty; and did you thank God in your heart, that he had preserved you from deserving the name of a liar, while, at the same time, you remembered with shame, that you had been guilty of many other sins, which were quite as bad as lying? Or did you turn first to your offending school-fellow, and then to your teacher, with a toss of the head, and a proud look, which seemed to say, "Ah! I never got into such disgrace as this; I'm sure I deserve praise, for I have never told a lie yet, ever since I have been to the school."

Perhaps you have been commended for your attention to the sermons which you hear, and for being able to give a good account of them when you return home. But do you listen so attentively, because you feel that you are a sinner against God, and are thankful to hear that he so loved sinners as to give up his own dear Son to die for them? Or have you not rather had feelings somewhat like the following:—When you have heard a minister speak of the great danger of those who have sinned against God, and say nothing but the blood of Christ can take away their guilt, have you not thought that he must be speaking of older people than you? or of those young people who spend the sabbath in idleness or amusement, and who do not even say their prayers morning and evening? When the preacher has said how necessary it is to repent of sin, and earnestly to seek forgiveness from God, have you not sometimes looked at one of your companions, and thought, "Ah! I am sure he has need to repent; I heard him swear three or four times the last day I played with him?" or, "There's Mary—; she must well be afraid that God will not forgive her; it was only yesterday she heard her refuse to do what her father desired her?" But you think that repentance, and forgiveness, such things, are what do not concern you at all.