

not right in the sight of God" (Acts viii. 21). He had the base thought—"that the gift of God might be purchased with money." Now, no real Christian can entertain the thought that such a gift as Simon coveted is purchasable by money. But the base thought is in our hearts, to earn something from God, and this hinders uprightness of heart. Surely, uprightness of heart is to maintain our character before God as sinners saved by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and to carry with us that character before men. If we forget what we are in ourselves, or what grace has made us to be in Christ, we are not upright in heart. It is blessed, indeed, not to have a part to act before God (for such is human religion), but to go before Him in the character which He has given to us, in the righteousness with which He Himself hath clothed us. To be upright in heart is not to draw a line between religions and other duties, but to come to the light to learn ourselves, and learn the glory of God in His grace. Where there is human sincerity and human uprightness and conscientiousness, it cannot perhaps, well be said that there is hypocrisy; but, such natural uprightness is apart from God, and may exist, and has existed, where God has not been known or revealed. But now light has come into the world. Men may know their real character in the estimate of God. And the condemnation is, that he "cometh not to the light" (John iii. 20). And before God all will be found hypocrites--that is, acting a character--save those who, coming to the light, and learning what they are in God's judgment, have sheltered themselves under the blessedness of "righteousness without works." Such are upright in heart; in their spirit is no guile. They may "shout for joy."