

with respect to many in this particular. But our Lord has furnished us with a rule by which each may ascertain his own condition. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven." Notice,

I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY RIGHTEOUSNESS ?

II. WHAT WAS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES ?

III. WHEREIN THEIR'S WAS DEFICIENT.

I. The word here rendered "righteousness," is in Greek *δικαιοσύνη* which comes from the primitive *δίκην*, signifying *law, right, justice*. Our English word is equally expressive, implying among other things, *the doing of what is right*. A very high authority explains it as meaning, "purity of heart, and rectitude of life." The term "righteous," is properly applicable only to a being of infinite perfections, and in Scripture is ascribed to Jehovah, and also used to denote Christ's obedience to the law, and his full compliance with his Father's will. But in an accommodated sense, it is ascribed to the creature who devotes his life to the service of God. Those who are accepted for the sake of Christ, recognized as members of the heavenly family, and heirs of glory, are termed "righteous." They are placed in contrast with the wicked. But these two classes are known. There are modifications of each—some excelling in righteousness, and some in wickedness; but there is no neutrality, all are either the friends or the enemies of God. Righteousness is threefold: it relates to belief, conduct, and condition, or theory, practice, and a state of heart.

1. *Theoretical Righteousness.*

By this I mean a correct system of belief. Correct views should be entertained on vital subjects. Some contend that if a man does right, it is no matter what he may believe. But this is sophistry, not argument. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We must not, however, contend for correctness in every particular. There are non-essentials in religious belief. The Bible must be studied. Rest not on man's ipse dixit. The following are considered as essential doctrines.—The existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of all things, and the Judge of all men; the fall of man, the depravity of his heart, and the endless punishment due to sin; the plan of salvation through the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, without any merit on the part of the creature; repentance, faith, holiness of heart, and life; and perseverance in the discharge of religious duties, and