

to pray, for the sanctuary is God's house—His "habitation, and the place where," in an especial manner, His "honour dwelleth." "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." We say that the Pharisee did well to go to pray "in the place where prayer" was "wont to be made," for Christ has taught us "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint,"—though it is a duty which too many still neglect—wilfully and culpably neglect. Nor is it a less palpable truth that very many who perform it at all, do so in the most imperfect and perfunctory manner, and pray more about themselves than for themselves—Glorying in their own imperfect morality, but never grieving for their guilt and sin. This was precisely the case with the Pharisee. We do not say that he did not feel himself called upon to attend to the duty of public prayer, but it is clear enough that he did not possess the proper spirit to engage aright in such a work—a work which ought to call forth all the life and all the energy of an awakened soul. He was, we fear, destitute of the true spirit of prayer and supplication. That spirit is not born with man. It is from above. It comes from God. It is when He breathes upon us that we can speak. It is when He opens our heart that our mouth is ready to show forth His praise. But the Pharisee did not feel this. He spoke as if he felt himself to be independent of God. He had none of the spirit of earnest pleading—none of the calm temper of a contrite worshipper—none of the lovely disposition of self-abasement—none of the subdued feeling of a self-condemned sinner—none of the spiritual longings of one that hungered and thirsted after righteousness—none of the meekness of a patient who needed the skill and grace of the Great Physician of souls. He did not possess that unfeigned submission to the Divine Will which is always a mark of a true child of God. He could not say with David, "O Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things that are too high for me." Neither could he say with Job, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Such a spirit is essential to the lifting up of the soul to God, and to the pious offering up to Him of an acceptable prayer—uttered forth from a smitten heart—a heart that feels its cruel sting of sin. But it is evident that the Pharisee was a total stranger to this devout and heavenly spirit. In the temper and spirit

of the proud Syrian captain, he looked nearer home than the cross for justification, pardon, and peace; nor did he understand how greatly he stood in need of that healing remedy for which one's own righteousness never can be a substitute. He looked to himself and appealed to his own life, instead of trusting in Jesus and throwing himself on His mercy. And this is what thousands are still doing. They trust in themselves that they are righteous, and see no beauty in Jesus why they should desire Him. The Pharisee felt that he was "rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing;" and labouring, as he certainly was, under such delusion, he did not know that he was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." In all this he appeared as a representative man, the very type of all modern formalists. His vanity supplied his mind with food, and his self-righteousness furnished a garment for his soul; but there was neither spiritual nourishment in the food, nor heavenly beauty in the garment. He was still—as many are at this day—a most melancholy specimen of fallen humanity. If in his prayer he acknowledged God, it was not that God might be honoured by receiving the willing homage of his heart, but in order that the worshipper himself might be able to ground a plea for acceptance on his own merits. He seemed to think that nothing could be added to his own good works, to make him wiser or better, or to fit and prepare him for heaven. They were to him what "Abana and Pharpar" were to the haughty Naaman—better than all other remedies. As the disdainful Syrian saw no reason why he should wash in Jordan, so the self-righteous Pharisee did not see any necessity why he should look to the blood of a crucified Saviour for salvation. Naaman loathed his leprosy, and wished to be cured of it, though he at first refused the appointed remedy. The Pharisee, on the other hand, did not hate his sins, and therefore he did not seek to be saved from them in the way ordained by God. For him "the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," had no attraction, because he did not feel that he had any sins to be washed away, or any corruption to be removed. As Naaman looked contemptuously on "all the waters of Israel," so the Pharisee regarded with equal contempt the blood of the everlasting covenant. His prayer does not therefore breath the spirit of a hearty and sincere confession of his short-comings and trans-