

ORIGINAL SKETCH OF A SERMON.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"—Matt. v. 20.

These words form a part of that interesting discourse known as our Lord's Sermon on the Mount,—a discourse which excels in beauty, simplicity, and sublimity, as well as real instruction, all the sermons of ancient and modern divines. Christ has been appropriately denominated *the great teacher*. To him the world is indebted for the purest and most truthful doctrines promulgated. Even the opponents of his divinity have been compelled to concede this, and yield to Jesus of Nazareth the highest place among the instructors of mankind. How much, then, should we, my brethren, who recognize in his teachings the sayings of an Omniscient Being, study His truth and govern our lives by His sacred precepts.

Among the various peculiarities in Christ's teachings, one of the most prominent must be reckoned his *plainness*. He called things by their right names : he was influenced by no timid apprehension of the displeasure of his auditors,—he readily denounced wickedness, even in high places. But he was especially severe upon those religionists amongst his countrymen, who, under cover of a superior zeal for the national faith, and an earnest desire to fulfil the minutest letter of the law, overlooked the spirit and design of religious ordinances. Their hypocrisy and formality were boldly exposed.

All this is designed for the instruction of others, as well as the parties immediately concerned. The practice of depending upon good works for salvation is not confined to the Pharisees. Many are still addicted to it. Because God has enjoined certain duties, and specified certain actions, as the fruit of faith and of a religious life, many have engaged in these as the condition of their salvation, and based their hope of heaven on their frequent religious observances. This course, though at first burdensome to the flesh, becomes by a law of our nature—the mere force of habit, natural and easy ; and all being externally right, the most attentive observer must give the professor credit for the possession of genuine piety. It is probable that eternity alone will undeceive the Church and the world