

is indeed a humbling condition of being—to dissemble what we are, to pretend to be what we are not—to use the tongue, or to put on an outward demeanour, to conceal the thoughts of the heart—and at the same time, on every moment of serious reflection, to be conscious that we are not before God what we seem to be, or profess to be before others. This is a condition which makes the thought of God insupportable. It is too much of restraint for man always to be acting a character, and “the idle” off-hand word betrays the condition of the heart, which perhaps more studied speech had concealed. It was by the idle word—“This man casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils”—that He, “who knew what was in man,” made manifest from His very words what was in their hearts. Whence then the remedy for so evil a condition? Whence the blessedness of having no guile in the spirit? It is alone the result, the first and blessed result, of the great truth of “righteousness without works.” This doctrine at once cuts off all effort at concealment, and all pretensions to be what we are not. The very ground-work of the doctrine is that the very God, before whom all things are naked and open, who knows us thoroughly (Heb. iv. 12, 13; cf. Ps. cxxxix. 1-12), and has taught us to see ourselves in measure as He sees us, is the One who has covered up our sin—yea, He has covered up all the sin which His omniscience knoweth to be in us; for He has not acted toward us on our