

the sacrifices of fools." He "giveth grace unto the lowly." "The Lord lifteth up the meek." "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away." Again it is said, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." But the Pharisee did not belong to this latter class of people. He knew nothing about meekness or humility, nor did he care for the precious promises which are attached to both. He had never learned the great value and importance of humility; and the mighty truth that a man must become as a little child before he can enter the kingdom of heaven, was most repugnant to his notions of godliness. Making his boast in the law, and relying on his own ability to satisfy its demands, he remained an entire stranger to that holiness which is produced in the really converted by the Holy Ghost working mightily in them. He knew nothing practically of this inward purity, an experimental knowledge which is confined to those who have passed from darkness unto light, and from spiritual death to the hidden life in the crucified one. In his own eyes the Pharisee was upright; and it never occurred to him that if he were "weighed in the balances" he would be "found wanting," and lighter altogether than vanity. He knew that it was his duty to pray, but he had not yet learned to pray as a suppliant. He engaged in his public devotions, not as a devout worshipper, but as a self-conceited critic. He stood before the throne of grace, not as a sinner who needed repentance and forgiveness, but as a judge who claimed to decide what God was entitled to receive from the worshipper. He did not therefore "pray with the spirit," or "with the understanding." He could not indeed do so without a very signal change, which, affecting the heart, would also affect the outer life, and give quite a different tone to his sentiments. But the absolute necessity of such a change was remote from his thoughts. He was not acquainted with the renewal of the heart; nor had his love for public prayer arisen from higher and clearer views of God, acquired from the inward teaching of the Spirit. He did not consider himself to be a poor, miserable outcast, a stranger "from the covenants of promise." Nothing seemed to him to be wanting to complete his character as a most exemplary and devout man; and he had spared no pains to impress those around him with the idea that he was absolutely perfect, that he was without spot or blemish. Surely such a man had the

best reason to feel at ease, and to congratulate himself on the high and secure position which he occupied. And what more could he desire than that of which he believed himself to be possessed? Was he not without a single flaw or defect? Religiously and morally was he not the best of men, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile?" Who could challenge any imperfection in him? Who could venture to accuse him of any inconsistency of principle, or say that he had ever deviated, even in the least, from the path of moral rectitude? Was he not a perfect model for the imitation of all good men? And ought not such men as the poor publican to feel very deeply humbled in his presence? Such, indeed, appear to have been his feelings. No doubt, if we understand his character aright, these high and foolish notions entered into the composition of the very flattering judgment which he had formed of himself, and the extremely harsh opinion which he entertained of others. And if this be so, no one will be surprised at the tenor of his prayer. Did he not deport himself precisely as might be expected in the circumstances? Was he not very circumspect in his conduct, reverent in aspect, and truly devout in his utterances? Was not his language that of a man who had long been accustomed to prayer? Were not his words few, and pregnant with unfeigned piety? Was he not very grave in his manner, for did he not belong to those who "for a pretence" made "long prayers," and for a vain show of godliness assumed "a sad countenance"? He did belong to that class, and did it not behove him to fill up the measure of their hypocrisy? What though he mingled his prayers with wicked taunts, had not thousands done the same before his time? Hypocrisy in religious worship was not a rare thing. It was clothed with the majesty of devout antiquity, and it had the sanction of modern times. From Cain to Judas, this demon of false devotion had breathed deadly vapour and fiery smoke around the universal sanctuary, and poisoned the very springs of countless hearts. Was the Pharisee singular then? By no means, for he was only one of a vast multitude. Some had gone before and some have followed. But he did not consider hypocrisy any obstacle to heart worship, nor did he regard it as any defect, he having long been in the habit of looking on it as the most innocent thing in the world. Hypocrisy, notwithstanding, was not his self-sufficiency beyond all question,