

When such persons have any real work of God in their souls, they are destitute of peace. Where there is thorough self-deception, men may thank God that they are not as other men. But supposing there is any idea of what man is before God, and yet the attempt to take this ground, misery must be the result. It may be the ground on which some readers are seeking to stand, who, if asked, Do you take the ground of the Pharisee? would say, Oh, no! Then what ground do you take? What are you wishing to stand upon before God? Is not this the reason you allege for not having peace, that you do not find in yourselves such fruits as would be certain marks of your being God's children? Or if sometimes you hope that you see some such marks, you cannot always find them, and therefore you are so cast down and desponding. Is not this the way in which you explain your own state? Or, perhaps, with some examples of rare devotedness before your eyes, you say, If I were but such an one! And what if you were? Would it do *then* to say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are?" What are you wishing and seeking? You are seeking and wishing to be something better than you are, in order to stand before God. And if you could have your wish and be that, would you stand upon it? Then you would be the Pharisee outright.

But what was the publican's ground? There was the deepest sense of what he was—a sinner; and he was not even asking to be something better. No doubt he did desire deliverance. He would not have

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