

In some cases we find the house in which they dwell, and in which they think they shall remain and be secure for ever, is made up of their own deeds and activities. We have a striking illustration of this spirit in the case of Madame de Maintenon, a celebrated character in the reign of Louis XIV. of France, and who was esteemed very religious. Thus she writes to her confessor, the Abbe Gobelin: "My days are now pretty regular and very solitary. I pray to God as soon as I rise. I go to mass twice on Sundays and holy days, and once every other day. I say my office daily, and read a chapter in some pious book. I pray to God on going to bed, and when I awake in the night I say a 'Laudate Dominum' or a 'Gloria Patri.' I think of God often in the course of the day, and make Him an offering of my actions!" What was the character of these actions which she so ignorantly and with such confidence offered to God may be gathered from the following. She goes on to say: "I can scarcely ever reproach myself with *deeds*, but only with human motives, great vanity, much levity, great freedom of thought and judgment, and a reserve in speaking that proceeds from nothing but human prudence." What a state of mind! No mention is made of the Saviour; and His one offering is superseded by the presentation of her own actions!

Others seek to find a shelter in a refuge made up of outward formalities, the show and glitter of sensuous worship. They are very scrupulous in the observance of certain days; they fast and they pray; repeat certain forms of prayer; partake of the sacraments of the church; pay great deference to the teachings of certain authorities; and go so far often as to confess their sins and receive absolution from the priest; and through these things, and resting upon them, they hope to find acceptance with God, to enjoy His favour, and to escape the punishment due to sin, which must come in the future.

Others there are who, while repudiating their own deeds and outward observances, are yet found hiding themselves in their own feelings and enjoyments; they have had so much sorrow for sin, and so much joy in the service of God, that they feel they must be secure.

All such persons, however, as we have described, viewed in the light of the gospel, are but foolish builders, and are living self-deceived; they are, indeed, one and all building upon the sand, and not upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. However sincere and careful they may be, they are really by their own work trying to supersede the work of Christ; they are striving to save themselves; and to the extent that they thus strive they reject Christ. It is, however, written: "And a man shall be a hiding-place