

city, to find peace from the whips of conscience and the scorpions of God's law: and that is, a form of godliness. He will become a religious man, and surely that will save him. His whole course of life is now changed. Before, it may be, he neglected the outward ordinances of religion. He used not to kneel by his bedside—he never used to read the Word in secret, or in the family—he seldom went to the house of God in company with the multitude that kept holy day—he did not eat of that bread which, to the believer, is meat indeed, nor drink of that cup which is drink indeed.

But now his whole usages are reversed—his whole course is changed. He kneels to pray even when alone—he reads the Word with periodical regularity—he even raises an altar for morning and evening sacrifice in his family—his sobered countenance is never wanting in his wonted position in the house of prayer. He looks back now to his baptism with a soothing complacency, and sits down to eat the children's bread at the table of the Lord. His friends and neighbors all observe the change. Some make a jest of it, and some make it a subject of rejoicing; but one thing is obvious, that he is an altered man; and yet it is far from obvious that he is a new man, or a justified man. All this routine of bodily exercise, if it be entered on before the man has put on the divine righteousness, is just another way of going about to establish his own righteousness, that he may not be constrained to submit to put on the righteousness of God. Nay, so utterly perverted is the understanding of the unconverted, that many men are found to persevere in such a course of bodily worship of God, while, at the same time, they persevere as diligently in some course of open or secret iniquity. Such men seem to regard external observances not only as an atonement for sins that are past, but as a price paid to purchase a license to sin in time to come. Such appears to have been the refuge of lies which the poor woman of Samaria would fain have set down in, when the blessed Traveller, sitting by the well, awakened all the anxieties of her heart, by the searching words: "Go call thy husband, and come hither." Her anxious mind sought hither and thither for a refuge, and found it. Where? In her religious observances: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship?" She thrusts away the pointed conviction of sin by a question as to her outward observances—she changes her anxiety about the soul into anxiety about the place where men ought to worship Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim. Oh! if he would only settle that question—if he would only tell her on which of these mountains God ought to be worshipped—she was ready to worship all her lifetime in that favored place. If Zion be the place, she would leave her native mountain and go and worship there, that

that might save her. Oh! how fain she would have found here a refuge for her anxious soul. With what divine kindness, then, did the Saviour sweep away this refuge of lies by the answer: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, and now is, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Now it is with the very same object, and with the very same kindness, that Paul here sweeps away the same refuge of lies from every anxious soul, in these decisive words: "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God."

Is there any of you whom God hath awakened out of the deadly slumber of the natural mind?—has he drawn aside the curtains, and made the light of truth to fall upon your heart revealing the true condition of your soul? has he made you start to your feet alarmed, that you might go, and weep as you go to seek the Lord your God?—has he made you exchange the careless smile of gaiety for the tears of anxiety—the loud laugh of folly, for the cry of bitter distress about your soul?—are you asking the way to Zion with your face directed thitherward?—then take heed, I beseech you of sitting down contented in this refuge of lies. Remember, he is not a Jew which is one outwardly—remember, no outward observances—no prayers, or church-going, or Bible-reading—can ever justify you in the sight of God.

I am quite aware that when anxiety for the soul enters in, then anxiety to attend ordinances will also enter in. Like as the stricken deer goes apart from the herd to bleed and weep alone, so the stricken soul goes aside too from his merry companions, to weep, and read, and pray, alone. He will desire the preached Word, and press after it more and more; but remember, he finds no peace in this change that is wrought in himself. When a man goes thirsty to the well, his thirst is not allayed merely by going there. On the contrary, it is increased every step he goes. It is by what he draws out of the well that his thirst is satisfied. And just so it is not by the mere bodily exercise of waiting on ordinances that you will ever come to peace; but by tasting of Jesus in the ordinances—whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

If ever, then, you are tempted to think that you are surely safe for eternity, because you have been brought to change your treatment of the outward ordinances of religion, remember, I beseech you, the parable of the marriage feast, where many were called—many were invited to come in, but few, few were found having on the wed-