

was "perfect and upright," &c. It is said of Zachariah and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6, that "that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." The Scriptures teach that this holiness is secured through the blood of the Lamb. At best "we are unprofitable servants." God will accept no amount of good works as a substitute for purity. Our nature must be changed—we must be regenerated. See John iii. 3-8; Rev. vii. 9-17; 1 Timothy i. 5; 2 Cor. i. 12. Good works are not meritorious, as the Romish Church teaches; nor yet unnecessary, as held by Antinomians. See James ii. 17, 26. They are to be taken as the evidences of our faith in Christ, and of our justification through His atonement.

II. We have next to consider the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

1. *The Scribes.* These were men of learning, particularly acquainted with the Jewish law, and professionally instructors of the people. They kept an account of public acts and occurrences, officially recording important transactions. The Scribes formed a part of the great council of the Jews, and in that capacity figured at Christ's trial, and at the investigations to which the Apostles were subjected, see Acts xxiii. 1-10. Their righteousness consisted in theory. They stored their minds with the ceremonial law and the prophetic writings, relying on these mere intellectual acquisitions, and a rigid morality, for eternal life. Thus many now base their hope on a sound creed, a good education, &c. Some bring up their sons "for the church," without their having experienced a change of heart. Many evils are the result,—irreligious ministers, erroneous doctrines, undue prominence given to forms and ceremonies, Apostolical succession, and an unholy blending of religious with civil matters.

Now, no objection to learning; but it must be subservient to religion, not supersede it. A thorough literary training, and an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures are enjoined upon all; but these will not save the soul. A new heart is still indispensable. Sanctified learning is a great instrument of usefulness.

2. *The Pharisees.*

The most numerous religious sect among the Jews. They included most of the Scribes, and the majority of the people. Their name was derived from the Hebrew *parash*, to separate, and doubtless they were originally distinguished for their piety and good works. But they were fearfully corrupt in the days