

not for their own sake but for those choice advantages conveyed through them ; but prized no more than the shell of the nut compared with the value of the kernel within. "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess" was the climax of goodness of the self righteous Pharisee. But these were only externals, and as the power of religion had never been felt in his heart, a compliance with externals was of no avail. Many shall say in the day of judgment, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have done many wonderful things" to whom nevertheless the judge will answer, "depart from me I know you not." The means of grace are not to be confounded with grace itself, nor the method of attaining righteousness with righteousness itself. The mere externals of religion can avail nothing in satisfying the spiritual nature of man, a nature which nothing can fully satisfy but God, who is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. As reasonable would it be for the hungry man to be satisfied with the most costly platters but filled with nothing which can allay his famished appetite; or the thirsty man with a cup of the choicest gold carved with the most curious devices of the cunning artificer yet empty of any thing that can quench his burning desire for even a drop of water; or the man who in the darkness of midnight calls for a light, would with the lamp of the most valuable material put into his hands yet containing no oil. One and all of them would say "these are not the things we want, it is not the platter but food in the platter; it is not the cup, but water in the cup; it is not the lamp, but the light thereof that is wanted. All these vessels are prized as being useful, but only as means to an end. They afford the best and easiest method of enabling man to enjoy the blessings they contain. So with the ordinances of grace; they are, so to speak, but the vessels of the sanctuary, the means of conveying divine blessing to the soul; and false is the notion that man conceives of his having attained the righteousness of God simply by regarding the externals of religion.

But wherein then consists the righteousness of the Gospel, a righteousness said to be of God, revealed from faith to faith? We would answer it is the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness procured and bestowed by him on all the penitent and believing. This righteousness of Christ may be viewed in a two fold sense, 1st as justifying, and 2d as sanctifying.

To the question what shall I do to be saved? the guilty conscience in vain looks for a satisfactory answer in the various schemes and suppositions of reasoning men. For the purpose of working out a righteousness in the room of sinners and accord-

ing to the design of grace and wisdom, imputing that righteousness to all who believe, and trust in him, the Lord Jesus came into this world to be a propitiation for our sins. Though, therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified before God, there has been manifested the righteousness of God without the law, even the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. God for Christ's sake is ready to pardon the guilty and to account them in his sight as if they had never sinned at all, if so be that the guilty believe in Christ as their saviour and rest upon him alone for acceptance before God; for of him Christ is made unto believers, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. In desiring righteousness man should just be desiring Christ, loving, adoring, honouring, and obeying him, holding him as his hope, his peace, his holiness, his all in all, looking to, trusting and rejoicing in his intercession, resting the security of his state upon his merciful care, without restraint, doubt or suspicion confiding in the assurance that his blood cleanseth from all sin, that from him can be obtained a robe of white that shall hide every past imperfection, a garment of salvation adorned and beautified as the attire of angels. This righteousness of Christ is by him called the bread and the water of life. "I am the bread of life that came down from heaven of which if a man eat he shall live for ever. He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." In other words the righteousness that I will give him will be of such a satisfactory and permanent nature as shall supply every want and increase the joy of the receiver for evermore.

But the righteousness of the Gospel is to be considered as referring particularly to the sanctification of the heart by the influence of the Holy Spirit, a sanctification which will be obtained in proportion to the desire which is felt for it, a desire figuratively compared by our Lord to hunger and thirst. Man requires a better heart and purer affections than those which characterize him by nature. To enable him to enjoy and attain to the beauties of holiness the choice delights of heavenly wisdom and grace, his Saviour communicates to him according to the measure of his faith and prayer a new heart and a clean spirit, a righteousness within the mind, an influence to purify him from the dross and corruption of the earthly character and to implant and cherish in him the high born principles of the heavenly. This personal righteousness of the believer, can never be said at