

537

11



Mr. *Tennent's*  
S E R M O N

PREACH'D

at the Tuesday Evening Lecture,

*January, 27. 1740, I.*



*Mikhail Belknap*

300  
The Righteousness of the SCRIBES and PHARISEES  
considered.

I N A

S E R M O N

On MATTH. V. 20. Preach'd at the

*Evening-Lecture*

in BOSTON, *January 27.* 1740, I.

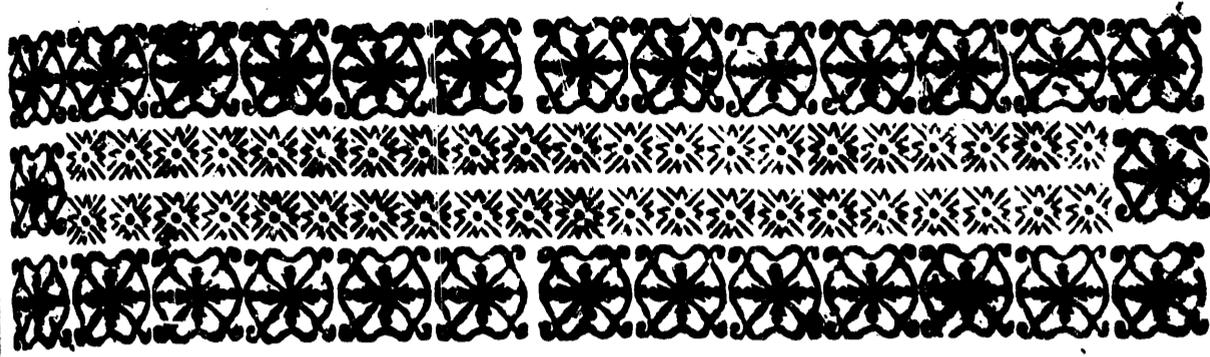
By *Gilbert Tennent, A.M.*

And Minister of the Gospel at *New-Brunswick, in New-Jersey.*

Enk. xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate:  
For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and  
shall not be able.*

B O S T O N :

Printed by J. DRAPER for D. HENCHMAN, in  
Cornhill. 1741.



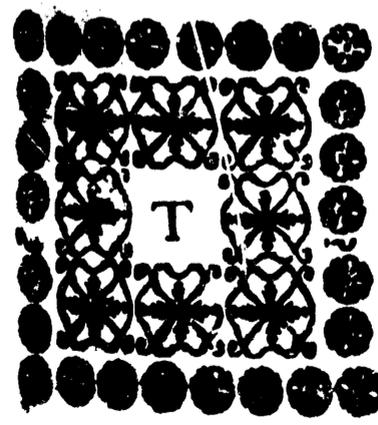
THE  
*Righteousness*  
 OF THE  
 Scribes *and* Pharisees

CONSIDER'D.



M A T T H. V. xx.

*For I say unto you, That except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*



THESE Words are as weighty and solemn, and as much deserve and require our serious and speedy Consideration and close Application, as any I know of in the whole Book of God.

It is a most difficult Task to bring back secure Sinners to the serious Search of their State towards God, and their Springs of Action; they conclude without an impartial Tryal, without Reason, that they are in a safe Condition, and so go on building a Fabrick in the Air. They

They endeavour to grow in Grace, before they get Grace. But can the fond and groundless Notions of Men's Brains alter the Nature of God and of Things? Will a Building stand well without a Foundation, or upon a sandy one? Would it not be better for Mankind, to labour with Impartiality and Speed to know the worst of their State, while there is an Opportunity to get it alter'd?

Is it reasonable for Men, in order to prevent a little necessary and transient Trouble of Mind, to rush upon the Bosses of God's Buckler? To rush against the strongest Remonstrances of Conscience and of God, into inexpressible, incomprehensible, intolerable, and eternal Torments? Is not this just as if a Man, in order to escape the Bite of a Musketoe, would run his naked Bosom against a drawn Sword?

I am grieved to behold the preposterous Practice of many of this Generation, who like foolish Children are attempting to raise a Superstructure, before they lay the Foundation.

I would to God, that that golden Saying of our Lord, *A corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*, was better understood, and more seriously ponder'd upon, by the Professors of this Age

If all that are born of the *Flesh, be Flesh*, and if he that is in the *Flesh*, (i. e. unconverted) cannot please God, or perform acceptable Service, any more than a Thorn can bring forth Figs, or a Thistle Grapes; then it is of the last Moment for us, to begin at the right End of Religion, by enquiring into our Hearts and Principles of Action, and not resting 'till we come to a scriptural Conclusion about our present State. If it be good, we need the Comfort of it, in a World of Labour and Sorrow; if bad, we need to know it, that so we may be affected with the Miseries of it, and so with Earnestness use proper Means to obtain an Escape. If Men know not the Miseries of their natural State, how shall they be duly affected with what they know not? And if they be not deeply affected, how can it be reasonably supposed that they will use Violence to take the Kingdom of God? And without a holy Violence

ence or Importunity, what Reason is there to expect an Interest in it?

Conscience and Credit excite many Men to take some Care of their outward Actions, and having done this, they rest securely with the old Pharisees: Many nowadays cleanse the *outside* of the Cup and Platter, but have the inside foul and neglected.

This being the Case of Multitudes at this Time, Is it not necessary to sound the Alarm of God's Judgments; to cry aloud and not spare, to shew to *Judah* their Transgressions, and the House of *Jacob* their Sins? To try by the Terrors of the Lord to perswade Men? For this we have the Example of our Saviour in the Text under our present Consideration; which, doubtless, however it may seem to the Sons of this Generation, was a terrible Paradox in the Age in which it was spoken! For then the Scribes and Pharisees had the greatest Fame for Religion, and took more Pains about it than any others; so that the People of that Age had a common Proverb, That if but two were saved, one would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee.

Seeing that Life and Immortality are bro't to Light by the Gospel, it is well worth our Labour, to enquire, Upon what Terms an Interest therein may be obtained: To this our Lord gives a plain and pungent Answer, in the Words of the Text, which inform us, That except our Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

By the *Kingdom of Heaven* here, we are not to understand the visible Church, as elsewhere the Term is taken, but the Seat of the Blessed; for we have too great Reason to believe, That many who have not a Righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, are too easily admitted as Members of the visible Church.

The lax Method of Admission to sacred Communion, which has too generally obtained among the *Protestant Churches*, more especially of late, has been, I believe, one great Cause of the lamentable Decay of Religion in them! This, the first Fathers of this Country, who had much

much of the Simplicity and Power of the Religion of Christ, were very sensible of, as appeared by their Practice respecting Church Fellowship.

But however Hypocrites may, by their specious Pretences deceive and intrude, or by the Carelessness of Watchmen obtain a Place in the *visible* Church, yet they shall in no Case enter into the *invisible*, viz. the Kingdom of Heaven; all their Pleas and Pretences will be baffled and rejected, their Mouths shut, and their false Hopes turned into everlasting Dispair and Horror!

The Paradise of God is compared to a Kingdom, to signify the Order and Harmony that there subsists, as well as the impregnable Strength of the Place, and the universal perpetual Subjection of all its Inhabitants, to the Empire of the great GOD, the King of Kings.

Now in order to explain the solemn Proposition of our Saviour in the Words before us, I intend to pursue the following Method,

In the first Place shew, *what the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was.* And

Secondly, *Wherein we must exceed them upon Pain of Death.* And

Thirdly, Offer some Things to *confirm and illustrate the Proposition.* We return to the first.

The Scribes were Writers of the Law, and the Pharisees a strict religious Sect of the Jews, who trusted they were righteous and despised others, of these many were publick Teachers of others. But before I speak of the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, I would premise this, viz. That I intend to discourse upon the Attainments of the strictest of them, and that with this View, that what shall be said may have the greater Tendency to convince the Secure.

Some of the Pharisees were gross Hypocrites, who took up a Cloak of Religion, in order to secure worldly Gain; for a Pretence they made long Prayers, that they might devour Widows Houses. Some were much for Ostentation in Alms-giving, and other Duties. But we are not to imagine that this was the Character and Tem-

per

per of the whole Sect. No, not at all; the young Man of the Gospel, Paul before his Conversion, and the foolish Virgins were of another Stamp and Disposition; they had a moral Integrity and Seriousness. Now Brethren, Until we exceed the highest Reach of the best Sort of the Pharisees and all other Hypocrites that have been upon the Stage of Time, I can't see that we have the least Ground for Peace and Quiet.

The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees may be said to consist in these two Generals, viz. 1<sup>st</sup>. In a certain Blamelessness or Freedom from gross Crimes. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. In a strict Conformity to the moral and ceremonial Laws.

As to the Law, Paul, while a Pharisee, was blameless, Phil. 3 Chap. But it may not be improper here to enquire more particularly, How strictly and punctually the Pharisees performed the Duties required by the first and second Table of the moral Law, as to the Letter of them.

They not only believed that there was a God, but were very zealous in celebrating the Duties of his Worship; they were certainly one of the most sound and orthodox Sects of the jewish Nation, much preferable to the Sadducees, (who in many Things resemble our modern infidel Deists,) they were diligent in attending publick Prayers at the stated Seasons: Hence we find that the Pharisee is said, by our Lord, to go with the Publican to the Temple to pray; as, no doubt, many of both sorts do this Night. They were also strict in observing the Duties of Family-Religion; which some think is intended by that Passage of our Lord respecting them, viz. That they pray'd standing in the Corners of the Streets, i. e. say they, in Corners of Houses; they were not ashamed to perform the Duties of Religion in the most publick and conspicuous Places, altho' they must needs know, that this would expose them, in all probability, to the Taunts and Fleers of the Sadducees, who could not look even so much as the dead Form of Religion! This is a greater Length than many Pretenders to Christianity come now-a-days, who, when they come to irreligious Places,

B

Places,

Places, soon lay aside their Form, and turn with the Tide.

The old Pharisees pray'd secretly many scores of Times in a Day, they had Prayers suited to every Occurrence, which they punctually us'd. It is storied of them, that some of that Sect, in order to excite themselves to secret Devotion in the night Season, were used to put a brass Bowl by their Bed-side, and hold a Bullet in their Hand, that so by the Bullet's falling into the Bowl, they might be alarmed to Prayer.

The Pharisees had also a great Veneration for God's Name: they they wou'dn't mention the Name of JEHOVAH in their common Discourse. And so strict were they in the Observation of the Sabbath, that they superstitiously charg'd our Lord with a Breach of it, for doing Works of Necessity and Mercy, in healing the Sick, and relieving the Necessities of Nature.

The Fame which the Pharisees obtain'd and retain'd as to Religion, necessarily supposes, That a Number of them were strictly honest in their Dealings with Men; for whatsoever Regard Men may pretend to the Duties of the first Table of the Law, yet if they observe not the Laws of Honesty, in civil Life, they'll soon crack their Credit.

As to *Chastity*; the Pharisees were so strict, that it is reported of them, that they wore deep brim'd Hatts, least thro' the Windows of the Senses, their Minds should be stain'd by tempting Objects, and thus indulge unchast Meditations.

It is certain, that the old Pharisees, had a *Zeal for the Good of the Souls* of their Fellow-Creatures, and this they express'd by much Pain and Labour: They compassed Sea and Land, to make Profelites to their Sect. Their Zeal was ting'd with that of a party Spirit; and thus it is with their Successors at this Day. There are many rigid *Bigotts* of all Sects, who are more zealous about *tytbing Mint, and Annis, and Cummin*, than about the *weightier Matters of the Law*! more studious to profel-  
lite People to their *several Parties*, than to CHRIST. All that are justify'd by CHRIST's Blood, and sanctify'd by his

his Spirit, upon Earth, will doubtless agree in Heaven; and therefore they should not jumble in the Way to it.

We are inform'd, Luk. 18. 11, 12. That *the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, GOD I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust. Adulterers, or even as this Publican: I fast twice in the Week, I give Tithes of all I possess.*

But to explain and illustrate this Head of Discourse, let me offer a few Instances more.

That of the *young Man in the Gospel*, is very memorable: He was *concerned about the Salvation of his Soul*; he gave our Lord a civil Salutation, *Good Master*, said he, *What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* And in his Answer to our Saviour, he asserted, That *he had kept all the Laws from his Youth up, (i. e. outwardly)* which our Lord did not contradict. Which of you now in this *great Assembly*, exceeds that *young Pharisee*?

The next Instance I would mention, is that of *Paul* before his Conversion, of which we have an Account, *Phil. 3d Chap.* He says of himself, That *if any Man thinketh, that he hath wheresof he might trust in the Flesh, (i. e. in his own Righteousness) he more.* He further adds, That *he was of the Stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning Zeal, persecuting the Church; as touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* Well, *my Fathers and Brethren*, See what a dreadful Pitch in Religion this *Pharisee* came to, and yet was not so much as convinced! Which of you now exceeds the Attainments of this Man, while under the Curse of CHRIST? Don't say within your selves, that you have *Abraham* to your Father. What will your good Parentage avail you, unless you walk in the Steps of their Simplicity, Faith, and Holiness, but to aggravate your everlasting Pains? because of your rebellious and ungrateful opposing of the Light of their Instructions and Examples! May I not say unto you, as my Master once did to the Jews, *Ye are of your Father the Devil; for his Works you will do.* A Pagan could say, *Quæ avi et proavi, &c.* What our Parents and Grand-Parents have done, are not

not our's Think not that your being admitted to outward Ordinances, will screen you from GOD's Vengeance; this was the foolish Confidence of the carnal Jews, who said, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these.* Saul, a Pharisee, was circumcis'd, and no doubt he partook of the Passover: Do you depend upon the soundness of your Sect, and inoffensiveness of your Life; why Saul was of the *strictest* Sect of the Jews, and as to the Law, blameless.

The last Instance I shall mention, under this Head, is, that of the *foolish Virgins*, recorded *Matth. 25th* Chap. Were they not call'd *Virgins*, because of their *chaste* and *regular* Conversation; did they not carry Lamps, which shews their Profession of the *true* Religion; did they not keep Company with the Wise, which supposes that they had some Love to those that were *truly* good? And are not their Lamps said to go out? which speaks forth the Moving they once had in their Affections towards God and Goodness, like the stony-ground Hearers, who are said to *receive the Seed of the Word with Joy*, but wanting Root, in Time of Temptation fall away. Had they not a strong Confidence that they should be kindly accepted of at last by the Bridegroom? Had not the wise Virgins a good Opinion of them, and did they not take Pains themselves to prepare for the Bridegroom's Coming? And yet, behold and tremble, ye *Pharisees!* when the Bridegroom did come, the marriage chamber Door was stove in their Faces: O confounding dreadful Disappointment! Take Care, Friends, lest after all your soundness in Principle, strictness of Life, Love to God's People, religious Affections, Pains and Confidence, the Door of Mercy, of Hope, and Salvation be'n't shut against you, by and by, for ever!

But I proceed to consider the

*Second* general Head of Discourse, which was, To shew wherein we must *exceed* the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees* upon Pain of Death. I answer, in two Instances, We must receive that Righteousness of the Saviour by *Imputation* which they *rejected*; and have an inward Righteousness by *Implantation*, which they *wanted*. And,

I. I

i. I say, We must have an *outward* Righteousness by *Imputation*, which the Pharisees *rejected*.

The Pharisees, as to the outward Part of Duty, did well; but herein they unhappily fail'd, they depended upon their Doings for Acceptance with God; they trusted in their own Righteousness and despised others: Yea, they slighted Christ himself, for as *Jesus* observed, *The Whole need no Physician, but the Sick*; they heal'd their slight Wounds by their dead Performances, and thus remain'd insensible of their absolute Need of an *almighty* Physician! *Being ignorant of the Righteousness of GOD*, (i. e. of the Righteousness of the *Messias*, which was of God the Father's sending out and Acceptance) *and going about to establish their own, they did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of GOD*. They sought after Righteousness (or Justification) and did not find it, because they sought it *not of Faith*, (i. e. *wholly* by the *Righteousness of Christ*, which Faith can only apprehend) but, as it were, by the *Works of the Law*. Observe, They didn't seek it *wholly* by the Works of the Law, but in *part*: They tho't that their Obedience would do *something* towards their Acceptance with God; that the Almighty would be induc'd hereby to pity and pardon them, and that it would be hard Treatment, if the Almighty should reject them, after all their good Meanings, Harmlessness, and religious Labours.

But, to bring the Matter a little closer, for the Discovery of Hypocrites, let it be observ'd, That those who receive the *outward* Righteousness of CHRIST as Mediator, are *first* convinc'd by the Law and Spirit, of their *Want* of Righteousness, according to the Promise of our Saviour in his humbled State, *Joh. 16. 8, 9.* and these Convictions are full, clear, constant; the Sinner is so convinc'd of Sin, in Life, Heart, State, and has such a View of the Certainty, Dreadfulness, and Eternity of that Damnation he is hereby expos'd to, that he is deeply distressed in Heart, (*a wounded Spirit who can bear?*) and cannot rest 'till he finds JESUS: And that which encreases his Uneasiness, is the Sight and sorrowful Sense he has of his Ignorance and Inability to help himself out

of

of his present State of Sin and Misery; and the Despair he has in the Help of all meer Creatures. These Things are set in a strong Light, by that beautiful Passage, in the Epistle of *Paul* to the Romans, 7th Chap. and 3d Verse, where he says, That *he was alive without the Law once: i. e.* before the Law was opened in its spiritual Breadth, by the Holy Ghost to his Mind, and set home with irresistible Energy upon his Heart; he was alive to *himself*, as his *last End*, to the Law as a Covenant of Works; he expected to *gain* Life by the Law; he was also imaginarily alive, and was very perk and merry, as all natural Men are, before they are wounded by the Law. Its a sad Sight to behold how merrily they go on to Damnation; like Fools in *Bedlam*, they sing and dance in their Shackles: But when the Law comes, *Sin revives* in their View, both as to its Numbers, Aggravations, and Condemnation, like a Lyon rampant, ready every Moment to devour them! *Then*, and not 'till then, the Sinner *dies to himself*, dies to the Law, dies to his former false Peace and Hope, and dies to all worldly Hopes, Fears and Enjoyments! The Law slays him, and he thro' the Law, as an Instrument, open'd and applied, dies to the Law, as a Covenant of Works. In this Case the poor Creature cannot rest, 'till CHRIST be revealed and applied to his Soul, by the Word and Spirit of GOD.

Now, When the sick Sinner has got a Discovery of CHRIST's Fullness, Suitableness, and Willingness to help the Distressed; being sensible of his absolute Need of JESUS, in all his Offices and Relations, he receives him in every of them; and is willing, not only to be govern'd by his Law, but to bear his Cross, in its utmost Extent.

And here let it be observed, That Faith, which receives the Righteousness of CHRIST, has effectual Influence upon the Heart and Practice; it *purifies the Heart*, works by Love, and overcomes the World.

Those Persons who receive the imputed Righteousness of CHRIST, know what it is to be *poor in Spirit*; what it is to have Peace of Conscience, after Distress, upon the Application of Christ to their Souls; as also what it is to have

have the Love of God spread abroad in their Hearts experimentally; they have a *Tenderness* for God's Honour, Kingdom, and People. The

2d Particular, In which we must exceed the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, upon pain of Death, is this, We must have an *inward* Righteousness by *Implantation*, or *Infusion*, thro' the Spirit, which they wanted.

The *Pharisees* fail'd in the main Spring of Action: They wanted the *New-Birth*: They were utterly destitute of holy *Principles*, without which, *Actions* cannot be good; they serv'd God in the *oldness of the Letter*, but not in the *newness of the Spirit*. Altho' the Matter of their Actions was good, yet because they perform'd them by their *own* Strength, and for their *own* Ends, chiefly; that GOD, who is a Spirit, and to whom spiritual Service is only acceptable, rejected them.

When there is a Fault in the *main Spring* of a Clock, the Motion must be stopt for a Time, and the main Spring set right, before it will answer its Design in measuring of the Hours: And thus must it be with graceless Sinners; they must, by Examination and Conviction, be bro't to a solemn Pause, and then get a new Principle of Action insur'd by the *New-Birth*, which will naturally and necessarily turn the free and general Byass of their whole Souls towards GOD, and so prepare them for, and dispose them to acceptable Service.

Now those that are born of the Spirit, receive the Kingdom of God as *little Children*, and generally favour most the Things of the Spirit; as little Children hunger after the Milk of the Breast, thus do they desire after the *pure Milk of the Word*, i. e. the Truths of CHRIST, spoken simply and favourily from the Heart, without the vain Affectation of humane Wit and Eloquence. Little Children mourn at the Absence of their Parents, and grow in Stature; thus those who are born of the Spirit, bitterly bewail Christ's Absence, and insatiably thirst and honestly labour for Growth in Knowledge, Holiness, and Usefulness; but Pharisees are contented with their dead dry Round of Duties, tho' they make no more Progress than

than a Door on the Hinges, or a turnspit Dog in a Wheel.

From those that are born of the Spirit, *old Things pass away, and all Things become new*: Their old false Peace, false Hope, Hatred against God's Ways and People, Pride of Heart, Covetousness, and worldly Conversation pass away; and now they see divine Things in a new and affecting Manner, and have a new Pliableness of Will, readily to comply with the Terms of the Gospel, a new Run of their Affections to GOD as their Center, a new Tenderness of Conscience, a new Love to Enemies, a new and heavenly Conversation.

I proceed to consider the

3d General Head of Discourse, which was to offer some Considerations tending to *confirm* and *illustrate* the Proposition of our Lord, in the Text we treat upon.

And here I may observe, That an outward, or *pharisaical* Righteousness, does not answer the Demands of the Law, which proceeding from a pure and perfect Spirit, requires not only an outward but an inward and compleat Conformity to it: A pharisaical Righteousness is defective, and the Law curses for the *least* Defect, *Gal. 3. 10.*

Neither does a pharisaical Righteousness answer the Demands of the Gospel, because it wants those main Principles of acceptable Service, which the Gospel requires, Namely, *Faith* and *Love*; without which, *whatever we do* is Sin.

A pharisaical Righteousness can neither prepare us for nor entitle us to eternal Blessedness; because it may consist with a governing Enmity against God, his Ways and People. This is evident from the Example of the *old Pharisees*, who notwithstanding their *Strictness*, were *virulent Opposers* of Christ and his Followers. And here, *My Brethren*, Let me observe, That if this Work of GOD which is more remarkably begun in *New-England* of late, be carry'd on, you will see some that profess the greatest Regard to Religion now, stand up and oppose it with implacable Hate. *Formalists* cannot brook the Power of Religion, our Lord and his Apostles were not opposed by

by any, so much as by that Sett of Men. Altho' *Pharisees* make a *fair Shew* in the Flesh, yet are the main Springs of their Obedience, mean and ignoble.

Some are bro't to this outward Strictness, meerly by the Force of a *religious Education*; long Custom makes the Performance of Duties easy, as it were a second Nature, so that it creates Uneasiness to neglect them.

Some are regular in Life, thro' *Want of much Temptation* to the contrary. The Devil does not tempt the *Secure* much, lest he should scare them out of his Clutches. While the *strong Man arm'd keeps the House*, all the Goods are in Peace. What tho' a *Rattle-Snake* does not spit its Venom in the Winter, for want of the warming Beams of the Sun, yet it has the *poisonous Nature* of a Snake still.

Some obtain *Credit* among their fellow Creatures, or to *preserve* it when obtain'd, labour for the *outward Form*: This is their main Motive, and a wretched one it is.

Some are careful in the outward Duties of Religion, chiefly in order to *acquire* or *preserve Peace of Mind*.

Some perform this outward Obedience, as *Slaves*, principally to escape the Whip of eternal Damnation: If you hold a Whip over a Dog's Head, it will scare him from snatching at a Bone, which notwithstanding he has a great Love to.

Others perform this pharisaical Obedience as *Hirelings*, chiefly out of Respect to the Wages; they imagine that their rotten Truck of graceless Prayers, and other dead Duties, will do something towards the purchasing of God's Favour for them. They think that if they do what they can, the Almighty will be in their Debt, their Salvation will be certain. They imagine that the Lord will be induc'd by their Doings, to shew them Kindness rather than Others. But it is *not of him that willetb, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD that sheweth Mercy.*

Thus you may see, *Brethren*, That all this outward Obedience, inasmuch as it springs not from *Love to GOD*, for himself, as its main Principle, but from *selfish Respects*, is mean and sordid, and tho' it has a fair Sun, yet is it, upon the aforesaid Account, rotten at the Core.

The IMPROVEMENT of this Subject remains.

And here, *My Fathers and Brethren*, I would solemnly in the Name of the great GOD, my Lord and Master, ask you, *What you think of your State towards GOD?* Pray have you a Righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, or have you not? Pause a while, *my Brethren*, and let your Consciences give an impartial Answer to this important Question: O Conscience! I charge thee, in the Name of the great GOD, to speak the Truth: Is it so, that our Righteousness must exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, upon Pain of eternal Death? O what Terror does this speak to those, who habitually *fall short* of their moral Righteousness!

The Pharisees abounded in the *Duties of Devotion*: What will become of you then, who knowingly and generally neglect secret or family Devotion, or attending the Places of publick Worship? Will not God's Wrath be pour'd out upon the Families that call not on his Name? If you despise those who are sent by Christ, do you not despise Christ who has sent them, and his Father also? If the Foolishness of Preaching (*i. e.* a *simple Method* of Preaching, from the Heart, without the Affectation of Wit or Eloquence, which is reckon'd, by the worldly Wise, Foolishness) be the appointed Mean of saving those that believe, then how shall those be saved who do not attend upon it?

The Pharisees had a great Veneration for *the holy Name of GOD*, and were strict Observers of the *Sabbath*. What then shall become of you wicked Creatures, who customarily prophane his holy Name, and violate his sacred Rest? Surely the righteous GOD will not hold you guiltless.

Were the Pharisees *honest, chaste, charitable, zealous*? Then how dreadful is your State, who fall short habitually of those Hypocrites, upon whom our Lord denounc'd so many Curses? Are not some of you habitually dishonest, unchast, uncharitable, and lukewarm about Religion? Does not a terrible Damnation await you? Surely the

Lord

Lord will spue such sordid Wretches out of his Mouth, *i. e.* reject you with eternal Abhorrence.

You prophane Herd of *harden'd* Mortals, who have not so much as the outward Form of Religion: Hear, with Confusion and Trembling, your Damnation denounc'd by the Mouth of Christ, in the Text I am now discoursing upon; *For I say unto you* (who am the Truth and the Life) *that except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* All ye Publicans and Harlots, behold your dismal Doom express'd, *1 Cor. 6. 19. Imprime Verba.*

But perhaps you will say, in your Excuse, I *do exceed* the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, for I *believe* and *trust* in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, which they did not; and I am *sincere*, thank God, but they were gross Hypocrites: Therefore I scorn your Comparison! *Answer*, I say, stay Friend, not so hasty neither; suffer me, for thy Conviction, to speak a Word in behalf of the old Pharisees. You say, you believe, and trust in Christ: Well: But what is Faith? You can't tell. I suppose, you never saw you was without Faith; never felt your Inability to believe; never felt Opposition made by Satan against your Faith; never felt the Effects of Faith on Heart or Life; it's probable your Faith never had so much Influence upon you, as the Faith of the Devils upon them, for they *believe* and *tremble*. You needn't boast of your dead *hypocritical* Faith; you'll surely go to the Devil with it, if you get no better. You say, you *trust* in Christ: Ay, *trust*; without Difficulty; with a whole Heart, and unholy Practice: Why, you trust in the Devil, and not in CHRIST; for you have no Word of Christ to trust upon, while in your present Condition. You say, you are *sincere*; but what is *Sincerity*? It's like you can't tell; What were you never without it; has it cost you nothing; no Sorrow, no Mourning; then you are without it still. Why your *Sincerity* is nothing but a *moral Earnestness* in seeking *yourselves* as your *last End*: And had not the Pharisees this? Yes, they had, witness *Saul*, and the *young Man* in the Gospel.

C 2

Thus

Thus it appears, That your Righteousness does not exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and therefore, so continuing, *ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD.*

Dear Brethren, and Fathers; Are there not a great Number in this large Assembly, of old, middle-aged, and young Persons, who have not exceeded the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, in the Instances before mentioned? You, *aged Persons*, What say ye to this? Is not your Religion a meer dead Form, accompany'd only with some selfish Earnestness? Are ye not Strangers to the receiving of that outward and inward Righteousness before express'd? Search your Bosoms by what has been said, and see if ye be not in the Gall of Bitterness. I know its hard for *old secure Professors* to begin again, and cast away their false Hopes; its hard, I confess; but yet its harder to be damn'd: Chuse you which you will!

And you *middle-ag'd People*, of thirty Years old and upwards, I ask you, in the Name of the great GOD, wherein do you exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees? Don't you know in your own Consciences, that many of you are unacquainted with Poverty of Spirit, and the new Birth?

And you, *my younger Brethren*, of fourteen Years and upwards; are not many of you in the same doleful Case? Poor Things, Does not this Text condemn you to Hell, if you continue thus?

I would not pass over the *little Children*, of six Years old and upwards. Altho' the haughty Pharisees should, in their great Wisdom, sneer at my Simplicity; You, dear *little ones*, are not many of you also Strangers to the new Birth? My blessed Master has said, *Suffer little Ones to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* You are not too young, dear little Creatures! to mourn over Sin, and to come to Christ.

How wretched is the Case of all the *Formalists* in this Assembly? Woo to you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, ye make clean the outside of the Cup and Platter, while the inside is left unclean: You are like whited

ted Sepulchres, which appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead Men's Bones, and all Rottenness: Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how shall ye escape the Damnation of Hell? Behold, the Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the Fire

All you *Publicans* and *Pharisees*, in this Assembly, apply to your own Consciences, the Threat'ning of our Lord in this Text, *Ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of GOD.* No! let the Devil, and your own false Hearts, say what they will to flatter you; the Mouth of Truth says, That ye shall, in *no Case*, enter into the Kingdom of GOD. The Door of Heaven is shut against you, and seeing there is no *Purgatory*, where must ye go, why into the Kingdom of Death, of Darkness, of the Devil, of Damnation! There (if ye die *as ye are*) ye will suffer the Loss of the blessed God, and all the Sweets of Heaven. Now your Minds are blinded, your Consciences stupify'd, your Hearts harden'd, so that you don't perceive your Loss, and ye are amus'd with worldly Projects, and Entertainments: But by and by, your Minds will be enlighten'd to take a View of your dismal dismal Loss! Your secure Consciences will be alarm'd, totting you with eternal Reflections, which ye can as little endure as avoid. Your cursed Hope, which makes you easy now, will then give Place to eternal Dispair! GOD will read your Confidence out of your Tabernacle, and bring you before the King of Terrors! You will be strip'd naked of all your temporal Comforts, and not have so much as one Drop of Water to cool your flaming Tongues! The Springs of your now frozen Passion, will then be open'd, and run with incessant, but useless Streams, *There shall be Weeping and gnashing of Teeth!* saith our dear Lord. Never did any so mourn over the untimely Bereavement of a dear Relative, as you will over your lost and damned Souls! but in vain! Now if you wou'd flow in Tears, it might be of saving Service: But then it will be too late, too late! O when you think in the gloomy Vault, of the Calls, Warnings and Entreaties you

you have had from GOD and Man, and of your wilful Murder and Madness, in rejecting of them, how will it rend your cursed Souls, with the acutest Agonies, when you reflect how you have sold your Souls to the Devil, for a Thing of Nought, and have taken such Pains to compass your own Ruin? You will be ready to tear your own Hearts out with Indignation, and wish you had no Being!

Think, *my Friends*, How dreadful it will be to fall into the Hands of the living GOD! and to be swallow'd up in the burning Main of his flaming Jealousy! to have your naked Souls eternally lash'd with the Whip of his infenc'd Indignation!

O how shocking is it, to be expos'd to intolerable, continual, inexpressible, unconceivable, unavoidable, and eternal Pains!

*Ye secure Sinners*, think on these Things, 'till you be awaken'd, for ye must be awaken'd, or damn'd!

You that are but *slightly convinc'd*, O think on these Things, in order to get your Convictions fastned and rivited. I am jealous over you, *my dear Brethren*, with a godly Jealousy, lest your Convictions die away of their own Accord, or be slightly heal'd. O don't rest, for Christ's Sake, till Jesus be discover'd and apply'd to your Souls! Think often upon the Uncertainty of your Lives, the Uncertainty of the Spirit's Strivings, and the dreadful Consequences of expiring Convictions, before Conversion. When the Blossoms are nipp'd, what Expectation is there of Fruit? Don't rush to the Lord's Table, till ye receive that Jesus, who is there represented.

One Word I must say to those that are *deeply convinc'd* of their Want of Righteousness. Dear Creatures! There is a *Balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there*; the Lord JESUS has come to *seek and save* those that are lost. He has receiv'd a Commission from his Father, to bind up the broken hearted, and to comfort the Mourners: He invites you that labour and are heavy laden to come to him, and he says he will give them Rest: He is able to *save to the uttermost*, all that come to the Father by him, and he that cometh, he says, he will in no wise cast them off.

off. Don't be discourag'd upon the Account of any Opposition that may be made against you, or Contempt that may be cast upon you, in your Way to CHRIST, either by *Pharisees* or *Publicans*. Some are so perverse that they will neither enter into the Kingdom themselves, nor suffer those that are entring to enter: Methinks they might be contented with their own Damnation. *Dear Brethren, and Sisters!* Let not those Things dismay you, it is an Honour to be dishonour'd by such People: What are the Trifles that we can suffer here, in Comparison of the Weight of Glory before us? Go on therefore, in the Name of GOD, seeking JESUS, sorrowing 'till ye find him. *Which, may GOD grant, for CHRIST's sake.*

A M E N.

