

backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways : and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.' Mark, every man shall be satisfied one way or other. The apostate, such as was forward and made show of religion, and yet to provide for himself in an unrighteous way, because he would not trust God to make provision for himself and family, he would

depart from righteousness. Well, saith the Holy Ghost, they shall be satisfied. God will fill them by giving them their own way ; but a good man is satisfied from himself. Such as are good and righteous, and walk according to the rule of righteousness, peace be to them. They are now blessed, and they shall certainly be satisfied.'

## SERMON XV.

OR,

### TIMES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS PROMISED TO THE CHURCH.

*'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.'*—MAT. v. 6.

THERE is a great blessedness in this hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that I have shewed in many particulars. When the time comes that God shall appear to all the world righteous in his ways, it will be a blessed time indeed. The saints that know anything of it, cannot but hunger and thirst for that time. God's omniscience, his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, faithfulness, will then be glorified in another way than now they are. Then all the groans and sighs and complaints of the saints shall be heard by God, and it shall appear that they are heard ; then all their appeals unto God shall be examined and judged ; all their endeavours and services shall be rewarded ; all their sufferings shall be recompensed. And the end why God hath suffered so much unrighteousness in the world for so long a time shall be declared ; their enemies shall be subdued and ashamed ; all their innocency shall be cleared, all secrets shall be disclosed ; the base ends of men shall be discovered, mistakes shall be rectified, the vanity of the plots and designs and ways of the wisdom of the flesh shall be manifested ; and this will be a blessed time. Oh when will that time come, say the saints, that this will be, that there shall be this righteousness ?

And the rather I took it to be the meaning here, because I find so many promises in the Scripture of an estate of the church that shall be wherein righteousness shall prevail, as in 2 Pet. iii. 13, 'New heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness.' Now that it is meant of a state of the church it is plain by comparing it with Isa. lxxv. 17. In Isa. xi. 4, there is a promise that is suitable to this in the

connexion of it with that that went before, 'Blessed are the meek ;' and then, 'blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Mark now, 'But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.' And then, ver. 5, 'And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. This is the promise of Christ, and many such promises in Isaiah, for there is no prophet more full of the prophecy of the state of the church, what yet it shall be, as Isaiah : chap. xxxii. 16, 17, 'Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.' When was this ever yet fulfilled ? There is such a time that the saints do long for, and in Isa. xxxiii. 5, 'The Lord is exalted ; for he dwelleth on high : he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.' There is a time of filling Zion with judgment and righteousness ; and in Isa. lx. you have many expressions, one of which we spake to the last time : 'I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.' And it follows, 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise,' when God shall make their exactors to be righteousness to them ; and in ver. 21, 'They people also shall be all righteous : they shall inherit the land for ever.' Here is that suitable to the former promise, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the

land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.' Thus these promises shew there is a time for glorious righteousness. So in Mal. iv. 2, 'To them that fear the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' It is the latter end of the Old Testament, it is true; he doth heal spiritually, and he doth heal outwardly too with righteousness. We might even spend this hour to shew the many promises of the righteousness that God will have among his people one day, and those that are godly, that do understand the secrets of God; for in Prov. iii. 32, 'His secret is with the righteous.' They understand the secrets of God, and they do believe that there is such a time coming wherein righteousness shall prevail, and this is that that upholds them from being overcome with those temptations that hypocrites are drawn aside withal: they keep on in their way uprightly, waiting for the time of this righteousness; and blessed are they upon divers grounds, as hath been shewn. But we shall pass by what was spoken, or might further be said concerning that interpretation. But if God appear in his righteousness, who can stand? For are not the best conscious to themselves of much unrighteousness? Can they hunger and thirst after the time when the righteousness of God shall appear to the full? Yes, they can; and this is the privilege of the saints, the more just and righteous God is that they have to deal with, the more do they long, hunger, and thirst for the appearing of that God. This is a great privilege; but how can that be? There is another righteousness that enables them to stand before the infinite righteousness of God, and that is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and to the end that when the Lord shall appear in the full glory of his righteousness to the world, they may stand before him with joy, therefore 'they hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ,' after the righteousness of Christ the mediator between God and them, the righteousness of justification; for without that even our God with whom we have to deal is a consuming fire. So we are now coming to speak of that text in the second interpretation, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ.' Surely the spirit of Paul was very blessed in this. His heart was much upon this righteousness that we are speaking of; for in Phil. iii. 8, 9, he accounts all dung and dross—yea, dog's meat. For what? That he might not be found in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness which is of faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. All things are accounted dung and dross that he might appear in the righteousness which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness of God in him—that is, the righteousness of justification. Now for the handling of

this point there are these particulars to be observed; and in this method we shall speak to it:—

First, We shall open what this righteousness of Jesus Christ is which the saints do hunger and thirst after.

Secondly, We shall shew what their hunger and thirst is; the working of their hearts in their hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

Thirdly, What a desirable object this righteousness is; what there is in this righteousness that makes the saints so desire after it.

Fourthly, Those that do thus desire after it are blessed. They are blessed for the present.

Fifthly, That they certainly shall be filled with this righteousness. These are the five things for the explication of it.

For the first, What this righteousness is that now we are speaking of. It is the righteousness which is for justification; which I would describe thus:—

That perfect satisfaction to divine justice in whatsoever it requires, either in way of punishing for sin or obedience to the law, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, the mediator of the new covenant, as a common head representing all those whom the Father had given to him, and made over unto them that believe in him; this is the righteousness that Christ pronounces them blessed that hunger and thirst after. The other righteousness had some loveliness in it; but you shall see this is to be a matter of greater moment and consequence than the other.

Now for this we are to know that sin having made a most dreadful breach between God and man, God was resolved to have his justice satisfied, or none of the children of men should ever be saved. If his justice were not satisfied, they should be all in the same lost condition that the angels were that sinned against him. Therefore, saith God, punishment must be inflicted for sin committed; and that law of mine it must be kept, or none shall be excepted; Now when God stood upon this, that he would not merely through mercy say thus, You have sinned against me, and I will pardon you, and there is an end. No, saith God; you have now sinned, and I am resolved my justice shall be honoured, either in your eternal perdition, or some other way wherein my justice shall have as much honour as if you were eternally damned. Man is now in such a condition fallen that he hath lost all righteousness, that he is not able to think a thought, to speak a word, to do an action that is righteous, acceptable to God. But, saith God, I am resolved upon this, that I will have my righteous law kept if ever you be saved. What a dreadful condition is man in now, knowing what God stands upon! Why, then, must not all men perish eternally? If that question had been asked in heaven, after God's revealing such a determination of his, surely all the

angels in heaven must have given in their answer. Then man must perish : we cannot see any way how it is possible for them to be saved, if God stands thus upon it. But now Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, the second person in Trinity, he comes in and shews a way how the justice, the infinite justice of God may be satisfied, the law kept, and wretched, sinful, corrupt man yet saved. The Lord Jesus Christ comes and tenders himself to be the head of a second covenant, saying, as it were, after this manner, Father, all mankind is fallen from thee in that first covenant that thou hast made with them, and they are all now shut up under sin and unrighteousness. But I am content to be the head of another covenant, for to be a mediator, to take their nature upon me ; and I will take such a way for their salvation as thy justice shall be no loser,—thou shalt have as much glory to thy justice as thou shouldst have if they were all damned ; and thy law shall have nothing to complain of, for it shall have full satisfaction. Upon this, God the Father and the Son did, as it were, agree in that way of the second covenant, that we call the covenant of grace ; and the Father makes his Son to be the head of this covenant,—to take man's nature upon him as a public person, representing all such as the Father gives to him, for he will not that all individually shall come to be saved, but those that the Father gave to him he should represent to him, and they should have the gospel in time preached to them. And this righteousness should be made known by the gospel, and by the Spirit of God they should come to be convinced of this righteousness, and by faith this should be made over to them, that the sufferings and obedience of Jesus Christ, which he tenders up to God the Father, should be made over unto believers, and they by faith able to lay hold upon this righteousness, and to tender it likewise to God the Father for satisfaction ; this is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thus do poor wretched sinners come to be made righteous in Christ ; their sins are transferred upon Christ, and Christ's righteousness transferred upon them ; according to that scripture, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' This is a most glorious righteousness, as we shall speak to by and by. Now those that shall be enlightened by the Holy Ghost to see into the reality, the certainty, the beauty, the necessity, the glory of this righteousness, and upon that their hearts shall be set with hungering and thirsting after the assurance of their part in it, after the glorious effects that shall come from it, blessed are those souls, for they shall be filled with this righteousness ; when they shall come to have all the good that is to be had by this righteousness, their souls shall say that they have enough. Well, though they have not yet the

full comfort, and the full assurance, or the glorious fruit of this righteousness, yet they are in a blessed condition even now while they are hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. This is the second interpretation of this text, which indeed though the other hath a meaning which concerns the glory of God much, yet this much more ; and by this at any time, when you hear out of the word the preaching of the righteousness of Christ, or justification by Christ, you may come to know what it means by this short description.

Now the second thing that is to be opened, it is the work of the soul in the hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

For the opening of that, we are to consider from whence this hunger and thirst arises. It rises from the clear apprehension and thorough conviction of these four things :—

First, The soul doth clearly apprehend and is thoroughly convinced that it hath need of a righteousness to enable it to stand before the holy and righteous God ; whereas men going on in the common way and course of the world, in the ways of unrighteousness, they little mind that they have to do with a righteous God, or, if they have to do with a righteous God, yet because they think that this God is merciful as well as righteous and just, therefore they do not apprehend any absolute necessity of having any righteousness to enable them to stand before this righteous God. You see it ordinary for people that have lived very ungodly all their days, when they apprehend death to be near, they apprehend themselves to be ready to appear before this righteous God, what thoughts have they but only thus : The Lord have mercy upon me ! I am a great sinner ! God be merciful to me, and I trust in God's mercy ! They look at nothing else when they are just upon their appearing before God. But now that soul that understands the ways of God concerning sinners, and bringing of them to salvation, such a soul comes to see not only that God is merciful, but comes to see an absolute necessity of some righteousness to enable it to stand before the righteous God, and that no unrighteous thing shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; and therefore if I go out of this world an unrighteous soul, all the mercy that is in heaven cannot save me. My conscience tells me that I have been unrighteous in my way, the course of my life hath been unrighteous and ungodly ; well, now I am going to appear before the great and infinite righteous God, and it may be before the morning, must my soul stand before that righteous God to receive the sentence of my eternal doom from him. Now how shall I stand before this righteous God ? certainly I must have righteousness, or I cannot stand before him. That is the first thing that raises this hunger and thirst.

Secondly, The soul comes to be convinced of the insufficiency and imperfection of its own righteousness. Must I stand before this righteous God, and must I have a righteousness to enable me to stand before him? then let me look to my heart, and ways, and life, what righteousness have I? It may be some that have not lived so wickedly as others have done: Why, if I be to stand before the righteous God, I hope I may, for I have not been so as others have been—so wicked and ungodly; I have dealt righteously between man and man, my life hath been fair; I have been no whoremaster, nor drunkard, nor no swearer nor blasphemers; and upon this they think they may stand before this righteous God. Oh these people are infinitely mistaken! and as yet the Spirit of God hath not been at work upon them, to shew how things are between God and their souls. Certainly they know not God nor themselves that think so. But when the Lord works graciously by his Spirit in the soul, it comes to look into the life and heart, and there sees all its righteousness is but as a menstruous cloth. It may be it is not raised higher than a mere moral, civil righteousness, and then I have no true righteousness at all. But suppose my heart were sanctified, and my life sincere, holy, yet this righteousness being imperfect, it will never make me able to appear before this righteous God; but that infinite burning justice that I must stand before, it will come as a mighty flame and consume me all for this. If I do set this between me and that infinite righteous God, it will be but as the putting of a piece of brown paper before a man to deliver him from a mighty flame of fire that is coming out against him. That is the second thing.

Thirdly, The soul comes to see that there is another righteousness beyond its own; that notwithstanding whatsoever righteousness is in me I see imperfect and unable to do what my soul now hath need of. Although my righteousness that I had with men may make me to be able to stand before men, so that they are not able to plead anything against me; but it is God that I have to do with, therefore there must be another righteousness. Now this is revealed in the angel. The gospel tells me that the Son of God was Surely sin, and it is told of him that there is in His heart made; and here made unto believers wise we are speak righteousness, which is of God by Jesus. All things are accounted dung and dross that he faintly appear in the righteousness which is by faith in Christ, to the righteousness of God in him—that is, the righteousness of justification. Now for the handling of

of it, that it is so, and not only so, but the fulness of that righteousness, so that the soul sees it sufficient to satisfy God for whatsoever sin I have been guilty of; though my sins have been very great, yet here is righteousness enough to satisfy an infinite justice.

Fourthly, The soul likewise must be enlightened in the way of the gospel's making over this righteousness to the creature. It is true Jesus Christ is come as the great mediator to work righteousness for sinners; but now how shall this be made over to my soul, to be made mine, that it should be as my righteousness, that I should stand clothed with that righteousness before the Father? Therefore that is the last thing that the Lord discovers to the soul in the way of the gospel, that Christ is tendered to every wretched sinner freely with all his righteousness, and that upon their believing, or their casting their souls upon this righteousness, willing to venture their souls and eternal estates upon it, and wholly casting their souls here, that this shall be made over to them, made as their own righteousness before the Lord. When the soul comes to see this, that this is the tenor of the gospel, that Christ with his righteousness is freely offered, and it is not what the sinner hath been, either little or great, or what the condition of the sinner hath been: but here is righteousness enough to swallow up all unrighteousness whatsoever; that all thine unrighteousness in comparison of this it is but as a drop to the infinite ocean, that can soon be swallowed up. Upon this the soul doth, as it were, launch forth into this infinite ocean of righteousness, and God the Father doth by an act of his make it over to the soul, imputing the righteousness of Jesus Christ as really to this soul as ever the sin of Adam was imputed to the sons of Adam. Now, here you see the rise of this hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, now upon such a work of God as this is.

Then mark how the soul puts forth itself in the hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

In the first place, It doth feel it, it gets an assurance of it, it feels a mighty pain for the want of it; as you know in hunger and thirst there is a very great pain in the body till nature be supplied. There are not very many of you that have understood what the pain of hunger and thirst means; yet it may be there are some here that may understand it, and some more than others, but few of you as some have done in former times. The pain of hunger and thirst it is one of the greatest pains that our bodies are capable of here; and a man that were ready to starve would rather venture, though it were through the fire, to get meat, than he would not have it. Now, that soul that understands with what a God it hath to deal, and the infinite necessity of this kind

of righteousness to appear before this God, if it hath not the assurance of it, it cannot but be faint; it is that that lies even throbbing at the heart, and till this comes the soul is in great extremity, in most lamentable extremity, if it doth come to understand these things, and yet hath not got assurance of it.

Secondly, All other things whatsoever that you can tender unto a man that wants bread or drink, that is ready to perish for want of those things, tender what you will they are all nothing to him—he regards them as nothing, there is no savour in anything; come and bring him bags of gold or silver, it is bread that he must have; come and bring him brave suits of satin and velvet, what is that if he be ready to perish for want of bread? If you would give him all the possessions in all the world, if you give him not bread, if you do not satisfy his hunger, they are nothing to him. What is my birthright, saith profane Esau, whenas I am ready to die for hunger? and so it is with the soul that comes to understand this righteousness. It is true, God hath given me these and these outward comforts in the world, but what is all this to righteousness, to my soul's standing righteous before the great God? I must stand before him for the sentence of my eternal estate, and how long it will be before I shall be brought to him I know not; and therefore it is righteousness that I stand in need of, and such righteousness as shall be accepted of by the infinite, righteous God.

Thirdly, As all things are nothing to him till this comes, so in hunger and thirst there is a mighty strong desire, such a strong desire as the body is ready to faint if the desire be not satisfied, even to faint and die. So it is with the soul here; if I have not this righteousness I die, I faint and die—yea, I die eternally; I see myself ready to perish eternally if I have not this righteousness; there is a fainting in the spirit until this righteousness comes in.

Fourthly, There are strong endeavours after it; that must needs be in hunger and thirst. We use to say that hunger will break through stone walls; there is no work accounted difficult to a man to get bread. If he be ready to starve, he will not stay at home because it is ill weather, if there be bread to be had. Do we not hear, saith Jacob, that there is corn in Egypt? So the soul that comes to understand the meaning of this righteousness, and the need of it, doth not plead or pretend the difficulty of God's ways; such and such things are hard; for me to leave such and such sinful lusts and distempers of my heart, it is hard, very hard; and for me to turn a new life, and set upon new ways, oh it is hard, very hard to me; there is no such pleading of a soul that is in a hungering and thirsting way after this righteousness. Is it possible it may be had? This is

enough to my soul that there is any possibility for righteousness. If the Lord will require such and such things, whatsoever they be, why, to attend upon him in the use of ordinances never so long here, I am content; the soul puts forth its power, endeavours, mightily crying to God, and studying what it should do to know the way of the gospel, more than ever it did.

Fifthly, One that hungers and thirsts, his desires are resolute; there is power, and endeavours, and they are resolute; he doth not stand upon conditions, to indent this or that way, but let the endeavours be what they will be, and indeed this is the work of grace in the heart where a hypocrite fails. When the soul comes to resign itself up to God, it doth give up itself to God; it subscribes to a blank as it were—that is, let God set down what he will, here I am willing to yield up myself, as Paul in his conversion with trembling and astonishment said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' here I am content to yield up myself to do whatsoever thou requirest. Not that this is a condition still; I only speak this in a way of metaphor to shew the submission of the soul to God, for indeed this is not a thing upon which God will give faith; but this is the manner of the working of God upon the soul in bringing of it to this righteousness, when it is in this condition that Christ here speaks of, hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. It is true, God deals with a great deal more indulgence to some souls; but if you have had it sooner than others, do not you be wanton, and say, What need so much ado in hungering and thirsting, and the like? We do not impose this as a legal qualification, but we say this is the way that God doth work upon some, to keep them a great while before they come to know that they have part in this righteousness—to keep them hungering and thirsting after it, and so break their hearts.

Sixthly, Which is very observable, The soul is un-satisfied in this hunger and thirst till this righteousness doth come. A child that doth but play with his meat, or whose belly is full, may be crying after something that he sees, but you may put off a child with a rattle when his belly is full: but if he be thoroughly a-hungry, then offer him what rattles you will, yet he must have his hunger satisfied if he be hungry indeed: and so it is with the soul. Many a man or woman hath some beginnings in the work of God upon them, and they begin to think they have need of some righteousness; their lives have been wicked; and how shall I be able to appear before God, whose life hath been so wicked? And I know not how soon I may appear, and therefore I had need look to make up my peace with God. Now upon this there are some desires, and such a one will fall to prayer, and to attend upon the word for a while; but now

mark it, within a while, being wearied and tired, because he comes not off fully to God, and hath not this righteousness applied by faith, something or other doth satisfy this soul, and draws the heart away from those good beginnings. It may be, when they are hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, the devil persuades them that for them to live somewhat better than formerly, that that is righteousness enough; well, that they will do, and upon that they come to be satisfied, and so they will be forward in many public good works. This is good; but if this satisfies the soul, I say the soul is undone, undone eternally, if it be satisfied with this. Now the soul that God works savingly upon, when God puts it to hunger and thirst thus, nothing in the world shall satisfy it; though the world should come in never so fully, yet that shall not satisfy him when the soul is working after Christ to get pardon and mercy in him. The soul follows God in the use of all means and all ordinances; but now it doth not look upon these as the righteousness that it must tender up to God, but only as means to reveal righteousness, and as those ordinances that God hath appointed, through which he will convey the work of his Spirit into the soul, to bring the soul to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and so to rest here; and for want of the right knowledge of this it is that many thousands do miscarry in their profession. In the time of their youth they were vain and loose, and after they came to be men and women of discretion, they live better than before, and they think this is conversion. Now this is miscarriage, to mistake those things that are the means of revealing righteousness, or of conveying the work of the Spirit; they mistake it, and think it is the righteousness itself that they should present to God. Oh no; it is just here for all the world as it was with Abraham. God makes a promise to Abraham, that he should have a seed in whom all the nations of the world should be blessed. Now Abraham stayed a great while after the promise was made, and he began to grow very ancient, and his wife past bearing, after the manner of women, and no child comes. Why, now upon this Abraham's faith begins somewhat to stagger and fail, and therefore Abraham goes in to his handmaid Hagar. Sarah's faith: she begins first to stagger, and she would give to Abraham Hagar, that he might bring forth children from Hagar. Why, Abraham doth it. Ay, but he should have stayed till the time of God's fulfilling his promise had come; for though Abraham had a child of Hagar, yet that was not the promised seed, and the nations of the earth could never be blessed by that child; but afterwards comes the child which he had by Sarah, and that was the promised seed. I make use of this because I find the Holy Ghost doth make use of it. The Holy Ghost compares the law to Hagar, and the gospel to Sarah,

and the fruit that came by the law bred into bondage, saith he; but that that comes by the gospel is the blessed seed indeed. It is thus with a soul that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and would fain come to have all made even between God and itself. The soul is using of means, praying, and attending upon the word, and saith, Oh that God would reveal to me his mercy in Christ, and that his justice it satisfied for me in Christ, oh how happy should I be! But now, when the soul hath been a long time seeking after assurance of mercy this way, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and doth not find a real work upon it, the soul is weary; and now it goes, as it were, in to Hagar—goes and seeks for this blessedness by some works of the law, that is, by reforming its life, and being otherwise than it was, and so resting in an outward, civil, or moral righteousness. This is to be so weary of waiting, as to go from this blessed seed, from that righteousness that should make thy soul blessed for ever, to go in to a Hagar, in to the works of the law, and there to rest upon the works of the law, and think that they will make thee righteous. Take heed of this mistake, it is a dangerous rock. Be forewarned all you that are seeking after the righteousness of Jesus Christ; look to yourselves here, be unsatisfied therefore in your hungering and desires; let nothing quiet your souls but the application of the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith, so as you may be able, by the hand of faith, to present this infinite righteousness of the Son of God unto the Father for your souls. That is that that only can make you stand with comfort before the great God. Luther had a notable expression this way about the difference of righteousness. Saith he, Righteousness between man and man in a political way, it is a very sweet thing, for by that the peace of kingdoms doth stand; but if therefore, because thou art a good citizen, a chaste husband, or a just merchant, dealing justly in your merchandise—if because of these thou wouldst be just before God, thou dost of the most sweet thing make an abomination that God cannot bear. That is Luther's expression concerning this, and it is a very excellent one. Take heed of that, you that are good citizens, and in the place where you live good townsmen, or good parishioners, and none of your neighbours can find any fault with you. It is true there is none that have the righteousness of Christ but attain to this: a man may attain to this, and yet miss of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If upon this you shall satisfy your souls, if you shall from this sweet thing think to be just before God, you do make of this sweet thing an abomination that the Spirit of God will not bear. Thus you see the work of the soul in hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. Now the main thing that yet remains, and that is, to

set before you the loveliness of this righteousness—that is, what a desirable object this is the soul hungers and thirsts after. Now that we hunger and thirst after, we see much in that thing which makes us to desire it. In the opening what this righteousness was, and the work of God in causing this hunger and thirst after this righteousness, you may see cause enough why the soul should be earnest after it; but yet there be many things more to set before you, the

beauty and excellency of this righteousness, so as if it be possible to draw hungering and thirsting in all your souls after it. This is certain, there is never a one of you but have infinite need of it. Those that never knew it, if they but knew it, their hearts would be taken off from other things and set upon this. And you that have some knowledge of it, yet if you knew it more, your hunger and thirst would be increased more abundantly.

## SERMON XVI.

OR,

### THE DESIRABLENESS OF THE OBJECT HUNGERED AFTER.

*'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'*—MAT. v. 6.

I COME now to the third thing, which is the desirableness of this object. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Thus described, it is a most desirable object, and those that know it, they cannot but hunger and thirst after it, to have their share in it. For,

First, By this righteousness all despairing temptations and thoughts for want of any righteousness in ourselves are taken away. Whatsoever despairing temptations or thoughts may be in the mind for want of any righteousness in the creature, in one's self, these thoughts and temptations are by this righteousness removed from the soul. You do not understand, many of you, what strong despairing thoughts doth possess many souls when they come to apprehend how they have to deal with an infinite great God, and then come to see what the unrighteousness of their hearts and the unrighteousness of their lives have been; you know not what throbs there are in their spirits, what warring in their thoughts; they would give ten thousand thousand worlds that they might be delivered from the anguish and trouble of those sinking, despairing thoughts and temptations that their souls are afflicted withal; but there is nothing in the world can do it but the sight and application of this righteousness of Jesus Christ, as it hath been before described. Therefore it is very desirable.

Secondly, By this righteousness the soul comes to see a way for making up all the wrong that ever was done to God by his sin. I have wronged God by my

sin, and how this can be made up it were impossible for angels and men to think of a way; but the revealing of this righteousness of Christ, made over to the soul by faith, shews a way how all the wrong that ever my sin hath done to God may be quite made up. And is not this desirable? Will not this draw the heart? Thou that art any way sensible of the wrong that thy sin hath done to God, wouldst not thou give, if thou hadst, ten thousand worlds to make it up again? Here is a way that all may be made up again. Oh what a desirable object is this righteousness!

Thirdly, By this righteousness the law is fully satisfied, and all the claim of the law is answered, that the law hath nothing to charge now upon the soul, to lay any claim to the soul for any breach of it. This is a desirable thing. There is no desirableness at all in being freed from the law as a rule of life; that is no way desirable to a gracious heart. 'Blessed are they that love thy law,' (as the rule of life,) 'nothing shall offend them.' They would choose the law to themselves; therefore that is desirable. But the claim that the law lays to the soul, and the charge that the law brings against the soul for the breach of it, the soul desires to be delivered from this. This is a sore and dreadful evil, that I stand before the law of God, that hath infinite justice in it, that hath such and such a dreadful charge to charge upon me. Oh that I could be discharged from whatever the law hath to charge! Why, this righteousness will do it; it will deliver the soul from whatever