

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

the law hath to charge upon it. Therefore, in Rom. x. 4, it is said that 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' He is the end of the law; it hath its perfection in him. Thou mayest turn the demands of the law over to thy surety, and God will never come upon the principal in this case, but upon the surety. By having this righteousness thine, thou comest here to be able to give the law what it will claim, and to discharge it of whatever it hath to charge upon thee.

Fourthly, By this righteousness the hazard of miscarrying to all eternity is quite over. When the soul comes to apprehend this righteousness, it may see in the bowels of it, as it were, an absolute safety and blessed security. May this but be made over to my soul, though it is true that yet there will remain much unrighteousness in me, yet I know that that unrighteousness that will remain in me shall never hazard the eternal miscarrying of my soul, but that all the hazard of that is quite over. Is not this desirable? What would any troubled soul give to know the hazard of eternal miscarrying over, that doth but understand what eternity means, and apprehends any hazard of miscarrying in it! There is nothing can satisfy the soul but this. If so be that I think to satisfy my soul in the matter of my eternal estate, and in the deliverance from the hazard of miscarrying by what I do, to think I will mend my life and do better,—(though every one should do so),—yet still the fears will return upon the soul again—there will be an uncertainty whether I shall miscarry for ever or no. It may be I shall, it may be I shall not. I hope God will accept of me; but whether he will or no I cannot tell. But now, when the soul comes to understand such an infinite and a glorious righteousness to be made over to it in the way of the gospel, surely now the soul is able to bless itself in Jesus Christ, and to say, 'My soul, return unto thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' Now, though thou beest unrighteous in thyself, yet there is that righteousness as doth free thee from any such danger of miscarrying. But thou art certainly safe; this will certainly bring thee to eternal life, 'for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' It is impossible for a soul that God the Father shall look upon in the righteousness of his Son—a soul so righteous as a believer is through the righteousness of Christ—to miscarry to eternity, that even God should come to hate or to let out his revenging wrath upon such a soul; it is impossible, it can never be.

Fifthly, It is worth the hungering and thirsting after; for through this righteousness we come to have access to the throne of grace, and to be able to stand with boldness before the throne of grace, before God, yea, before God's infinite holiness and

justice—not only before God's mercy, but before the very throne of justice, as well as the throne of grace. Though I have to deal with an infinite holy and an infinite just God, yet here is a way to make me stand with boldness, with a holy boldness, before this infinite holiness and infinite justice of God: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.' By him we come to have access even to the tribunal of God's justice; so that there needs no appeal now from the justice-seat of God to his mercy-seat. It is mercy that God will have such a way, that God will bring us to it, that God will accept of us in it. It is that that makes us, through him, stand before his justice-seat; our pardon is sealed in the court of justice.

Sixthly, This righteousness is a glorious robe. When Jesus Christ shall appear, and God the Father, and the holy angels, this shall be the glorious robe that shall cover the souls of the saints, of believers, in the presence of God and Christ and the holy angels at the great day; they shall be clothed with this, and this is the robe that is prepared by Jesus Christ to cover, to adorn, and beautify the saints at the day of judgment in their appearing before God. Yea hear much of the dreadful day of judgment; sometimes the shrill sound of the trumpet, and all appearing before the Lord to hear the sentence of your eternal doom, and it may be some terror may strike into some of your hearts; but this robe of righteousness takes away all the terror of that day. The glorious condition of the saints in being clothed with this robe before the Lord, now those to whom this righteousness comes to be revealed, they see what the use of this righteousness will be at that day. And that is the sixth thing wherein it appears so desirable.

Seventhly, There must certainly be a most glorious reward of this righteousness; and this raises the condition of the saints above that of Adam in paradise—yea, in some respect, above the angels themselves. If Adam had stood in paradise there had been a righteousness suitable to such a creature, and the angels have a righteousness suitable to their natures; but here is the righteousness of the Son of God, the righteousness of God-man, and this is of a higher nature than the righteousness of Adam was, or could be, of a higher nature than the righteousness of the angels themselves in heaven; and now for this to be made over to the soul as its own righteousness, there must needs be an expectation of a glorious reward of this righteousness. If Adam had continued righteous he should have lived; but it appears not that he should have lived but on'y in paradise, in this world; but now this righteousness purchases

a higher degree of glory than if ever Adam had stood. Glorious must needs the reward of this be: and as the righteousness itself is made over to the soul, so all that this righteousness doth deserve, all the fruits of the good pleasure of God the Father for this righteousness that his Son doth tender to him, shall be made over to the soul too, and is made over; the soul hath present right unto it. When a poor creature shall come to understand such a righteousness that is beyond Adam's in innocency, that is beyond angels', the righteousness of the Son of God, to be made over to it; and all the good that this righteousness doth deserve, all the fruits of the good pleasure of the Father for this righteousness of his Son, that is all mine too; oh how desirable is this when apprehended really by faith!

Eighthly, This righteousness is a perfect righteousness. There is no sinner whatsoever, but at the first instant wherein it becomes a believer, and hath this righteousness made over to it, it comes in the point of justification to be equal with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with David, the patriarchs, prophets, angels, martyrs, with the most eminent saints. There is a great deal of difference between thee and those glorious prophets and saints that we read of, and martyrs, and many eminent Christians; a great deal of difference when thou lookest upon that blind mind of thine, that dull spirit of thine, that dead heart of thine, those many strong lusts that are in thee; and upon this thy heart is dejected, it may be. But though the difference be great in respect of sanctification, yet in respect of the righteousness of justification thou art equal with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—thou art equal with any of the prophets, or apostles, or martyrs. A perfect righteousness, that is made over to thee, and therefore it is a most desirable object; is not that desirable and worth the hungering and thirsting after for one that hath been a base, wicked, forlorn wretch in the whole course of his life—hath been nothing but a very lump of filth and abomination; for this man or woman at the very instant of the time of believing, to come to stand through a righteousness made over by Christ as perfect as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or of any saint that ever lived in the world? Thy justification is equal to theirs; certainly if you knew this, if you did believe it, one would think it impossible but that you should have a stomach to it, you should have hungering and thirsting desires after such a righteousness as this is.

Ninthly, This righteousness is that that Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father, is continually presenting before the Father, that he might be well pleased with those to whom it is applied. It is a special work of the intercession of Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father, to be presenting this

his righteousness before the Father for such and such souls that do belong unto him; and for thee, though vile here in this world, and full of sin, yet to have such a mediator at the right hand of God the Father continually presenting a perfect righteousness, to the end that it should be accepted for thee: as if he should say, Lord, though these and these poor creatures be full of unrighteousness, yet behold the perfect righteousness of mine; I perfectly obeyed, therefore accept of that righteousness of mine. Is not this an object desirable? doth not this call for strong desires, hungering and thirsting? and are they not blessed that have such a righteousness as this is to be clothed with?

Tenthly and lastly, The acceptance that comes from this righteousness it doth not ebb and flow according to the difference of the gracious workings of our hearts, but it abides constant for ever. It is true the Lord looks upon the different workings of our hearts, and in respect of weakness of sanctification, or further degrees, there may be a complacency in God more or less—I mean in the manifestations for what is God's complacency but some way or other the letting out of himself towards his creature; and the Lord is well pleased with the righteousness of sanctification too, as we shall speak to afterwards, as well as in this. But now though there may be a different letting out of God, and in some respect we may say the very complacency of God's heart may be towards his servants in a different way, according to the difference of their graces here; but in respect of their acceptance of this righteousness, it is always the same. There is always the same acceptance of this righteousness, and no ebbings and flowings in the acceptance of this righteousness for any believer. Oh, how blessed is this righteousness of Jesus Christ, and what a desirable object is it! Thus now you have had the third thing opened—what the workings of the heart are in hungering and thirsting after it, and what a desirable object this righteousness is.

The fourth thing is the blessedness, which is to be spoken unto: Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after this. Blessed are they.

First, because they come to see the great mystery of godliness, in the way of God's bringing man unto himself, and this is a blessed thing. It is a blessed thing for the eyes of the understanding to be so enlightened, as to be able to see the great mystery of God in the way that he hath to bring man to himself. Most people in the world they think there is no other way of God to bring men to himself but this: Those that have been wicked sinners they must mourn, and be sorry that they have done so, and sin no more, and there is an end; but those that do hunger and thirst after this righteous-

ness, they are enlightened by another manner of light from heaven. The beams of divine light hath shined into them, whereby they come to understand the deep counsels of God concerning his way in bringing man to himself, and blessed are those that have their eyes thus opened: blessed are your eyes, because you see these things. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst because of the enlightening that they have.

Secondly, Blessed are they for the present, for their hearts are taken with that which hath the greatest weight in it. There is nothing that ever concerned God himself, or that ever concerned man, or any creature, that had greater weight in it than this that I am speaking of; nothing of God's works, nothing, that is, *ab extra*, (for I speak of that,) nothing that ever concerned God in his working towards the creature, or in glory that he receives from the creature. There was never anything of such high concernment towards any creature as this is, the righteousness of the Son of God applied by faith. Now blessed are they who have their hearts taken with this righteousness. For the most of you, what are your hearts taken withal? they are taken with meat and drink, to live merrily, to be in company, and to play, and pour down wine, and to satisfy your lusts. Your hearts are taken with this; here is no blessedness in this. But now for to have the heart of a man that had nothing but vanity and folly in it before, to be taken with a matter of such infinite weight and consequence as this righteousness is, blessed is that heart.

Thirdly, Blessed are they, for now is the time when this righteousness of Christ is offered unto sinners; and blessed are they that by the work of God are brought into the way that God brings those into that he intends to give the righteousness of his Son unto. In the time that he is offering of the righteousness of his Son to sinners, if so be that thou hadst but stayed a while, and God had but cut the thread of thy life off before thou hadst seen the excellency of this righteousness of Christ, and before thou hadst had strong desires after it, thou couldst not have been blest; but blessed art thou that in this time of thy life, that is, the time that God offers this righteousness of his Son to sinners, that now thou seest thy need of it, and that thy heart works after it, and that thou art now in the way that God brings those into that he doth intend to bestow this righteousness of his Son upon; for though it may be yet thou dost not thoroughly know that this is made over to thee, yet thou art blessed in this, because thou art in the way that God doth use to bring those into that he hath a purpose to bless for ever in this his Son's righteousness. Thou wert not long since in a way of folly and vanity, minding

nothing less than this, minding only those things that would have undone thee for ever, and doth God now bring thee into the way that he uses to bring those into that he hath a purpose to save? blessed art thou that thou art come so far.

Fourthly, Blessed art thou that hungerest and thirstest thus after this righteousness, for it is a good evidence that the soul hath some seed of faith wrought in it already, that it makes so much after Jesus Christ. Indeed thou hast not an assurance, thou art not able to say yet, that Christ's righteousness is mine; but yet thou hast this blessedness, that there is some good evidence to thee, in these hungerings and thirstings of thine, that there is some seed of faith sown in thy heart already, for thou wouldst not otherwise cling so to Christ. Those makings of thy soul after Christ, that nothing in the world can take off thy soul from him, but still thou lingerest after him, and with mighty workings of spirit dost desire him; surely he is there already, that makes thy soul so much to work after him.

Fifthly, but especially, 'Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled;' that is thus,—

First, All fears, all misgiving thoughts shall one day be removed. Thou hast some hopes that do encourage thee, but many doubts and fears mixed, but thou shalt be satisfied in respect of them.

Secondly, All accusations of Satan shall be answered. Satan will be clamouring, but this righteousness shall appear in that beauty and glory that shall stop Satan's mouth.

Thirdly, Thou shalt be filled—that is, thou shalt have the good of this righteousness, as if thou' hadst satisfied and obeyed thyself. Consider of this, this will fill indeed, thou shalt have the fruit and the benefit of this righteousness as if thou thyself hadst satisfied the law, and hadst obeyed thyself. If it were possible for a creature to satisfy God's justice and to discharge the law, there would be expecting very great good to come of it. Thou shalt have as much as if thou thyself hadst borne the punishment of what thy sin had deserved; yea, there shall be greater benefit come by what Christ hath satisfied and done than if thou hadst satisfied and done it thyself. If this had been the way of God, that so many as I intend to save, they shall lie ten thousand thousand years in flames to satisfy for their sin, and they shall perfectly obey my law, and so I will be reconciled to them: now thou wouldst think it a blessed thing that thou hadst gone through this work; but know, if thou hadst gone through it, and so God reconciled, thou couldst not expect such love from God, such acceptance with God after this as now thou mayest expect upon the satisfaction that

Christ hath made by his perfect righteousness. And therefore thou shalt be filled, for thou shalt have more than if thou hadst done it thyself.

Fourthly, Thou shalt hereafter know that God, in sending his Son to work such a righteousness as this is, he had an intention at thee in particular. When those eternal counsels of his will were that his Son should come into the world and work this glorious righteousness, the Lord had an intention toward thee, and said, Now I will send my Son to work this glorious and eternal righteousness for the good of this soul, and for the good of the other soul; and will not this fill thee?

Fifthly, Christ shall bring thee one day before his Father shining bright in this righteousness. That was the desirableness of it that I spoke of, and now I make use of it only to shew how such as do hunger and thirst after it shall be filled.

Sixthly, Thou shalt eternally enjoy all the fruits of this righteousness; and certainly this will fill thee as full as ever thou canst hold, when thou shalt come to enjoy all the benefits and fruits that will be the consequents of such a righteousness as this is. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after this righteousness, for they shall be filled. Thus we have opened this second branch—viz., the hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By way of application;—

In the first place, The opening of what we have will presently rebuke those that never minded or regarded this righteousness that we are now speaking of, that never felt any want at all of it, and therefore never had any hungering and thirsting after it. I am afraid I speak this day but riddles to most people. I appeal to your consciences, as in the name of God. When hath God discovered the glory of this righteousness in the reality of it to your souls? when have your hearts been taken with it? And can any closet of thine, any room of thine, testify those mighty cries to God for thy part in this righteousness? when hath there been such stirrings in thy soul after this righteousness: Lord, I am undone, I perish for ever; better I had never been born, but that I had been a toad, a dog, than not to have this righteousness of thy Son: I appeal to you, when was there ever any such kind of working in your hearts? Certainly, if you be altogether unacquainted with these hungerings and thirstings after this, you are not one of those that Christ pronounces blessed; you have hungerings and thirstings after other things that can do you no good; here is an object to raise up the desires of a rational creature, here indeed is that that should whet your appetite.

In the second place, Let what hath been said quicken and sharpen your appetites after this right-

eousness, and make you say, O Lord, thou hast this day set before me out of thy word a glorious mystery of religion, a righteousness of thy Son, that I either knew not, or little minded heretofore. Lord, I see my happiness to consist in that, I am for ever made if I have that; no great matter what becomes of me in the world, what becomes of my name or estate, if I have but that to clothe me I shall be made for ever. Oh that the heavens might hear of the cries of some souls this evening after this righteousness! or if so be that some of you, upon the hearing of what is said, may but think what is the meaning of this. However, let there be this fruit of what hath been spoken, as to get alone between God and yourselves, and cry to him to help you to understand what hath been said; for certainly it is one of the great mysteries of godliness. You are undone for ever if you do not. Therefore at least do thus much: cry to God that he would reveal this to you, and that will be some good way made for the stirring up your appetites after this righteousness. There are two or three things that may serve for the quickening of our appetites.

First, Consider that thou hast to deal with a righteous God. We have a notable scripture in Rom. x. 3, 'For thy, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' Mark, they are ignorant of God's righteousness, and so they go about to establish their own, and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; as if the Holy Ghost should say, Did they but know God's righteousness, they would never rest in their own righteousness, but, being ignorant of God's righteousness, they seek to establish their own righteousness. Oh that God would but this night cause one manifestation of his infinite righteousness to thy soul! this would cause thee to hunger and thirst after it indeed.

Secondly, Consider this, That the Lord is absolutely resolved that he will have his justice satisfied, that no soul shall ever be saved but he will have justice satisfied for that soul. This is God's determination; and the right understanding of this, and laying this for a certain conclusion, will mightily stir up the heart to seek after this righteousness: What! is God a God of infinite righteousness, and is this a certain truth, that no soul shall ever be saved but God will be honoured in his infinite justice as well as in his infinite mercy, what then shall become of the children of men? Were it not for this satisfaction they would all perish: and this is the reason why all the angels that sinned against God perish eternally. because there is no righteousness for them, there is no way of satisfaction for their sin, and so it would be with the children of men, for God is resolved to have

his justice honoured either upon them or upon a surety.

Thirdly, Know that it would go very ill with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, with the most glorious righteous person that ever lived in the world, were

it not for this; yea, we may boldly say. Woe to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets and apostles, were it not for this righteousness. And if these things be so, we had need have our hearts to be making after this righteousness here mentionel.

SERMON XVII.

OR,

COMFORTS TO THOSE THAT HUNGER.

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

FOR those that do find their hearts stirring after this righteousness, I have divers things to speak unto them by way of comfort and consolation. There are many poor souls, which, in the sense and burden of their sins, do hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so as there is nothing more that their thoughts and hearts are upon than the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that they may find it applied unto them by faith and made theirs, that they may have the comfort of it. To such I shall only speak these things briefly by way of comfort and encouragement:

First, If thy heart do in truth thirst after this righteousness of Christ that thou hearest preached of in the gospel, and thou dost in thy soul bless those that are able to make it theirs, know that thy thirst and Christ's thirst are the same. Christ thirsts after souls as much as souls thirst after him; and it is as great a satisfaction to Jesus Christ to see his righteousness applied unto souls for their discharge, as it can be any satisfaction to any soul to have the righteousness of Christ applied to it for its discharge. No soul can be more content in the assurance that Christ's righteousness belongs to it, than Christ doth to have his righteousness applied unto souls that do hunger and thirst after it, as hath been spoken of in the text; and for that I will give you only this scripture, Isa. liiii. a clear prophecy concerning Christ: ver. 10, it is said, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: for by his knowledge shall my righteous servant

justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.' Mark, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' What is the travail of the soul of Christ? Surely it is, that after he hath borne the burden of the wrath of the Father, that then there might be souls given to him, and discharged of their sin through his sufferings; this is the travail of Christ's soul. Is thy soul travailing after the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Then art as it were in a travail, and longest after that, as any woman in travail longs to be delivered. Know the soul of Christ is in as much travail for to discharge sinners, as sinners are to be discharged; and saith the text, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and he shall be satisfied.' There is nothing in the world can satisfy the soul of Christ as to have poor sinners come in to him, and to communicate his righteousness to them. 'For by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' That shall satisfy his soul; as if the Holy Ghost should say, After all that Jesus Christ hath suffered for souls, when any soul shall come in and believe in him, the Lord Jesus shall apply his righteousness to them and justify them; and this is that that Christ shall account worth all his sufferings—shall, as it were, say, I do not grudge, I do not repent for all that I have suffered, seeing I have the fruit of it, that here are poor sinful souls discharged of their sins by my sufferings. This is a great help and comfort to those that are hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Jesus Christ; you see what the hunger of Christ is, the travail of his soul, and what it is that will satisfy. Surely if this be an object so satisfactory to his soul to justify sinners, then thou mayest have encouragement in this, that when thy soul travails for this, and longest after this righteous-