

THE
DEFILEMENT OF SIN,
WHEREIN IT CONSISTS,
WITH
ITS PURIFICATION.

CHAP. IV.

Purification the first proper notion of sanctification. Institution of baptism confirming the same apprehension. A spiritual defilement and pollution in sin. The nature of that defilement, or wherein it doth consist. Depravations of nature and acts with respect unto God's holiness, how and why called filth and pollution. Twofold pravity and defilement of sin. Its aggravations. We cannot purge it of ourselves; nor could it be done by the law, nor by any ways invented by men for that end.

THESE things being premised, we proceed to the consideration of *sanctification* itself, in a farther explication of the description before given. And the first thing we ascribe unto the Spirit of God herein, which constitutes the first part of it, is the *purifying and cleansing of our natures from the pollution of sin*. Purification is the first proper notion of internal real sanctification. And although in order of time it do not precede the other acts and parts of this work, yet in order of nature it is first proposed and apprehended. To be unclean absolutely, and to be holy, are universally opposed. Not to be purged from sin, is an expression of an unholy person, as to be cleansed is of him that is holy. And this purification, or the effecting of this work of cleansing, is ascribed unto all the causes and means of sanctification. As, 1. unto the *Spirit*, who is the principal efficient of the whole. Not that sanctification consists wholly herein, but firstly and necessarily it is required thereunto; Prov. xxx. 12. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your

idols will I cleanse you.' That this sprinkling of clean water upon us, is the communication of the Spirit unto us for the end designed, I have before evinced. It hath also been declared wherefore he is called 'water,' or compared thereunto. And the next verse shews expressly that it is the Spirit of God which is intended. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' And that which he is thus in the first place promised for, is the cleansing of us from the pollution of sin, which, in order of nature, is proposed unto his enabling us to walk in God's statutes, or to yield holy obedience unto him.

To the same purpose, among many others, is that promise, Isa. iv. 4. 'When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem, by the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning.' Upon what ground the Spirit is compared to fire, and thence here called a 'Spirit of burning,' hath been also declared. In brief, fire and water were the means whereby all things were purified and cleansed typically in the law; Numb. xxxi. 23. And 'the Holy Spirit being the principal efficient cause of all spiritual cleansing is compared to them both, by which his work was signified, and called by their names; see Mal. iii. 2, 3. And judgment is frequently taken for holiness. 'The Spirit of judgment,' therefore, and the 'Spirit of burning,' is the Spirit of sanctification and purification. And he is here promised for the sanctification of the elect of God. And how shall he effect this work? He shall do it in the first place by 'washing away their filth and purging away their blood;' that is, all their spiritual sinful defilements.

2. The application of the *death and blood of Christ* unto our souls for our sanctification by the Holy Ghost, is said to be for our *cleansing and purging*; Eph. v. 26, 27. 'Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word;' he gave himself that he might redeem us from all iniquity, 'and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works;' Tit. ii. 14. 'For the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sins;' 1 John i. 7. 'For he loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;' Rev. i. 5. 'The blood of Jesus Christ purgeth our conscience from dead works to serve

the living God ;' Heb. ix. 14. Respect, I acknowledge, in some of these places, may be had unto the expiation of the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ as offered in sacrifice, for so ' in himself he purged our sins ;' Heb. i. 3. But as they all suppose a defilement in sin, so the most of them respect its cleansing by the application of the virtue of the blood of Christ unto our souls and consciences in our sanctification.

And, 3. moreover, where sanctification is enjoined us as our duty it is prescribed under this notion of *cleansing ourselves* from sin. ' Wash you, make you clean ;' Isa. i. 16. ' O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved ;' Jer. iv. 14. ' Having, therefore, these promises let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ;' 2 Cor. vii. 1. ' Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself ;' 1 John iii. 3. Psal. cxix. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 20. and the like expressions of this duty occur in other places.

4. Answerable unto these *promises* and *precepts*, and in the confirmation of them, we have the institution of the ordinance of *baptism*, the outward way and means of our initiation into the Lord Christ and the profession of the gospel, the great representation of the inward washing of regeneration ; Tit. iii. 5. Now this baptism, in the first place, expresseth the outward putting away the filth of the flesh, by external washing with material water ; 1 Pet. iii. 21. And that which answers hereunto can be in nothing but the inward purifying of our souls and consciences by the grace of the Spirit of God ; that is, saith our apostle, the ' putting off the body of the sins of the flesh ;' Col. ii. 11. which contains the whole defilement and corruption of sin. And this also was typed out unto us by all the legal purifications of old. Wherefore, we shall do three things in the explication of this first branch of our sanctification : 1. Shew that there is a spiritual pollution and defilement in sin. 2. Declare what it is, or wherein it doth consist : and, 3. Manifest how it is removed or washed away, and believers made holy thereby.

For the first, it needs not much to be insisted on. Our minds and their conceptions are in these things to be regulated by divine revelations and expressions. And in the whole representation made unto us in the Scripture, of the nature of sin, of our concernment therein, of the respect of God to-

wards us on the account thereof; of the way and means whereby we may be delivered from it; there is nothing so much inculcated, as its being filthy, abominable, full of defilement and pollution, which is set forth both in the plain expressions and various similitudes. On the account hereof is it said to be abhorred of God, the abominable thing which his soul hateth, which he cannot behold, which he cannot but hate and detest, and is compared to blood, wounds, sores, leprosy, scum, loathsome diseases. With respect hereunto is it so frequently declared that we must be washed, purged, purified, cleansed, as in the testimonies before cited; before we can be accepted with him, or be brought to the enjoyment of him. And the work of the Spirit of Christ in the application of his blood unto us for the taking away of sin, is compared to the effects of fire, water, soap, nitre, every thing that hath a purifying cleansing faculty in it. These things so frequently occur in the Scripture, and testimonies concerning them are so multiplied, that it is altogether needless to produce particular instances. This is evident and undeniable, that the Scripture, which regulates our conceptions about spiritual things, expressly declares all sin to be uncleanness, and every sinner to be defiled thereby, and all un-sanctified persons to be wholly unclean; and how far these expressions are metaphorical, or wherein the metaphor doth consist, must be afterward declared.

Besides, there is no notion of sin and holiness whereof believers have a more sensible spiritual experience. For although they may not, or do not, comprehend the metaphysical notion or nature of this pollution and defilement of sin, yet they are sensible of the effects it produceth in their minds and consciences. They find that in sin which is attended with shame and self-aborrency, and requires deep abasement of soul. They discern in it, or in themselves on the account of it, an unsuitableness unto the holiness of God, and an unfitness thereon for communion with him. Nothing do they more earnestly labour after in their prayers and supplications than a cleansing from it by the blood of Christ; nor are any promises more precious unto them than those which express their purification and purging from it. For these are they which, next unto their interest in the atonement made by the sacrifice of Christ, give them boldness in

their approaches unto God. So our apostle fully expresseth it; Heb. x. 19—22. ‘ Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.’ The foundation of all our confidence in our access unto God, the right and title we have to approach unto him is laid in the blood of Christ, the sacrifice he offered, the atonement he made, and the remission of sins which he obtained thereby, which effect of it he declares; ver. 19. ‘ Having boldness by the blood of Jesus.’ The way of our access is by pleading an interest in his death and suffering, whereby an admission and acceptance is consecrated for us, ver. 20. ‘ by a new and living way which he hath consecrated.’ And our encouragement to make use of this foundation, and to engage in this way, is taken from his discharge of the office of a high-priest in our behalf. And ‘ having a high-priest over the house of God let us draw near.’

But, besides all this, when we come to an actual address unto God, that we may make use of the boldness given us in the full assurance of faith, it is moreover required, that our ‘ hearts be sprinkled, and our bodies washed;’ that is, that our whole persons be purified from the defilement of sin, by the sanctification of the Spirit. And this experience of believers, we cannot only oppose unto, and plead against, the stupidity of such persons by whom these things are derided, but conclude from it, that those who are unacquainted with it, in some degree of sincerity, are wholly uninterested in that evangelical holiness which we inquire after. We need not, therefore, farther labour in the confirmation of that, concerning which the testimonies of Scripture are so multiplied, and whereof we have such undoubted experience.

Secondly, *The nature of this defilement of sin* must be inquired into. *Ans.* 1. By some it is reckoned unto guilt. For, whereas the inseparable effects of guilt are shame and fear, whereby it immediately evidenced itself in our first parents, and shame, in particular, is from this filth of sin, it

may be esteemed an adjunct thereof. Hence sin was said to be purged by sacrifices, when its guilt was expiated: and Christ is said to ‘purge our sins by himself;’ that is, when he offered himself a sacrifice for us; Heb. i. 3. And therefore, it is granted, that so far as the filth of sin was taken away, not by actual purification, but by legal expiation, it is sin with its guilt that was intended. But the Scripture, as we have shewed, intendeth more hereby, even such an internal inherent defilement as is taken away by real actual sanctification and no otherwise. 2. There are some especial sins, which have a peculiar pollution and defilement attending them, and which thereon, are usually called uncleanness in a peculiar manner. The ground hereof, is in that of the apostle; 1 Cor. vi. 18. ‘Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doth, is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body;’ all sins of that nature, have a peculiar defilement and filth accompanying them. And holiness is sometimes mentioned in an opposition unto this especial pollution; 1 Thess. iv. 3. But yet, this is not that which we inquire after, although it be included in it, as one especial kind of it. That we now consider always inseparably attends every sin as sin, as an adjunct or effect of it. It is the uncleanness of all sin, and not the sin of uncleanness which we intend. And for the discovery of its proper nature, we may observe:

(1.) That the pollution of sin, is that property of it, whereby it is directly opposed unto the holiness of God, and which God expresseth his holiness to be contrary unto. Hence he is said to be ‘of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, or to look on evil;’ Hab. i. 13. It is a thing, vile and loathsome under the eyes of his holiness; Psal. v. 4—6. So, speaking concerning it, he useth that pathetical dehortation, ‘O do not that abominable thing, which my soul hateth;’ Jer. xlv. 4. and with respect unto his own holiness it is, that he sets it forth by the names of all things which are vile, filthy, loathsome, offensive, every thing that is abominable. It is so to him, as he is infinitely pure and holy in his own nature. And that consideration which ingenerates shame and self-aborrency on the account of the defilement of sin, is taken peculiarly from the holiness of God. Hence it is, that persons are so often said to blush,

to be ashamed, to be filled with confusion of face, to be vile, to be abased in their own sight, under a sense and apprehension of this filth of sin.

(2.) The holiness of God, is the infinite absolute perfection and rectitude of his nature, as the eternal original cause and pattern of truth, uprightness, and rectitude in all. And this holiness doth God exert, as in all he doth, naturally and necessarily, so particularly in his law, which is, therefore, good, holy, and perfect, because it represents the holiness of God, which is impressed on it. God might not have made any creature, nor given a law, which are free acts of his will. But on supposition he would do so, it was absolutely necessary from his own nature, that this law of his should be holy. And, therefore, whatever is contrary unto, or different from, the law of God, is so unto and from the holiness of God himself. Hence it follows,

(3.) That this defilement and pollution of sin, is that *pravity, disorder, and shameful crookedness that is in it, with respect unto the holiness of God, as expressed in the law.*

Sin is either original or actual. Original sin is the habitual inconformity of our natures unto the holiness of God, expressed in the law of creation. Actual sin is our inconformity to God and his holiness, expressed in the particular commands of the law: the nature of all sin, therefore, consists in its enmity, its inconformity, to the rule. Now this rule, which is the law, may be considered two ways, which give a twofold respect or inseparable consequent or adjunct unto every sin.

[1.] As it expresseth the *authority of God*, in its precepts and sanction. Hence guilt inseparably follows every sin, which is the respect it induceth on the sinner unto the law, upon the account of the authority of the lawgiver. The act of sin passeth away, but this guilt abideth on the person, and must do so, until the law be satisfied, and the sinner thereon absolved. This naturally produceth fear, which is the first expression of a sense of guilt. So Adam expressed it upon his sin: 'I heard thy voice and was afraid;' Gen. iii. 10.

[2.] The law may be considered, as it expresseth the *holiness of God* and his truth, which it was necessary, from the nature of God, that it should do. Hence there is in sin, a

peculiar inconformity to the holiness of God, which is the *macula*, the 'spot,' 'stain,' and 'filth' of it, which are inseparable from it, whilst God is holy, unless it be purged and done away, as we shall shew. And this is inseparably attended with shame, which is the expression of a sense of this filth of sin. So Adam, upon his sin, had his eyes open to see his nakedness, and was filled with shame. This is the order of these things. God, who is the object of our obedience and sin, is considered as the supreme lawgiver. On his law he hath impressed his authority and his holiness. Sin, with respect unto his authority, is attended with guilt; and this, in the conscience of the sinner, produceth fear. As it respects the holiness of God, it is attended with filth or uncleanness, and this produceth shame. And the ultimate effects of it, are on the first account *pæna sensus*, on the other *pæna damni*: this, therefore, is the spot, the stain, the pollution of sin, which is purged in our sanctification. The perverse disorder and shameful crookedness that is in sin with respect unto the holiness of God.

And herein there is a *real filthiness, but spiritual*; which is compared with, and opposed unto, things materially and carnally so. 'Not that which goeth into a man,' meats of any sort, 'defile him,' saith our Saviour, 'but that which cometh out of the heart,' that is, spiritually, with respect unto God, his law and holiness. And as men are taught the guilt of sin by their own fear, which is the inseparable adjunct of it, so are they taught the filth of sin by their own shame, which unavoidably attends it. To instruct us herein is one end of the law and the gospel. For in the renovation of the law, which was added to the promise 'because of transgressions,' Gal. iii. 19. and in the institutions annexed unto it, God designed to instruct us farther in them both, with the ways whereby we may be freed from them. In the doctrine of the law with the sanction and curse of it, and the institution of sacrifices to make atonement for sin, God declared the nature of guilt and its remedy. By the same law, and by the institution of sundry ordinances for purification and cleansing, as also by determining sundry ceremonial defilements, he makes known the nature of this filth and its remedy. To what end were so many meats and drinks, so many diseases and natural distempers, so many external fortuitous acci-

dents, as touching the dead and the like, made religiously unclean by the law? It was to no other but to teach us the nature of the spiritual defilement of sin. And to the same end, together with a demonstration of the relief and remedy thereof, were the ordinances of purification instituted; which as they were outward and carnal purged those uncleannesses as they also were outward and carnal, made so by the law. But internal and spiritual things were taught and prefigured hereby, yea, wrought and effected by virtue of their typical relation to Christ, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. ix. 13, 14. 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.' And hence, the whole work of sanctification is expressed by opening 'a fountain for sin and for uncleanness;' that is, the purging of them away; Zech. xiii. 1. So is it in the gospel, where the blood of Christ is said to 'purge our sins' with respect to guilt, and to wash our souls with respect to filth. Yea, so inseparable is this filth from sin, and shame from filth, that wherever abides a sense of sin, there is a sense of this filth with shame. The very Heathen, who had only the workings of their minds and consciences for their guide, were never able to quit themselves from a sense of this pollution of sin. And thence proceeded all those ways of lustration, purgation, and cleansing, by washings, sacrifices, and mysterious ceremonious observances which they had invented. It remains, therefore, only that we inquire a little into the reasons and causes why this pravity of sin, and discrepancy from the holiness of God, is such a defilement of our natures and so inseparably attended with shame. For without the consideration hereof, we can never understand the true nature of sanctification and holiness. And it will also then yet farther appear how openly they betray their prodigious ignorance of these things, who pretend that all grace consists in the practice of moral virtues. And we may to this purpose observe,

1. *That the spiritual beauty and comeliness of the soul consists in its conformity unto God.* Grace gives beauty. Hence it is said of the Lord Christ, that he is 'fairer' or 'more beautiful than the children of men,' and that because

‘ grace was poured into his lips;’ Psal. xlv. 2. And when the church is furnished or adorned with his graces, he affirms her to be ‘ fair and comely;’ Cant. i. 5. vi. 4. vii. 6. Christ by washing of it takes away its ‘ spots and wrinkles,’ rendering it beautiful, that is, ‘ holy, and without blemish;’ Eph. v. 27. And this beauty originally consisted in the image of God in us, which contained the whole order, harmony, and symmetry of our natures, in all their faculties and actions with respect unto God, and our utmost end. That, therefore, which is contrary hereunto, as is all and every sin, hath a deformity in it, or brings spots, stains, and wrinkles on the soul. There is in sin all that is contrary to spiritual beauty and comeliness, to inward order and glory, and this is the filth and pollution of it.

2. *Holiness and conformity to God is the honour of our souls.* It is that alone which makes them truly noble. For all honour consists in an accession unto him who is the only spring and absolute possessor of all that is so, in whom alone is originally and perfectly all being and substance. Now this we have alone by holiness, or that image of God wherein we were created. Whatever is contrary hereunto is base, vile, and unworthy. This is sin, which is therefore the only base thing in nature. Hence it is said of some great sinners that they had ‘ debased themselves to hell;’ Isa. lvii. 9. This belongs to the pollution of sin: that it is base, vile, unworthy, dishonouring the soul, filling it with shame in itself and contempt from God. And there are no persons who are not absolutely hardened, but are in their own minds and consciences sensible of this baseness of sin, as they are also of the deformity that is in it. When men’s eyes are opened to see their nakedness, how vile and base they have made themselves by sin, they will have a sense of this pollution not easily to be expressed. And from hence it is, that sin hath the properties and effects of uncleanness in the sight of God and in the conscience of the sinner. God abhors, loathes it, accounts it an abominable thing, as that which is directly contrary to his holiness, which as impressed on the law is the rule of purity, integrity, spiritual beauty, and honour. And in the conscience of the sinner it is attended with shame, as a thing deformed, loathsome, vile, base, and dishonourable. See Jer. ii. 26.

In all in whom it is, I say unless they are blind and obdurate, it fills them with shame. I speak not of such as are little or not at all spiritually sensible of sin or any of its properties, who fear not because of its guilt, nor are disquieted by its power, nor acquainted with its *fomes* or disposition to evil, and so not ashamed of its filth; much less of such as are given over to all uncleanness with delight and greediness, wallowing in the pollution of it, like the sow in the mire, who not only do the things which God abhorreth, but also have pleasure in them that do them: but those I intend who have the least real conviction of the nature and tendency of sin, who are all, in one degree or other, ashamed of it, as a filthy thing. And a casting off of outward shame, that is so from its object, or shame with respect unto the conscience and judgment of human kind, as those do who proclaim their sins as Sodom and hide them not, is the highest aggravation of sinning and contempt of God; and the casting out of inward shame, with respect unto the divine omniscience, the highest evidence of a reprobate mind. But in all others, who have more light and spiritual sense, it produceth shame and self-aborrency, which hath always a respect unto the holiness of God; as Job xlii. 5, 6 They see that in sin which is so vile, base, and filthy, and which renders them so, that, like unto men under a loathsome disease, they are not able to bear the sight of their own sores; Psal. xxxviii. 5. God detesteth, abhorreth, and turneth from sin as a loathsome thing, and man is filled with shame for it; it is, therefore, filthy. Yea, no tongue can express the sense which a believing soul hath of the uncleanness of sin with respect unto the holiness of God. And this may suffice to give a little prospect into the nature of this defilement of sin, which the Scripture so abundantly insisteth on, and which all believers are so sensible of.

(1.) This pravity or spiritual disorder with respect unto the holiness of God which is the shameful defilement of sin, is twofold. [1.] That which is habitual in all the faculties of our souls by nature, as they are the principle of our spiritual and moral operations. They are all shamefully and loathsomely depraved, out of order, and no way correspondent unto the holiness of God. Hence by nature we are wholly unclean; who can bring a clean thing out of that which is

unclean? and this uncleanness is graphically expressed under the similitude of a wretched polluted infant; Ezek. xvi. 3—5. [2.] That which is actual in all the actings of our faculties as so defiled, and as far as they are so defiled. For, 1st. be any sin of what nature it will, there is a pollution attending of it. Hence the apostle adviseth to cleanse ourselves from ‘all pollutions of flesh and spirit;’ 2 Cor. vii. 1. The sins that are internal and spiritual, as pride, self-love, covetousness, unbelief, have a pollution attending them as well as those which are fleshly and sensual. 2ndly. So far as any thing of this pravity or disorder mixeth itself with the best of our duties, it renders both us and them unclean; Isa. lxiv. 6. ‘We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’

(2.) This uncleanness as it is habitual, respecting our natural defilement, is equal in and unto every one that is born into the world. We are by nature all alike polluted, and that to the utmost of what our nature is capable. But with respect unto actual sins it is not so. For in them it hath various degrees and aggravations, even as many as sin itself hath. [1.] The greater the sin is from its nature or circumstances, the greater is the defilement wherewith it is attended. Hence there is no sin expressed under such terms of filthiness and abhorrences as idolatry, which is the greatest of sins. See Ezek. xvi. 36, 37. Or, [2.] There is an aggravation of it when the whole person is defiled, as it is in the case of fornication before instanced in. [3.] It is heightened by a continuance in sin, whereby an addition is made to its pollution every day, and which is called ‘wallowing in the mire;’ 2 Pet. ii. 22.

I have in this whole discourse but touched upon this consideration of sin, which the Scripture so frequently mentions and inculcates. For as all the *first institutions of divine worship* recorded therein had some respect hereunto, so the *last rejection* of obstinate sinners mentioned in it is, *let him that is filthy or unclean be filthy still*; Rev. xxii. 11. Neither is there any notion of sin whereby God would convey an apprehension of its nature and an abhorrency thereof unto our minds and consciences, so frequently insisted on as is this of its *pollution*. And in order to our use of it unto the discovery of the nature of holiness, we may yet observe these three

things. (1.) Where this uncleanness abideth unpurged, there neither is nor can be any true holiness at all; Eph. iv. 22—24. For it is universally opposed unto it, it is our unholiness. Where, therefore, it is absolute and purified in no measure or degree, there is no work of sanctification, no holiness so much as begun. For in the purging hereof, it makes its entrance upon the soul, and its effect therein is the first beginning of holiness in us. I acknowledge that it is not in any at once absolutely and perfectly taken away in this world. For the work of purging it is a continued act commensurate unto the whole work of our sanctification. And, therefore, they who are truly sanctified and holy, are yet deeply sensible of the remainder of it in themselves, do greatly bewail it, and earnestly endeavour after the removal of it. But there is an initial, real, sincere, and (as to all the faculties of the soul) universal purging of it, which belongs to the nature and essence of holiness, begun and carried on, though not absolutely perfected, in this life. And men who pretend unto a grace and holiness that should consist in moral virtue only, without a supposition of and respect unto the purification of this pollution of sin, do but deceive their own souls and others, so far as any are forsaken of God to give credit unto them. The virtues of men not purged from the uncleanness of their natures, are an abomination to the Lord; Tit. i. 15. (2.) Unless this *uncleanness* of sin be purged and washed away, we can never come unto the enjoyment of God. Nothing 'that defileth shall in any wise enter into the new Jerusalem;' Rev. xxi. 27. To suppose that an unpurified sinner can be brought unto the blessed enjoyment of God, is to overthrow both the law and the gospel, and to say that Christ died in vain. It is therefore of the same importance with the everlasting salvation of our souls, to have them purged from sin. (3.) We are not able of ourselves, without the especial aid, assistance, and operation of the Spirit of God, in any measure or degree to free ourselves from this *pollution*, neither that which is *natural* and *habitual* nor that which is *actual*. It is true, it is frequently prescribed unto us as our duty. We are commanded 'to wash ourselves,' to 'cleanse ourselves from sin,' to 'purge ourselves' from all our iniquities, and the like, frequently. But to suppose that whatever God requireth of us, that we have power of our-

selves to do, is to make the cross and grace of Jesus Christ of none effect. Our duty is our duty, constituted unalterably by the law of God, whether we have power to perform it or no, seeing we had so at our first obligation by and unto the law, which God is not obliged to bend unto a conformity to our warpings, nor to suit unto our sinful weaknesses. Whatever, therefore, God worketh in us in a way of grace, he prescribeth unto us in a way of duty, and that because although he do it in us, yet he also doth it by us, so as that the same work is an act of his Spirit and of our wills as acted thereby. Of ourselves, therefore, we are not able by any endeavours of our own, nor ways of our own finding out, to cleanse ourselves from the defilement of sin. 'If I be wicked,' saith Job, 'why then labour I in vain? if I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall make me to be abhorred;' chap. ix. 29—31. There may be ways and means used whereby an appearance of washing and cleansing may be made. But when things come to be tried in the sight of God, all will be found filthy and unclean. 'In vain,' saith the prophet, 'shalt thou take to thyself soap and much nitre, thou shalt not be purged;' Jer. ii. 22. The most probable means of cleansing, and the most effectual in our judgment, however multiplied, shall fail in this case. Some speak much of 'washing away their sins by the tears of repentance.' But repentance as prescribed in the Scripture is of another nature, and assigned unto another end. And for men's tears in this matter they are but soap and nitre, which howsoever multiplied will not produce the effect intended. And therefore doth God in places of Scripture innumerable take this to himself as the immediate effect of his Spirit and grace, namely, to 'cleanse us from our sins and our iniquities.'

(4.) The *institutions* of the law for this end to purge uncleanness could not of themselves reach thereunto. They did indeed purify the unclean legally, and sanctified persons as to the purifying of the flesh; Heb. ix. 13. so that they should not on their account be separated from their privileges in the congregation and the worship of God. But of themselves they could go no farther, Heb. x. 2. only they did typify and signify that whereby sin was really cleansed. But the real stain is too deep to be taken away by any outward ordi-

nances or institutions. And therefore God, as it were, rejecting them all, promiseth to open another fountain to that purpose; Zech. xiii. 1. Wherefore,

(5.) There is a great emptiness and vanity in all those aids and reliefs which the *papal church* hath invented in this case. Sensible they are of the spot and stain that accompanies sin, of its pollution and defilement, which none can avoid whose consciences are not utterly hardened and blinded. But they are ignorant of the true and only means and remedy thereof. And, therefore, as in the work of justification, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they submit not themselves to the righteousness of God, as the apostle spake of their predecessors; so in the work of sanctification, being ignorant of the ways of the working of the Spirit of grace and efficacy of the blood of Christ, they go about to set up their own imaginations, and submit not themselves unto a compliance with the grace of God. Thus, in the first place, they would, at least the most of them would, have the whole uncleanness of our natures to be washed away by baptism, *Virtute operis operati*. The ordinance being administered without any more to do; or any previous qualifications of the person internal or external, the filth of original sin is washed away; though it fell not out so with Simon Magus, who, notwithstanding he were baptized by Philip the Evangelist, and that upon his visible profession and confession, 'yet continued in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' and was therefore certainly not cleansed from his sins. But there is a cleansing in profession and signification, and there is a cleansing in the reality of sanctification. The former doth accompany baptism when it is rightly administered. With respect hereunto are men said to be purged from their old sins, that is, to have made a profession and have had a fair representation thereof in being made partakers of the outward sign of it; 2 Pet. i. 9. as also to escape the pollutions of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; chap. ii. 18. 20. But all this may be, and yet sin not be really purged; for not only the outward washing of regeneration in the pledge of it, but the internal renovation of the Holy Ghost is required thereunto; Tit. iii. 5. But having thus shifted themselves of the filth of original sin as easily as a man may put

off his clothes when they are foul, they have found out many ways whereby the ensuing defilements that attend actual sins may be purged or done away. There is the sprinkling of holy water, confession to a priest, penances, in fasting and some other abstinences that are supposed to be of wonderful virtue to this end and purpose. And I do acknowledge that the one art of confession is really the greatest invention to accommodate the inclinations of all flesh, that ever this world was acquainted withal. For as nothing is so suited unto all the carnal interests of the priests be they what they will, nor so secures them a veneration in the midst of their looseness and worthless conversation; so for the people, who for the most part have other business to do than long to trouble themselves about their sins, or find it uneasy to be conversant about their guilt and the consequences of it in their minds, it is such an expedite course of absolute exoneration that they may be free for other sins or businesses, to deposit them wholly and safely with a priest, that nothing equal unto it could ever have been invented. For the real way of dealing with God by Jesus Christ in these things, with endeavours of a participation in the sanctifying cleansing work of the Holy Ghost is long, and very irksome to flesh and blood, besides that it is intricate and foolish unto natural darkness and unbelief. But yet it so falls out, that after all these inventions they can come to no perfect rest or satisfaction in their own minds. They cannot but find by experience that their sores sometimes break forth, through all these sorry coverings, unto their annoyance; and their defilements yet fill them with shame, as well as the guilt of sin doth with fear. Wherefore, they betake themselves to their sheet-anchor in this storm, in the relief which they have provided in another world; when, let men find themselves never so much mistaken they cannot complain of their disappointments. This is in their purgatory, whereunto they must trust at last for the cancelling of all their odd scores, and purging away that filth of sin which they have been unwilling to part withal in this world. But as this whole business of purgatory is a groundless fable, an invention set up in competition with, and opposition unto, the sanctification of the Spirit and cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, as a matter of unspeakable more profit and secular advantage unto those

who have its management committed unto them; so it is as great an encouragement unto unholiness and a continuance in sin, for those who believe it, and at the same time love the pleasures of sin, which are the generality of their church, as ever was or can be found out or made use of. For, to come with a plain downright dissuasure from holiness and encouragement unto sin, is a design that would absolutely defeat itself, nor is capable of making impressions on them who retain the notion of a difference between good and evil. But this side-wind, that at once pretends to relieve men from the filth of sin, and keeps them from the only ways and means whereby it may be cleansed, insensibly leads them into a quiet pursuit of their lusts under an expectation of relief when all is past and done. Wherefore, setting aside such vain imaginations, we may inquire into the true causes and ways of our purification from the uncleanness of sin described, wherein the first part of our sanctification and the foundation of our holiness doth consist.