

## THE FILTH OF SIN PURGED

BY THE

## SPIRIT AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

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### CHAP. V.

*Purification of the filth of sin, the first part of sanctification, how it is effected. The work of the Spirit therein. Efficacy of the blood of Christ to that purpose. The blood of his sacrifice intended. How that blood cleanseth sin. Application unto it, and application of it, by the Spirit. Wherein that application consists. Faith the instrumental cause of our purification, with the use of afflictions to the same purpose. Necessity of a due consideration of the pollution of sin. Considerations of the pollution and purification of sin practically improved. Various directions for a due application unto the blood of Christ for cleansing. Sundry degrees of shamelessness in sinning. Directions for the cleansing of sin continued. Thankfulness for the cleansing of sin. With other uses of the same consideration. Union with Christ how consistent with the remainders of sin. From all that, differences between evangelical holiness and the old nature asserted.*

THE purging of the souls of them that believe from the defilements of sin, is, in the Scripture, assigned unto several causes of different kinds. For the *Holy Spirit*, the *blood of Christ*, *faith*, and *afflictions*, are all said to cleanse us from our sins, but in several ways, and with distinct kinds of efficacy. The Holy Spirit is said to do it as *the principal efficient cause*; the blood of Christ as *the meritorious procuring cause*; faith and affliction as *the instrumental causes*; the one direct and internal, the other external and occasional.

1. That we are purged and purified from sin by the *Spirit of God* communicated unto us, hath been before in general confirmed by many testimonies of the Holy Scriptures. And we may gather also, from what hath been spoken, wherein this work of his doth consist. For, (1.) whereas the spring and fountain of all the pollution of sin lies in the depravation of the faculties of our natures, which ensued on the loss of the image of God, he *renews* them again by his grace; Tit. iii. 5. Our want of due answering unto the

holiness of God as represented in the law, and exemplified in our hearts originally, is a principal part and universal cause of our whole pollution and defilement by sin. For when our eyes are opened to discern it, this is that which in the first place filleth us with shame and self-aborrancy, and that which makes us so unacceptable, yea, so loathsome, to God. Who is there who considereth aright the vanity, darkness, and ignorance, of his mind, the perverseness and stubbornness of his will, with the disorder, irregularity, and distemper, of his affections, with respect unto things spiritual and heavenly, who is not ashamed of, who doth not abhor, himself? This is that which hath given our nature its leprosy and defiled it throughout. And I shall crave leave to say, that he who hath no experience of spiritual shame and self-aborrancy upon the account of this inconformity of his nature, and the faculties of his soul, unto the holiness of God, is a great stranger unto this whole work of sanctification. Who is there that can recount the unsteadiness of his mind in holy meditation, his low and unbecoming conceptions of God's excellencies, his proneness to foolish imaginations and vanities that profit not, his aversation to spirituality in duty and fixedness in communion with God, his proneness to things sensual and evil, all arising from the spiritual irregularity of our natural faculties, but if ever he had any due apprehensions of divine purity and holiness, that is not sensible of his own vileness and baseness, and is not oft-times deeply affected with shame thereon? Now this whole evil frame is cured by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost in the rectifying and renovation of our natures. He giveth a new understanding, a new heart, new affections, renewing the whole soul into the image of God; Eph. iv. 23, 24. Col. iii. 10. The way, whereby he doth this, hath been before so fully declared in our opening of the doctrine of regeneration, that it need not be here repeated. Indeed our original cleansing is therein, where mention is made of the 'washing of regeneration;' Tit. iii. 5. Therein is the image of God restored unto our souls. But we consider the same work now as it is the cause of our holiness. Look then how far our minds, our hearts, our affections, are renewed by the Holy Ghost, so far are we cleansed from our spiritual habitual pollution. Would we

be cleansed from our sins, that which is so frequently promised that we shall be, and so frequently prescribed as our duty to be, and without which we neither have nor can have any thing of true holiness in us, we must labour after and endeavour to grow in this renovation of our natures by the Holy Ghost. The more we have of saving light in our minds, of heavenly love in our wills and affections, of a constant readiness unto obedience in our hearts; the more pure are we, the more cleansed from the pollution of sin. The old principle of corrupted nature is unclean and defiling, shameful and loathsome. The new creature, the principle of grace implanted in the whole soul by the Holy Ghost, is pure and purifying, clean and holy.

(2.) The Holy Ghost doth purify and cleanse us by *strengthening* our souls by his grace unto all holy duties, and against all *actual* sins. It is by actual sins that our natural and habitual pollution is increased. Hereby some make themselves base and vile as hell. But this also is prevented by the gracious actings of the Spirit. Having given us a principle of purity and holiness, he so acts it in duties of obedience, and in opposition unto sin, as that he preserves the soul free from defilements, or pure and holy according to the tenor of the new covenant, that is, in such measure and to such a degree as universal sincerity doth require. But it may be yet said, that indeed hereby he makes us pure, and prevents many future defilements, yet how is the soul freed from those it had contracted before this work upon it, or those which it may and doth unavoidably afterward fall into; for as there is no man doth good and sinneth not, so there is none who is not more or less defiled with sin, whilst they are in the body here in this world. The apostle answereth this objection or inquiry; 1 John i. 7—9. ‘If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’ But if sin be in us we are defiled, and how shall we be cleansed? ‘God is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ But how may this be done, by what means may it be accomplished? ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.’

2. It is, therefore, the *blood of Christ*, in the second place, which is the *meritorious* procuring, and so the effective, cause that *immediately purgeth* us from our sins, by an especial ap-

plication of it unto our souls by the Holy Ghost. And there is not any truth belonging unto the mystery of the gospel, which is more plainly and evidently asserted, as it hath in part been made to appear before. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin ;’ 1 John i. 7. ‘He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood ;’ Rev. i. 5. ‘The blood of Christ purgeth our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God ;’ Heb. ix. 14. ‘He gave himself for his church that he might wash and cleanse it ;’ Eph. v. 26. ‘To purify to himself a peculiar people ;’ Tit. ii. 14. Besides, whatever is spoken in the whole Scripture concerning purifying the unclean, the leprous, the defiled, by sacrifices or other instruments of the Old Testament, it is all instructive in, and directive unto, the purifying nature of the blood of Christ, from whence alone these institutions had their efficacy ; and the virtue of it is promised under that notion ; Zech. xiii. 1. And this the faith and experience of all believers doth confirm ; for they are no imaginations of their own, but what being built on the truth and promises of God, yield sensible spiritual relief and refreshment unto their souls. This they believe, this they pray for, and find the fruits and effects of it in themselves. It may be some of them do not, it may be few of them do, comprehend distinctly the way whereby, and the manner how, the blood of Christ, so long since shed and offered, should cleanse them now from their sins. But the thing itself they do believe as it is revealed, and find the use of it in all wherein they have to do with God. And I must say (let profane and ignorant persons, whilst they please, deride what they understand not, nor are able to disprove), that the Holy Spirit of God which leadeth believers into all truth, and enableth them to pray according to the mind and will of God, doth guide them in and by the working and experience of faith, to pray for those things, the depths of whose mysteries they cannot comprehend. And he who well studieth the things which he is taught of the Spirit to ask of God, will find a door opened into much spiritual wisdom and knowledge. For (let the world rage on) in those prayers which believers are taught, and enabled unto by the Holy Ghost helping of them as a Spirit of supplication, there are two things inexpressible. (1.) The inward labouring and spiritual working of



the sanctified heart and affections towards God, wherein consist those 'sighs and groans that cannot be uttered;' Rom. viii. 26. God alone sees and knows and understands the fervent workings of the new creature, when acted by the Holy Ghost in supplications. And so it is added in the next words, ver. 27. 'And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, what is the meaning of the Spirit,' what it favours and inclines unto. It is not any distinct or separate acting of the Spirit by himself that is intended, but what and how he works in the hearts of believers as he is a Spirit of grace and supplication. And this is known only unto him who is the searcher of hearts, and as he is so. And he knoweth what is the bent, frame, inclination, and acting of the inward man in prayer, from the power of the Spirit, which they themselves in whom they are wrought do not fathom nor reach the depth of. This he doth in the subject of prayer, the hearts and minds of believers, the effects of his operation in them are inexpressible. (2.) As to the object of prayer, or things prayed for, he doth in and by the word so represent and exhibit the truth, reality, subsistence, power, and efficacy, of spiritual mysterious things, unto the faith and affections of believers, that they have a real and experimental sense of, do mix faith with, and are affected by, those things now made nigh, now realized unto them, which it may be they are not able doctrinally and distinctly to explain in their proper notions. And thus do we oft-times see men low and weak in their notional apprehension of things, yet in their prayers led into communion with God in the highest and holiest mysteries of his grace, having an experience of the life and power of the things themselves in their own hearts and souls. And hereby do their faith, love, affiance, and adherence unto God, act and exercise themselves. So is it with them in this matter of the actual present purifying of the pollutions of sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ, the way whereof we shall now briefly inquire into.

1. Therefore, by the *blood of Christ* herein, is intended the blood of his *sacrifice*, with the power, virtue, and efficacy thereof. And the blood of a sacrifice fell under a double consideration. (1.) As it was *offered* unto God to make atonement and reconciliation. (2.) As it was *sprinkled* on other things for their purging and sanctification. Part of

the blood in every propitiatory sacrifice was still to be sprinkled round about the altar; Lev. i. 11. And in the great sacrifice of expiation, some of the blood of the bullock was to be sprinkled before the mercy-seat seven times; Lev. xvi. 14. This our apostle fully expresseth in a great and signal instance; Heb. ix. 19—22. ‘For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet-wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which he hath enjoined unto you; and almost all things are by the law purged with blood.’ Wherefore the blood of Christ, as it was the blood of his sacrifice, hath these two effects, and falls under this double consideration. (1.) As he *offered* himself by the eternal Spirit unto God to make atonement for sin, and procure eternal redemption. (2.) As it is *sprinkled* by the same Spirit on the consciences of believers to purge them from dead works; as ver. 12—14. ‘And hence it is called, with respect unto our sanctification, the ‘blood of sprinkling;’ Heb. xii. 24. For we have ‘the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus;’ 1 Pet. i. 2.

2. The blood of Christ in his sacrifice is still always and continually in the same *condition*, of the same force and efficacy as it was in that hour wherein it was shed. The blood of other sacrifices was always to be used immediately upon its effusion; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use to be offered or to be sprinkled; Lev. xvii. 11. Blood was appointed to make atonement as the life or animal spirits were in it. But the blood of the sacrifice of Christ is always hot and warm, having the same spirits of life and sanctification still moving in it. Hence the way of approach which we have to God thereby, is said to be ζῶσα καὶ πρόσφατος, Heb. x. 20. always living, and yet always as newly slain. Every one, therefore, who at any time hath an especial actual interest in the blood of Christ, as sacrificed, hath as real a purification from the defilement of sin as he had typically who stood by the priest and had blood or water sprinkled on him. For the Holy Ghost diligently declares that whatever was done legally, carnally, or typically, by any of the sacrifices of old at any time, as to the expiation

or purification of sin, that was all done really and spiritually by that one sacrifice, that is, the offering and sprinkling of the blood of Christ, and abideth to be so done continually. To this purpose is the substance of our apostle's discourse in the ninth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And they had various sorts of sacrifices, wherein to this end the blood of them was sprinkled, they being propitiatory in their offering. As, (1.) there was the *תמיד* or continual burnt-offering of a lamb or kid, for the whole congregation, morning and evening, whose blood was sprinkled as at other times. And hereby the habitual purification of the congregation, that they might be holy to the Lord, and their cleansing from the daily incursions of secret and unknown sins was signified and carried on. (2.) On the sabbath-day this *juge sacrificium* was doubled morning and evening, denoting a peculiar and abounding communication of mercy, and purging grace through the administration of instituted ordinances on that day. (3.) There was the great annual sacrifice at the feast of expiation, when by the sacrifice of the sin-offering and the scape-goat, the whole congregation were purged from all their known and great sins, and recovered into a state of legal holiness. And other stated sacrifices there were. (4.) There were occasional sacrifices for every one according as he found his condition to require. For those who were clean one day, yea, one hour, might by some miscarriage or surprisal be unclean the next; but there was a way continually ready for any man's purification, by his bringing his offering unto that purpose. Now the blood of Christ must continually, and upon all occasions, answer unto all these, and accomplish spiritually what they did legally effect and typically represent. This our apostle asserts and proves; Heb. i. 9—14. Thereby is the gradual carrying on of our sanctification habitually effected, which was signified by the continual daily sacrifice. From thence is especial cleansing virtue communicated unto us by the ordinances of the gospel, as is expressly affirmed, Eph. v. 25, 26. denoted by the doublings of the daily sacrifice on the sabbath. By it are we purged from all our sins whatever, great or small, as was typified in the great sacrifice on the day of expiation. And unto him have we continual recourse upon all occasions of our spiritual defilements whatever. So was his blood, as

to its purifying virtue, to answer and accomplish all legal institutions. Especially it doth so that of the ‘ashes of the red heifer;’ Numb. xix. which was a standing ordinance whereby every one who was any way defiled might immediately be cleansed: and he who would not make application thereunto, was to be cut off from the people; ver. 20. And it is no otherwise with respect unto the blood of Christ, in our spiritual defilements; thence it is called ‘a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;’ Zech. xiii. 1. And he who neglects to make application thereunto, shall perish in his uncleanness, and that eternally.

Farther, to clear this whole matter, two things are to be inquired into. (1.) How doth the *blood of Christ* thus *cleanse* us from our sins, or what it is that is done thereby. (2.) How we come to be made *partakers* of the benefit thereof, or come to be interested therein.

As to the first, it must be observed, what hath been declared before, that the *uncleanness* we treat of is not physical or corporeal, but *moral* and *spiritual* only. It is the inconformity of sin unto the holiness of God as represented in the law, whence it is loathsome to God, and attended with shame in us. Now, wherever there is an interest obtained in the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ, it doth (by the will, law, and appointment of God) do these two things: [1.] It takes away all loathsomeness in the sight of God, not from sin in the abstract, but from the sinner; so that he shall be as one absolutely washed and purified before him: see Isa. i. 16. 18. Psal. li. 7. Eph. v. 25—27. [2.] It taketh away shame out of the conscience, and gives the soul boldness in the presence of God; Heb. x. 19—22. When these things are done, then is sin purged and our souls are cleansed.

(2.) It may be inquired, how we are to *apply* ourselves unto the blood of Christ for our purification, or how we may come continually to *partake* of the virtue of it as it is sprinkled unto that purpose. Now because what we do herein is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, my principal design being to declare his work in our sanctification, I shall at once declare both his work and our duty in the following instances.

[1.] It is he who discovereth unto us, and spiritually convinceth us of, the *pollution of sin*, and of our defilements thereby. Something indeed of this kind will be wrought by



the power of natural conscience awakened and excited by ordinary outward means of conviction. For wherever there is a sense of guilt there will be some kind of sense of filth; as fear and shame are inseparable. But this sense alone will never guide us to the blood of Christ for cleansing. Such a sight and conviction of it as may fill us with self-aborrancy and abasement, as may cause us to loathe ourselves for the abomination that is in it, is required of us. And this is the work of the Holy Ghost belonging to that peculiar conviction of sin which is from him alone; John xvi. 8. I mean, that self-aborrancy, shame, and confusion of face, with respect unto the filth of sin, which is so often mentioned in the Scripture as a gracious duty, as nothing is a higher aggravation of sin than for men to carry themselves with a carnal boldness with God and in his worship, whilst they are unpurged from their defilements. In a sense hereof the publican stood afar off as one ashamed, and destitute of any confidence for a nearer approach. So the holy men of old professed to God, that they blushed and were ashamed to lift up their faces unto him. Without this preparation whereby we come to know the plague of our own hearts, the infection of our leprosy, the defilement of our souls, we shall never make application unto the blood of Christ for cleansing in a due manner. This, therefore, in the first place, is required of us, as the first part of our duty, and first work of the Holy Ghost herein.

[2.] The Holy Ghost proposeth, declareth, and presents unto us the only *true remedy*, the only means of purification. ‘When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian and sent to king Jareb, yet would he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound;’ Hos. v. 13. When men begin to discern their defilements they are apt to think of many ways for their purging. What false ways have been invented to this purpose, hath been before declared; and every one is ready to find out a way of his own; every one will apply his own soap, and his own nitre. Though the only fountain for cleansing be nigh unto us, yet we cannot see it until the Holy Ghost open our eyes as he did the eyes of Hagar; he it is who shews it unto us, and leads us unto it. This is an eminent part of his office and work. The principal end of his send-

ing, and consequently of his whole work, was to glorify the Son; as the end and work of the Son was to glorify the Father. And the great way whereby he glorifieth Christ is by shewing such things unto us; John xvi. 14. And without his discovery we can know nothing of Christ, nor of the things of Christ; for he is not sent in vain to shew us the things that we can see of ourselves. And what is more so of Christ than his blood, and its efficacy for the purging of our sins? We never, therefore, discern it spiritually and in a due manner but by him. To have a true spiritual sense of the defilement of sin, and a gracious view of the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, is an eminent effect of the Spirit of grace. Something like it there may be in the workings of an awakened natural conscience, with some beams of outward gospel-light falling on it: but there is nothing in it of the work of the Spirit. This, therefore, secondly, we must endeavour after if we intend to be cleansed by the blood of Christ.

[3.] It is he who worketh *faith* in us, whereby we are actually interested in the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ. By faith we receive Christ himself, and by faith do we receive all the benefits of his mediation, that is, as they are tendered unto us in the promises of God. He is our propitiation through faith in his blood as offered; and he is our sanctification through faith in his blood as sprinkled. And particular acting of faith on the blood of Christ, for the cleansing of the soul from sin, is required of us. A renewed conscience is sensible of a pollution in every sin, and is not freed from the shame of it without a particular application unto the blood of Christ. It comes by faith to the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness, as the sick man to the pool of healing waters, and waiteth for a season to be cleansed in it. So David, on the defilement he had contracted by his great sins, addresseth himself unto God with that prayer, ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;’ Psal. li. 7. He alludeth unto the purging of the leprous person, the ordinance whereof is instituted, Lev. xiv. 5—7. or that more general institution for the purification of all legal uncleanness, by the water of separation made of the ashes of the red heifer; Numb. xix. 4—6. which our apostle hath respect

unto, Heb. ix. 14. For both these purifications were made by the sprinkling of blood or water with hyssop. It is plain, I say, that he alludeth unto these institutions, but it is as plain they are not the things which he intendeth. For there was not in the law any purging by hyssop for persons guilty of such sins as he lay under. And therefore, he professeth, in the close of the psalm, that ‘sacrifice and burnt-offering God would not accept,’ in his case; ver. 16. It was therefore that which was signified by those institutions which he made his application unto; namely, really to the blood of Christ, by which he might be justified from all things, from which he could not be ‘justified by the law of Moses;’ Acts xiii. 39. and so likewise purified. In like manner do all believers make an actual application unto the blood of Christ for the purging away of their sins, which until it is done they have a conscience of sin, that is, condemning them for sin, and filling them with shame and fear; Heb. x. 1—3.

And this actual *application* by faith unto the blood of Christ for *cleansing*, the mystery whereof is scorned by many as a thing fanatical and unintelligible, consists in these four things: 1st. A *spiritual view* and *due consideration* of the blood of Christ in his sacrifice, as proposed in the promises of the gospel for our cleansing and purification. ‘Look unto me,’ saith he, ‘and be saved;’ Isa. xlv. 22. which respects the whole work of our salvation, and all the means thereof. Our way of coming unto our interest therein is by looking to him, namely, as he is proposed unto us in the promise of the gospel. For ‘as the serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness,’ so was he in his sacrifice on the cross lifted up; John iii. 14. And so in the gospel is he represented unto us; Gal. iii. 1. And the means whereby they were healed in the wilderness, was by looking unto the serpent that was lifted up. Herein then, doth faith first act itself, by a spiritual view and due consideration of the blood of Christ, as proposed unto us in the gospel for the only means of our purification. And the more we abide in this contemplation, the more effectual will our success be in our application thereto. 2ndly. Faith actually *relieth* on his blood, for the real effecting of that great work and end for which it is proposed unto us. For God sets him forth, as to be a propitiation through faith in his blood as offered;

Rom. iii. 25. so to be our sanctification through faith in his blood as sprinkled. And the establishing of this especial faith in our souls, is that which the apostle aims at in his excellent reasoning; Heb. ix. 13, 14. And this conclusion unto that purpose is so evident, that he encourageth us thereon to draw nigh in the full assurance of faith; Heb. x. 22. 3rdly. Faith worketh herein by  *fervent prayer*, as it doth in its whole address unto God, with respect unto his promises; because, for all these things God will be sought unto by the house of Israel. By this means the soul brings itself nigh unto its own mercy. And this we are directed unto, Heb. iv. 15, 16. 4thly. An  *acquiescency* in the truth and faithfulness of God, for cleansing by the blood of Christ, whence we are freed from discouraging perplexing shame, and have boldness in the presence of God.

[4.] The Holy Ghost actually communicates the cleansing purifying virtue of the blood of Christ unto our souls and consciences, whereby we are freed from shame, and have boldness towards God. For the whole work of the application of the benefits of the mediation of Christ unto believers is his properly. And these are the things which believers aim at and intend in all their fervent supplications for the purifying and cleansing of their souls by the sprinkling and washing of the blood of Christ; the faith and persuasion whereof give them peace and holy boldness in the presence of God, without which they can have nothing but shame and confusion of face in a sense of their own pollutions.

How the blood of Christ was the  *meritorious* cause of our purification as it was offered, in that thereby he procured for us  *eternal redemption*, with all that was conducing or needful thereunto, and how thereby he expiated our sins, belongs not unto this place to declare. Nor shall I insist upon the more mysterious way of communicating cleansing virtue unto us from the blood of Christ, by virtue of our union with him. What hath been spoken, may suffice to give a little insight into that influence which the blood of Christ hath into this first part of our sanctification and holiness. And as for those who affirm, that it no otherwise cleanseth us from our sins, but only because we, believing his doctrine confirmed by his death and resurrection, do amend our lives, turning from sin unto righteousness and holiness, they re-



nounce the mystery of the gospel, and all the proper efficacy of the blood of Christ.

3. *Faith* is the *instrumental cause* of our purification. 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' Acts xv. 9. The two unfailing evidences of sincere faith are, that within it purifieth the heart, and without it worketh by love. These are the touch-stones whereon faith may, yea, ought to be tried. We 'purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit;' 1 Pet. i. 20. That is, by believing, which is our original obedience unto the truth. And hereby are our souls purified: unbelievers and unclean are the same; Tit. i. 15. For they have nothing in them whereby they might be instrumentally cleansed. And we are purified by faith. Because, (1.) faith itself is the *principal* grace whereby our nature is restored unto the image of God, and so freed from our original defilement; Col. iii. 10. John xvii. 3. (2.) It is by faith on our part, whereby we receive the purifying virtue and influences of the blood of Christ whereof we have before discoursed. Faith is the grace whereby we constantly adhere and cleave unto Christ; Deut. iv. 4. Josh. xxiii. 8. Acts xi. 10. And if the woman who touched his garment in faith, obtained virtue from him to heal her issue of blood, shall not those who cleave unto him continually derive virtue from him for the healing of their spiritual defilements. (3.) It is by the working of faith *principally*, whereby those lusts and corruptions which are defiling, are mortified, subdued, and gradually wrought out of our minds. All actual defilements spring from the remainders of defiling lusts, and their depraved workings in us; Heb. xii. 15. James i. 14. How faith worketh to the correcting and subduing of them, by deriving supplies of the Spirit and grace to that end from Jesus Christ, as being the means of our abiding in them whereon alone those supplies do depend; John. xv. 3—5. as also by the acting of all other graces which are contrary to the polluting lusts of the flesh and destructive of them, is usually declared, and we must not too far enlarge on these things. (4.) Faith takes in all the *motives* which are proposed unto us, to stir us up unto our utmost endeavours and diligence in the use of all means and ways for the preventing of the defilements of sin, and for the cleansing our minds and consciences from the relicts of dead works. And these

motives, which are great and many, may be reduced unto two heads : [1.] A participation of the excellent promises of God at the present ; the consideration hereof brings a singular enforcement on the souls of believers to endeavour after universal purity and holiness ; 2 Cor. vii. 1. And, [2.] the future enjoyment of God in glory, whereunto we cannot attain without being purified from sin ; 1 John iii. 1. Now these motives which are the springs of our duty in this matter, are received and made efficacious by faith only.

4. Purging from sin is likewise in the Scripture ascribed unto *afflictions* of all sorts. Hence they are called ‘ God’s furnace,’ and his ‘fining-pot;’ Isa. xxxi. 9. xlviii. 10. whereby he taketh away the dross and filth of the vessels of his house. They are called fire that trieth the ways and works of men, consuming their hay and stubble, and purifying their gold and silver ; 1 Cor. iii. 13. And this they do through an efficacy unto the ends communicated unto them, in the design and by the Spirit of God. For by and in the cross of Christ, they were cut off from the curse of the first covenant, whereunto all evil and trouble did belong, and implanted into the covenant of grace. The tree of the cross being cast into the waters of affliction hath rendered them wholesome and medicinal. And as the Lord Christ being the head of the covenant, all the afflictions and persecutions that befall his members are originally his ; Isa. lxiii. 9. Acts ix. 5. Col. i. 24. so they all tend to work us unto a conformity unto him in purity and holiness. And they work towards this blessed end of purifying the soul several ways. For, (1.) they have in them some tokens of God’s displeasure against sin, which those who are exercised by them are led by the consideration of unto a fresh view of the vileness of it. For although afflictions are an effect of love, yet it is of love mixed with care, to obviate and prevent distempers. Whatever they are else they are always chastisements ; and correction respects faults. And it is our safest course in every affliction to lodge the adequate cause of it in our own deserts ; as the woman did, 1 Kings xvii. 18. and as God directs, Psal. lxxxi. 30—32. Lament. iii. 33, 34. And this is one difference between his chastisements and those of the fathers of our flesh ; that he doth it ‘ not for his pleasure ;’ Heb. xii. 9, 10. Now a view of sin under suffering makes men loathe and abhor them-

selves for it, and to be ashamed of it. And this is the first step towards our purifying of ourselves by any ways appointed for it. Self-pleasing in sin is the highest degree of our pollution; and when we loathe ourselves for it, we are put into the way at least of seeking after a remedy. (2.) Afflictions take off the beauty and allurements of all created good things and their comforts, by which the affections are solicited to commit folly and lewdness with them; that is, to embrace and cleave unto them inordinately, whence many defilements do ensue; Gal. vi. 14. This God designs them for, even to wither all the flowerings of this world in the minds of men, by discovering their emptiness, vanity, and insufficiency to give relief. This intercepts the disorderly intercourse which is apt to be between them and our affections, whereby our minds are polluted. For there is a pollution attending the least inordinate actings of our minds and affections towards objects either in their own nature sinful, or such as may be rendered so by an excess in us towards them, whilst we are under the command of loving the Lord our God with all our minds, souls, and strength, and that always. (3.) Afflictions take off the edge, and put a deadness on those affections whereby the corrupt lusts of the mind and flesh, which are the spring and cause of all our defilements, do act themselves. They curb those vigorous and brisk affections which were always ready pressed for the service of lust, and which sometimes carry the soul into the pursuit of sin, like the horse into the battle, with madness and fury. They are no more such prepared channels for the *fomes* of concupiscence to empty itself into the conversation, nor such vehicles for the spirits of corrupted lusts and inclinations. God, I say, by afflictions brings a kind of death unto the world, and the pleasures of it, upon the desires and affections of the soul, which render them unserviceable unto the remainder of defiling lusts and corruptions. This in some indeed endures but for a season, as when in sickness, wants, fears, distresses, losses, sorrows, there is a great appearance of mortification, when yet the strength of sin and the vigour of carnal affections do speedily revive upon the least outward relief. But with believers it is not so, but by all their chastisements they are really more and more delivered from the pollutions of sin, and made partakers of

God's holiness ; 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. (4.) God doth by them excite, stir up, and draw forth all the graces of the Spirit, into a constant, diligent, and vigorous exercise, and therein the work of cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin is carried on. A time of affliction is the especial season for the peculiar exercise of all grace. For the soul can then no otherwise support or relieve itself. For it is cut short or taken off from other comforts and reliefs, every sweet thing being made bitter unto it. It must, therefore, live not only by faith and love and delight in God, but in some sense upon them. For if, in their exercise, supportment and comfort be not obtained, we can have none. Therefore, doth such a soul find it necessary to be constantly abounding in the exercise of grace, that it may in any measure be able to support itself under its troubles or sufferings. Again, there is no other way whereby a man may have a sanctified use of afflictions, or a good issue out of them, but by the assiduous exercise of grace. This God calls for, this he designs, and without it afflictions have no other end but to make men miserable ; and they will either have no deliverance from them, or such an one, as shall tend to their farther misery and ruin.

And so have we taken a view of the first part of our sanctification and holiness, which I have the more largely insisted on, because the consideration of it is utterly neglected by them who frame us a holiness to consist only in the practice of moral virtue. And I do not know but what hath been delivered may be looked on as fanatical and enthusiastical. Yet is there no other reason why it should be so, but only because it is taken from the Scripture. Neither doth that so much insist on any consideration of sin and sanctification, as this of the pollution of the one, and the purifying of it by the other. And to whom the wisdom and words of the Holy Ghost are displeasing, we cannot in these things give any satisfaction. And yet I could easily demonstrate, that they were well known to the ancient writers of the church, and for the substance of them were discerned and discussed by the schoolmen in their manner. But where men hate the practice of holiness, it is to no purpose to teach them the nature of it.

But we may not pass over these things without some reflections upon ourselves, and some consideration of our



concernment in them. And first, hence we may take a view of our own state and condition by nature. It is useful for us all to be looking back into it; and it is necessary for them who are under it to be fully acquainted with it. Therein are we wholly defiled, polluted, and every way unclean. There is a spiritual leprosy spread all over our natures, which renders us loathsome to God, and puts us in a state of separation from him. They who were legally unclean were separated from the congregation, and therein all the pledges of God's gracious presence; Numb. v. 2. It is so virtually with all them who are spiritually defiled, under that pollution which is natural and universal; they are abhorred of God and separated from him, which was signified thereby. And the reason why so many laws with so great severity and exactness were given about the cleansing of a leprous person, and the judgment to be made thereon, was only to declare the certainty of the judgment of God, that no unclean person should approach unto him. Thus is it with all by nature, and whatever they do of themselves to be quit of it, it doth but hide and not cleanse it. Adam cured neither his nakedness nor the shame of it by his fig-leaves. Some have no other covering of their natural filth but outward ornaments of the flesh, which increase it, and indeed rather proclaim it than hide it. The greatest filth in the world is covered with the greatest bravery. See Isa. iii. 16, 17. Whatever we do ourselves in answer unto our convictions, is a covering not a cleansing. And if we die in this condition unwashed, uncleansed, unpurified, it is utterly impossible that ever we should be admitted into the blessed presence of the Holy God; Rev. xxi. 27. Let no man deceive you then with vain words. It is not the doing of a few good works, it is not an outward profession of religion, that will give you an access with boldness and joy unto God. Shame will cover you when it will be too late. Unless you are washed by the Spirit of God, and in the blood of Christ, from the pollutions of your natures, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God; 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. Yea you will be a horrid spectacle unto saints and angels, yea to yourselves, unto one another, when the shame of your nakedness shall be made to appear; Isa. lxvi. 24. If, therefore, you would not perish and that eternally, if you would not perish as base defiled

creatures, an abhorring unto all flesh, *then* when your pride, and your wealth, and your beauty, and your ornaments, and your duties, will stand you in no stead, look out betimes after that only way of purifying and cleansing your souls, which God hath ordained. But if you love your defilements, if you are proud of your pollutions, if you satisfy yourselves with your outward ornaments; whether moral, of gifts, duties, profession, conversation; or natural, of body, wealth, apparel, gold, and silver; there is no remedy, you must perish for ever, and that under the consideration of the basest and vilest part of the creation.

Seeing this is the condition of all by nature, if any one now shall inquire and ask what they shall do, what course they shall take, that they may be cleansed according to the will of God; in answer hereunto, I shall endeavour to direct defiled sinners by sundry steps and degrees in the way unto the cleansing fountain. There is a 'fountain set open for sin and uncleanness;' Zech. xiii. 1. But it falleth out with many, as the wise man speaketh; 'The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city;' Eccles. x. 15. Men weary themselves and pine away under their pollutions, because they cannot find the way; they know not how to go to the cleansing fountain. I shall, therefore, direct them from first to last, according to the best skill I have.

1. Labour after an *acquaintance* with it, to know it in its nature and effects. Although the Scripture so abounds in the assertion and declaration of it as we have shewed, and believers find a sense of it in their experience, yet men in common take little notice of it. Somewhat they are affected with the guilt of sin, but little or not at all with its filth. So they can escape the righteousness of God which they have provoked, they regard not their unanswerableness unto his holiness whereby they are polluted. How few indeed do inquire into the pravity of their natures, that vileness which is come upon them by the loss of the image of God, or do take themselves to be much concerned therein? How few do consider aright that *fomes* and filthy spring which is continually bubbling up crooked, perverse, defiled imaginations in their hearts, and influencing their affections unto the lewdness of depraved concupiscence? Who meditates upon

the holiness of God in a due manner, so as to ponder what we ourselves ought to be, how holy, how upright, how clean, if we intend to please him or enjoy him? With what appearances, what outsides of things, are most men satisfied? Yea, how do they please themselves in the shades of their own darkness and ignorance of these things, when yet an unacquaintedness with this pollution of sin, is unavoidably ruinous unto their souls? See the danger of it, Rev. iii. 16—18. Those who would be cleansed from it, must first know it; and although we cannot do so aright, without some convincing light of the Spirit of God, yet are there duties required of us in order thereunto. As, (1.) to *search the Scripture*, and to consider seriously what it declareth concerning the condition of our nature after the loss of the image of God. Doth it not declare, that it is shamefully naked, destitute of all beauty and comeliness, wholly polluted and defiled? And what is said of that nature which is common unto all, is said of every one who is partaker of it. Every one is ‘gone aside, every one is become altogether filthy,’ or stinking; Psal. liii. 3. This is the glass, wherein every man ought to contemplate himself, and not in foolish flattering reflections from his own proud imaginations; and he that will not hence learn his natural deformity, shall live polluted and die accursed. (2.) He who hath received the testimony of the Scripture concerning his corrupted and polluted estate, if he will be at the pains to try and examine himself by the *reasons* and *causes* that are assigned thereof, will have a farther view of it. When men read, hear, or are instructed in what the Scripture teacheth concerning the defilement of sin, and giving some assent to what is spoken, without an examination of their own state in particular, or bringing their souls unto that standard and measure, they will have very little advantage thereby; multitudes learn that they are polluted by nature, which they cannot gainsay, but yet really find no such thing in themselves. But when men will bring their own souls to the glass of the perfect law, and consider how it is with them in respect of that image of God, wherein they were at first created, what manner of persons they ought to be with respect unto the holiness of God, and what they are, how vain are their imaginations, how disorderly are their affections, how perverse all the actings of their minds, they

will be ready to say with the leprous man, 'Unclean, unclean.' But they are but few, who will take the pains to search their own wounds, it being a matter of smart and trouble to corrupt and carnal affections. Yet, (3.) *prayer* for light and direction herein, is required of all as a duty. For a man to know himself, was of old, esteemed the highest attainment of human wisdom. Some men will not so much as inquire into themselves, and some men dare not, and some neglect the doing of it from spiritual sloth, and other deceitful imaginations. But he that would ever be purged from his sins, must thus far make bold with himself, and dare to be thus far wise. And in the use of the means before prescribed, considering his own darkness and the treacheries of his heart, he is to pray fervently that God by his Spirit would guide and assist him in his search after the pravity and defilement of his nature. Without this, he will never make any great or useful discoveries. And yet the discerning hereof, is the first evidence that a man hath received the least ray of supernatural light. The light of a natural conscience, will convince men of, and reprove them for, actual sins as to their guilt; Rom. ii. 14, 15. But the mere light of nature is dark and confused about its own confusion. Some of the old philosophers discerned, in general, that our nature was disordered, and complained thereof; but as the principal reason of their complaints was, because it would not throughout serve the ends of their ambition, so of the causes and nature of it, with respect unto God and our eternal condition, they knew nothing of it at all. Nor is it discerned but by a supernatural light, proceeding immediately from the Spirit of God. If any, therefore, have a heart or wisdom to know their own pollution by sin, without which they know nothing of themselves unto any purpose, let them pray for that directing light of the Spirit of God, without which they can never attain to any useful knowledge of it.

2. Those who would, indeed, be purged from the *pollution of sin*, must endeavour to be *affected with it*, suitably to the discovery which they have made of it. And as the proper effect of the guilt of sin is fear, so the proper effect of the filth of sin is shame. No man who hath read the Scriptures, can be ignorant how frequently God calls on men to



be ashamed and confounded in themselves for the pollutions and uncleannesses of their sin. So is it expressed in answer unto what he requires. ‘O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God, because of our iniquities;’ Ezra ix. 6. And by another prophet, ‘We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God;’ Jer. iii. 25. And many other such expressions are there of this affection of the mind, with respect unto the pollution of sin. But we must observe, that there is a twofold shame with respect unto it. (1.) That which is legal, or the product of a mere legal conviction of sin. Such was that in Adam, immediately after his fall. And such is that which God so frequently calls open and profligate sinners unto; a shame accompanied with dread and terror, and from which the sinner hath no relief, unless in such sorry evasions as our first parents made use of. And, (2.) there is a shame, which is evangelical, arising from a mixed apprehension of the vileness of sin, and the riches of God’s grace, in the pardon and purifying of it. For, although this latter gives relief against all terrifying discouraging effects of shame, yet it increaseth those which tend to genuine self-abasement and abhorrency. And this God still requires to abide in us, as that which tends to the advancement of his grace in our hearts. This is fully expressed by the prophet; Ezek. xvi. 60—63. ‘I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant; then shalt thou remember thy ways and be ashamed, and I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.’ There is a shame and confusion of face for sin, that is a consequent, yea, an effect of God’s renewing his covenant, and thereby giving in the full pardon of his sin, as being pacified. And the apostle asks the Romans, what fruit they had in those things, whereof they were now ashamed; chap. vi. 21. Now, after the pardon of them, they were yet ashamed, from the consideration of their filth and vileness. But it is shame, in the first sense, that I here intend, as antecedent unto the first

purification of our natures. This may be thought to be in all men; but it is plainly otherwise, and men are not at all ashamed of their sins, which they manifest in various degrees. For,

(1.) Many are *senseless and stupid*; no instruction, nothing that befalls them, will fix any real *shame* upon them. Of some particular facts they may be ashamed, but for any thing in their natures they slight and despise it. If they can but preserve themselves from the known guilt of such sins as are punishable amongst men, as to all other things they are secure. This is the condition of the generality of men living in sin in this world. They have no inward shame for any thing between God and their souls, especially not for the pravity and defilement of their natures, no, although they hear the doctrine of it never so frequently. What may outwardly befall them that is shameful they are concerned in; but for their internal pollutions between God and their souls they know none.

(2.) Some have a *boldness and confidence* in their condition, as that which is well and pure enough. ‘There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, yet are they not washed from their filthiness;’ Prov. xxx. 12. Although they were never sprinkled with the pure water of the covenant, or cleansed by the Holy Spirit; although their consciences were never purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, nor their hearts purified by faith, and so are no way washed from their filthiness; yet do they please themselves in their condition as pure in their own eyes, and have not the least sense of any defilement. Such a generation were the Pharisees of old, who esteemed themselves as clean as their hands and cups, that they were continually washing, though within they were filled with all manner of defilements; Isa. lxxv. 4, 5. And this generation is such as indeed despise all that is spoken about the pollution of sin and its purification; and deride it as enthusiastical; or a fulsome metaphor not to be understood.

(3.) Others proceed farther, and are so far from taking *shame* to themselves for what they are, or what they do, as that they openly *boast* of and *glory* in the most shameful sins that human nature can contract the guilt of. ‘They proclaim their sins,’ saith the prophet, ‘like Sodom,’ where all the peo-

ple consented together in the perpetration of unnatural lusts. They are not at all ashamed, but glory in the things, which because they do not here, will hereafter, fill them with confusion of face; Jer. vi. 15. viii. 12. And where once sin gets this confidence, wherein it completes a conquest over the law, the inbred light of nature, the convictions of the Spirit, and in a word God himself, then is it ripe for judgment. And yet is there a higher degree of shamelessness in sin. For,

(4.) Some content not themselves with boasting in their own sins, but also they *approve* and *delight* in all those who give up themselves unto the like outrage in *sinning* with themselves. This the apostle expresseth as the highest degree of shameless sinning: Rom. i. 32. ‘Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.’ When open profligate sinners do, as it were, make themselves up into societies, encouraging and approving one another in their abominable courses, so that no company pleaseth them but such as have obtained an impudence in sinning, then is the greatest defiance given unto the holiness and righteousness of God.

Now such as these will never seek after cleansing. For why should they do so who are sensible of no spiritual pollution, nor have the least touch of shame with respect thereunto? It is necessary, therefore, unto the duty of purifying our souls, that we be affected with shame for the spiritual defilements which our nature under the loss of the image of God is even rolled in. And where this is not, it will be but lost labour that is spent in the invitation of men to the cleansing fountain.

3. Let persons so affected be fully satisfied, that they can never *cleanse* or *purify* themselves by any endeavours that are merely their own, or by any means of their own finding out. According unto men’s convictions of the defilements of sin, so have and always will their endeavours be after purification; Hos. v. 10. And, indeed, it is the duty of believers to purify themselves more and more in the exercise of all purifying graces, and the use of all means appointed of God for that purpose; 2 Cor. vii. 1. And their neglect thereof is the highest disadvantage; Psal. xxxviii. 5.

But men in the state of nature, concerning whom we now treat, are no way able to cleanse their natures, or purge themselves. He only who can restore, repair, and renew their natures unto the likeness of God, can cleanse them. But here many fall into mistakes. For when by reason of their convictions they can no longer satisfy and please themselves in the pollution of sin, they go about by vain attempts of their own to 'purify their souls;' Hos. v. 13. Jer. ii. 22. Job ix. 30, 31. their own sorrow and repentance, and tears of contrition, and that sorry amendment of life they can attain unto, shall do this work for them. And every especial defiling act, or every renewed sense of it, shall have an especial act of duty for its cleansing. But though these things are good in themselves, yet there is required more wisdom to the right stating of them, as to their causes, respects, ends, and use, than they are furnished withal. Hence are they so frequently abused and turned into an effectual means not only of keeping men off and at a distance from Christ, but also from a due and acceptable performance of the very duties themselves pretended unto. For legal sorrow or repentance, or mere legal convictions, being trusted unto, will infallibly keep the soul from coming up unto that evangelical repentance which alone God accepts. And mere reformation of life rested in, proves opposite to endeavours for the renovation of our natures. But let these duties be performed, however, in what manner you please, they are utterly insufficient of themselves to cleanse our natural defilements. Nor will any seek duly for that which alone is effectual unto this purpose, until they are fully convinced hereof. Let, therefore, sinners hear and know whether they will or will not believe it, that as by nature they are wholly defiled and polluted with those abominations of sin which render them loathsome in the sight of God, so they have no power by any endeavours or duties of their own to cleanse themselves; but by all they do to this end, they do but farther plunge themselves into the ditch, and increase their own defilements; yet are all those duties necessary in their proper place and unto their proper end.

4. It is, therefore, their duty to *acquaint themselves* with that only *remedy* in this case, that only means of cleansing which God hath appointed, and which he makes effectual.



One great end of the revelation of the will of God from the foundation of the world of his institutions and ordinances of worship, was to direct the souls and consciences of men in and unto the way of their cleansing, which as it argues his infinite love and care, so the great importance by the matter itself. And one principal means which Satan from the beginning made use of to keep men in their apostacy from God, and to encourage them therein, was by supplying them with innumerable ways of purifications suited to the imaginations of their dark, unbelieving and superstitious minds. And in like manner when he designed to draw men off from Christ and the gospel under the papacy, he did it principally by the suggestion of such present and future purgatories of sin as might comply with their lusts and ignorance; of so great importance is it, therefore, to be acquainted with the only true real way and means hereof. And there are two considerations that are suited to excite the diligence of sinners in this inquiry. (1.) The *weight* that is laid on this matter by God himself. (2.) The *difficulty* of attaining an acquaintance with it. And, [1.] as hath been observed, any one by considering the legal institutions of old will see what weight God lays hereon. No sacrifice had any respect unto sin, but there was somewhat peculiar in it that was for its cleansing. And there were sundry ceremonious ordinances which had no other end but only to purify from uncleannesses. [2.] Among all the promises of the Old Testament concerning the establishment of the new covenant and the grace thereof, which are many and precious, there are none more eminent than those which concern our cleansing from sin by the administration of the Spirit, through the blood of Christ. Some of them have been mentioned before. Which also farther manifests the care that God hath taken for our instruction herein. [3.] There is nothing more pressed on us, nothing more frequently proposed unto us in the gospel, than the necessity of our purification and the only way of effecting it. If, therefore, either instructions, or promises, or precepts, or all concurring, may evidence the importance of a duty, then is this manifested to partake therein. And those who will prefer the guidance of carnal reason and vain traditions before these heavenly directions, shall live in their ignorance and

die in their sins. (2.) The *difficulty* of attaining an acquaintance with it, is to be duly considered. It is a part of the mystery of the gospel, and such a part as is among those which the wisdom of the world or carnal reason esteemeth foolishness. It is not easily admitted nor received, that we can no otherwise be cleansed from our sins but by the sprinkling of that blood which was shed so long ago. Yet this and no other way doth the Scripture propose unto us: to fancy that there is any cleansing from sin but by the blood of Christ, is to overthrow the gospel. The doctrine hereof are persons, therefore, obliged to inquire after and come to the knowledge of, that being satisfied with its truth, and that this is the only way of cleansing sin, appointed and blessed by God himself, their minds may be exercised about it, and so be taken off from resting on those vain medicines and remedies, which (having nothing else to fix upon) their own hearts, and others' blind devotions, would suggest unto them.

5. But now the great inquiry is, How a *sinful defiled soul* may come to have an interest in, or be partaker of, the purifying virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ? *Ans.* 1. The *purifying* virtue and force of the blood of Christ, with the administration of the Spirit for its application to make it effectual unto our souls and consciences, is proposed and exhibited unto us in the promises of the covenant; 2 Pet. i. 4. This all the instances (which need not be recited), before produced, do testify unto. 2. The only way to be made partaker of the good things presented in the promises, is by *faith*. So Abraham is said to have received the promises; Heb. xi. 17. and so are we also, and to receive Christ himself. Now this is not from their being proposed unto us, but from our believing of that which is proposed, as it is expressed of Abraham; Rom. iv. 19—21. x. 6—9. The whole use, benefit, and advantage, of the promises, depends absolutely on our mixing them with faith, as the apostle declares; Heb. iv. 1. Where they are mixed with faith, there they profit us, there we really receive the thing promised. Where they are not so mixed they are of no use, but to aggravate our sins and unbelief. I know that by some men the whole nature and work of faith is derided. They say it is nothing but a strong fixing of the imagination upon what is said.

However, we know that if a man promise us any thing seriously and solemnly, which is absolutely in his power, we trust unto his word or believe him, considering his wisdom, honesty, and ability. This we know is not a mere fixing of the imagination, but it is a real and useful confidence or trust. And whereas God hath given unto us great and precious promises, and that under several confirmations, especially that of his oath and covenant, if we do really believe their accomplishment, and that it shall be unto us according to his word, upon the account of his veracity, divine power, righteousness, and holiness; why shall this be esteemed a fanatical fixing of the imagination? If it be so, it was so in Abraham our example; Rom. iv. 19—21. But this blasphemous figment, designed to the overthrow of the way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, shall be elsewhere more fully examined. God, as was said, gives unto us great and precious promises, that by them we might be made partakers of the divine nature. These promises he requireth us to receive, and to mix them with faith; that is, trusting to and resting on his divine power and veracity, ascribing unto him thereby the glory of them, to believe that the things promised unto us shall be accomplished, which is the means, by God's appointment, whereby we shall be really made partakers of them. Such was the faith of Abraham, so celebrated by our apostle; and such was all the true and saving faith that ever was in the world from the foundation of it. Wherefore, 3. this is the *only way* and means to obtain an interest in the *cleansing virtue* of the blood of Christ. God hath given this power and efficacy unto it by the covenant. In the promise of the gospel it is proposed and tendered unto us. Faith in that promise, is that alone which gives us an interest in it, makes us partakers of it, and renders it actually effectual unto us, whereby we are really cleansed from sin. 4. There are two things which concur unto the *efficacy of faith* to this purpose: (1.) The *excellency of the grace* or duty itself. Despise their ignorance who tell you this is but a deceitful fixing of the imagination, for they know not what they say. When men come to the real practice of this duty, they will find what it is to discard all other ways and pretences of cleansing, what it is sincerely and really to give unto God, against all difficulties and opposi-

tions, the glory of his power, faithfulness, goodness, and grace; what it is to approve of the wisdom and love of God in finding out this way for us, and the infiniteness of his grace in providing it, when we were lost and under the curse, and to be filled with a holy admiration of him on that account, all which belong unto the faith mentioned, neither is it nor can it be acted in a due manner without them; and when you understand these things, you will not think it so strange that God should appoint this way of believing only as the means to interest us in the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ. (2.) Hereby are we, as hath been shewn, *united* unto Christ, from whom alone is our *cleansing*; he that declares another way must make another gospel.

6. *Faith*, in this case, will act itself in and by *fervent prayer*. When David had, by sin, brought himself into that condition wherein he stood in need of a new universal purification, how earnest is he in his supplications, that God would again ‘purge and cleanse him;’ Psal. li. And when any soul is really coming over to the way of God for his washing in the blood of Christ, he will not be more earnest and fervent in any supplication than in this; and herein, and hereby, doth Christ communicate of the purging efficacy of his blood unto us. And these things may, in some measure, suffice for the direction and guidance of those who are yet wholly under the pollution of corrupted nature, how they may proceed to get themselves cleansed according to the mind of God. Not that this order or method is prescribed unto any; only, these are the heads of those things, which, in one degree or other, are wrought in the souls of them whom Christ will and doth cleanse from their sins.

Secondly, Instruction, also, may be hence taken for them, concerning whom our apostle says, ‘Such were you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;’ 1 Cor. vi. 9. Such as are freed from the general pollution of nature, by the ‘washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;’ Tit. iii. 5. Those, I mean, who have been made partakers of that cleansing purifying work of the Holy Ghost, which we have described; several duties are incumbent on them with respect hereunto. As,

1. Continual *self-abasement*, in the remembrance of that



woful defiled state and condition from whence they have been delivered. This consideration is one of them which principally doth influence the minds of believers unto humility, and hideth pride from them. For what should creatures of such a base and defiled extraction have to boast of in themselves? It is usual, I confess, for vile men of the most contemptible beginnings, when they are greatly exalted in the world, to outgo others in pride and elation of mind, as they are behind them in the advantages of birth and education. But this is esteemed a vile thing amongst men; and it is but one potsherd of the earth boasting itself against another. But when believers shall consider, what was their vile and polluted estate, with respect unto God, when first he had regard unto them, it will cause them to walk humbly in a deep sense of it, or I am sure it ought so to do. God calls his people to self-abasement, not only from what they are, but from what they were; and whence they came. So he ordained that confession to be made by him that offered the first-fruits of his fields and possessions; 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father,' or a Syrian, that is, Laban, was ready to destroy my father, a poor helpless man, that went from one country to another for bread. How is it of sovereign mercy that I am now in this state and condition of plenty and peace? Deut. xvi. 4, 5. And, in particular, God wonderfully binds upon them the sense of that defiled natural extraction whereof we speak; Ezek. xvi. 3—5. And when David upon his great sin and his repentance, took in all humbling self-abasing considerations, here he fixeth the head of them; Psal. li. 5. 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' His original natural defilement was that which in the first place influenced him into self-abasement. So our apostle frequently calls the saints to a remembrance of their former condition before they were purged; Eph. ii. 11—13. 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9. and therewith are the minds of all true believers greatly affected and greatly humbled. When they consider what was their natural state and condition, universally leprous and polluted, with what remainders of it do still abide, it casts them on the earth, and causeth them to lay their mouths in the dust. Hence proceed their great and deep humiliations of themselves, and confessions of their own vileness in their prayers and sup-

plications. Considering the holiness of God, with whom they have to do, unto whom they do approach, they are no way able to express what low thoughts and apprehensions they have of themselves. Even God himself doth teach them to use figurative expressions whereby to declare their own vileness by nature, which abound in the Scripture. It is true, all declarations hereof, in prayer and confession of sin, are derided and scorned by some, who seem to understand nothing of these things, yea, to glory that they do not. Whatever is spoken to express, as they are able, the deep sense any have of their natural defilement with the remainder of it, their shame and self-abasement with respect unto the holiness of God, is reputed either as false and hypocritical, or that it containeth such things as for which men ought to be hanged; such prodigious impudence in proclaiming a senselessness of the holiness of God, and of the vileness of sin, have we lived to see and hear of. But when we have to deal with God, who puts no trust in his servants, and chargeth his angels with folly, what shall we say? What lowliness becomes them 'who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth?'

2. That *initial deliverance* which believers have from their *original pollution* of sin, is a matter and cause of everlasting thankfulness. When our Lord Jesus Christ cleansed the ten lepers, he manifests how much it was their duty to return unto him with their thankful acknowledgment, though nine of them failed therein; Luke xvii. 17. And when of old any one was cleansed from a carnal defilement, there was an offering enjoined him to testify his gratitude. And, indeed, the consideration hereof is that which in an eminent manner influenceth the minds of believers in all their grateful ascriptions of glory, honour, and praise to Jesus Christ. 'To him,' say they, 'who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever;' Rev. i. 5, 6. And there are three things which concur to this duty. (1.) A due *valuation* of the causes and means of our purification; namely, the *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ in the sanctification of the Spirit. As these alone have effected this great work, so they alone were able so to do. Had we not been washed in the blood of Christ, we must have lived and died in our pollutions, and have lain under

them to eternity. For the fire of hell will never purge the defilements of sin, much less will the fictitious fire of purgatory cleanse any from them. How ought we then to prize, value, and admire, both the virtue or efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the love from whence it was given for us, and is applied unto us. And because this valuation and admiration are acts of faith, the very work itself, also, of cleansing our souls is carried on by them. For by the exercise of faith, do we continually derive virtue from Christ to this purpose, as the woman did by touching of his garment, for the stopping of her issue of blood. (2.) *Inward joy* and satisfaction in our freedom from that *shame* which deprived us of all boldness and confidence in God. This internal joy belongs unto the duty of thankfulness. For therein is God glorified when we are graciously sensible of the effects of his love and kindness towards us. Every grace then glorifies God, and expresseth our thankfulness for his love, when a soul finds itself really affected with a sense of its being washed from all its loathsome defilements in the blood of Christ, and, being thereby freed from discouraging oppressing shame, to have filial boldness in the presence of God. (3.) *Acknowledgment* in a way of actual praise.

Again, We have declared not only that there is in our natural frame and spiritual constitution a discrepancy to the holiness of God, and consequently a universal defilement, but that there is from its pravity and disorder a *pollution* attending every *actual sin*, whether *internal* of the heart and mind only, or *external* in sin perpetrated, averse to holiness, and contrary to the carrying on of the work of sanctification in us. And sundry things, believers whose concernment alone this is, may learn from hence also. As,

1. How they ought to *watch against sin*, and all the motions of it, though never so secret. They all of them defile the conscience. And it is an evidence of a gracious soul to be watchful against sin on this account. Convictions will make men wary where they are prevalent, by continual representations of the danger and punishment of sin: and these are an allowable motive to believers themselves to abstain from it in all known instances. The consideration of the terror of the Lord, the use of the threatenings both of the law and gospel, declare this to be our duty. Neither let any

say, that this is servile fear; that denomination is taken from the frame of our minds, and not from the object feared. When men so fear as thereon to be discouraged, and to incline unto a relinquishment of God, duty, and hope, that fear is servile whatever be the object of it. And that fear which keeps from sin, and excites the soul to cleave more firmly to God, be the object of it what it will, is no servile fear, but a holy fear of due reverence unto God and his word. But this is the most genuinely gracious fear of sin, when we dread the defilement of it, and that contrariety which is in it to the holiness of God. This is a natural fruit of faith, and love. And this consideration should always greatly possess our minds; and the truth is, if it do not so, there is no assured preservative against sin. For together with an apprehension of that spiritual pollution wherewith sin is accompanied, thoughts of the holiness of God, of the care and concernment of the sanctifying Spirit, of the blood of Christ, will continually abide in our minds, which are all efficaciously preservative against sin. I think that there is no more forcible argument unto watchfulness against all sin unto believers in the whole book of God, than that which is managed by our apostle, with especial respect unto one kind of sin, but may in proportion be extended unto to all; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. iv. 15. 19. Moreover, where this is not, where the soul hath no respect to the defilement of sin, but only considers how it may shift with the guilt of it, innumerable things will interpose, partly arising from the abuse of grace, partly from carnal hopes and foolish resolutions for after-times, as will set it at liberty from that watchful diligence in universal obedience which is required of us. The truth is, I do not believe that any one that is awed only with respect to the guilt of sin, and its consequents, doth keep up a firm integrity with regard to inward and outward actings of his heart and life in all things. But where the fear of the Lord and of sin is influenced by a deep apprehension of the holiness of the one, and the pollution that inseparably attends the other, there is the soul kept always upon its best guard and defence.

2. How we ought to *walk humbly* before the Lord all our days. Notwithstanding our utmost watchfulness and diligence against sin, there is yet 'no man that liveth and sinneth not.' Those who pretend unto a perfection here, as they



manifest themselves to be utterly ignorant of God and themselves, and despise the blood of Christ, so for the most part they are left visibly and in the sight of men to confute their own pride and folly. But to what purpose is it to hide ourselves from ourselves, when we have to do with God? God knows and our own souls know, that more or less we are defiled in all that we do. The best of our works and duties brought into the presence of the holiness of God are but as filthy rags. And man even every man of himself drinketh in iniquity like water. Our own clothes are ready to defile us every day. Who can express the motions of lust that are in the flesh, the irregular actings of affections, in their inordinate risings up to their objects, the folly of the imaginations of our hearts and minds, which as far as they are not principled by grace are only evil, and that continually; with the vanity of our words, yea, with a mixture of much corrupt communications, all which are defiling, and have defilements attending of them? I confess I know not that my heart and soul abhors any eruption of the diabolical pride of man, like that whereby they reproach and scoff at the deepest humiliations and self-abasements which poor sinners can attain unto in their prayers, confessions, and supplications. Alas! that our nature should be capable of such a contempt of the holiness of God, such an ignorance of the infinite distance that is between him and us, and be so senseless of our own vileness, and of the abominable filth and pollution that is in every sin, as not to tremble at the despising of the lowest abasements of poor sinners before the holy God. 'Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.'

3. How we ought continually to endeavour after the *wasting* of sin in the *root* and principle of it. There is a root of sin in us which springs up and defiles us. 'Every man is tempted' (that is, chiefly and principally) 'of his own lust,' and seduced, and then 'when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin.' It is the flesh that lusteth against the spirit, and which bringeth forth corrupted and corrupting, polluted and polluting fruits. This principle of sin, of aversation from God, of inclination unto things sensual and present, however wounded, weakened, dethroned, impaired, yet still abides in all believers. And it is the foundation, the spring, the root,

the next cause of all sin in us, which tempts, enticeth, draws aside, conceives, and brings forth. And this hath in us all more or less degrees of strength, power, and activity, according as it is more or less mortified by grace, and the application of the virtue of the death of Christ unto our souls. And according to its strength and power, so it abounds in bringing forth the defiled acts of sin. Whilst this retains any considerable power in us, it is to no purpose to set ourselves merely to watch against the eruptions of actual sins, in the frames of our hearts, in the thoughts of our minds, or outward actions. If we would preserve ourselves from multiplying our defilements, if we would continually be perfecting the work of holiness in the fear of the Lord, it is this we must set ourselves against. The tree must be made good if we expect good fruit, and the evil root must be digged up or evil fruit will be brought forth. That is, our main design should be to crucify and destroy the body of the sins of the flesh that is in us, the remainders of the flesh or indwelling sin, by the ways and means which shall afterward be declared.

4. Hence also is manifest the necessity we have of *continual applications* to Jesus Christ for *cleansing virtue* from his Spirit, and the sprinkling of his blood on our consciences, in the efficacy of it to purge them from dead works. We defile ourselves every day, and if we go not every day to the fountain that is 'open for sin and for uncleanness,' we shall quickly be all over leprous. Our consciences will be filled with dead works, so that we shall no way be able to serve the living God, unless they are daily purged out. How this is done hath been at large before declared. When a soul, filled with self-abasement, under a sense of its own defilements, applies itself unto Christ by faith for cleansing, and that constantly and continually, with a fervency answering its sense and convictions, it is in its way and proper course. I am persuaded no true believer in the world is a stranger unto this duty. And the more any one abounds therein, the more genuine is his faith evidenced to be, and the more humble is his walk before the Lord.

But it may justly be inquired, upon all that we have discoursed upon this subject concerning the *defilement* of sin, how, if it be so, believers can be *united unto Jesus Christ*, or

be *members* of that mystical body, whereof he is the head, or obtain *fellowship* with him. For whereas he is absolutely *pure*, holy, and perfect, how can he have *union* or *communion* with them who are in any thing *defiled*? There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, no communion of light and darkness, and what can there be between Christ and those that are defiled with sin? And because he is 'holy, harmless, and undefiled,' he is said to be 'separate from sinners.'

Many things must be returned unto this objection, all concurring to take away the seeming difficulty that is in it. As,

1. It must be granted, that where men are *wholly* under the power of their original defilement, they neither have nor can have either union or communion with Christ. With respect unto such persons, the rules before mentioned are universally true and certain: there is no more communion between them and Jesus Christ, than is between light and darkness, as the apostle speaks expressly; 1 John i. 6. Whatever profession they may make of his name, whatever expectations they may unduly raise from him in their own minds, he will say unto them at the last day; 'Depart from me, I never knew you.' No person therefore whatever, who hath not been made partaker of the washing of regeneration and the renovation of the Holy Ghost, can possibly have any union with Christ. I do not speak this, as though our purifying were in order of time or nature, antecedent unto our union with Christ, for indeed it is an effect thereof. But it is such an effect as immediately and inseparably accompanieth it; so that where the one is not, there is not the other. The act whereby he unites us unto himself, is the same with that whereby he cleanseth our natures.

2. Whatever our *defilements* are, or may be, he is not *defiled* by them. They adhere only unto a capable subject, which Christ is not. He was capable to have the guilt of our sins imputed to him, but not the filth of one sin adhering to him. A member of a body may have a putrefied sore. The head may be troubled at it, and grieved with it, yet is not defiled by it. Wherefore, where there is a radical original cleansing by the Spirit of regeneration and holiness, whereby any one is meet for union and communion with

Christ, however he may be affected with our partial pollutions, he is not defiled by them; he is able *συμπαθεῖν*, *com-pati*, *condolere*, he suffers with us in his compassion; but he is not liable *συμμολύνεσθαι*, to be defiled with us, or for us. The visible mystical body of Christ may be defiled by corrupt members; Heb. xii. 15. but the mystical body cannot be so, much less the head.

3. The design of Christ when he takes believers into union with himself is to *purge and cleanse* them absolutely and perfectly; and therefore the present remainders of some defilements are not absolutely inconsistent with that union. 'He gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he may present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish; Eph. v. 26, 27. This he aims at; and this he will, in his own way, and in his own time, perfectly accomplish. But it is not done at once, it is a progressive work, that hath many degrees. God did never sanctify any soul at once, unless by death. The body must die by reason of sin. Every believer is truly and really sanctified at once, but none is perfectly sanctified at once. It is not therefore necessary unto union that we should be completely sanctified, though it is that we should be truly sanctified. Complete sanctification is a necessary effect of union in its proper time and season. See John xv. 1—5.

4. Where the work of sanctification and spiritual cleansing is really begun in any, there the whole person is, and is thence denominated holy. As therefore Christ the head is holy, so are all the members holy according to their measure. For although there may be defilements adhering unto their actions, yet their persons are sanctified. So that no unholy person hath any communion with Christ, no member of his body is unholy, that is, absolutely so, in such a state as thence to be denominated unholy.

5. Our union with Christ is immediately in and by the *new creature* in us, by the divine nature which is from the Spirit of holiness, and is pure and holy. Hereunto and hereby doth the Lord Christ communicate himself unto our souls and consciences; and hereby have we all our intercourse with him. Other adherences that have any defilement in



them, and consequently are opposite unto this union, he daily worketh out by virtue hereof; Rom. viii. 10. The whole body of Christ, therefore, and all that belongs unto it is holy, though those who are members of this body are in themselves oft-times polluted, but not in any thing which belongs to their union. The apostle describeth the twofold nature, or principle that is in believers, the new nature by grace, and the old of sin, as a double person; Rom. vii. 19, 20. And it is the former, the renewed (and not the latter, which he calls I also, but corrects as it were that expression, calling it 'sin which dwelleth in him'), that is the subject of the union with Christ, the other being to be destroyed.

6. Where the *means of purification* are duly used, no defilement ensues on any sin that believers fall into, which doth or can totally obstruct communion with God in Christ according to the tenor of the covenant. There were many things under the Old Testament that did typically and legally defile men that were liable unto them. But for all of them were provided typical and legal purifications, which sanctified them as to the purifying of the flesh. Now no man was absolutely cut off or separated from the people of God for his being so defiled; but he that being defiled did not take care that he might be purified according to the law, he was to be cut off from among the people. It is in like manner in things spiritual and evangelical. There are many sins whereby believers are defiled. But there is a way of cleansing still open unto them. And it is not merely the incidence of a defilement, but the neglect of purification that is inconsistent with their state and interest in Christ. The rule of communion with God, and consequently of union with Christ in its exercise, is expressed by David, Psal. xix. 12, 13. 'Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret sins; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.' The design of the Psalmist is to be preserved in such a state and condition, as wherein he may be upright before God. To be upright before God is that which God requireth of us in the covenant, that we may be accepted with him, and enjoy the promises thereof; Gen. xvii. 1. He that is so, will be freed from that great transgression, or that abun-

dance of sin which is inconsistent with the covenant, love, and favour of God. And hereunto three things are required: (1.) A constant humble acknowledgment of sin; ‘Who can understand his errors?’ (2.) Daily cleansing from those defilements which the least and most secret sins are accompanied withal. ‘Cleanse thou me from secret sins;’ and, (3.) A preservation from presumptuous sins, or wilful sins committed with a high hand. Where these things are, there a man is upright, and hath the covenant-ground of his communion with God. And whilst believers are preserved within these bounds, though they are defiled by sin, yet is there not any thing therein, inconsistent with their union with Christ.

7. Our blessed head is not only *pure* and holy, but he is also gracious and merciful, and will not presently cut off a member of his body, because it is sick, or hath a sore upon it. He is himself passed through his course of temptations, and is now above the reach of them all. Doth he, therefore, reject and despise those that are tempted, that labour and suffer under their temptations? It is quite otherwise, so that on the account of his own present state his compassions do exceedingly abound towards all his that are tempted. It is no otherwise with him as to their sins and defilements. These he himself was absolutely freed from in all his temptations and sufferings, but we are not. And he is so far from casting us away on that account, while we endeavour after purification, as that it draweth out his compassions towards us. In brief, he doth not unite us to himself, because we are perfect, but that in his own way and time he may make us so; not because we are clean, but that he may cleanse us; for it is the blood of Jesus Christ, with whom we have fellowship, that cleanseth us from all our sins.

Lastly, To wind up this discourse, there is hence sufficiently evidenced a comprehensive difference between a *spiritual life* unto God by *evangelical holiness*, and a *life of moral virtue* though pretended unto God also. Unto the first, the original and continual purification of our nature and persons by the Spirit of God and blood of Christ is indispensably required. Where this work is not, there neither is nor can be any thing of that holiness, which the gospel prescribes, and which we inquire after. Unless the purification and

cleansing of sin belongs necessarily unto the holiness of the new covenant, all that God hath taught us concerning it in the Old Testament and the New, by his institution of legal purifying ordinances, by his promises to wash, purify, and cleanse us, by his precepts to get ourselves cleansed by the means of our purification, namely, his Spirit and the blood of Christ, by his instructions and directions of us to make use of those means of our cleansing, by his declarations that believers are so washed and cleansed from all their defilements of their sins, are things fanatical, enthusiastic notions, and unintelligible dreams. Until men can rise up to a confidence enabling them to own such horrible blasphemies, I desire to know, whether these things are required unto their morality? If they shall say they are so, they give us a new notion of morality never yet heard of in the world; and we must expect until they have farther cleared it, there being little or no signification in the great swelling words of vanity, which have hitherto been lavished about it; but if they do not belong thereunto, as it is most certain, the most improved moralists that are only so, whether in notion or practice, have no regard unto them; then is their life of moral virtue (were it as real in them as it is with notorious vanity pretended), cast out from all consideration in a serious disquisition after evangelical holiness. And what hath been spoken may suffice to give us some light into the nature of this first act of our sanctification by the Spirit, which consists in the cleansing of our souls and consciences from the pollutions of sin, both original and actual.

END OF VOL. II.