

BOOK IV.

THE NATURE

OF

SANCTIFICATION AND GOSPEL HOLINESS

EXPLAINED.

CHAP. I.

Regeneration the way whereby the Spirit forms living members for the mystical body of Christ. Carried on by sanctification ; 2 Thess. v. 23. opened. God the only author of our sanctification and holiness. And that as the God of peace. Sanctification described. A diligent inquiry into the nature whereof, with that of holiness, proved necessary. Sanctification twofold: 1. By external dedication ; 2. By internal purification. Holiness peculiar to the gospel and its truth. Not discernible to the eye of carnal reason. Hardly understood by believers themselves. It passeth over into eternity. Hath in it a present glory. Is all that God requireth of us, and in what sense. Promised unto us. How we are to improve the command for holiness.

IN the regeneration or conversion of God's elect, the nature and manner whereof we have before described, consists the second part of the work of the Holy Spirit, in order unto the completing and perfecting of the new creation. As in the former he prepared a natural body for the Son of God, wherein he was to obey and suffer according to his will, so by this latter he prepares him a mystical body, or members spiritually living, by uniting them unto him who is their head and their life; Col. iii. 4. 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ;' 1 Cor. xii. 12. Nor doth he leave this work in that beginning of it whereof we have treated, but unto him also it belongs to continue it, to preserve it, and to carry it on to perfection.

And this he doth in our sanctification, whose nature and effects we are in the next place to inquire into.

Our apostle in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. v. having closely compiled a great number of weighty, particular, evangelical duties, and annexed sundry motives and enforcements unto them, closeth all his holy prescriptions with a fervent prayer for them; ver. 23. 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and let your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Or, as I had rather read the words, 'And God himself, even the God of peace, sanctify you throughout, that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless.' The reason hereof is, because all the graces and duties which he had enjoined them, did belong unto their sanctification, which, though their own duty, was not absolutely in their own power, but was a work of God in them and upon them. Therefore that they might be able thereunto, and might actually comply with his commands, he prays that God would thus sanctify them throughout. That this shall be accomplished in them and for them, he gives them assurance from the faithfulness (and consequently power and unchangeableness which are included therein) of him who had undertaken to effect it; ver. 24. 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.' Now whereas this assurance did not arise, nor was taken from any thing that was peculiar unto them, but merely from the consideration of the faithfulness of God himself, it is equal with respect unto all that are effectually called. They shall all infallibly be sanctified throughout, and preserved blameless to the coming of Jesus Christ. This therefore being the great privilege of believers, and their eternal safety absolutely depending thereon, it requires our utmost diligence to search into the nature and necessity of it; which may be done from this and the like places of Scripture.

And in this place, 1. the *author* of our sanctification, who only is so, is asserted to be 'God.' He is the eternal spring and only fountain of all holiness; there is nothing of it in any creature, but what is directly and immediately from him. There was not in our first creation. He made us in his own image. And to suppose that we can now sanctify or make ourselves holy, is proudly to renounce and cast off our

principal dependance upon him. We may as wisely and rationally contend, that we have not our being and our lives from God, as that we have not our holiness from him, when we have any. Hereunto are the proud opinions of educating a holiness out of the principles of nature to be reduced. I know all men will pretend that holiness is from God, it was never denied by Pelagius himself. But many with him would have it to be from God in a way of nature, and not in a way of especial grace. It is this latter way which we plead for; and what is from ourselves, or educed by any means out of our natural abilities, is not of God in that way. For God, as the author of grace, and the best of corrupted nature, are opposed, as we shall see farther afterward. And therefore, 2. is he that is the author of our sanctification so emphatically here expressed, *αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Θεός*, ‘Even God himself;’ if he doth it not, none other can do it; it is no otherwise to be wrought nor effected: there is no other way whereby it may be brought about, nor doth it fall under the power or efficacy of any means absolutely whatever, but it must be wrought by God himself. He doth it of himself, from his own grace; by himself, or his own power; for himself, or his own glory: And that, 3. under this especial consideration, as he is the ‘God of peace.’

This title is ascribed unto God only by our apostle, and by him frequently; Rom. xv. 33. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 20. Were it unto our present purpose to discourse concerning the general nature of peace, I might shew how it is comprehensive of all order, rest, and blessedness, and all that is in them. On this account the enclosure of it in this title unto God as its only possessor and author, belongs to the glory of his sovereign diadem. Every thing that is contrary unto it, is evil, and of the evil one; yea, all that is evil is so, because of its contrariety unto peace. Well therefore may God be styled the God of peace. But these things I may not here stay to explain; although the words are so comprehensive and expressive of the whole work of sanctification, and that holiness which is the effect thereof, as that I shall choose to found my whole discourse concerning this subject upon them. That which offers itself unto our present design from this expression, is the peculiar respect unto the work of our sanctification which lies in this

especial property of God. Wherefore he is said to sanctify us as the God of peace. (1.) Because it is a fruit and effect of that peace with himself which he hath made and prepared for us by Jesus Christ. For he was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, destroying the enmity which entered by sin, and laying the foundation of eternal peace. From hence it is, that he will sanctify us or make us holy, without a respect whereunto he would no more do so, than he will sanctify again the angels that have sinned, for whom there is no peace made, nor atonement. (2.) God, by the sanctification of our natures and persons preserves that peace with himself in its exercise, which he made and procured by the mediation of Christ; without which it could not be kept, nor continued. For in the duties and fruits thereof, consist all those actings towards God which a state of reconciliation, peace, and friendship do require. It is holiness that keeps up a sense of peace with God, and prevents those spiritual breaches which the remainders of our enmity would occasion. Hence God, as the author of our peace, is the author of our holiness. God, even God himself, the God of peace, doth sanctify us. How this is done immediately by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and peace, and wherein the nature of this work doth consist, are the things which must afterward be more fully declared. And he is here said to sanctify us *ὁλοτελείς*, that is, ‘universally and completely;’ carrying on the work until it comes to perfection. For two things are intended in that expression: 1. That our whole nature is the subject of this work, and not any one faculty or part of it. 2. That as the work itself is sincere and universal, communicating all parts of real holiness unto our whole natures, so it is carried on to completeness and perfection. Both these, in the ensuing words, the apostle expresseth as the end and design of his prayer for them, and the effect of the work of grace which he prayed for. For, (1.) the subject of this sanctification he makes to be our whole natures, which he distributes unto our entire spirits, souls, and bodies; and, (2.) the end of the whole is, the preservation of us blameless in the peace of God unto the coming of Christ, which will both of them be immediately more fully spoken unto. Wherefore,

Sanctification, as here described, *is the immediate work of*

God by his Spirit upon our whole natures, proceeding from the peace made for us by Jesus Christ, whereby, being changed into his likeness, we are kept entirely in peace with God, and are preserved unblamable, or in a state of gracious acceptation with him, according to the terms of the covenant, unto the end.

The nature of this work and its effect, which is our holiness, with the necessity of them both, we must on many accounts with our utmost diligence inquire and search into. This both the importance of the truth itself, and the opposition that is made unto it, render necessary. Besides, whereas we are in the declaration of the especial operations of the Holy Ghost, although he be not so denominated originally from this peculiar work, as though he should be called holy merely because he is the author of holiness in all that are made partakers of it, which we have before disproved; yet there is a general consent, in words at least, among all who are called Christians, that this is his immediate and proper work, or that he is the only sanctifier of all them that do believe: and this I shall take as yet for granted, although some among us, who not only pretend high to the preaching of holiness (whatever be their practice), but reproach others as weakening the necessity of it, do talk at such a rate as if in the holiness which they pleaded for, he had nothing to do in a peculiar manner. For it is no news to meet with quaint and gilded discourses about holiness, intermixed with scoffing reflections on the work of the Holy Ghost therein. This work, therefore, of his we are in an especial manner to attend unto; unless we would be found among the number of such as those who own themselves, and teach their children, That the 'Holy Ghost sanctifies all the elect of God,' and yet not only despise the work of holiness in themselves, but deride those who plead an interest therein as an effect of the sanctification of the Spirit. For, such fruits of secret atheism doth the world abound withal. But our principal duty in this world, is to know aright what it is to be holy, and so to be indeed.

One thing we must premise to clear our ensuing discourse from ambiguity. And this is, that there is mention in the Scripture of a *twofold sanctification*, and consequently of a twofold holiness. The first is common unto persons and things, consisting in the peculiar dedication, consecration,

or separation of them unto the service of God by his own appointment, whereby they become holy. Thus the priests and Levites of old, the ark, the altar, the tabernacle, and the temple, were sanctified and made holy. And indeed in all holiness whatever there is a peculiar dedication and separation unto God. But in the sense mentioned, this was solitary and alone; no more belonged unto it but this sacred separation, nor was there any other effect of this sanctification. But (secondly) there is another kind of sanctification and holiness, wherein this separation to God is not the first thing done or intended, but a consequent and effect thereof. This is real and internal, by the communicating of a principle of holiness unto our natures, attended with its exercise in acts and duties of holy obedience unto God. This is that which in the first place we inquire after, and how far believers are therein and thereby peculiarly separated and dedicated unto God, shall be afterward declared. And unto what we have to deliver concerning it we shall make way by the ensuing observations.

1. This whole matter of sanctification and holiness is peculiarly joined with, and limited unto the *doctrine, truth, and grace*, of the gospel; for holiness is nothing but the implanting, writing, and realizing, of the gospel in our souls. Hence it is termed *ὁσιότης τῆς ἀληθείας*, Eph. iv. 24. ‘The holiness of truth,’ which the truth of the gospel ingenerates, and which consists in a conformity thereunto; and the gospel itself is *ἀλήθεια κατ’ ἐνσέβειαν*, Tit. i. 1. ‘The truth which is according unto godliness,’ which declares that godliness and holiness which God requireth. The prayer also of our Saviour for our sanctification is conformed thereunto; John xvii. 17. ‘Sanctify them in (or by) thy truth, thy word is truth.’ And he sanctified himself for us, to be a sacrifice, that ‘we might be sanctified in the truth.’ This alone is that truth ‘which makes us free; John viii. 12. that is, from sin and the law, unto righteousness in holiness. It belongs neither to nature nor the law, so as to proceed from them, or to be effected by them. Nature is wholly corrupted and contrary unto it. The law indeed for certain ends was given by Moses, but all ‘grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.’ There neither is, nor ever was, in the world, nor ever shall be, the least dram of holiness, but what, flowing from Jesus

Christ, is communicated by the Spirit, according to the truth and promise of the gospel. There may be something like it as to its outward acts and effects (at least some of them), something that may wear its livery in the world, that is but the fruit of men's own endeavours in compliance with their convictions, but holiness it is not, nor of the same kind or nature with it. And this men are very apt to deceive themselves withal. It is the design of corrupted reason to debase all the glorious mysteries of the gospel, and all the concernments of them. There is nothing in the whole mystery of godliness, from the highest crown of it, which is the person of Christ, 'God manifested in the flesh,' unto the lowest and nearest effect of his grace, but it labours to deprave, dishonour, and debase. The Lord Christ, it would have in his whole person to be but a mere man, in his obedience and suffering to be but an example, in his doctrine to be confined unto the capacity and comprehension of carnal reason, and the holiness which he communicates by the sanctification of his Spirit, to be but that moral virtue which is common among men as the fruit of their own endeavours. Herein, some will acknowledge that men are guided and directed to a great advantage by the doctrine of the gospel, and thereunto excited by motions of the Holy Ghost himself put forth in the dispensation of that truth; but any thing else in it, more excellent, more mysterious, they will not allow. But these low and carnal imaginations are exceedingly unworthy of the grace of Christ, the glory of the gospel, the mystery of the recovery of our nature, and healing of the wound it received by the entrance of sin, with the whole design of God in our restoration into a state of communion with himself. Moral virtue is indeed the best thing amongst men that is of them. It far exceeds in worth, use, and satisfaction, all that the honours, powers, profits, and pleasures of the world can extend unto. And it is admirable to consider, what instructions are given concerning it, what expressions are made of its excellency, what encomiums of its use and beauty by learned contemplative men among the heathen, the wisest of whom did acknowledge, that there was yet something in it which they could only admire, and not comprehend. And very eminent instances of the practice of it were given in the lives and conversations of some

of them. And as the examples of their righteousness, moderation, temperance, equanimity, in all conditions, rise up at present unto the shame and reproach of many that are called Christians, so they will be called over at the last day, as an aggravation of their condemnation. But to suppose that this moral virtue, whatever it be really in its own nature, or however advanced in the imaginations of men, is that holiness of truth which believers receive by the Spirit of Christ, is to debase it, to overthrow it, and to drive the souls of men from seeking an interest in it. And hence it is that some pretending highly a friends up and respect unto it, do yet hate, despise, and reproach what is really so, pleasing themselves with the empty name, or withered carcass of virtue, every way inferior as interpreted in their practice to the righteousness of heathens. And this in the first place should stir up our diligence in our inquiries after its true and real nature, that we deceive not ourselves with a false appearance of it, and that unto our ruin.

2. It is our duty to inquire into the nature of *evangelical holiness*, as it is a fruit or effect in us of the *Spirit of sanctification*, because it is abstruse and mysterious, and (be it spoken with the good leave of some, or whether they will or no) undiscernible unto the eye of *carnal reason*. We may say of it in some sense as Job of wisdom; ‘whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding, seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of heaven; destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears: God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;’ chap. xxviii. 20—23. 28. This is that wisdom whose ways, residence, and paths, are so hidden from the natural reason and understandings of men. No man, I say, by their mere sight and conduct can know and understand aright the true nature of evangelical holiness; and it is, therefore, no wonder if the doctrine of it be despised by many as an enthusiastical fancy. It is of the things of the Spirit of God, yea it is the principal effect of all his operations in us and towards us. And ‘these things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God;’ 1 Cor. ii. 11. It is by him alone that we are enabled to ‘know the things that

are freely given unto us of God;' ver. 12. as this is, if ever we receive any thing of him in this world, or shall do so to eternity. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him:' the comprehension of these things is not the work of any of our natural faculties, but 'God reveals them unto us by his Spirit;' ver. 9, 10. Hence it often falls out, as it did in the Jews and Pharisees of old, that those who are most zealous and industrious for and after a legal righteousness, walking in a strict attendance unto duties proportionable unto light and convictions, pretending to be it, and bearing some resemblance of it, are the most fierce and implacable enemies of true evangelical holiness. They know it not, and therefore hate it; they have embraced something else in its place and stead, and therefore despise and persecute it, as it befalls them who embrace error for truth in any kind.

3. Believers themselves are oft-times much unacquainted with it, either as to their apprehension of its true nature, causes, and effects, or, at least, as to their *own interest* and concernment therein. As we know not of ourselves, the things that are wrought in us of the Spirit of God, so we seldom attend as we ought unto his instructing of us in them. It may seem strange indeed, that, whereas, all believers are sanctified and made holy, that they should not understand, nor apprehend what is wrought in them, and for them, and what abideth with them: but, alas, how little do we know of ourselves, of what we are, and whence are our powers and faculties even in things natural? Do we know how the members of the body are fashioned in the womb? We are apt to be seeking after, and giving reasons for all things, and to describe the progress of the production of our natures from first to last, so as if not to satisfy ourselves, yet to please and amuse others; for, vain man would be wise, although he be like the wild ass's colt. The best issues of our consideration hereof, is that of the psalmist: 'Thou, O God, hast possessed my reins, thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and cu-

riously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect ; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them ;' Psal. cxxxix. 13—16. By diligent consideration of these things, we may obtain a firm foundation to stand on, in a holy admiration of the infinite wisdom and goodness of that sovereign architect, who hath raised this fabric unto his own glory ; and what we farther attempt, is vanity and curiosity. How little do we know of these souls of ours, and all that we do so, is by their powers and operations, which are consequential unto their beings. Now these things are our own naturally, they dwell and abide with us ; they are we, and we are they, and nothing else ; yet is it no easy thing for us to have a reflex and intimate acquaintance with them. And is it strange, if we should be much in the dark unto this new nature, this new creature, which comes from above, from God in heaven, wherewith our natural reason hath no acquaintance ? It is new, it is wonderful, it is a work supernatural, and is known only by supernatural revelation.

Besides there are other things, which pretend to be this gospel holiness and are not, whereby unspeakable multitudes are deluded and deceived. With some, any reformation of life, and abstinence from flagitious sins, with the performance of the common duties of religion, is all which they suppose is required unto this head of their duty. Others contend with violence to substitute moral virtues, by which they know not themselves what they intend, in the room thereof. And there is a work of the law, which in the fruits of it, internal and external, in the works of righteousness and duties, which is hardly, and not but by spiritual light and measures, to be distinguished from it. This also adds to the difficulty of understanding it aright, and should to our diligent inquiry into it.

4. We must also consider, that holiness is not confined to this life, but passeth over into *eternity* and glory. Death hath no power over it to destroy it, or divest us of it. For, (1.) its acts indeed are transient, but its fruits abide for ever in their reward. They who die in the Lord, rest from their labours, ' and their works follow them ;' Rev. xiv. 13. ' God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love ;'

Heb. vi. 10. There is not any effect or fruit of holiness, not the least, not the giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, in the name of a disciple, but it shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and abide for ever in its eternal reward. Nothing shall be lost, but all the fragments of it shall be gathered up and kept safe for ever. Every thing else, how specious soever it be in this world, shall be burnt up and consumed as hay and stubble; when the least, the meanest, the most secret fruit of holiness, shall be gathered as gold and silver, durable substance, into God's treasury, and become a part of the riches of the inheritance of the saints in glory. Let no soul fear the loss of any labour, in any of the duties of holiness, in the most secret contest against sin, for inward purity, for outward fruitfulness, in the mortification of sin, resistance of temptations, improvement of grace, in patience, moderation, self-denial, contentment, all that you do know, and what you do not know, shall all be revived, called over, and abide eternally in your reward. Our Father who now 'seeth in secret,' will one day reward openly. And the more we abound in these things, the more will God be glorified in the recompense of reward. But this is not all, nor that which I intend. It abides, (2.) for ever, and passeth over into glory in its principle or nature. The love wherewith we now adhere to God, and by which we act the obedience of faith towards the saints, faileth not, it ends not when glory comes on, but is a part of it; 1 Cor. xiii. 8. It is true, some gifts shall be done away as useless in a state of perfection and glory, as the apostle there discourseth; and some graces shall cease, as to some especial acts and peculiar exercise, as faith and hope, so far as they respect things unseen and future. But all those graces, whereby holiness is constituted, and wherein it doth consist, for the substance of them, as they contain the image of God, as by them we are united, and do adhere unto God in Christ, shall in their present nature improved into perfection, abide for ever. In our knowledge of them, therefore, have we our principal insight into our eternal condition in glory: and this is as a firm foundation of consolation, so a part of our chiefest joy in this world. Is it not a matter of unspeakable joy and refreshment, that these poor bodies we carry about us, after they have been made a prey unto death,

dust, worms, and corruption, shall be raised and restored to life and immortality, freed from pains, sickness, weakness, weariness, and vested with those qualities in conformity to Christ's glorious body, which yet we understand not? It is so also, that these souls which now animate and rule in us, shall be delivered from all their darkness, ignorance, vanity, instability, and alienation from things spiritual and heavenly. But this is not all. These poor low graces, which now live, and are acting in us, shall be continued, preserved, purified, and perfected, but in their nature be the same as now they are, as our souls and bodies shall be. That love, whereby we now adhere to God as our chiefest good, that faith, whereby we are united to Christ our everlasting head, that delight in any of the ways or ordinances of God, wherein he is enjoyed according as he hath promised his presence in them; that love and good-will, which we have for all those in whom is the Spirit, and on whom is the image of Christ, with the entire principle of spiritual life and holiness, which is now begun in any of us, shall be all purified, enhanced, perfected, and pass into glory. That very holiness which we here attain, those inclinations and dispositions, those frames of mind, those powers and abilities in obedience, and adherence unto God, which here contend with the weight of their own weakness and imperfections, with the opposition that is continually made against them by the body of death, that is utterly to be abolished, shall be gloriously perfected into immutable habits, unchangeably acting our souls in the enjoyment of God. And this also manifesteth, of how much concernment it is unto us, to be acquainted with the doctrine of it, and of how much more to be really interested in it. Yea,

5. There is *spiritual and heavenly glory* in it in this world. From hence is the church, the 'king's daughter,' said to be 'all glorious within;' Psal. xlv. 13. Her inward adorning with the graces of the Spirit making her beautiful in holiness, is called glory, and is so; so also the progress and increase of believers herein, is called by our apostle their being 'changed from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. from one degree of glorious grace unto another. As this, next unto the comeliness of the righteousness of Christ put upon us by the free grace of God, is our only beauty in his sight, so

it is such as hath a real spiritual glory in it. It is the first-fruits of heaven; and as the apostle argueth concerning the Jews, that if the first-fruits were holy, then is the whole lump holy, so may we on the other side, if the whole weight, as he calls it, and fulness of our future enjoyments be glory, then are the first-fruits in their measure so also. There is in this holiness, as we shall see farther afterward, a ray of eternal light, a principle of eternal life, and the entire nature of that love whereby we shall eternally adhere unto God. The divine nature, the new immortal creature, the life of God, the life of Christ, are all comprised in it. It represents unto God the glory of his own image renewed in us; and unto the Lord Christ the fruits of his Spirit and effect of his mediation, wherein he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. There is, therefore, nothing more to be abhorred, than those carnal, low, and unworthy thoughts which some men vent of this glorious work of the Holy Spirit, who would have it wholly to consist in a legal righteousness or moral virtue.

6. This is that which God indispensably *requireth* of us. The full prosecution of this consideration we must put off unto our arguments for the necessity of it, which will ensue in their proper place. At present I shall shew, that not only God requireth holiness indispensably in all believers, but also that this is all which he requireth of them or expecteth from them: for it compriseth the whole duty of man. And this surely rendereth it needful for us both to know what it is, and diligently to apply ourselves unto the obtaining an assured participation of it. For what servant who hath any sense of his relation and duty, if he be satisfied that his master requireth but one thing of him, will not endeavour an acquaintance with it, and the performance of it. Some indeed say that their holiness (such as it is) is the chief or only design of the gospel. If they intend that it is the first principal design of God in and by the gospel, and that not only as to the preceptive part of it, but also as unto its doctrinal and promissory parts, whence it is principally and emphatically denominated, it is a fond imagination. God's great and first design, in and by the gospel, is eternally to glorify himself, his wisdom, goodness, love, grace, righteousness, and holiness, by Jesus Christ; Eph. i. 5, 6. And in

order to this his great and supreme end, he hath designed the gospel, and designs by the gospel, which gives the gospel its design: (1.) To reveal that love and grace of his unto lost sinners, with the way of its communication through the mediation of his Son incarnate, as the only means whereby he will be glorified, and whereby they may be saved; Acts xxvi. 18. (2.) To prevail with men in and by the dispensation of its truth, and encouragement of its promises, to renounce their sins and all other expectations of relief or satisfaction, and to betake themselves by faith unto that way of life and salvation which is therein declared unto them; 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Col. i. 25—28. (3.) To be the means and instrument of conveying over unto them, and giving them a title unto, and a right in, that grace and mercy, that life and righteousness, which is revealed and tendered unto them thereby; Mark xvi. 16. (4.) To be the way and means of communicating the Spirit of Christ with grace and strength unto the elect, enabling of them to believe and receive the atonement; Gal. iii. 2. (5.) Hereby to give them union with Christ as their spiritual and mystical head, as also to fix their hearts and souls in their choicest actings in their faith, trust, confidence, and love, immediately on the Son of God as incarnate and their mediator; John xiv. 1. Wherefore the first and principal end of the gospel towards us, is to invite and encourage lost sinners unto the faith and approbation of the way of grace, life, and salvation, by Jesus Christ, without a compliance wherewith in the first place the gospel hath no more to do with sinners, but leaves them to justice, the law, and themselves. But now upon a supposition of these things, and of our giving glory to God by faith in them, the whole that God requireth of us in the gospel in a way of duty is, that we should be holy, and abide in the use of those means whereby holiness may be attained and improved in us. For if he requires any other thing of us it must be on one of these four accounts: (1.) To make atonement for our sins; or, (2.) To be our righteousness before him; or, (3.) To merit life and salvation by; or, (4.) To supererogate in the behalf of others. No other end can be thought of, besides what are the true ends of holiness whereon God should require any thing of us. And all the false religion that is in the world leans on a supposition

that God doth require somewhat of us with respect unto these ends.

But, (1.) he requires nothing of us (which we had all the reason in the world to expect that he (would, to make *atonement* or satisfaction for our sins, that might compensate the injuries we have done him by our apostacy and rebellion. For whereas we had multiplied sins against him, lived in an enmity and opposition to him, and had contracted insupportable and immeasurable debts upon our own souls, terms of peace being now proposed, who could think but that the first thing required of us would be, that we should make some kind of satisfaction to divine justice for all our enormous and heinous provocations? Yea, who is there that indeed doth naturally think otherwise? so he apprehended who was contriving a way in his own mind how he might come to an agreement with God; Micah vi. 6, 7. ‘Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’ This, or something of this nature, seems to be but a very reasonable inquiry for a guilty self-condemned sinner, when first he entertains thoughts of an agreement with the holy sin-avenging God? And this was the foundation of all that cruel and expensive superstition that the world was in bondage unto for so many ages. Mankind generally thought that the principal thing which was required of them in religion, was to atone and pacify the wrath of the divine power, and to make a compensation for what had been done against him. Hence were their sacrifices of hecatombs of beasts, of mankind, of their children, and of themselves, as I have elsewhere declared. And the same principle is still deep rooted in the minds of convinced sinners; and many an abbey, monastery, college, and alms-house hath it founded. For in the fruits of this superstition the priests which set it on work, always shared deeply. But quite otherwise in the gospel, there is declared and tendered unto sinners, an absolute free pardon of all their sins, without any satisfaction or compensation made, or to be made, on their part; that is, by themselves, namely, on the

account of the atonement made for them by Jesus Christ. And all attempts or endeavours after works or duties of obedience in any respect satisfactory to God for sin, or meritorious of pardon, do subvert and overthrow the whole gospel. See 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Wherefore, in answer to the inquiry before mentioned, the reply in the prophet is, that God looks for none of these things, and that all such contrivances were wholly vain; ‘He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?’ ver. 8. which last expression compriseth the whole of our covenant obedience, Gen. xvii. 1. as the two former are eminent instances of it in particular.

(2.) He requireth nothing of us in a way of *righteousness for our justification* for the future; that this also he would have done we might have justly expected. For a righteousness we must have or we cannot be accepted with him. And here also many are at a loss, and resolve that it is a thing fond and inconvenient, to think of peace with God without some righteousness of their own, on the account whereof they may be justified before him; and rather than they will forego that apprehension they will let go all other thoughts of peace and acceptance. ‘Being ignorant of the righteousness of God, they go about to establish their own righteousness, and do not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God;’ nor will they acquiesce in it ‘that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,’ as Rom. x. 3, 4. But so it is, that God requireth not this of us in the gospel; for we are ‘justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;’ Rom. iii. 24. And we do ‘therefore, conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law;’ ver. 28. so Rom. viii. 3, 4. Neither is there any mention in the whole gospel, of God’s requiring a righteousness in us upon the account whereof we should be justified before him, or in his sight. For the justification by works mentioned in James consists in the evidencing and declaration of our faith by them.

(3.) God requireth not any thing of us whereby we should *purchase or merit* for ourselves life and salvation. For we ‘are saved by grace through faith, not of works lest any man should boast;’ Eph. ii. 8, 9. God doth save us neither

by nor 'for the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy;' Titus iii. 5. so that although on the one side, the 'wages of sin is death,' there being a proportion in justice between sin and punishment; yet there is none between our obedience and our salvation; and therefore 'eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord;' Rom. vi. 23. God, therefore, requires nothing at our hands under this notion or consideration; nor is it possible that in our condition any such thing should be required of us. For whatever we can do is due beforehand on other accounts, and so can have no prospect to merit what is to come. Who can merit by doing his duty? our Saviour doth so plainly prove the contrary, as none can farther doubt of it than of his truth and authority; Luke xvii. 10. Nor can we do any thing that is acceptable to him, but what is wrought in us by his grace. And this overthrows the whole nature of merit which requires, that that be every way our own whereby we would deserve somewhat else at the hands of another, and not his more than ours. Neither is there any proportion between our duties and the reward of the eternal enjoyment of God. For besides that, they are all weak, imperfect, and tainted with sin, so that no one of them is able to make good its own station for any end or purpose in the strictness of divine justice, they altogether come infinitely short of the desert of an eternal reward by any rule of divine justice. And if any say that this merit of our works depends not on, nor is measured by, strict justice, but wholly by the gracious condescension of God who hath appointed and promised so to reward them; I answer, in the first place, that this perfectly overthrows the whole nature of merit: for the nature of merit consists entirely and absolutely in this, that to him that worketh the 'reward is reckoned of debt, and not of grace;' Rom. iv. 4. And these two are contrary and inconsistent; 'for what is by grace is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and what is of works is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work;' Rom. xi. 6. And those who go about to found a merit of ours in the grace of God, do endeavour to unite and reconcile those things which God hath everlastingly separated and opposed. And I say (secondly), that although God doth freely, graciously, and bountifully, reward our duties

of obedience, and upon the account of his covenant and promise he is said to be, and he is righteous in his so doing, yet he every where declares that what he so doth, is an act of mere grace in himself, that hath not respect unto any thing but only the interposition and mediation of Jesus Christ. In this sense God in the gospel requireth of us nothing at all.

(4.) Much less doth he require of any, that they should do such things as being no way necessary unto that obedience which themselves personally owe unto him, may yet by their *supererogation* therein, redound to the advantage and benefit of others. This monstrous fiction which hath out-done all the Pharisaism of the Jews, we are engaged for to the church of Rome, as a pretence given to the piety, or rather covering of the impiety, of their votaries. But seeing on the one hand, that they are themselves who pretend to these works but flesh, and so cannot on their own account be ‘justified in the sight of God,’ so it is extreme pride and cursed self-confidence for them to undertake to help others by the merit of those works whose worth they stand not in need of; concerning which it will be one day said unto them, ‘Who hath required these things at your hands?’ But now whereas God requireth none of these things of us, nothing with respect unto any of these ends, such is the perverseness of our minds by nature, that many think that God requireth nothing else of us, or nothing of us, but with respect unto one or other of these ends; nor can they in their hearts conceive why they should perform any one duty towards God, unless it be with some kind of regard unto these things. If they may do any thing whereby they may make some recompense for their sins that are past, at least in their own minds and consciences, if any thing whereby they may procure an acceptance with God, and the approbation of their state and condition, they have something which as they suppose may quicken and animate their endeavours. Without these considerations, holy obedience is unto them a thing lifeless and useless. Others will labour and take pains both in ways of outward mortification and profuse munificence, in any way of superstitious charity, whilst they are persuaded, or can persuade themselves, that they shall merit eternal life and salvation thereby, without much being beholden to the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Yea all that hath the face or pretence of religion in the papacy, consists in a supposition, that all which God requireth of us, he doth it with respect unto these ends, of atonement, justification, merit, and supererogation. Hereunto do they apply all that remains of the ordinances of God amongst them, and all their own inventions are managed with the same design. But by these things is the gospel and the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ made of none effect. Herein then, I say, lies the express opposition that is between the wisdom of God in the mystery of the gospel, and the *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, the ‘wisdom of the flesh,’ or our carnal reason. God in his dealing with us by the gospel, takes upon his own grace and wisdom the providing of an atonement for our sins, a righteousness whereby we may be justified before him, and the collation of eternal life upon us, all in and by him who of God is made ‘unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.’ But withal he indispensably requires of us holiness and universal obedience for the ends that shall be declared afterward. This way, thinks the wisdom of the flesh, or carnal reason, is mere foolishness, as our apostle testifies; 1 Cor. i. 18. 23. But such a foolishness it is, that is wiser than men; ver. 25. that is, a way so excellent and full of divine wisdom, that men are not able to comprehend it. Wherefore, in opposition hereunto, carnal reason concludes, that either what God requires of us is to be done with respect unto the ends mentioned, some or other, or all of them, or that it is no great matter whether it be done or no. Neither can it discern of what use our holiness or obedience unto God should be if it serve not unto some of these purposes. For the necessity of conformity to God, of the renovation of his image in us before we are brought unto the enjoyment of him in glory, the authority of his commands, the reverence of his wisdom, appointing the way of holiness and obedience as the means of expressing our thankfulness, glorifying him in the world, and of coming to eternal life, it hath no regard unto. But the first true saving light that shines by the gospel from Jesus Christ into our souls, begins to undeceive us in this matter. And there is no greater evidence of our receiving an evangelical baptism, or of being baptized into the spirit of the gospel, than the clear compliance of our minds with the

wisdom of God herein. When we find such constraining motives unto holiness upon us, as will not allow the least subducting of our souls from a universal attendance unto it, purely on the ends of the gospel without respect unto those now discarded, it is an evidence that the wisdom of God hath prevailed against that of the flesh in our minds.

Wherefore holiness with the fruits of it, with respect unto their proper ends, which shall afterward be declared, is all that God requireth of us. And this he declares in the tenor of the covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am God Almighty, walk before me and be thou perfect.' This is that, and this is all that I require of thee, namely, thy holy obedience; for all other things wherein thou art concerned I take them all upon my own almighty power or all-sufficiency; as he says elsewhere, that the 'whole of man is to fear God and keep his commandments.' And the consideration hereof, taken singly and by itself, is sufficient with all that have any regard unto God, or their own eternal welfare, to convince them of what importance these things are unto them.

7. But neither yet are we left in this matter merely under the authority of God's *command*, with an expectation of our compliance with it from our own ability and power; God moreover hath *promised* to sanctify us, or to work this holiness *in us*, the consideration whereof will give us yet a nearer prospect into its nature. He that requires it of us, knows that we have it not of ourselves. When we were in our best condition by nature, in the state of original holiness, vested with the image of God, we preserved it not. And is it likely, that now, in the state of lapsed and depraved nature, it is in our own power to restore ourselves, to re-introduce the image of God into our souls, and that in a far more eminent manner than it was at first created by God? What needed all that contrivance of infinite wisdom and grace for the reparation of our nature by Jesus Christ, if holiness, wherein it doth consist, be in our own power, and educed out of the natural faculties of our souls? There can be no more fond imagination befall the minds of men, than that defiled nature is able to cleanse itself, or depraved nature to rectify itself, or we, who have lost that image of God which he created in us, and with us, should create it again in ourselves by our own endeavours. Wherefore, when God commandeth and requireth

us to be holy, he commands us to be that, which by nature and of ourselves we are not; and not only so, but that which we have not of ourselves a power to attain unto. Whatever, therefore, is absolutely in our own power, is not of that holiness which God requireth of us. For what we can do ourselves, there is neither necessity nor reason why God should promise to work in us by his grace. And to say, that what God so promiseth to work, he will not work or effect indeed, but only persuade and prevail with us to do it, is through the pride of unbelief to defy the truth and grace of God, and with the spoils of them to adorn our own righteousness and power. Now God hath multiplied his promises to this purpose, so that we shall need to call over only some of them, in way of instance. Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will put my law in your inward parts, and write it in your hearts, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.' Chap. xxxii. 39, 40. 'I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, and I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' Ver. 25. 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness.' Ver. 29. 'I will also save you from all your uncleanness.' The whole of our sanctification and holiness is comprised in these promises. To be cleansed from the defilements of sin, whatever they be, to have a heart inclined, disposed, enabled, to fear the Lord always, and to walk in all his ways and statutes accordingly, with an internal habitual conformity of the whole soul unto the law of God, is to be sanctified or to be holy. And all this, God promiseth directly to work in us and to accomplish himself. In the faith of these promises, and for the fulfilling of them, the apostle prayeth for the Thessalonians, as we observed at our entrance, 'That the God of peace himself would sanctify them throughout, whereby their whole spirits, souls, and bodies, might be preserved blameless to the coming of Jesus Christ.' And hence is evident what we before observed, that what is absolutely in our own power, is not of the nature of, nor

doth necessarily belong unto, holiness whatever it be. The best of the intellectual or moral habits of our minds, which are but the natural improvement and exercise of our faculties, neither are nor can be our holiness; nor do the best of our moral duties, as merely and only so, belong thereunto. By these moral habits and duties we understand the powers, faculties, or abilities, of our souls exercised with respect and in obedience unto the commands of God, as excited, persuaded, and guided, by outward motives, rules, arguments, and considerations. Plainly, all the power we have of ourselves to obey the law of God, and all that we do in the pursuit and exercise of that power, upon any reasons, motives, or considerations, whatever, which may all be resolved into fear of punishment and hope of reward, with some present satisfactions of mind, on the account of ease in conscience within, or outward reputation, whether in abstinence from sin, or the performance of duties, are intended hereby, and are not that holiness which we inquire after. And the reason is plain, even because those things are not wrought in us by the power of the especial grace of God, in the pursuit of the especial promise of the covenant as all true holiness is. If any shall say, that they are so wrought in us they do expressly change the nature of them. For, thereby, those powers would be no more natural but supernatural; and those duties would be no more merely moral, but evangelical and spiritual, which is to grant all we contend for; wherefore, that which men call moral virtue, is so far from being the whole of internal grace or holiness, that if it be no more than so, it belongs not at all unto it, as not being effected in us by the especial grace of God, according to the tenor and promise of the covenant.

And we may here divert a little, to consider what ought to be the frame of our minds in the pursuit of holiness, with respect unto these things; namely, what regard we ought to have unto the *command* on the one hand, and to the *promise* on the other; to our own *duty* and to the *grace* of God. Some would separate these things as inconsistent. A command they suppose leaves no room for a promise, at least, not such a promise as wherein God should take on himself to work in us what the command requires of us. And a promise they think takes off all the influencing authority of the

command. If holiness be our duty there is no room for grace in this matter; and if it be an effect of grace there is no place for duty. But all these arguings are a fruit of the wisdom of the flesh, before mentioned, and we have before disproved them. The 'wisdom that is from above' teacheth us other things. It is true our works and grace are opposed in the matter of justification as utterly inconsistent; 'if it be of works it is not of grace, and if it be of grace it is not of works,' as our apostle argues; Rom. xi. 6. Our duty and God's grace are no where opposed in the matter of sanctification, yea, the one doth absolutely suppose the other. Neither can we perform our duty herein without the grace of God; nor doth God give us this grace unto any other end but that we may rightly perform our duty. He that shall deny either that God commands us to be holy in a way of duty, or promiseth to work holiness in us in a way of grace, may, with as much modesty, reject the whole Bible. Both these, therefore, we are to have a due regard unto, if we intend to be holy. And, (1.) our regard unto the command consisteth in three things: [1.] That we get our consciences always affected with the authority of it, as it is the command of God. This must afterward be enlarged on. Where this is not there is no holiness. Our holiness is our obedience; and the formal nature of obedience ariseth from its respect unto the authority of the command. [2.] That we see and understand the reasonableness, the equity, the advantage of the command. Our service is reasonable service; the ways of God are equal; and, in the keeping of his commands there is great reward: if we judge not thus, if we rest not herein, and are thence filled with indignation against every thing within us or without us that opposeth it, or riseth up against it, whatever we do in compliance with it in a way of duty, we are not holy. [3.] That hereon we love and delight in it, because it is holy, just, and good; because the things it requires are upright, equal, easy, and pleasant, to the new nature, without any regard to the false ends before discovered. And, (2.) we have a due regard unto the promise to the same end; when, [1.] we walk in a constant sense of our own inability to comply with the command in any one instance from any power in ourselves. For we have no sufficiency of ourselves, our sufficiency is of God. For him who

is otherwise minded his heart is lifted up. [2.] When we adore that grace which hath provided help and relief for us. Seeing without the grace promised we could never have attained unto the least part or degree of holiness, and seeing we could never deserve the least dram of that grace, how ought we to adore and continually praise that infinite bounty which hath freely provided us of this supply. [3.] When we act faith in prayer and expectation on the promise for supplies of grace enabling us unto holy obedience. And, [4.] When we have especial regard thereunto, with respect unto especial temptations and particular duties. When on all such occasions we satisfy not ourselves with a respect unto the promise in general, but exercise faith in particular on it for aid and assistance, then do we regard it in a due manner.

8. To come yet nearer unto our principal design, I say it is the *Holy Ghost* who is the *immediate peculiar Sanctifier* of all believers, and the author of all holiness in them. I suppose, I need not insist upon the confirmation of this assertion in general. I have proved before, that he is the immediate dispenser of all divine grace, or the immediate operator of all divine gracious effects in us, whereof this is the chief. Besides, it is such an avowed and owned principle among all that are called Christians; namely, that the Holy Ghost is the sanctifier of all God's elect; that as it is not questioned, so it need not in general be farther proved: those who are less experienced in these things, may consult Psal. li. 10—12. Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 25—27. Rom. viii. 9—13. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Pet. i. 2. Isa. iv. 4. xlv. 3, 4. Titus iii. 4, 5. But it is the nature and manner of his work herein, with the effect produced thereby, that we are to inquire into. For, as this belongs unto our general design, of declaring the nature, power, and efficacy, of all the gracious divine operations of the Holy Spirit, so it will give us an acquaintance, in particular, with that work, and the fruits of it, wherein we are so highly concerned.