

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

FROM

OUR CONDITION IN THIS WORLD.

CHAP. V.

Necessity of holiness farther argued, from our own state and condition in this world; with what is required of us with respect unto our giving glory to Jesus Christ.

ANOTHER argument for the *necessity of holiness*, may be taken from the consideration of *ourselves*, and our *present state and condition*. For it is hereby alone that the vicious distemper of our natures is or can be cured. That our nature is fearfully and universally depraved by the entrance of sin, I have before declared and sufficiently confirmed. And I do not now consider it as to the disability of living unto God, or enmity unto him which is come upon us thereby, nor yet as to the future punishment which it renders us obnoxious unto: but it is the present misery that is upon us by it, unless it be cured, which I intend. For the mind of man being possessed with darkness, vanity, folly, and instability; the will under the power of spiritual death, stubborn and obstinate, and all the affections carnal, sensual, and selfish, the whole soul being hurried off from God, and so out of its way, is perpetually filled with confusion and perplexing disorder. It is not unlike that description which Job gives of the grave, 'A land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness;' chap. x. 21, 22. When Solomon set himself to search out the causes of all the vanity and vexation that is in the world, of all the troubles that the life of man is filled withal; he affirms that this was the sum of his discovery, 'God made men upright, but they have found out many inventions;' Eccles. vii. 29. that is, cast themselves into endless entanglements and con-

fusions. What is sin in its guilt, is punishment in its power, yea, the greatest that men are liable unto in this world. Hence God for the guilt of some sins, penally gives many up to the power of others; Rom. i. 24. 26. 28. 2 Thess. ii. 11. And this he doth, not only to secure and aggravate their condemnation at the last day, but to give them in this world a recompense of their folly in themselves. For there is no greater misery nor slavery, than to be under the power of sin.

This proves the original depravation of our nature, the whole soul filled with darkness, disorder, and confusion, being brought under the power of various lusts and passions, captivating the mind and will unto their interests, in the vilest drudgeries of servitude and bondage. No sooner doth the mind begin to act any thing suitably unto the small remainders of light in it, but it is immediately controlled by impetuous lusts and affections, which darken its directions, and silence its commands. Hence is the common saying, not so common as what is signified by it;

—————Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor—————

Hence the whole soul is filled with fierce contradictions and conflicts. Vanity, instability, folly, sensual irrational appetites, inordinate desires, self-disquieting and torturing passions, act continually in our depraved natures. See the account hereof, Rom. iii. 10—18. How full is the world of disorder, confusion, oppression, rapine, uncleanness, violence, and the like dreadful miseries? Alas! they are but a weak and imperfect representation of the evils that are in the minds of men by nature. For as they all proceed from thence, as our Saviour declares, Matt. xv. 18, 19. so the thousandth part of what is conceived therein, is never brought forth and acted. ‘From whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet you have not;’ James iv. 1, 2. All evils proceed from the impetuous lusts of the minds of men, which when they are acted unto the utmost, are as unsatisfied as they were at their first setting out. Hence the prophet tells us, that wicked men, under the power and disorder of depraved nature, are like a ‘trou-

bled sea that cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt; and 'have no peace;' Isa. lvii. 20, 21. The heart is in continual motion; is restless in its figments and imaginations, as the waters of the sea when it is stormy and troubled; and they are all evil, 'only evil continually;' Gen. vi. 5. Herein doth it cast up 'mire and dirt.' And those who seem to have the greatest advantages above others in power and opportunity to give satisfaction unto their lusts, do but increase their own inquietness and miseries; Psal. lxxix. 14. For as these things are evil in themselves, and unto others, so they are penal unto those in whom they are, especially in whom they abound and reign. And if their breasts were opened, it would appear, by the confusion and horror they live in, that they are on the very confines of hell.

Hence is the life of man full of vanity, trouble, disappointments, vexations, and endless self-dissatisfactions, which those who were wise among the Heathens, saw, complained of, and attempted in vain reliefs against. All these things proceed from the depravation of our natures, and the disorder that is come upon us by sin. And as, if they are not cured and healed, they will assuredly issue in everlasting misery, so they are woful and calamitous at present. True peace, rest, and tranquillity of mind are strangers unto such souls. Alas! what are the perishing profits, pleasures, and satisfactions by them, which this world can afford? How unable is the mind of man to find out rest and peace in them or from them? They quickly satiate and suffocate in their enjoyment, and become to have no relish in their varieties, which only heightens present vanity, and treasures up provision for future vexation. We have, therefore, no greater interest in the world, than to inquire how this disorder may be cured, and a stop put to this fountain of all abominations. What we intend, will be cleared in the ensuing observations.

1. It is true, that some are *naturally* of a more *sedate* and *quiet temper* and *disposition* than others are. They fall not into such outrages and excesses of outward sins as others do; nay, their minds are not capable of such turbulent passions and affections as the most are possessed withal. These comparatively are peaceable, and useful to their relations and others. But yet their minds and hearts are full of dark-

ness and disorder. For so it is with all by nature (as we have proved), who have not an almighty effectual cure wrought upon them. And the less troublesome waves they have on the surface, the more mire and dirt oft-times they have at the bottom.

2. *Education, convictions, afflictions, illuminations*, hope of a *righteousness* of their own, love of *reputation*, engagements into the *society* of good men, *resolutions* for secular ends, with other means of the like kind, do often put great restraints upon the *actings* and *ebullitions* of the evil imaginations and turbulent affections of the minds of men; yea, the *frame* of the *mind* and the *course* of the *life* may be much changed by them; *how, wherein, and how far*, is not our present business to declare.

3. Notwithstanding all that may be effected by these *means*, or any other of like nature, the *disease* is *uncured*, the soul continues still in its *disorder*, and in all inward confusions. For our original order, harmony, and rectitude, consisted in the powers and inclinations of our minds, wills, and affections, unto regular actings towards God as our end and reward. Hence proceeded all that order and peace which was in all their faculties and their actings. Whilst we continued in due order towards God, it was impossible that we should be otherwise in ourselves: but being by sin fallen off from God, having lost our conformity and likeness unto him, we fell into all the confusion and disorder before described. Wherefore,

4. The only *cure* and *remedy* of this evil condition, is by *holiness*. For it must be and can be no otherwise but by the renovation of the image of God in us; for from the loss hereof doth all the evil mentioned spring and arise. By this are our souls in some measure restored unto their primitive order and rectitude. And without this, attempts for inward peace, real tranquillity of mind, with due order in our affections, will be in vain attempted. It is the holy soul, the sanctified mind alone, that is composed into an orderly tendency towards the enjoyment of God. That which we aim at is, what we are directed unto by our apostle; Eph. iv. 22—24. Our deliverance from the power of corrupt and deceitful lusts, which are the spring and cause of all the confusion mentioned, is by the renovation of the image of God in us, and no otherwise. And hence, unto all persons not in love with their

lusts and ruin, ariseth a cogent argument and motive unto holiness. But sundry things may be objected hereunto; as,

First, That we do admit and maintain, that in all *sanctified persons* there are yet certain *remainders* of our *original depravation* and disorder; that *sin* still abideth in *believers*; yea, that it works *powerfully* and effectually in them, leading them *captive* unto the *law of sin*. Hence ensue great and mighty wars and conflicts in the souls of regenerate persons, that are truly sanctified. Herein they suffer so far, as to groan, complain, and cry out for deliverance. ‘The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary.’ Wherefore, it doth not appear, that this holiness doth so heal, and cure the sinful distempers of our minds. On the other side, men supposed as yet under the power of sin, who have not that grace and holiness in the renovation of the image of God which is pleaded for, seem to have more peace and quietness in their minds. They have not that inward conflict which others complain of, nor those groans for deliverance. Yea, they find satisfaction in their lusts and pleasures, relieving themselves by them against any thing that occasioneth their trouble.

Ans. 1. For that *peace* and *order* which is pretended to be in the minds of men under the *power* of *sin*, and not *sanctified*, it is like that which is in *hell*, and the kingdom of darkness. Satan is not divided against himself, nor is there such a confusion and disorder in his kingdom as to destroy it; but it hath a consistency from the common end of all that is in it, which is an opposition unto God and all that is good. Such a peace and order there may be in an un-sanctified mind. There being no active principle in it for God and that which is spiritually good, all works one way, and all its troubled streams have the same course. But yet they continually cast up mire and dirt. There is only that peace in such minds which the ‘strong man armed,’ that is Satan, keeps his goods in, until a stronger than he comes to bind him. And if any one think that peace and order to be sufficient for him, wherein his mind in all its faculties acts uniformly against God, or for self, sin, and the world, without any opposition or contradiction, he may find as much in hell when he comes there.

2. There is a difference between a *confusion* and a *re-*

bellion. Where a confusion is in a state, all rule or government is dissolved, and every thing is let loose unto the utmost disorder and evil. But where the rule is firm and stable, there may be rebellions that may give some parts and places disturbances and damage, but yet the whole state is not disordered thereby. So is it in the condition of a sanctified soul on account of the remainders of sin; there may be rebellion in it, but there is no confusion. Grace keeps the rule in the mind and heart firm and stable, so that there is peace and assurance unto the whole state of the person, though lusts and corruptions will be rebelling and warring against it. The divine order, therefore, of the soul consisting in the rule of grace, subordinating all to God in Christ, is never overthrown by the rebellion of sin at any time, be it never so vigorous or prevalent. But in the state of unsanctified persons, though there be no rebellion, yet is there nothing but confusion. Sin hath the rule and dominion in them; and however men may be pleased with it for a season, yet is it nothing but perfect disorder, because it is a continual opposition to God. It is a tyranny that overthrows all law, and rule, and order, with respect unto our last and chiefest end.

3. The soul of a *believer* hath that *satisfaction* in this *conflict*, as that its *peace* is not ordinarily *disturbed*, and is never quite *overthrown* by it. Such a person knows sin to be his enemy, knows its design, with the aids and assistances which are prepared for him against its deceit and violence; and considering the nature and end of this contest, is satisfied with it. Yea, the greatest hardships that sin can reduce a believer unto, do but put him to the exercise of those graces and duties wherein he receiveth great spiritual satisfaction. Such are repentance, humiliation, godly sorrow, self-abasement, and abhorrency, with fervent outcries for deliverance. Now, although these things seem to have that which is grievous and dolorous prevailing in them, yet the graces of the Spirit of God being acted in them, they are so suited unto the nature of the new creature and so belong unto the spiritual order of the soul, that it finds secret satisfaction in them all. But the trouble others meet withal in their own hearts and minds on the account of sin, is from the severe reflections of their consciences only, and they re-

ceive them no otherwise but as certain presages and predictions of future and eternal misery.

4. A *sanctified person* is secured of *success* in this *conflict*, which keeps *blessed peace* and *order* in his soul during its continuance. There is a twofold *success* against the *rebellious* actings of the *remainders* of *indwelling sin*. (1.) In *particular instances*: (2.) In the *whole cause*. And in both these have we sufficient assurance of *success*, if we be not wanting unto ourselves.

(1.) For suppose the contest be considered with respect unto any *particular lust* and *corruption*, and that in conjunction with some powerful *temptation*, we have sufficient and blessed assurance that *abiding* in the diligent use of the *ways* and *means* assigned unto us, and the improvement of the *assistance* provided in the *covenant* of *grace*, we shall not so fail of actual *success*, as that '*lust should conceive, bring forth, and finish sin*;' 2 Cor. ii. 12. But if we be wanting unto ourselves, negligent in our known duties and principal concerns, it is no wonder if we are sometimes cast into disorder, and foiled by the powers of sin. But,

(2.) As to the *general success* in the *whole cause*, namely, that *sin* shall not *utterly deface* the *image* of God in us, nor *absolutely* or *finally ruin* our *souls*, which is its end and tendency, we have the *covenant faithfulness* of God (which will not fail us) for our *security*; Rom. vi. 12. Wherefore, notwithstanding this opposition and all that is ascribed unto it, there is peace and order preserved by the power of holiness in a sanctified mind and soul.

Secondly, But it will be farther objected, That many professors who pretend highly unto sanctification and holiness, and whom you judge to be partakers of them, are yet peevish, froward, morose, unquiet in their minds, among their relations, and in the world; yea, much outward vanity and disorder (which you make tokens of the internal confusion of the minds of men, and the *power* of *sin*) do either proceed from them, or are carried on by them. And where then is the advantage pretended, that should render holiness so indispensably necessary unto us?

Ans. If there are any such, the more *shame* for them, and they must bear their own *judgment*. These things are *diametrically* opposite to the work of holiness, and the '*fruits*

of the Spirit; Gal. v. 22. And, therefore, I say, 1. That many, it may be, are esteemed *holy* and *sanctified*, who indeed are not so. Though I will judge no man in particular, yet I had rather pass this judgment on any man, that he hath no grace, than that, on the other hand, grace doth not change our natures, and renew the image of God in us. 2. Many who are really holy, may have the double disadvantage; first, to be under such circumstances as will frequently draw out their natural infirmities, and then to have them greated and heightened in the apprehension of them with whom they have to do, which was actually the case of David all his days, and of Hannah; 1 Sam. i. 6, 7. I would be far from giving countenance unto the sinful distempers of any; but yet I doubt not, but that the infirmities of many are represented, by envy and hatred of profession, unto an undeserved disadvantage. 3. Wherever there is the seed of grace and holiness, there an entrance is made on the cure of all these sinful distempers; yea, not only of the corrupt lusts of the flesh, that are absolutely evil and vicious in their whole nature; but even of those natural infirmities and distempers of peevishness, moroseness, inclination to anger and passion, unsteadiness in resolution, which lust is apt to possess, and use unto evil and disorderly ends. And I am pressing the necessity of holiness, that is, of the increase and growth of it, that this work may be carried on to perfection, and that so through the power of the grace of the gospel, that great promise may be accomplished which is recorded, Isa. xi. 6—9. And, as when a wandering juggling impostor, who pretended to judge of men's lives and manners by their physiognomy, beholding Socrates, pronounced him from his countenance a person of a flagitious sensual life, the people derided his folly, who knew his sober virtuous conversation; but Socrates excused him, affirming that such he had been, had he not bridled his nature by philosophy; how much more truly may it be said of multitudes, that they had been eminent in nothing but untoward distempers of mind, had not their souls been rectified and cured by the power of grace and holiness.

I find there is no end of arguments that offer their service to the purpose in hand; I shall, therefore, wave many, and those of great importance, attended with an unavoidable

cogency, and shut up this discourse with one which must not be omitted. In our holiness consists the principal part of that revenue of glory and honour which the Lord Christ requireth and expecteth from his disciples in this world. That he doth require this indispensably of us, is, I suppose, out of question amongst us; although the most who are called Christians, live as if they had no other design but to cast all obloquies, reproach, and shame, on him and his doctrine. But, if we are indeed his disciples, he hath bought us with a price, and we are not our own, but his, and that to glorify him in soul and body, because they are his; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. He died for us, that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him that so died for us, and by virtue of whose death we live; Rom. xiv. 7—9. ‘He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;’ Tit. ii. 14. But we need not insist hereon. To deny that we ought to glorify and honour Christ in the world, is to renounce him and the gospel. The sole inquiry is, How we may do so, and what he requireth of us to that purpose?

Now the sum of all that the Lord Christ expects from us in this world, may be reduced unto these two heads: 1. That we should *live holily* to him. 2. That we should *suffer patiently* for him. And in these things alone is he glorified by us. The first he expecteth at all times, and in all things; the latter, on particular occasions, as we are called by him thereunto. Where these things are, where this revenue of glory is paid in and returned unto him, he repents not of his purchase, nor of the invaluable price he hath paid for us; yea, says, ‘The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage;’ which are the words of Christ concerning the church, which is his lot, and the ‘portion of his inheritance;’ Psal. xvi. 6. Now, amongst many others, we shall consider but one way, whereby we glorify the Lord Christ by our holy obedience, and whence also it will appear how much we dishonour and reproach him when we come short thereof.

The Lord Christ coming into the world as the mediator between God and man, wrought and accomplished a mighty work amongst us. And what he did may be referred to three heads. 1. The *life* which he *led*; 2. The *doctrine* which he

taught: and, 3. The *death* which he *underwent*. Concerning all these, there ever was a great contest in the world, and it is yet continued. And on the part of the world, it is managed under a double appearance; for some openly have traduced his life as unholy, his doctrine as foolish, and his death as justly deserved; which was the sense of the Pagan world, and the apostate Judaical church of old, as it is of many at this day. Others allow them to pass with some approbation, pretending to own what is taught in the gospel concerning them, but, in fact and practice, deny any such power and efficacy in them as is pretended, and without which, they are of no virtue, which is the way of carnal gossellers, and all idolatrous, superstitious worshippers among Christians. And of late there is risen up amongst us a generation, who esteem all that is spoken concerning him to be a mere fable. In opposition hereunto, the Lord Christ calls all his true disciples, to bear witness and testimony unto the holiness of his life, the wisdom and purity of his doctrine, the efficacy of his death to expiate sin, to make atonement and peace with God, with the power of his whole mediation to renew the image of God in us, to restore us into his favour, and to bring us unto the enjoyment of him. This he calls all his disciples to avow unto and express in the world, and by their so doing is he glorified (and no otherwise) in a peculiar manner. A testimony is to be given unto and against the world, that his life was most holy, his doctrine most heavenly and pure, his death most precious and efficacious, and consequently, that he was sent of God unto his great work, and was accepted of him therein; now all this is no otherwise done, but by obedience unto him in holiness as it is visible and fruitful. For,

1. We are obliged to profess, that the *life* of *Christ* is our *example*. This, in the first place, are we called unto, and every Christian doth virtually make that profession. No man takes that holy name upon him, but the first thing he signifies thereby, is that he makes the life of Christ his pattern, which it is his duty to express in his own. And he who takes up Christianity on any other terms, doth wofully deceive his own soul. How is it then that we may yield a revenue of glory herein? How may we bear testimony unto the holiness of his life, against the blasphemies of the world,

and the unbelief of the most, who have no regard thereunto? Can this be any otherwise done but by holiness of heart and life, by conformity to God in our souls, and living unto God in fruitful obedience? Can men devise a more effectual expedient to cast reproach upon him, than to live in sin, to follow divers lusts and pleasures, to prefer the world and present things before eternity, and in the meantime to profess, that the life of Christ is their example, as all unholy professors and Christians do? Is not this to bear witness with the world against him, that indeed his life was unholy? Surely it is high time for such persons to leave the name of Christians, or the life of sin. It is, therefore, alone in conformity to him in the holiness we are pressing after, that we can give him any glory on the account of his life being our example.

2. We can 'give him no *glory*, unless we bear testimony unto his *doctrine*, that it is *holy, heavenly*, filled with divine *wisdom* and *grace*, as we make it our *rule*. And there is no other way whereby this may be done, but by holy obedience, expressing the nature, end, and usefulness of it; Tit. ii. 11, 12. And, indeed, the holy obedience of believers, as hath been declared at large before, as a thing quite of another kind than any thing in the world which by the rules, principles, and light of nature, we are directed unto, or instructed in. It is spiritual, heavenly, mysterious, filled with principles and actings of the same kind with those whereby our communion with God in glory unto eternity shall be maintained. Now, although the life of evangelical holiness, be in its principle, form, and chief actings, secret and hidden, hid with Christ in God from the eyes of the world, so that the men thereof neither see, nor know, nor discern, the spiritual life of a believer, in its being, form, and power; yet there are always such evident appearing fruits of it, as are sufficient for their conviction, that the rule of it, which is the doctrine of Christ alone, is holy, wise, and heavenly. And multitudes in all ages have been won over unto the obedience of the gospel, and faith in Christ Jesus, by the holy, fruitful, useful conversation of such as have expressed the power and purity of his doctrine in this kind.

3. The *power* and *efficacy* of the *death of Christ*, as for other ends, so 'to purify us from all iniquity,' and to 'purge

our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God,' is herein also required. The world, indeed, sometimes riseth unto that height of pride and contemptuous atheism, as to despise all appearance and profession of purity. But the truth is, if we are not cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ, if we are not thereby purified from iniquity, we are an abomination unto God, and shall be objects of his wrath for ever. However, the Lord Christ requireth no more of his disciples in this matter unto his glory, but that they profess that 'his blood cleanseth them from their sins,' and evidence the truth of it by such ways and means as the gospel hath appointed unto that end. If their testimony herein unto the efficacy of his death be not received, be despised by the world, and so at present no apparent glory redound unto him thereby, he is satisfied with it, as knowing that the day is coming wherein he will call over these things again, when the rejecting of this testimony shall be an aggravation of condemnation unto the unbelieving world.

I suppose the *evidence* of this *last argument* is plain, and exposed unto all ; it is briefly this : without the *holiness* prescribed in the *gospel*, we give nothing of that *glory* unto *Jesus Christ* which he indispensably requireth. And if men will be so sottishly foolish as to expect the greatest benefits and advantages by the mediation of Christ, namely, pardon of sin, salvation, life, and immortality, whilst they neglect and refuse to give him any revenue of glory for all he hath done for them ; we may bewail their folly, but cannot prevent their ruin. He saves us freely by his grace, but he requires that we should express a sense of it in ascribing unto him the glory that is his due. And let no man think this is done in wordy expressions ; it is no otherwise effected, but by the power of a holy conversation, shewing 'forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Nay, there is more in it also ; if any one profess himself to be a Christian, that is, a disciple of Jesus Christ, to follow the example of his life, to obey his doctrine, to express the efficacy of his death, and continue in an unholy life ; he is a false traitor to him, and gives in his testimony on the side of the world, against him and all that he hath done for us. And it is indeed the flagitious lives of professed Christians that

have brought the life, doctrine, and person of our Lord Jesus Christ into contempt in the world. And I advise all that read or hear of these things, diligently and carefully to study the gospel, that they may receive thence an evidence of the power, truth, glory, and beauty of Christ and his ways; for he that should consider the conversation of men for his guide, will be hardly able to determine which he should choose, whether to be a Pagan, a Mahometan, or a Christian. And shall such persons, by reason of whom the name of Christ is dishonoured and blasphemed continually, expect advantage by him or mercy from him? Will men yet think to live in sensuality, pride, ambition, covetousness, malice, revenge, hatred of all good men, and contempt of purity, and to enjoy life, immortality, and glory, by Christ? Who can sufficiently bewail the dreadful effects of such a horrid infatuation! God teach us all duly to consider, that all the glory and honour of Jesus Christ in the world, with respect unto us, depends on our holiness, and not on any other thing either that we are, have, or may do. If, therefore, we have any love unto him, any spark of gratitude for his unspeakable love, grace, condescension, sufferings, with the eternal fruits of them, any care about, or desire of, his glory and honour in the world, if we would not be found the most hateful traitors at the last day unto his crown, honour, and dignity, if we have any expectation of grace from him, or advantage by him, here or hereafter, let us labour to be ‘holy in all manner of conversation,’ that we may thereby adorn his doctrine, express his virtues and praises, and grow up into conformity and likeness unto him, who is the first-born and image of the invisible God.

Μόνω Θεῷ σωτῆρι δόξα.