

OF THE
ACTS AND DUTIES
OF
HOLINESS.

CHAP. VII.

Actual inherent righteousness in duties of holiness and obedience, explained. The work of the Holy Spirit with respect thereto. Distribution of the positive duties of holiness. Internal duties of holiness. External duties, and their difference. Effectual operation of the Holy Spirit necessary unto every act of holiness. Dependence on Providence with respect unto things natural, and on grace with respect unto things supernatural, compared. Arguments to prove the necessity of actual grace, unto every duty of holiness. Contrary designs and expressions of the Scripture and some men, about duties of holiness.

II. THE second part of the work of the Spirit of God in our sanctification, respects the *acts* and *duties* of holy obedience. For what we have before treated of, chiefly concerns the principle of it as habitually resident in our souls, and that both as unto its first infusion into us, as also its preservation and increase in us. But we are not endued with such a principle or power to act it at our pleasure, or as we see good, but God, moreover, ‘worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.’ And all these acts and duties of holiness, or gospel obedience, are of two sorts; or may be referred unto two heads. First, Such as have the *will* of God in *positive commands* for their object, which they respect in duties internal and external, wherein we do what God requireth. Secondly, Such as respect *divine prohibitions*, which consist in the actings of grace or holiness, in an opposition unto, or the *mortification* of, sin. And what is the work of the Holy Spirit, what is the aid which he affords us in both these sorts of duties, must be declared.

i. The acts and duties of the first sort, respecting *positive*

divine commands, fall under a double distinction. For, 1. they are in their own nature either *internal* only; or, 2. *External* also. There may be internal acts of holiness, that have no external effects. But no external acts or duties are any part of holiness, which are only so, and no more; for it is required thereunto, that they be quickened and sanctified by internal actings of grace. Two persons may, therefore, at the same time, perform the same commanded duties, and in the same outward manner, yet may it be the duty of evangelical holiness in the one, and not in the other; as it was with Cain and Abel, with the other apostles and Judas. For if faith and love be not acted in either of them, what they do is duty but equivocally, properly it is not so.

1. By the duties of holiness that are *internal* only, I intend all acts of faith, love, trust, hope, fear, reverence, delight, that have God for their immediate object, but go not forth, nor exert themselves in any external duties; and in these doth our spiritual life unto God principally consist. For they are as the first acts of life, which principally evidence the strength or decays of it. And from these we may take the best measure of our spiritual health, and interest in holiness. For we may abound in outward duties, and yet our hearts be very much alienated from the life of God. Yea, sometimes men may endeavour to make up what is wanting with them, by a multitude of outward duties, and so have 'a name to live when they are dead,' wherein the true nature of hypocrisy and superstition doth consist; Isa. i. 11—15. But when the internal actings of faith, fear, trust, and love, abound and are constant in us, they evidence a vigorous and healthy condition of soul.

2. Duties that are *external*, also, are of two sorts; or, are distinguished with respect unto their objects and end. For, (1.) God himself is the *object* and end of some of them, as of prayer and praises, whether *private* or more *solemn*. And of this nature are all those which are commonly called, duties of the first table; all such as belong unto the sanctification of the name of God in his worship. (2.) Some respect men of all sorts in their various capacities, and our various relations unto them, or have men for their *object*, but God for their end. And among these, also, I include those which principally regard ourselves, or our own persons. The whole

of what we intend, is summarily expressed by our apostle, Tit. ii. 12.

Concerning all these acts and duties, whether *internal* only, or *external* also, whether their proper object be God, ourselves, or other men, so far as they are *acts of holiness*, and are accepted with God, they proceed from a *peculiar operation* of the Holy Spirit in us. And herein, to make our intention the more evident, we may distinctly observe :

1. That there is in the minds, wills, and affections, of all believers, a *meetness, fitness, readiness*, and habitual disposition unto the *performance* of all acts of obedience towards God, all duties of piety, charity, and righteousness, that are required of them, and hereby are they internally and habitually distinguished from them that are not so. That it is so with them, and whence it comes to be so, we have before declared. This power and disposition is wrought and preserved in them by the Holy Ghost.

2. No believer can of *himself* act, that is, actually exert or exercise, this *principle*, or power, of a *spiritual* life, in any one instance of any duty, *internal* or *external*, towards God or men, so as that it shall be an act of holiness, or a duty accepted with God. He cannot, I say, do so of himself, by virtue of any power habitually inherent in him. We are not in this world intrusted with any such spiritual ability from God, as without farther actual aid and assistance, to do any thing that is good : therefore,

3. That which at present I design to prove, is, that the *actual aid, assistance, and internal operation of the Spirit of God, is necessary, required, and granted, unto the producing of every holy act of our minds, wills, and affections, in every duty whatever*. Or, notwithstanding the power or ability which believers have received in or by *habitual* grace, they still stand in need of *actual* grace, in, for, and unto, every single, gracious, holy act or duty towards God. And this I shall now a little farther explain, and then confirm.

As it is in our natural lives with respect unto God's providence, so it is in our spiritual lives with respect unto his grace. He hath in the works of nature endowed us with a vital principle, or an act of the quickening soul upon the body, which is quickened thereby. By virtue hereof, we are enabled unto all vital acts, whether natural and neces-

sary, or voluntary, according to the constitution of our beings, which is intellectual. 'God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul;' Gen. ii. 7. giving him a principle of life, he was fitted for, and enabled unto, all the proper acts of that life. For a principle of life is an ability and disposition unto acts of life. But yet, whosoever is thus made a living soul, who is endued with this principle of life, he is not able originally, without any motion or acting from God as the first cause, or independently on him, to exert or put forth any vital act: that which hath not this principle, as a dead carcass, hath no meetness unto vital actions, nor is capable either of motion or alteration, but as it receives impressions from an outward principle of force, or an inward principle of corruption. But he in whom it is, hath a fitness, readiness, and habitual power for all vital actions, yet so as without the concurrence of God in his energetical providence, moving and acting of him, he can do nothing. For, in God 'we live, and move, and have our being;' Acts xvii. 28. And if any one could of himself perform an action without any concourse of divine operation, he must himself be absolutely the first and only cause of that action, that is, the creator of a new being.

It is so as unto our spiritual life. We are, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, furnished with a principle of it, in the way and for the ends before described. Hereby are we enabled and disposed to live unto God, in the exercise of spiritually vital acts, or the performance of duties of holiness. And he who hath not this principle of spiritual life, is spiritually dead, as we have at large before manifested, and can do nothing at all that is spiritually good. He may be moved unto, and, as it were, compelled by the power of convictions, to do many things that are materially so. But that which is on all considerations spiritually good, and accepted with God, he can do nothing of. The inquiry is, what believers themselves, who have received this principle of spiritual life, and are habitually sanctified, can do as to actual duties, by virtue thereof, without a new immediate assistance and working of the Holy Spirit in them. And, I say, they can no more do any thing that is spiritually good, without the particular concurrence and assistance of the grace of God, unto every act thereof, than a man can naturally act

or move, or do any thing in an absolute independency on God, his power and providence. And this proportion between the works of God's providence and of his grace, the apostle expresseth, Eph. ii. 10. 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' God at the beginning made all things by a creating power, producing them out of nothing, and left them not merely to themselves and their own powers when so created, but he upholds, supports, sustains, and preserves them in the principles of their beings and operations, acting powerfully in and by them, after their several kinds. Without his supportment of their beings, by an actual incessant emanation of divine power, the whole fabric of nature would dissolve into confusion and nothing. And without his influence into, and concurrence with, their ability, for operation by the same power, all things would be dead and deformed, and not one act of nature be exerted. So also is it in this work of the new creation of all things by Jesus Christ. 'We are the workmanship of God,' he hath formed and fashioned us for himself, by the renovation of his image in us. Hereby are we fitted for good works, and the fruits of righteousness, which he hath appointed as the way of our living unto him. This new creature, this divine nature in us, he supporteth and preserveth, so as that without 'his continual influential power, it would perish and come to nothing. But this is not all; he doth moreover act it, and effectually concur to every singular duty, by new supplies of actual grace. So then, that which we are to prove, is, that there is an actual operation of the Holy Ghost in us, necessary unto every act and duty of holiness whatever, without which none either will or can be produced or performed by us, which is the second part of his work in our sanctification. And there are several ways whereby this is confirmed unto us.

First, The Scripture declares, that *we ourselves*, cannot in and by *ourselves*, that is, by virtue of *any strength or power* that we have received, *do any thing* that is spiritually good. So our Saviour tells his apostles, when they were sanctified believers, and in them all that are so; 'without me ye can do nothing;' John xv. 5. *χωρὶς ἐμοῦ*, so, 'without me,' *seorsim a me*, so 'separated from me,' as a branch may be from the

vine. If a branch be so separated from the root and body of the vine, as that it receives not continual supplies of nourishment from them, if their influence into it, be by any means intercepted, it proceeds not in its growth, it brings forth no fruit, but is immediately under decay: it is so, saith our Saviour, with believers in respect unto him. Unless they have continual uninterrupted influences of grace, and spiritually vital nourishment from him, they can do nothing. 'Without me,' expresseth a denial of all the spiritual aid that we have from Christ. On supposition hereof, 'we can do nothing;' that is, by our own power, or by virtue of any habit or principle of grace we have received. For when we have received it, what we can do thereby without farther actual assistance, we can do of ourselves. 'You can do nothing;' that is, which appertains to fruit-bearing unto God. In things natural and civil we can do somewhat, and in things sinful too much; we need no aid or assistance for any such purpose. But in fruit-bearing unto God we can do nothing. Now every act of faith and love, every motion of our minds or affections towards God, is a part of our fruit-bearing, and so unquestionably are all external works and duties of holiness and obedience. Wherefore, our Saviour himself being judge, believers who are really sanctified, and made partakers of habitual grace, yet cannot of themselves, without new actual aid and assistance of grace from him, do any thing that is spiritually good, or acceptable with God.

Our apostle confirmeth the same truth, 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. 'And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' It is a great and eminent grace which he declareth that he was acting; namely, trust in God through Christ in the discharge of his ministry, and for the blessed success thereof: but he had no sooner expressed it, than he seems to be jealous lest he should appear to have assumed something to himself, in this work, or the trust he had for its success. This no man was ever more cautious against, and indeed it was incumbent on him so to be, because he was appointed to be the principal minister and preacher of the grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I say, he adds a caution against any such apprehensions, and openly renounceth any such power, abi-

lity, or sufficiency in himself, as that by virtue thereof he could act so excellent a grace, or perform so great a duty. 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves;' and in this matter he hath not only in places innumerable asserted the necessity and efficacy of grace, with our impotency without it, but in his own instance he hath made such a distinction between what was of himself, and what of grace, with such an open disclaimer of any interest of his own in what was spiritually good, distinct from grace, as should be sufficient with all sober persons, to determine all differences in this case. See 1 Cor. xv. 10. Gal. ii. 21. and this place. I assume no such thing to myself, I ascribe no such thing unto any other, as that I or they should have in ourselves a sufficiency unto any such purpose. For our apostle knew nothing of any sufficiency that needed any other thing to make it effectual. And he doth not exclude such a sufficiency in ourselves with respect unto eminent actings of grace, and greater duties, but with respect unto every good thought, or whatever may have a tendency unto any spiritual duty. We cannot conceive, we cannot engage, in the beginning of any duty by our own sufficiency. For it is the beginning of duties which the apostle expresseth by thinking; our thoughts and projections being naturally the first thing that belongs unto our actions. And this he doth, as it were, on purpose to obviate that Pelagian fiction, that the beginning of good was from ourselves, but we had the help of grace to perfect it. But what then! if we have no such sufficiency, to what purpose should we set about the thinking or doing of any thing that is good? Who will be so unwise as to attempt that which he hath no strength to accomplish? And doth not the apostle hereby deny, that he himself had performed any holy duties, or acted any grace, or done any thing that was good, seeing he had no sufficiency of himself so to do? to obviate this cavil he confines this denial of a sufficiency unto 'ourselves,' we have it not of ourselves. But, saith he, 'our sufficiency is of God,' that is, we have it by actual supplies of grace, necessary unto every duty; and how God communicates this sufficiency, and how we receive it, he declares, chap. ix. 8. 'God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' God

manifests the abounding of grace towards us, when he works an effective sufficiency in us, which he doth so as to enable us to abound in good works, or duties of holiness. These are those supplies of grace which God gives us unto all our duties, as he had promised unto him in his own case; chap. xii. 9. And this is the first demonstration of the truth proposed unto consideration, namely, the testimonies given in the Scripture, that believers themselves cannot of themselves perform any acts or duties of holiness, any thing that is spiritually good. Therefore, these things are effects of grace, and must be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, who is the immediate author of all divine operations.

Secondly, All *actings of grace*, all *good duties*, are actually ascribed unto the operation of the Holy Ghost. The particular testimonies hereunto, are so multiplied in the Scripture, as that it is not convenient nor indeed possible to call them over distinctly, some of them, in a way of instance, may be insisted on, and reduced unto three heads.

1. There are many places wherein we are said to be *led*, *guided*, *acted*, by the Spirit, to *live* in the Spirit, to *walk* after the Spirit, to *do things* by the Spirit that dwelleth in us. For nothing, in general, can be intended in these expressions, but the actings of the Holy Spirit of God upon our souls, in a compliance wherewith, as acting when we are acted by him, our obedience unto God according to the gospel doth consist; Gal. v. 16. 'Walk in the Spirit.' To walk in the Spirit, is to walk in obedience unto God, according to the supplies of grace which the Holy Ghost administers unto us; for so it is added, 'that we shall not then fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' that is, we shall be kept up unto holy obedience and the avoidance of sin. So are we said to be 'led by the Spirit;' ver. 18. being acted by him, and not by the vicious depraved principles of our corrupted nature. Rom. viii. 4. 'Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' To walk after the flesh, is to have the principles of indwelling sin, acting itself in us unto the production and perpetration of actual sins. Wherefore, to walk after the Spirit, is to have the Spirit acting in us, to the effecting of all gracious acts and duties. And this is given unto us in command, that we neglect not his motions in us, but comply with them in a way of diligence and duty; see ver. 14, 15

So are we enjoined, to attend unto particular duties 'through the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us;' 2 Tim. i. 14. that is, through his assistance, without which we can do nothing.

2. As we are said to be *led* and *acted* by him, so he is declared to be the author of all gracious actings in us; Gal. v. 22, 23. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance.' All these things are wrought and brought forth in us by the Spirit, for they are his fruits. And not only the habit of them, but all their actings, in all their exercise, are from him. Every act of faith is faith, and every act of love is love, and consequently no act of them is of ourselves, but every one of them is a fruit of the Spirit of God. So in another place he adds a universal affirmative, comprehending all instances of particular graces and their exercise; Eph. v. 9. 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' Unto these three heads, all actings of grace, all duties of obedience, all parts of holiness, may be reduced. And it is through the supplies of the Spirit, that he trusteth for a good issue of his obedience; Phil. i. 19. So is it expressly in the promise of the covenant; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' This is the whole that God requireth of us, and it is all wrought in us by his Spirit. So also, chap. xi. 19, 20. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. All the obedience and holiness that God requires of us in the covenant, all duties and actings of grace, are promised to be wrought in us by the Spirit, after we are assured that of ourselves we can do nothing.

3. Particular *graces* and their exercise, are assigned unto his *acting* and working in us; Gal. v. 5. 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' The hope of the righteousness of faith, is the thing hoped for thereby. All that we look for or expect in this world or hereafter, is by the righteousness of faith. Our quiet waiting for this, is an especial gospel grace and duty. This we do not of ourselves, but 'through the Spirit;' Phil. iii. 3. 'We worship God in the Spirit,' love 'the brethren in the Spirit;' Col. i. 8. we 'purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren;' 1 Pet. i. 22. See Eph.

i. 17. Acts xix. 31. Rom. v. 5. viii. 15. 22. 26. 1 Thess. i. 6. Rom. xiv. 17. xv. 13. 16. of faith it is said expressly, that it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; Eph. ii. 7, 8.

Thirdly, There are testimonies that are express unto the *position* as before laid down; Phil. ii. 13. 'It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The things thus wrought, are all things that appertain unto our obedience and salvation, as is evident from the connexion of the words with ver. 12. 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' Hereunto two things are required: 1. *Power* for such operations, or for all the duties of holiness and obedience that are required of us. That this we are endued withal, that this is wrought in us, bestowed upon us, by the Holy Ghost, hath been before abundantly confirmed. But when this is done for us, is there ought else yet remaining to be done? Yea, 2. there is the *actual exercise* of the grace we have received. How may this be exercised? All the whole work of grace consists in the internal acts of our wills, and external operations in duties suitable thereunto. This, therefore, is incumbent on us, this we are to look unto in ourselves; it is our duty so to do, namely, to stir up and exercise the grace we have received in and unto its proper operations. But it is so our duty, as that of ourselves we cannot perform it. It is God who worketh effectually in us all those gracious acts of our wills, and all holy operations in a way of duty. Every act of our wills, so far as it is gracious and holy, is the act of the Spirit of God efficiently; he 'worketh in us to will,' or the very act of willing. To say he doth only persuade us, or excite and stir up our wills by his grace to put forth their own acts, is to say he doth not do what the apostle affirms him to do. For, if the gracious actings of our wills be so our own as not to be his, he doth not work in us to will, but only persuadeth us so to do. But the same apostle utterly excludeth this pretence, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured abundantly, yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' He had a necessity incumbent on him of declaring the great labour he had undergone, and the pains he had taken in 'preaching of the gospel:' but yet immediately, least any one should apprehend that he ascribed any thing to himself, any gracious holy actings in those labours, he adds his usual epanorthosis, 'not I;' let me not be mistaken;

it was not I, by any power of mine, by any thing in me, but it was all wrought in me by the free grace of the Spirit of God. 'Not I, but grace,' is the apostle's assertion. Suppose now, that God by his grace doth no more but aid, assist, and excite the will in its actings, that he doth not effectually work all the gracious actings of our souls in all our duties; the proposition would hold on the other hand, 'not grace, but I,' seeing the principal relation of the effect is unto the next and immediate cause, and thence hath it its denomination. And as he worketh them, 'to will' in us, so also 'to do;' that is, effectually to perform those duties whereunto the gracious actings of our wills are required.

And what hath been spoken may suffice to prove, that the Holy Spirit, as the *Author* of our *sanctification*, worketh also in us all gracious *acts* of faith, love, and obedience, wherein the first part of our *actual holiness* and *righteousness* doth consist. And the truth thus confirmed, may be farther improved unto our instruction and edification.

1. It is easily hence discernible, how contrary are the *æ-signs* and *expressions* of the Scripture, and the *notions* of some men among us. There is not any thing that is good in us, nothing that is done well by us in the way of obedience, but the Scripture expressly and frequently assigns it unto the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit in us. It doth so, in general, as to all gracious actings whatever, and not content therewith, it proposeth every grace, and every holy duty, distinctly affirming the Holy Ghost to be the immediate author of them. And when it comes to make mention of us, it positively, indeed, prescribes our duty to us, but as plainly lets us know, that we have no power in or from ourselves to perform it. But some men speak, and preach, and write, utterly to another purpose. The freedom, liberty, power, and ability of our own wills; the light, guidance, and direction of our own minds or reasons; and from all, our own performance of all the duties of faith and obedience, are the subjects of their discourses; and that in opposition unto what is ascribed in the Scriptures unto the immediate operations of the Holy Ghost. They are all for grace; 'Not I, but grace, not I but Christ, without him we can do nothing:' these are all for our wills; not grace but our wills do all. It is not more plainly affirmed in the Scrip-

ture, that God created heaven and earth, that he sustains and preserves all things by his power, than that he creates grace in the hearts of believers; preserves it, acts it, and makes it effectual, working all our works for us, and all our duties in us. But evasions must be found out, strange, forced, uncouth senses, be put upon plain, frequently repeated expressions, to secure the honour of our wills, and to take care, that all the good we do may not be assigned to the grace of God. To this purpose distinctions are coined, evasions invented, and such an explanation is given of all divine operations, as renders them useless and insignificant. Yea, it is almost grown, if not criminal, yet weak and ridiculous in the judgment of some, that any should assign those works and operations to the Spirit of God, which the Scripture doth, in the very words that the Scripture useth. To lessen the corruption and depravation of our nature by sin; to extol the integrity and power of our reasons; to maintain the freedom and ability of our wills in and unto things spiritually good; to resolve the conversion of men unto God, into their natural good dispositions, inclinations, and the right use of their reason; to render holiness to be only a probity of life, or honesty of conversation, upon rational motives and considerations; are the things that men are now almost wearied with the repetition of. Scarce a person that hath confidence to commence for reputation in the world, but immediately he furnisheth himself with some new tinkling ornaments for these old Pelagian figments. But whoever shall take an impartial view of the design and constant doctrine of the Scripture in this matter, will not be easily carried away with the plausible pretences of men exalting their own wills and abilities, in opposition to the Spirit and grace of God by Jesus Christ.

2. From what hath been discoursed, a farther discovery is made of the nature of *gospel obedience*, of all the acts of our souls therein, and of the duties that belong thereunto. It is commonly granted, that there is a great difference between the acts and duties that are truly gracious, and those which are called by the same name, that are not so, as in any duties of faith, of prayer, of charity. But this difference is supposed generally to be in the adjuncts of those duties, in some properties of them, but not in the kind, nature, or substance of the

acts of our minds in them. Nay, it is commonly said, that whereas wicked men are said to believe, and do many things gladly in a way of obedience; what they so do, is for the substance of the acts they perform, the same with those of them who are truly regenerate and sanctified. They may differ in their principle and end, but as to their substance or essence they are the same. But there is no small mistake herein. All gracious actings of our minds and souls, whether internal only, in faith, love, or delight, or whether they go out unto external duties required in the gospel, being wrought in us by the immediate efficacy of the Spirit of grace, differ in their kind, in their essence and substance of the acts themselves, from whatever is not so wrought or effected in us. For whatever may be done by any one, in any acting of common grace, or performance of any duty of obedience, being educed out of the power of the natural faculties of men, excited by convictions, as directed and enforced by reasons and exhortations, or assisted by common aids of what nature soever, they are natural as to their kind, and they have no other substance or being but what is so. But that which is wrought in us by the especial grace of the Holy Ghost in the way mentioned, is supernatural, as being not educed out of the powers of our natural faculties, but an immediate effect of the almighty supernatural efficacy of the grace of God. And, therefore, the sole reason why God accepts and rewards duties of obedience in them that are sanctified, and regardeth not those which for the outward matter and manner of performance are the same with them, (as unto Abel and his offering he had respect, but he had no respect unto Cain and his offering; Gen. iv. 4, 5.) is not taken from the state and condition of the persons that perform them only, though that also have an influence thereinto, but from the nature of the acts and duties themselves also. He never accepts and rejects duties of the same kind absolutely with respect unto the persons that do perform them. The duties themselves are of a different kind. Those which he accepts are supernatural effects of his own Spirit in us, whereon he rewardeth and crowneth the fruits of his own grace. And as for what he rejects, whatever appearance it may have of a compliance with the outward command, it hath nothing in it that is supernaturally gracious, and so is not of the same kind with what he doth accept.