

# BOOK V.

## NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

FROM  
THE CONSIDERATION  
OF  
THE NATURE OF GOD.

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### CHAP. I.

*The necessity of evangelical holiness owned by all Christians: doctrines falsely charged with an inconsistency with it. Though owned by all, yet practised by few, and disadvantageously pleaded for by many; the true nature of it briefly expressed. First argument for the necessity of holiness from the nature of God; frequently proposed unto our consideration for that end. This argument cogent and unavoidable; pressed with its limitation. Not the nature of God absolutely, but as he is in Christ, the foundation of this necessity, and a most effectual motive unto the same end; the nature and efficacy of that motive declared. The argument enforced, from the consideration of our conformity unto God by holiness; with that communion and likeness with him which depend thereon; with our future everlasting enjoyment of him. True force of that consideration vindicated; merit rejected, and the substitution of morality in the room of gospel holiness. False accusations of the doctrine of grace, discarded; and the neglect of the true means of promoting gospel obedience, charged. The principal argument farther enforced, from the pre-eminence of our natures and persons by this conformity to God; and our accesses unto God thereby, in order unto our eternal enjoyment of him: as it also alone renders us useful in this world unto others. Two sorts of graces, by whose exercise we grow into conformity with God; those that are assimilating, as faith and love; and those which are declarative of that assimilation, as goodness or benignity, and truth. An objection against the necessity of holiness, from the freedom and efficacy of grace, answered.*

THAT wherewith I shall close this discourse, is, the consideration of the *necessity* of that *holiness* which we have thus far described, unto all persons who make profession of the

*gospel*, with the *reasons* of that necessity, and principal *motives* unto it. And for our encouragement in this part of our work, this *necessity* is such, as that it is by all sorts of Christians allowed, pleaded for, and the thing itself pretended unto. For, whereas the gospel is eminently, ἀληθεία, or διδασκαλία ἡ κατ' ἐνσίβειαν; 1 Tim. vi. 3. Tit. i. 1. 'The truth or doctrine which is according unto godliness,' or that which is designed and every way suited unto the attaining, furtherance, and practice of it, no men can with modesty refuse the trial of their doctrines by their tendency thereunto. But what is of that nature, or what is a hinderance thereunto, that many are not yet agreed about. The Socinians contend, that the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ doth overthrow the necessity of a holy life. The Papists say the same, concerning the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto our justification. The same charge is laid by others against the doctrine of the gratuitous election of God, the almighty efficacy of his grace in the conversion of sinners, and of his faithfulness in the preservation of true believers in their state of grace unto the end: on the other hand, the Scripture doth so place the foundations of all true and real holiness in these things, that without the faith of them, and an influence on our minds from them, it will not allow of any thing to be so called.

To examine the pretences of others concerning the suitability of their doctrines unto the promotion of holiness, is not my present business. It is well that it hath always maintained a conviction of its necessity, and carried it through all different persuasions in Christianity. In this one thing alone almost, do all Christians agree; and yet, notwithstanding, the want of it, is, if not the only yet the principal thing, whereby the most who are so called, are ruined. So ordinary a thing is it, for men to agree for the necessity of holiness, and live in the neglect of it, when they have so done. Conviction comes in at an easy rate, as it were whether men will or no, but practice will stand them in pains, cost, and trouble. Wherefore, unto the due handling of this matter, some few things must be premised. As,

First, It is disadvantageous unto the interest of the gospel, to have men plead for holiness with weak incogent arguments, and such as are not taken out of the stores of its

truth, and so really affect not the consciences of men. And it is pernicious to all the concerns of holiness itself, to have that defended and pleaded for, under its name and title, which indeed is not so, but an usurper of its crown and dignity; which we shall afterward inquire into.

Secondly, It is uncomely and unworthy, to hear men contending for holiness, as the whole of our religion, and in the meantime, on all occasions, express in themselves a habit and frame of mind utterly inconsistent with what the Scripture so calls, and so esteems. There is certainly no readier way, on sundry accounts, to unteach men all the principles of religion, all respect unto God and common honesty. And if some men did this only, as being at variance with themselves, without reflections on others, it might the more easily be borne. But to see or hear men proclaiming themselves, in their whole course, to be proud, revengeful, worldly, sensual, neglecters of holy duties, scoffers at religion, and the power of it, pleading for a holy life, against the doctrine and practice of those who walked unblamably before the Lord in all his ways, yea, upon whose breasts and foreheads was written ‘Holiness unto the Lord;’ such as were most of the first reformed divines, whom they reflect upon, is a thing which all sober men do justly nauseate, and which God abhors. But the farther consideration hereof I shall at present omit, and pursue what I have proposed.

Thirdly, In my discourse concerning the *necessity* of holiness, with the grounds and reasons of it, and arguments for it, I shall confine myself unto these two things :

1. That the reasons, arguments, and motives, which I shall insist on, being such as are taken out of the gospel, or the Scripture, are not only consistent and compliant with the great doctrines of the *grace of God* in our free election, conversion, justification, and salvation by Jesus Christ, but such as *naturally flow* from them, discover what is their true nature and tendency in this matter.

2. That I shall at present suppose all along, what *that holiness* is which I do intend. Now this is not that *outward* show and pretence of it, which some plead for; not an attendance unto, or the observation of, *some* or all *moral virtues* only; not a readiness for some *acts of piety and charity*, from a superstitious proud conceit of their being *meritorious* of grace

or glory. But I intend that *holiness* which I have before described, which may be reduced to these three heads: (1.) An *internal change* or renovation of our souls, our minds, wills and affections by grace. (2.) A *universal compliance* with the will of God in all duties of obedience, and abstinence from sin, out of a principle of *faith* and *love*. (3.) A *designa-tion* of all the *actions of life* unto the glory of God by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel: this is holiness; so to be, and so to do, is to be holy. And I shall divide my arguments into two sorts: 1. Such as prove the *necessity* of holiness as to the *essence* of it, holiness in our hearts and natures; 2. Such as prove the *necessity* of holiness as to the *degrees* of it, holiness in our lives and conversations.

I. First, then, *The nature of God* as revealed unto us, with our dependence on him, the obligation that is upon us to live unto him, with the nature of our blessedness in the enjoyment of him, do require indispensably that we should be *holy*. The holiness of God's nature is every where in the Scripture made the fundamental principle and reason of the necessity of holiness in us. Himself makes it the ground of his command for it; Lev. xi. 44. 'For I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy.' So also chap. xix. 2. xx. 7. And to shew the everlasting equity and force of this reason, it is transferred over to the gospel; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' God lets them know, that his nature is such, as that unless they are sanctified and holy, there can be no such intercourse between him and them as ought to be between a God and his people. So he declares the sense of this enforcement of that precept to be; Lev. xi. 45. 'I brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God, ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.' Without this, the relation designed cannot be maintained, that I should be your God and you should be my people. To this purpose belongs that description given us of his nature, Psal. v. 4—6. 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lying; the Lord will abhor the

bloody and deceitful man.' Answerable unto that of the prophet; 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity;' Hab. i. 13. He is such a God, that is, such is his nature, so pure, so holy, that previous to the consideration of any free acts of his will, it is evident, that he can take no pleasure in fools, liars, or workers of iniquity. Therefore Joshua tells the people, that if they continued in their sins, they could not serve the Lord, for he is a 'holy God;' chap. xxiv. 19. All the service of unholy persons towards this God, is utterly lost and cast away, because it is inconsistent with his own holiness to accept of it. And our apostle argues in the same manner; Heb. xii. 28, 29. 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.' He lays his argument for the necessity of grace and holiness in the worship of God, from the consideration of the holiness of his nature, which, as a consuming fire, will devour that which is unsuited unto it, inconsistent with it. There would be no end of pursuing this reason of the necessity of holiness, in all places where it is proposed expressly in the Scripture. I shall only add in general, that God of old strictly required, that no unholy, no unclean, no defiling thing should be in the camp of his people, because of his presence among them who is himself holy, and without an exact observance hereof he declares, that he will depart and leave them.

If we had no other argument to prove the necessity of holiness, and that it is indispensably required of us, but only this, that the God whom we serve and worship is absolutely holy, that his being and nature is such, as that we can have no delightful intercourse with any that are unholy, it were abundantly sufficient unto our purpose. He who resolveth not to be holy, had best seek another God to worship and serve, with our God he will never find acceptance. And therefore the Heathen, who gave up themselves unto all filthiness with delight and greediness, to stifle the notions of a divine being, that they might not control them in their sins and pleasures, fancied such gods to themselves as were wicked and unclean, that they might freely conform unto them, and serve them with satisfaction. And God himself lets us know, that men of wicked and flagitious lives, have some

secret thoughts that he is not holy, but like themselves; Psal. 1. 21. For if they had not, they could not avoid it, but they must either think of leaving him or their sins.

But we must yet farther observe some things to evidence the force of this argument. As,

First, That unto us, in our present state and condition, the *holiness of God* as absolutely considered, merely as an infinite eternal property of the divine nature, is not the immediate ground of, and motive unto, holiness, but it is the *holiness of God as manifested and revealed unto us in Christ Jesus*. Under the first consideration, we who are sinners can make no conclusion from it, but that of Joshua, ‘He is a holy God, a jealous God, he will not forgive their iniquities, nor spare.’ This we may learn indeed from thence, that nothing which is unholy can possibly subsist before him, or find acceptance with him. But a motive and encouragement unto any holiness that is not absolutely perfect, no creature can take from the consideration thereof. And we do not, we ought not to, urge any such argument for the necessity of holiness, as cannot be answered and complied with by the grace of God as to the substance, though we come short in the degrees of it. My meaning is, that no argument can be rationally and usefully pleaded for the necessity of holiness, which doth not contain in itself an encouraging motive unto it. To declare it necessary for us, and at the same time impossible unto us, is not to promote its interest. They understand neither the holiness of God nor man, who suppose that they are absolutely and immediately suited unto one another, or that, under that notion of it, we can take any encouraging motive unto our duty herein. Nay, no creature is capable of such a perfection in holiness, as absolutely to answer the infinite purity of the divine nature, without a covenant-condescension; Job iv. 18. xv. 15. But it is the holiness of God as he is in Christ, and as in Christ represented unto us, that gives us both the necessity and motive unto ours.

Wherefore, God, in dealing with his people of old in this matter, did not propose unto them to this end the absolute perfection of his own nature, but his being *holy, as he dwelt among them, and was their God*; that is, in covenant, both which had respect unto Jesus Christ. In him all the glo-

rious perfections of God are so represented unto us, as we may not thence only *learn* our duty, but also be *encouraged* unto it. For,

1. All the *properties* of God as so represented unto us, are more *conspicuous, resplendent, alluring, and attractive*, than as *absolutely* considered. I know not what light into, and knowledge of, the divine perfections, Adam had in his state of innocency, when God had declared himself only in the works of nature; sufficient no doubt it was to guide him in his love and obedience, or that life which he was to live unto him. But I know that now, all our knowledge of God and his properties, unless it be that which we have in and by Jesus Christ, is insufficient to lead or conduct us in that life of faith and obedience, which is necessary unto us. He, therefore, gives us the ‘light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;’ 2 Cor. iv. 6. that is, clear manifestations of his glorious excellencies. The light of the knowledge hereof is a clear, useful, saving perception and understanding of them. And this is not only directive unto holiness, but also effective of it. For thus beholding the glory of the Lord, we are ‘changed into the same image, from glory to glory;’ chap. iii. 18.

2. In particular. The *fiery holiness of God*, is represented unto us in Christ, so, as that although it lose nothing of declaring the indispensable necessity of *holiness* in all that draw nigh to him, yet under such a *contemperation with goodness, grace, love, mercy, condescension*, as may invite and encourage us to endeavour after a *conformity* thereunto.

3. Together with a representation of the *holiness of God in Christ*, there is a *revelation* made of *what holiness* in us he doth require, and will accept. As was observed before, the consideration of it absolutely neither requires nor admits of any but that which is absolutely perfect, and where there is any one failing, the whole of what we do is condemned; James ii. 10. This, therefore, can only perplex and torture the soul of a sinner, by pressing on him at the same time the necessity and impossibility of holiness; Isa. xxxiii. 14. But now as God is in Christ, through his interposition and mediation, he accepts of such a holiness in us, as we are capable of, and which no man hath any discouragement from endeavouring to attain.

4. There is, in and by *Christ*, declared and administered a *spiritual power of grace*, which shall work this *holiness* in us, or that conformity unto the holiness of God which he doth require. From this fountain therefore we draw immediately as the reasons of the necessity, so prevalent motives unto holiness in our souls. Hence some things may be inferenced. As, (1.) That the mediation of *Christ*, and in particular his satisfaction, is so far from being a hinderance of, or a *discouragement* unto *holiness*, as some blasphemously pretend, that the great fundamental reason of it in us, namely, the holiness of God himself, can have no influence upon us, without the supposition of it and faith in it; unless faith be built hereon, no sinner upon a view of God's holiness as absolutely considered, can have any other thoughts but those of Cain, 'My sin is great it cannot be pardoned.' God is a holy God, I cannot serve him, and therefore will depart out of his presence. But the holiness of God as manifested in Jesus Christ, including a supposition of satisfaction made unto what is required by its absolute purity, and a condescension thereon to accept, in him, that holiness of truth and sincerity which we are capable of, doth equally maintain the indispensable necessity of it, and encourage us unto it. And we may see what contrary conclusions will be made on these different considerations of it. Those who view it only in the first way, can come to no other issue in their thoughts but that which they express in the prophet; Isa. xxxiii. 14. 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall inhabit with everlasting burnings.' God's fiery holiness serves towards them unto no other end but to fill them with terror and despair. But other inferences are natural from the consideration of the same holiness, in the latter way. 'Our God,' saith the apostle, 'is a consuming fire;' what then, what follows as our duty thereon? 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear;' Heb. xii. 28, 29. There is no such forcible reason for, no such powerful motive unto, our adherence unto him in holy obedience. Such different conclusions will men make from these different considerations of the holiness of God, when once they come to be serious and in good earnest about them.

(2.) It follows from hence also, that our holiness under



the new covenant, although it have the same general nature and one principal end with that which was required in the covenant of works, yet as it hath an especial spring and fountain, which that had not, and relates unto sundry causes which the other had no concernment in, so it is not of the same especial use therewith. The immediate end and use of that holiness in us, was to answer the holiness of God absolutely as expressed in the law, whereon we should have been justified. This is now done for us by Christ alone, and the holiness which God requireth of us, respects only those ends which God hath proposed unto us, in compliance with his own holiness, as he will glorify it in Jesus Christ; which must be afterward declared.

Secondly, We may consider in what particular *instances* the force of this argument is conveyed unto us, or what are the especial reasons why we ought to *be holy because God is so*. And they are three.

1. Because herein consists all that *conformity* unto God, whereof in this world we are capable, which is our *privilege, pre-eminence, glory, and honour*. We were originally created in the image and likeness of God. Herein consisted the privilege, pre-eminence, order, and blessedness of our first state; and that for the substance of it, it was no other but our holiness, is by all confessed. Wherefore, without this conformity unto God, without the impress of his image and likeness upon us, we do not, we cannot, stand in that relation unto God which was designed us in our creation. This we lost by the entrance of sin. And if there be not a way for us to acquire it again, if we do not so, we shall always come short of the glory of God, and of the end of our creation. Now this is done in and by holiness alone, for therein consists the renovation of the image of God in us, as our apostle expressly declares; Eph. iv. 22—24. with Col. iii. 10. It is, therefore, to no purpose for any man to expect an interest in God, or any thing that will prove eternally to his advantage, who doth not endeavour after conformity unto him. For such a man despiseth all the glory that God designed unto himself in our creation, and all that was eminent and peculiarly bestowed upon ourselves.

He, therefore, whose design is not to be like unto God, according to his measure, and the capacity of a creature,

always misseth both of his end, his rule, and his way. Our Saviour would have his disciples to do all things so, as that they may be the ‘children of their heavenly Father;’ Matt. v. 45. that is, like him, representing him, as children do their father. And the truth is, if this necessity of conformity unto God be once out of our view and consideration, we are easily turned aside by the meanest temptation we meet withal. In brief, without that likeness and conformity unto God, which consists in holiness, as we do under his eye bear the image of his great adversary the devil, so we can have no especial interest in him, nor hath he any in us.

2. The force of the argument ariseth from the respect it bears unto our actual *intercourse* and *communion with God*: this we are *called* unto, and this in all our duties of obedience we must endeavour to attain. If there be not in them a real intercourse between God and our souls, they are all but uncertain beatings of the air. When we are accepted in them, when God is glorified by them, then have we in them this intercourse and communion with God. Now whereas God is holy, if we are not in our measure holy according to his mind, this cannot be. For God neither accepts of any duties from unholy persons, nor is he glorified by them; and, therefore, as unto these ends doth he expressly reject and condemn them. It is a good duty to ‘preach the word;’ but ‘unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee;’ Psal. l. 16, 17. Seeing thou art unholy. To pray is a good duty; but unto them that are not ‘washed’ and made ‘clean,’ and ‘put not away the evil of their doings from before his eyes,’ saith God, ‘When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, and when ye make many prayers I will not hear;’ Isa. i. 15, 16. And the like may be said of all other duties whatever.

It is certain, therefore, that whereas God is holy, if we are not so, all the duties which we design or intend to perform towards him, are everlastingly lost, as unto their proper ends. For there is no intercourse nor communion between light and darkness: ‘God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and if we say, We have fellowship with him,

and walk in darkness,' as all unholy persons do, 'we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus;' 1 John i. 6, 7. 3. Now what man that shall consider this, unless he be infatuated, would for the love of any one sin, or out of conformity to the world, or any other thing, whereby the essence and truth of holiness is impeached, utterly lose and forfeit all the benefit and fruit of all those duties wherein perhaps he hath laboured, and which he hath, it may be, been at no small charge withal. But yet this is the condition of all men, who come short in any thing that is essentially necessary unto universal holiness. All they do, all they suffer, all the pains they take in and about religious duties, all their compliance with convictions, and what they do therein within doors and without, is all lost, as unto the great ends of the glory of God, and their own eternal blessedness, as sure as God is holy.

3. It ariseth from a respect unto our future *everlasting enjoyment* of him. This is our utmost end, which if we come short of (life itself is the greatest loss), better ten thousand times we had never been. For without it, a continuance in everlasting miseries is inseparable from our state and condition. Now this is never attainable by any unholy person. 'Follow holiness,' saith our apostle, 'without which no man shall see God.' For it is the 'pure in heart only,' that shall see God; Matt. v. 8. It is hereby that we are 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;' Col. i. 12. Neither can we attain it before we are thus made meet for it. No unclean thing, nothing that defileth or is defiled, shall ever be brought into the glorious presence of this holy God. There is no imagination wherewith mankind is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious as this, that persons not purified, not sanctified, not made holy in this life, should afterward be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. There can be no thought more reproachful to his glory, nor more inconsistent with the nature of the things themselves. For neither can such persons enjoy him, nor would God himself be a reward unto them. They can have nothing whereby they should adhere unto him as their chiefest good, nor can see any thing in

him that should give them rest or satisfaction; nor can there be any medium whereby God should communicate himself unto them, supposing them to continue thus unholy, as all must do who depart out of this life in that condition. Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven, but the beginning of it is inviolably and unalterably confined to this world; and where this fails, no hand shall be put unto that work unto eternity. All unholy persons, therefore, who feed and refresh themselves with hopes of heaven and eternity, do it merely on false notions of God and blessedness, whereby they deceive themselves. Heaven is a place where as well they would not be, as they cannot be; in itself it is neither desired by them, nor fit for them. ‘He that hath this hope’ indeed, that he shall see God, ‘purifieth himself even as he is pure;’ 1 John iii. 2, 3. There is, therefore, a manifold necessity of holiness impressed on us, from the consideration of the nature of that God whom we serve and hope to enjoy, which is holy.

I cannot pass over this consideration, without making some especial *improvement* of it. We have seen how all our concernment and interest in God both here and hereafter, do depend on our being holy. They invented a very effectual means for the prejudicing, yea, indeed a fatal engine for the ruin of true holiness in the world, who built it on no other bottom, nor pressed it on any other motive, but that the acts and fruits of it were meritorious in the sight of God. For whether this be believed and complied withal or not, true holiness is ruined, if no other more effectual reason be substituted in its room. Reject this motive, and there is no need of it; which I am persuaded hath really taken place in many, who being taught that good deeds are not meritorious, have concluded them useless. Comply with it, and you destroy the nature of true holiness, and turn all the pretended duties of it into fruits and effects of spiritual pride, and blind superstition. But we see the necessity of it with respect unto God, hath other foundations suited unto, and consistent with, the grace and love and mercy of the gospel. And we shall fully shew in our progress, that there is not one motive unto it, that is of any real force or efficacy, but perfectly complies with the whole doctrine of the free undeserved grace of God towards us by Jesus Christ; nor is there any

of them which gives the least countenance unto any thing of worth in ourselves, as from ourselves, or that should take us off from an absolute and universal dependance on Christ for life and salvation. But yet such they are, as render it as necessary unto us to be holy, that is, to be sanctified, as to be justified. He that thinks to please God, and to come to the enjoyment of him without holiness, makes him an unholy God, putting the highest indignity and dishonour imaginable upon him. God deliver poor sinners from this deceit. There is no remedy, you must leave your sins, or your God. You may as easily reconcile heaven and hell, the one remaining heaven and the other hell, as easily take away all difference between light and darkness, good and evil, as procure acceptance for unholy persons with our God. Some live without God in the world; whether they have any notion of his being or no, is not material: they live without any regard unto him, either as unto his present rule over them, or his future disposal of them. It is no wonder if holiness, both name and thing, be universally despised by these persons; their design being to serve their lusts to the utmost, and immerse themselves in the pleasures of the world, without once taking God into their thoughts, they can do no otherwise. But for men who live under some constant sense of God, and an eternal accountableness unto him, and thereon do many things he requires, and abstain from many sins that their inclinations and opportunities would suggest and prompt them unto, not to endeavour after that universal holiness, which alone will be accepted with him, is a deplorable folly. Such men seem to worship an idol all their days. For he that doth not endeavour to be like unto God, doth contrarily think wickedly that God is like unto himself. It is true, our interest in God is not built upon our holiness, but it is as true that we have none without it. Were this principle once well fixed in the minds of men, that without holiness no man shall see God, and that enforced from the consideration of the nature of God himself, it could not but influence them unto a greater diligence about it, than the most seem to be engaged in.

There is indeed amongst us a great plea for morality, or for moral virtue; I wish it be more out of love to virtue itself, and a conviction of its usefulness, than out of a design to

cast contempt on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel, as it is declared by the faithful dispensers of it. However, we are bound to believe the best of all men. Where we see those who so plead for moral virtues, to be in their own persons, and in their lives, modest, sober, humble, patient, self-denying, charitable, useful towards all, we are obliged to believe, that their pleas for moral virtue proceed from a love and liking of it. But where men are proud, furious, worldly, revengeful, profane, intemperate, covetous, ambitious, I cannot so well understand their declamations about virtue. Only I would for the present inquire, what it is that they intend by their morality. Is it the renovation of the image of God in us by grace? is it our conformity from thence unto him in his holiness? is it our being holy in all manner of holiness, because God is holy? is it the acting of our souls in all duties of obedience, from a principle of faith and love, according to the will of God, whereby we have communion with him here, and are led towards the enjoyment of him? If these are the things which they intend, what is the matter with them? why are they so afraid of the words and expressions of the Scripture? Why will they not speak of the things of God in words that the Holy Ghost teacheth? Men never dislike the words of God but when they dislike the things of God; is it because these expressions are not intelligible, people do not know what they mean, but this of moral virtue they understand well enough? We appeal to the experience of all that truly fear God in the world unto the contrary. There is none of them, but the Scripture expressions of the causes, nature, work, and effects of holiness, do convey a clear experimental apprehension of them unto their minds: whereas, by their moral virtue, neither themselves, nor any else, do know what they intend, since they do, or must reject the common received notion of it, for honesty amongst men. If, therefore, they intend that holiness hereby which is required of us in the Scripture, and that particularly on the account of the holiness of that God whom we serve, they fall into a high contempt of the wisdom of God, in despising of those notices and expressions of it, which being used by the Holy Ghost, are suited unto the spiritual light and understanding of believers; substituting their own arbitrary, doubtful, uncertain sentiments and

words in their room and place. But if it be something else which they intend (as indeed evidently it is, nor doth any man understand more in the design than sobriety and usefulness in the world, things singularly good in their proper place), then it is no otherwise to be looked on, but as a design of Satan to undermine the true holiness of the gospel, and to substitute a deceitful and deceiving cloud or shadow in the room of it.

And, moreover, what we have already discoursed, doth abundantly evince the folly and falsehood of those clamorous accusations, wherein the most important truths of the gospel are charged as inconsistent with, and as repugnant unto, holiness. The doctrine, say the Socinians, of the satisfaction of Christ, ruins all care and endeavours after a holy life: for when men do believe that Christ hath satisfied the justice of God for their sins, they will be inclined to be careless about them, yea, to live in them. But as this supposition doth transform believers into monsters of ingratitude and folly, so it is built on no other foundation than this, that if Christ take away the guilt of sin, there is no reason in the nature of these things, nor mentioned in the Scripture, why we should need to be holy, and keep ourselves from the power, filth, and dominion of sin, or any way glorify God in this world; which is an inference weak, false, and ridiculous. The Papists and others with them, lay the same charge on the doctrine of justification through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto us. And it is wonderful to consider with what virulent railing this charge is managed by the Papists, so with what scorn and scoffing, with what stories and tales, some amongst ourselves endeavour to expose this sacred truth to contempt, as though all those by whom it is believed, must consequently be negligent of holiness and good works. Now, although I deny not, but that such men may find a great strength of connexion, between these things in their own minds, seeing there is a principle in the corrupt heart of men, to ‘turn the grace of God into lasciviousness;’ yet (as shall in due time be proved) this sacred truth is both doctrinally and practically the great constraining principle unto holiness and fruitfulness in obedience. For the present I shall return no other answer unto those objections, but that the objectors are wholly mistaken in our

thoughts and apprehensions, concerning that God whom we serve. God in Christ whom we worship, hath so revealed his own holiness unto us, and what is necessary for us on the account thereof, as that we know it to be a foolish, wicked, and blasphemous thing, for any one to think to please him, to be accepted with him, to come to the enjoyment of him, without that holiness which he requireth, and from his own nature cannot but require. That the grace, or mercy, or love, of this God, who is our God, should encourage those who indeed know him unto sin, or countenance them in a neglect of holy obedience to him, is a monstrous imagination. There are, as I shall shew afterward, other invincible reasons for it, and the motives unto it. But the owning of this one consideration alone, by them who believe the grace of the gospel, is sufficient to secure them from the reproach of this objection.

Moreover, from what hath been discoursed, we may all charge ourselves with blame, for our sloth and negligence in this matter. It is to be feared, that we have none of us endeavoured as we ought, to grow up into this image and likeness of God. And although for the main of our duty herein, our hearts may not condemn us, yet there are no doubt sundry things that belong unto it, wherein we have all failed. Our likeness unto God, that wherein we bear his image, is our holiness, as hath been declared. Wherever there is the holiness of truth before described, in the essence of it, there is a radical conformity and likeness unto God. In the first communication of it unto us, through the promises of the gospel, we are made partakers *τῆς θείας φύσεως*, 'of the divine nature;' 2 Pet. i. 4. Such a new spiritual nature as represents that of God himself: being begotten by him, we are made partakers of his nature. But though all children do partake of the nature of their parents, yet they may be, and some of them are, very deformed, and bear very little of their likeness. So is it in this matter; we may have the image of God in our hearts, and yet come short of that likeness unto him in its degrees and improvement which we ought to aim at. And this happens two ways: (1.) When our graces are weak, withering, and unthrifty; for in their flourishing and fruit-bearing, is our likeness unto God evidenced, and in them doth the glory of God in this world



consist. (2.) When by the power of our corruptions or our temptations, we contract a deformity; something that hath the likeness of the old crooked serpent. Where either of these befall us, that our graces are low and thriftless; that our corruptions are high and active, frequently discovering themselves; there, though the image of God may be in us, there is not much of his likeness upon us, and we come short of our duty, in this great and fundamental duty of our faith and profession. So far as it is thus with us, may we not, ought we not, greatly to blame ourselves? Why are we so slow, so negligent in the pursuit of our principal interest and happiness? Why do we suffer every thing, why do we suffer any thing, to divert our minds from, or retard our endeavours in, this design? Wherefore, that I may contribute something to the awakening of our diligence herein, I shall add some few *motives* unto it, and some *directions* for it, that herein we may be found ‘perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord,’ which is the only way whereby we may be like unto him, in this world.

First, In our *likeness* unto God, consists the excellency and pre-eminence of our *nature*, above that of all other creatures in the world, and of our *persons* above those of other men, who are not partakers of his *image*.

For, 1. with reference unto other things, this is the highest excellency that a *created nature* is capable of. Other things had external impressions of the greatness, power, and goodness of God upon them; man alone in this lower world was capable of the image of God in him. The perfection, the glory, the pre-eminence of our nature in the first creation, was expressed only by this, that we were made in the ‘image and likeness of God;’ Gen. i. 26, 27. This gave us a pre-eminence above all other creatures, and hence a dominion over them ensued. For, although God made a distinct grant of it unto us, that we might the better understand and be thankful for our privilege; yet was it a necessary consequence of his image in us. And this is that which James respects, where he tells us, that *πᾶσα φύσις*, ‘every nature,’ the nature of all things in their several kinds, *δαμάζεται τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ*, ‘is tamed,’ that is, subjected to the nature of man. He renders כבש, Gen. i. 28. by *δαμάζω*, which the LXX. render *κατακυριένω*, ‘subdue it.’ But being not

contented to be like God, that is, in holiness and righteousness, we would be as God in wisdom and sovereignty; and not attaining what we aimed at, we lost what we had; Gen. iii. 5. Being in 'honour we continued not, but became like the beasts that perish;' Psal. xlix. 12. we were first like God, and then 'like beasts;' 2 Pet. ii. 12. By the loss of the image of God, our nature lost its pre-eminence, and we were reduced into order amongst perishing beasts. For notwithstanding some feeble relics of this image yet abiding with us, we have really, with respect unto our proper end, in our lapsed condition, more of the bestial nature in us, than of the divine. Wherefore, the restoration of this image in us by the grace of Jesus Christ,' Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. is the recovery of that pre-eminence and privilege of our nature which we had foolishly lost. Hereby there is an impression again made upon our natures of the authority of God, which gives us a pre-eminence above other creatures, and a rule over them; yea, that whole dominion which mankind scrambles for with craft and violence, over the residue of the creation, depends on this renoyation of the image of God in some of them. Not that I judge that men's right and title to their portion and interests in this world, doth depend on their own personal grace or holiness; but that if God had not designed to renew his image in our nature by Jesus Christ, and as the foundation thereof to take our nature into union with himself in the person of his Son, and thereby to gather up all things unto a new head in him, and to make him the first-born of the creation, the head and heir of all, he would not have continued any thing of right or title therein. It was upon the promise, and the establishment of the new covenant, that this right was restored unto us. So it is expressed in the renovation of the covenant with Noah and his children, Gen. ix. 1, 2. 'God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth on the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered;' which is an express renovation of the grant made unto us at our first creation; Gen. i. 28. The right whereunto we had lost, in our loss of the image of God. And therefore, in that service

wherein the creature is continued unto mankind, it is made subject to vanity, and put into bondage, in which state, though it groan, and look out, as it were, for deliverance, it must continue until God hath accomplished the whole design of the glorious ‘liberty of his children;’ Rom. viii. 20, 21. Whatever they may pride themselves in, their parts or enjoyments, however they may sport themselves in the use or abuse of other creatures, if this image of God be not renewed in them, they have really no great pre-eminence above the things which perish under their hands; 2 Pet. ii. 12. God having exalted our natures by union with himself in the person of his Son, requires of us to preserve its dignity above others.

2. Again, this is that which gives privilege and pre-eminence unto the *persons* of some above others; ‘the righteous,’ saith the wise man, ‘is more excellent than his neighbour;’ Prov. xii. 26. It is seldom that this is so upon the account of civil wisdom, wealth, greatness, or power. There is nothing can establish this general rule, but their conformity and likeness to God. Hence are such persons called the ‘saints in the earth, and the excellent;’ Psal. xvi. 3. Both the terms קדושים and קדירים, do first belong properly to God. He above is absolutely קדוש or ‘holy;’ and he is אדיר, Psal. viii. 2. unto men they are ascribed upon their likeness unto him in holiness. This makes them the ‘saints and excellent in the earth,’ that gives them a pre-eminence of office and authority in some above others. And this dignity of office reflects a dignity of person on them who are vested in it, and communicates a pre-eminence unto them; for their office and authority is from God, which gives both it and them a real privilege and honour above others. But that which is originally in and from persons themselves, is solely from the renovation of the image of God in them, and is heightened and increased according to the degrees they attain in the participation of it. The more holy, the more honourable. Hence wicked men in the Scripture are said to be vile, זלזלתי לבני אדם; Psal. xii. 8. *Quisquilie hominum*, ‘trifling vilenesses;’ and the righteous are said to be precious and valuable. And hence it is, that there hath oft-times an awe been put on the spirits of vile and outrageous sinners, from the appearances of God in holy persons. And indeed at all

times, where men do eminently bear a conformity to God in holiness, wicked men exasperated by their secular interests, prejudices, and an unconquerable adherence to their lusts, may oppose, revile, reproach, and persecute them, but secretly in their hearts they have an awe from the likeness of God in them, whence they will sometimes dread them, sometimes flatter them, and sometimes wish that they were not, even as they deal with God himself. Why do we weary ourselves about other things? Why do we spend our labour in vain, and our strength for that 'which is not bread?' such will all endeavours after any other excellency at length appear.

Herein lies the whole of that dignity which our nature was made for, and is capable of; sin is the sole debasement of it, that alone whereby we render ourselves base and contemptible. Men's self-pleasing in the ways and fruits of it, or in worldly advantages, and their mutual applauses of one another, will suddenly vanish into smoke. It is holiness alone that is honourable, and that because there is in it the image and representation of God. I think we are satisfied, that the dignity of professors above others, doth not consist in worldly or secular advantages, for they are very few who have them; 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;' 1 Cor. i. 26. nor doth it consist in spiritual gifts; many who have excelled us, not only in the degree of them, but in the kind also, who have had extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, shall be shut out of heaven with the worst of the world; Matt. vii. 22. 'Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name wrought *δυνάμεις πολλὰς*, many miraculous works?' which is more than any of us can say; yet Christ will 'profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity,' you unholy persons. Nor is it in profession itself. Many make it in rigid austerities, renunciation of the world, and outward works of charity, beyond the most of us, and yet perish in their superstitions. Nor is it in the purity of worship, without such mixtures of human inventions as others defile the service of God withal. For multitudes may be made partakers thereof in the 'great house of God,' and yet be 'vessels of wood and stone,' who being 'not purged from sin,' are not 'vessels to honour, sanctified and meet for

the master's use;' 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. It consists, therefore, alone in that likeness unto God, which we have in and by holiness, with what doth attend it, and is inseparable from it. Where this is not, no other thing will exempt us from the common herd of perishing mankind.

Secondly, According unto our *growth* and *improvement* in this *likeness* unto God, are our accesses and approaches towards glory. We are drawing every day towards our natural end whether we will or no; and if we do not therewithal draw nearer towards our supernatural end in glory, we are most miserable. Now men do but deceive themselves, if they suppose that they are approaching towards glory in time, if they are not at the same time making nearer unto it in grace; it is some representation of future glory, that therein we shall be *ἰσάγγελοι*; Luke xx. 36. 'like, or equal unto angels.' But that respects one particular only of that state. It is a far more excellent description of it, that we shall be like unto God, 'when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 1 John iii. 2. Our glory as subjectively considered, will be our likeness unto God according to the capacity of creatures. And it is the highest folly for any to think that they shall love that hereafter, which now they hate; that that will be their glory which they now abhor; such sottish contradictions are the minds of men filled withal. There is nothing in this world which they more despise, than to be like unto God, and they hate every one that is so; yet pretend a desire and expectation of that estate wherein they shall be so, which is a being so for ever. But this will be our glory; 'to behold the face of God in righteousness, and to be satisfied with his likeness;' Psal. xvii. 15. How then shall we make approaches towards this glory spiritually; which at least may answer the approaches we make towards our ends naturally, seeing not to do so, is folly and intolerable negligence? We have no other way, but thriving and growing in that likeness of God which we have here in holiness. Hereby alone are we 'transformed into the image of God, from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. From one glorious degree of grace unto another, until one great change shall issue all grace and holiness in eternal glory: and in our desires for heaven, if they are regular, we consider not so much our freedom from trouble

as from sin; nor is our aim in the first place so much at complete happiness, as perfect holiness. And they who desire heaven, as that which would only ease them of their troubles, and not as that which will perfectly free them of sin; will fall into a state wherein sin and trouble shall be eternally inseparable. As, therefore, we would continually tend towards our rest and blessedness, as we would have assured and evident pledges of it in our own souls, as we would have foretastes of it, and an experimental acquaintance with it (as who would not know as much as is possible of his eternal blessedness), this is the design which we ought to pursue. It is to be feared, that the most of us know not how much of glory may be in present grace, nor how much of heaven may be attained in holiness on the earth. We have a generation amongst us, that would fain be boasting of perfection, whilst in their minds they are evidently under the power of darkness, corrupt in their affections, and worldly in their lives. But our duty it is, to be always ‘perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.’ This pursued in a due manner, is continually transforming the soul into the likeness of God. Much of the glory of heaven may dwell in a simple cottage. And poor persons, even under rags, may be very like unto God.

Thirdly, It is from our *likeness* and *conformity* unto God alone, that we are, or may be *useful* in the world, in a due manner and order. I shall have occasion to speak more unto this afterward, and shall therefore here only touch upon it, with respect unto one concernment or circumstance. God is the great preserver and benefactor of the whole creation: he is good and doth good, the sole cause and fountain of all good, that in any kind, any creature is made partaker of. And there is no property of God more celebrated in the Scripture than this of his goodness, and his giving out of the fruits of it to all his creatures. And he is so only good, that there is nothing so in any sense but by a participation of it, and a likeness unto him therein. They, therefore, who are like unto God, and they only, are useful in this world. There is indeed, or at least there hath been, much good, useful good done by others, on various convictions, and for various ends: but there is one flaw or other in all they do. Either superstition, or vain-glory, or selfishness, or merit, or one

thing or other, gets into all the good that is done by unholy persons, and brings death into the pot, so that although it may be of some use in particulars, unto individual persons, in some seasons, it is of none unto the general good of the whole. He that bears the likeness of God, and in all that he doth acts from that principle, he alone is truly useful, represents God in what he doth, and spoils it not by false ends of his own. If, therefore, we would keep up the privilege and pre-eminence of our nature and persons, if we would make due and daily accessions towards glory and blessedness, if we would be of any real use in this world, our great endeavour ought to be, to grow up more and more into this likeness of God, which consists in our holiness.

It will, therefore, or it may, be justly here inquired, *how* or *what* we may do, that we may *thrive* and *grow* up more and more into this *likeness* unto God. To remit other considerations unto their proper place, at present I answer, that there are some graces of holiness that are effectually *assimilating*, and others that are *declarative*, and expressive of this likeness of God in us.

*First*, Those of the first sort, which have a peculiar efficacy to promote the *likeness of God* in our souls, are *faith* and *love*, in whose constant exercise we ought to abide and abound, if we intend to *grow* in *likeness* and conformity to God.

1. *Faith* is a part of our *holiness*, as it is a *grace* of the sanctifying Spirit, and it is a *principle* of holiness as it *purifies* the heart, and is effectual by *love*. The more faith is in its due and proper exercise, the more holy we shall be, and consequently the more like unto God. This were a large theme, I shall confine it unto one instance. The glorious properties of God, as we have shewed before, are manifested and revealed in Jesus Christ, ‘in his face do they shine forth.’ The only way whereby we behold them, whereby we have an intuition into them, is by faith. In Christ are the glorious excellencies of God represented unto us, and by faith do we behold them. And what is the effect hereof? ‘we are changed into the same image and likeness, from glory to glory;’ 2 Cor. iii. 18. This is the great mystery of growing in holiness, and thriving in the image of God, which the world being ignorant of, have la-

boured in vain, by other means, to satisfy their notions and convictions. But this is the great way and means of it, appointed and blessed of God unto that purpose; namely, constantly by faith, in a way of believing the revelation made in the gospel, to view, behold, and contemplate on the excellencies of God, his goodness, holiness, righteousness, love, and grace, as manifested in Jesus Christ; and that so as to make use of, and apply unto ourselves and our condition, the effects and fruits of them, according to the promise of the gospel. This is the great *arcamum* of growing up into the likeness of God; without which, however men may multiply duties in a compliance with their convictions, they will have never the more conformity to God. And all professors who come short in this matter, do, or may, know, that it ariseth from their want of a constant exercise of faith on God in Christ. If, therefore, we have a real design, of being yet more like unto God, which is our privilege, safety, glory, blessedness, this is the way we must take for its accomplishment. Abound in actings of faith, and we shall thrive in holiness. And they are but acts of presumption under the name of faith, which do not infallibly produce this effect.

2. *Love* hath the same *tendency* and *efficacy*. I mean the love of God. He that would be like unto God must be sure to love him, or all other endeavours to that purpose will be in vain. And he that loves God sincerely, will be like him. Under the Old Testament none in his general course so like unto God as David, called, therefore, ‘the man after God’s own heart;’ and none ever made greater expressions of love unto him, which occur continually in the Psalms. And let men take what pains they can in acts and duties of obedience, if they proceed not from a principle of divine love, their likeness unto God will not be increased by them. All love in general hath an assimilating efficacy, it casts the mind into the mould of the thing beloved. So love of this world makes men earthly minded; their minds and affections grow earthly, carnal, and sensual. But of all kinds divine love is most effectual to this purpose, as having the best, the most noble, proper, and attractive object. It is our adherence unto God with delight, for what he is in himself, as manifested in Jesus Christ. By it we cleave unto God, and so keep near him, and thereby derive transforming virtue from



him. Every approach unto God by ardent love and delight is transfiguring. And it acts itself continually by, (1.) *Contemplation*; (2.) *Admiration*; and, (3.) *Delight* in obedience.

(1.) *Love* acts itself by *contemplation*. It is in the nature of it to be meditating and contemplating on the excellencies of God in Christ. Yea, this is the life of it, and where this is not, there is no love. A heart filled with the love of God, will night and day be exercising itself in and with thoughts of God's glorious excellencies, rejoicing in them. This the psalmist exhorts us unto, Psal. xxx. 4. 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.' And love will do the same with respect unto all his other properties. See to this purpose, Psal. lxiii. throughout. And this will further our likeness unto him; our minds by it will be changed into the image of what we contemplate, and we shall endeavour that our lives be conformed thereunto.

(2.) It works by *admiration* also. This is the voice of love; 'How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!' Zech. ix. 17. the soul being, as it were, ravished with that view which it hath of the glorious excellencies of God in Christ, hath no way to express its affections but by admiration. How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! And this beauty of God is that sweetness and holy symmetry of glory (if I may be allowed to speak so improperly) in all the perfections of God, being all in a sweet correspondence exalted in Christ, which is the proper object of our love. To see infinite holiness, purity, and righteousness, with infinite love, goodness, grace, and mercy, all equally glorified in and towards the same things and persons, one glimpse whereof is not to be attained in the world out of Christ; is that beauty of God which attracts the love of a believing soul, and fills it with a holy admiration of him. And this also is a most effectual furtherance of our conformity unto him, which without these steps we shall labour in vain after.

(3.) Again, love gives *delight* in obedience, and all the duties of it. The common instance of Jacob is known, of whom it is said, that his seven years' service seemed short, and so easy to him, for the love he bare to Rachel. He did that with delight, which he would not afterward undergo for the greatest wages. But we have a greater instance; our

Lord Jesus Christ says concerning all the obedience that was required of him; ‘Thy law, O God, is in my heart; I delight to do thy will.’ And yet we know how terrible to nature were the things he did and suffered in obedience to that law. But his unspeakable love to God and the souls of men, rendered it all his delight. Hence follows intension and frequency in all the duties of it. And where these two are, intension of mind and spirit, with a frequency of holy duties, both proceeding from delight, there holiness will thrive, and consequently we shall do so in our conformity to God. In brief, love and likeness unto God are inseparable, and proportionate unto one another. And without this, no duties of obedience are any part of his image.

*Secondly*, There are graces which are *declarative* of this assimilation, or which *evidence* and manifest our *likeness* unto God. I shall instance only in two of them.

1. And the first is such, as I shall give many *names* unto it in its description, as the Scripture doth also, but the thing intended is one and the same. This is *goodness*, *kindness*, *benignity*, *love*, with readiness to do *good*, to *forgive*, to *help*, and *relieve*, and this towards *all* men, on *all* occasions. And this also is to be considered in opposition unto an evil habit of mind exerting itself in many vices, which yet agree in the same general nature; such are anger, wrath, envy, malice, revenge, frowardness, selfishness: all which are directly opposite to the grace of holiness, at present instanced in and pleaded for. And this I fear, is not so considered as it ought to be: for if it were, it would not be so common a thing as, it may be, it is, for men to plead highly for the imitation of God, and almost in all they do give us a full representation of the devil. For as this universal benignity and love to all, is the greatest representation of the nature of God on the earth; so is fierceness, envy, wrath, and revenge, of that of the devil. Would we then be like unto our heavenly Father, would we manifest that we are so unto his glory, would we represent him in and unto the world, it must be by this frame of spirit, and actings constantly suited thereunto. This our blessed Saviour instructs us in and unto; Matt. v. 44, 45. A man, I say, thus good, his nature being cured and rectified by grace, thence useful and helpful, free from guile, envy and selfishness, pride and elation.

tion of mind, is the best representation we can have of God on the earth, since the human nature of Christ was removed from us.

This, therefore, we are to labour after, if we intend to be like God, or to manifest his glory in our persons and lives unto the world. And no small part of our holiness consists herein. Many lusts, corruptions, and distempered passions, are to be subdued by grace, if we design to be eminent. Strong bents and inclinations of mind to comply with innumerable provocations and exasperations that will befall us, must be corrected and discarded. Many duties be constantly attended unto, and sundry graces kept up to their exercise. The whole drove of temptations, all whose force consists in a pretence of care for self, must be scattered or resisted. And hence it is, that in the Scripture a good man, a merciful man, a useful, liberal man, is frequently spoken of by way of eminency and distinction, as one whom God hath an especial regard unto, and concerning whom there are peculiar promises. When men live to themselves, and are satisfied that they do no hurt, though they do no good; are secure, selfish, wrathful, angry, peevish, or have their kindness confined to their relations, or otherwise are little useful but in what they are pressed unto, and therein come off with difficulty in their own minds, who esteem all lost that is done for the relief of others, and the greatest part of wisdom to be cautious, and disbelieve the necessities of men; in a word, that make self and its concerns the end of their lives; whatever otherwise their profession be, or their diligence in religious duties, they do very little either represent or glorify God in the world. If we, therefore, design to be holy, let us constantly, in our families, towards our relations, in churches, in our conversations in the world, and dealings with all men, towards our enemies and persecutors, the worst of them, so far as they are ours only, towards all mankind as we have opportunity, labour after conformity unto God, and to express our likeness unto him, in this philanthropy, goodness, benignity, condescension, readiness to forgive, to help and relieve, without which we neither are, nor can be, the children of our Father which is in heaven.

Especially is this frame of heart, and actings suitable thereunto, required of us with respect unto the saints of

God, unto believers. Even God himself, whom we are bound to imitate, and a conformity unto whom we are pressing after, doth exercise his benignity and kindness in a peculiar manner towards them ; 1 Tim. iv. 10. ‘ He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe.’ There is a specialty in the exercise of his saving goodness towards believers. And in answer hereunto, we are likewise commanded ‘ to do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith ;’ Gal. vi. 10. Although we are obliged to the exercise of the goodness before described, unto all men whatever, as we have an opportunity ; so we are allowed, yea, we are enjoined a peculiar regard herein unto the household of faith. And if this were more in exercise, if we esteemed ourselves (notwithstanding the provocations and exasperations which we meet withal, or suppose we do so, when perhaps none are given us, or intended us) obliged to express this benignity, kindness, goodness, forbearness, and love towards all believers in an especial manner ; it would prevent or remove many of those scandalous offences and animosities that are among us. If in common we do love them that love us, and do good to them that do good to us, and delight in them who are of our company and go the same way with us, it may advance us into the condition of pharisees and publicans, for they did so also. But if among believers, we will take this course, love them only, delight in them only, be open and free in all effects of genuine kindness, towards them who go our way, or are of our party, or are kind and friendly to us, or that never gave us provocations really, nor in our own surmises ; we are so far, and therein worse than either pharisees or publicans. We are to endeavour conformity and likeness unto God, not only as he is the God of nature, and is good unto all the works of his hands ; but as he is our heavenly Father, and is good, kind, benign, merciful, in an especial manner, unto the whole family of his children, however differenced among themselves, or indeed unkind or provoking unto him. I confess, when I see men apt to retain a sense of old provocations and differences, ready to receive impressions of new ones, or ready for apprehensions of such, where there are none ; incredulous of the sincerity of others who profess a readiness for love and peace, to take

things in the worst sense, to be morose and severe towards this or that sort of believers, unready to help them, scarce desiring their prosperity, or, it may be, their safety; I cannot but look upon it as a very great stain to their profession whatever else it be. And by this rule would I have my own ways examined.

2. *Truth* is another grace, another part of holiness, of the same import and nature. Truth is used in the Scripture for uprightness and integrity; ‘Thou requirest truth in the inward parts;’ Psal. li. 6. and frequently the doctrine of truth, as of God revealed, and by us believed. But that which I intend is only what is enjoined us by the apostle, namely, in all things to ‘speak the truth in love;’ Eph. iv. 15. Our apostacy from God was eminently from him as the God of truth, by an opposition to which attribute we sought to dethrone him from his glory; we would not believe that his word was truth. And sin entered into the world by and with a long train of lies: and ever since the whole world and every thing in it is filled with them, which represents him and his nature who is the father of lies and liars. Hereby doth it visibly and openly continue in its apostacy from the God of truth. I could willingly stay to manifest how the whole world is corrupted, depraved, and sullied by lies of all sorts, but I must not divert thereunto. Wherefore, truth and sincerity in words, for that at present I must confine myself unto, is an effect of renovation of the image of God in us, and a representation of him to the world. No duty is more frequently pressed upon us; ‘Put away false speaking,’ ‘lie not one to another,’ ‘speak the truth in love;’ and the consideration hereof is exceeding necessary unto all those who by their course of life are engaged in trading, and that both because of the disreputation which by the evil practices of some, of many, that I say not of the most, is cast upon that course of life, and also because failures in truth are apt a thousand ways to insinuate themselves into the practices of such persons, yea, when they are not aware thereof. ‘It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he goeth away he boasteth;’ and it is good, it is good, saith the seller, but when he hath sold it he boasteth, or is well pleased with the advantage which he hath made by his words; but these things have the image

of Satan upon them, and are most opposite to the God of truth. Another occasion must be taken farther to press this necessary duty, only at present I do but intimate that where truth is not universally observed, according to the utmost watchfulness of sincerity and love, there all other marks and tokens of the image of God in any persons are not only sullied but defaced, and the representation of Satan is most prevalent. And these things I could not but add, as naturally consequential unto that first principal argument for the necessity of holiness, which we have proposed and insisted on.

Having dispatched this first argument, and added unto it some especial improvements with respect unto its influence into our practice, it remains only that we free it from one objection which it seems exposed unto. Now this ariseth from the consideration of the infinite grace, mercy, and love of God, as they are proposed in the dispensation of the word : for it may be said unto us, and like enough it will, considering the frame of men's minds in the days wherein we live, do not you yourselves who thus press unto holiness, and the necessity of it, from the consideration of the nature of God, preach unto us every day the greatness of his mercy towards all sorts of sinners, his readiness to receive them, his willingness to pardon them, and that freely in Christ, without the consideration of any worth, merit, or righteousness of their own ? And do you not herein invite all sorts of sinners, the worst and the greatest, to come unto him by Christ, that they may be pardoned and accepted ? Whence then can arise any argument for the necessity of holiness, from the consideration of the nature of this God, whose inestimable treasures of grace, and the freedom of whose love and mercy towards sinners, no tongue, as you say, can express.

*Ans.* 1. This objection is very natural unto carnal and unbelieving minds, and therefore we shall meet with it at every turn. There is nothing seems more reasonable unto them, than that we may live in sin because grace hath abounded. If men must yet be holy, they can see no need nor use of grace ; and they cannot see that God is gracious to any purpose, if, notwithstanding, men may perish because they are not holy. But this objection is raised, rejected, and

condemned by our apostle, in whose judgment we may acquiesce; Rom. vi. 1. and in the same place he subjoins the reasons, why, notwithstanding the superabounding grace of God in Christ, there is an indispensable necessity that all believers should be holy.

2. God himself hath obviated this objection. He proclaims his name, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* ‘The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sin.’ Had he stood here, and neither in this nor in any other place of Scripture, farther declared his nature and unchangeable purposes concerning sinners, some colour might have been laid on this objection. But he adds immediately, ‘and that will by no means clear the guilty;’ that is, as it is explained in places of Scripture innumerable, such as go on in their sins, without regard unto obedience and holiness, springing from the atonement made for their guilty souls in the blood of Christ.

3. We do, we ought to declare, the rich and free love, grace, mercy, and bounty of God unto sinners, in and by Jesus Christ; and woe unto us, if we should not be found in that work all our days, and thereby encourage all sorts of sinners to come unto him for the free pardon of their sins, ‘without money or price,’ without merit or desert on their part; for this is the gospel. But, notwithstanding all this grace and condescension, we declare, that he doth not dethrone himself, nor deny himself, nor change his nature, nor become unholy, that we may be saved. He is God still, naturally and essentially holy; holy as he is in Christ, reconciling the sinful world unto himself, and therefore indispensably requires, that those whom he pardons, receives, accepts into his love and communion with himself, should be holy also. And these things are not only consistent but inseparable. Without the consideration of this grace in God, we can have no encouragement to be holy; and without the necessity of holiness in us, that grace can neither be glorified nor useful.