

# The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification

## Part One



Walter Marshall

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### Direction 1

*That we may acceptably perform the duties of Holiness, and Righteousness required in the law, our first work is, to learn the powerful and effectual means whereby we may attain to so great an end.*

### Explication

This direction may serve instead of a preface, to prepare the understanding and attention of the reader for those that follow. And,

First, it acquainteth you with the great *end* for which all those means are designed that are the *principal subject* to be here treated of. The *scope of all is*, to teach you how you may attain to that practice and manner of life which we call *holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion*; and which God requireth of us in the *law* particularly in the *moral law*, summed up in the *ten commandments*, and more briefly in these two great commandments of *love to God* and *our neighbour* (Matt. 22:37, 39), and more largely explained throughout the *Holy Scriptures*. My work is, to shew *how the duties of this law may be done*, when they are known: therefore expect not that I should delay my intent, to help you to the *knowledge* of them, by any large exposition of them; which is a work already performed in several catechisms and commentaries. Yet, that you may not miss the mark, for want of discerning it, take notice, in a few words, that the holiness which I would bring you to is *spiritual* (Rom. 7:14). It consists not only in *external works of piety and charity*, but in the *holy thoughts, imaginations, and affections* of the soul, and chiefly in *love*; from whence all other good works must flow, or else they are not

acceptable to God, not only in refraining the execution of sinful lusts, but in longing and delighting to do the will of God, and in a cheerful obedience to God, without repining, fretting, grudging at any duty, as if it were a grievous yoke and burden to you.

Take notice further, that the *law*, which is your *mark*, is *exceeding broad* (Psa. 119:96); and yet not the more easy to be hit; because you must aim to hit it, in every duty of it, with a performance of equal breadth, or else you cannot hit it at all (James 2:10). The Lord is not at all loved with that love that is due to him as Lord of all, if he be not loved with all our *heart, spirit, and might*. We are to love every thing in him, his *justice, holiness, sovereign authority, all-seeing eye*, and all his *decrees, commands, judgments*, and all his *doings*. We are to love him, not only better than other things, but singly, as *only good, the fountain of all goodness*; and to reject all fleshly and worldly, enjoyments, even our own lives, as if we hated them, when they stand in competition with our enjoyment of him, or our duty towards him. We must love him so as to yield ourselves wholly up to his constant service in all things, and to his disposal of us as our absolute Lord, whether it be for prosperity or adversity, life or death. And, for his sake, we are to love our neighbour, even all men, whether they be friends or foes to us; and so do to them in all things, that concerneth their honour, life, chastity, worldly wealth, credit, and content, whatever we would that men should do to us in the like condition (Matt. 7:12). This spiritual universal obedience is the great end, to the attainment whereof I am directing you. And that you may not reject mine enterprise as impossible, observe, that the most I promise is no more than an acceptable performance of those duties of the law, such as our gracious merciful God will certainly delight in, and be pleased with, during our state of imperfection in this world, and such as will end in perfection of holiness, and all happiness in the world to come.

Before I proceed farther, stay your thoughts a while in the contemplation of the great dignity and excellency of these duties of the law, that you may aim at the performance of them, as your end, with so high an esteem, as may cast an amiable lustre upon

the ensuing discovery of the means. The principal duties of *love to God above all*, and to *each other*, for his sake, from whence all the other duties flow are so excellent, that I cannot imagine any more noble work for the holy angels in their glorious sphere. They are the chief works for which we were first framed in the image of God, engraved upon man in the first creation, and for which that beautiful image is renewed upon us in our new creation and sanctification by Jesus Christ, and shall be perfected in our glorification. They are works which depend not merely on the sovereignty of the will of God, to be commanded or forbidden, or left indifferent, or changed, or abolished at his pleasure, as other works that belong either to the judicial or ceremonial law, or to the means of salvation prescribed by the gospel; but they are, in their own nature, *holy, just, and good* (Rom. 7:12); and meet for us to perform, because of our natural relation to our Creator and fellow creatures; so that they will have an inseparable dependence upon the holiness and will of God, and an indispensable establishment thereby. They are works sufficient to render the performers holy in all manner of conversation, by the fruits which they bring forth, if no other duties had ever been commanded; and by which the performance of all other duties is sufficiently established as soon as they are commanded; and without which, there can be no holiness of heart and life imagined; and to which it was one great honour of Mosaical, and is now of evangelical ordinances, to be subservient for the performance of them, as means which shall cease when their end, this never-failing charity, is perfectly attained (1 Cor. 13). They are duties which we were naturally, obliged to, by that reason and understanding which God gave to man at his first creation, to discern what was just and meet for him to do, and to which even heathens are still obliged, by the light of nature, without any written law, or supernatural revelation (Rom. 2:14, 15). Therefore they are called *natural religion* and the law that requireth them, is called the *natural law*, and also the *moral law*; because the manners of all men, infidels as well as Christians, ought to be conformed to it, (and, if they had been fully conformable, they would not have come short of eternal

happiness (Matt. 5:19; Luke 10:27, 28)) under the penalty of the wrath of God for the violation of it. This is the true morality which God approveth of, consisting in a conformity of all our actions to the moral law. And, if those that in these days, contend so highly for mortality, do understand no other than this, I dare join with them in asserting, that the best morally honest man is the greatest saint; and that morality is the principal part of true religion, and the rest of all other parts, without which faith is dead, and all other religious performances are a vain shew, and mere hypocrisy. For the faithful and true witness hath testified, concerning the two great moral commandments of *love to God*, and *our neighbour*, that there is none other commandment greater than these, and that on them “hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:31).

The second thing contained in this introductory direction is the *necessity* of learning the powerful and effectual *means*, whereby this great and excellent end may be accomplished, and of making this the first work to be done, before we can expect success in any attempt for the attainment of it.

This is an advertisement very needful; because many are apt to skip over the lesson concerning the *means* (that will fill up this whole treatise) as superfluous and useless. When once they know the nature and excellency of the duties of the law, they account nothing wanting but diligent performance; and they rush blindly upon immediate practice, making more haste than good speed. They are quick in promising (Exod. 19:8). “all that the Lord hath spoken we will do,” without sitting down and counting the cost. They look upon holiness as only the means, of an end of eternal salvation: not as an end itself requireth any great means for attaining the practice of it. The inquiry of most, when they begin to have a sense of religion, is, “*what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*” (Matt. 19:16); not, how shall I be enabled to do any thing that is good? Yea, many that are accounted powerful preachers, spend all’ their zeal in the earnest pressing the immediate practice of the law, without any discovery of the effectual means of performance: as if the works of righteousness

were like those servile employments that need no skill and artifice at all, but industry and activity. That you may not stumble at the threshold of a religious life, by this common oversight, I shall endeavour to make you sensible, that it is not enough for you to know the matter and reason of your duty, but that you are also to learn the powerful and effectual means of performance, before you can successfully apply yourselves to immediate practice. And, for this end, I shall lay before you the considerations following.

1. We are all, by nature, void of all *strength* and *ability* to perform acceptably that holiness and righteousness which the law requireth, and are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and “children of wrath,” by the sin of our first father, Adam, as the scripture witnesseth (Rom. 5:12, 15, 18, 19; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 8:7, 8). This doctrine to original sin, which Protestants generally profess, is a firm basis and ground-work to the assertion now to be proved, and to many other assertions in this whole discourse. If we believe it to be true, we cannot rationally encourage ourselves to attempt a holy practice, until we are acquainted with some powerful and effectual means to enable us for it. While man continued upright in the image of God, as he was at first created (Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:27), he could do the will of God sincerely, as soon as he knew it; but when he was fallen, he was quickly afraid, because of his nakedness; but could not help it at all, until God discovered to him the means of restoration (Gen. 3:10, 15). Say to a strong healthy servant, “go, and he goeth: come, and he cometh: do this, and he doeth it:” but a bed-ridden servant must know first how he may be enabled. No doubt the fallen angels knew the necessity of holiness, and trembled at the guilt of their sin: but they knew of no means for them to attain to holiness effectually, and so continue still in their wickedness. It was in vain for Samson to say, “*I will go out as at other times, and shake myself,*” when he had sinned away his strength (Judges 16:20). Men shew themselves strangely forgetful, or hypocritical, in professing original sin in their prayers, catechisms, and confessions of faith; and yet urging upon themselves and others the practice of the law, without the consideration of any strengthening, enlivening means: as if there

were no want of ability, but only of activity.

2. Those that doubt of, or deny the doctrine of original sin, may all of them know concerning themselves (if their consciences be not blind) that the exact *justice* of God is against them, and they are under the *curse of God*, and sentence of death, for their actual sins, if God should enter into judgment with them (Rom. 1:32; 2:2; 3:9; Gal. 3:10). Is it possible for a man that knoweth this to be his case, and hath not learned any means of getting out of it, to practice the law immediately, to love God and every thing in him, his justice, holiness, and power, as well as his mercy, and to yield himself willingly to the disposals of God, though God should inflict sudden death upon him: Is there no skill or artifice required in this case, to encourage the fainting soul to the practice of universal obedience?

3. Though Heathens might know much of the works of the law by the common light of natural reason, and understanding (Rom. 2:14). yet the effectual *means* of performance cannot be discovered by that light, and therefore are wholly to be learned by the teaching of supernatural revelation. For what is our natural light, but some sparks and glimmerings of that which was in Adam before the fall; and even then, in its brightest meridian, it was not sufficient to direct Adam, how to recover ability to walk holily, if once he should lose it by sin; nor assure him before hand, that God should vouchsafe to him any means of recovery. God had sent nothing but death before his eyes in case of transgression (Gen. 2:17), and therefore he hid himself from God, when the shame of his nakedness appeared, as expecting no favour from him. We are like sheep gone astray, and know not which way to return, until we hear the Shepherd's voice. *Can these dry bones live to God in holiness? "O Lord, thou knowest;"* and we cannot know it, except we learn it of thee.

4. Sanctification, whereby our hearts and lives are conformed to the law, is a *grace* of God, communicated to us by means, as well as justification; and by means of teaching, and learning something that we cannot see without the word (Acts 26:17, 18). There are several things pertaining to life and godliness, that are given

through *knowledge* (2 Peter 1:2, 3). This is a form of doctrine made use of by God, to make people free from sin, and servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17, 18). And there are several pieces of the whole armour of God necessary to be known and put on, that we may stand against sin and Satan in the evil day (Eph. 6:13). Shall we slight and overlook the way of sanctification, when the learning the way of justification hath been accounted worth so many elaborate treatises?

5. God hath given, in the Holy Scriptures, by his inspiration, plentiful instruction in righteousness, *that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good work* (2. Tim. 3:16, 17). especially since *“the dayspring from on high hath visited us,”* by the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, *“to guide our feet into the way of peace”* (Luke 1:78, 79). If God condescend to us so very low, to teach us this way in the scripture, and by Christ, it must needs be greatly necessary for us, to sit down at his feet and learn it.

6. The way of attaining to godliness is so far from being known without learning out of the Holy Scriptures, that, when it is here plainly revealed, we cannot learn it so easily as the duties of the law; which are known in part by the light of nature, and therefore the more easily assented to. It is the way whereby the dead are brought to live unto God; and therefore doubtless it is far above all the thoughts and conjectures of human wisdom. It is the way of salvation, wherein God will *“destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,”* by discovering things by his Spirit, that *“the natural man receiveth not; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 1:19, 21; 2:14). *“without controversy great is the mystery of godliness”* (1 Tim. 3:16). The learning of it requireth double work; because we must unlearn many of our former deeply rooted notions, and *become fools, that we may be wise*. We must pray earnestly to the Lord to teach us, as well as search the Scriptures, that we may get this knowledge. *“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end”* (Psa. 119: 5, 33). *“Teach me to do thy will”* (Psa.



143:10). “*The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*” (2 Thess. 3:5). Surely these saints did not so much want teaching and directions concerning the duties of the law to be done, as concerning the way and means whereby they might do them.

7. The certain knowledge of these powerful and effectual means, is of greatest *importance* and *necessity* for our establishment in the true faith, and avoiding errors contrary thereunto; for we cannot rationally doubt, that the moral duties of love to God and our neighbour, are absolutely necessary to true religion, so that it cannot subsist without them. And, from this principle we may firmly conclude, that nothing repugnant to the practice of these holy duties, ought to be received as a point of faith, delivered to us by the most holy God; and that whatsoever is truly necessary, powerful, and effectual, to bring us to the practice of them, ought to be believed as proceeding from God, because it hath the image of his holiness and righteousness engraven upon it. This is a sure test and touchstone, which those that are seriously religious will use, to try spirits and their doctrines, whether they be of God or no; and they cannot rationally approve any doctrine as religious, that is not according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3). By this touchstone Christ proveth his doctrine to be of God, because therein he seeketh the glory of God (John 7:17, 18). And he teacheth us to know false prophets by their fruits (Matt. 7:15, 16). wherein the fruits, which their doctrine tendeth unto, are especially to be considered. Hence it appeareth, that until we know what are the effectual means of holiness, and what not, we want a necessary touchstone of divine truth, and may be easily deceived by false doctrine, or brought to live in mere suspense concerning the truth of any religion, like the seekers. And if you mistake, and think those things to be effectual that are not, and those that are effectual to be weak, or of contrary effect, your error in this will be a false touchstone to try other doctrines, whereby you will readily approve of errors, and refuse the truth; which hath been a pernicious occasion of many errors in religion in late days. Get but a true touchstone, by learning this lesson, and you will be able to try the various doctrines of Protestants, Papists, Arminians,

Socinians, Antinomians, Quakers: and to discover the truth and cleave to it, with much satisfaction to your judgment, amongst all the janglings and controversies of these times. Hereby you may discover, whether the Protestant religion, established among us, hath in it any sinews of Antinomianism; whether it be guilty of any insufferable defect in practical principles, and deserves to be altered, and turned almost upside down, with new doctrines and methods; as some learned men, in late times, have judged by their touchstones.

8. It is also of great importance and necessity for our establishment in *holy practice*; for we cannot apply ourselves to the practice of holiness, with hope of success, except we have some faith concerning the divine assistance; which we have no ground to expect, if we use not such means as God hath appointed to work by. *God meeteth these that remember him in his own ways* (Isa. 64:5); and *makes a breach upon them that seek him not after the due order* (1 Chron. 15:13). He hath chosen and ordained such means of sanctification and salvation, as are for his own glory, and those only he blesseth to us; and he crowneth no man that striveth, “except he *strive lawfully*” (2 Tim. 2:5).

Experience sheweth plentifully, both of heathens and Christians, how pernicious ignorance, or mistaking of these effectual means, is to a holy practice. The heathens generally fell short of an acceptable performance of these duties of the law which they knew, because of their ignorance in this point: (1). Many Christians content themselves with external performances because they never knew how they might attain to spiritual service. (2). And many reject the way of holiness as austere and unpleasant, because they knew not how to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, without intolerable pain; whereas they would find *the ways of wisdom* (if they knew them) *to be “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace”* (Prov. 3:17). This occasioneth the putting off repentance from time to time, as an uncouth thing. (3). Many others set upon the practice of holiness with a fervent zeal, and run very fast; but tread not a step in the right way; and finding themselves frequently disappointed and overcome by their lusts,

they at last give over the work, and turn to wallow again in the mire: which hath occasioned several treatises, to shew how far a reprobate may go in the way of religion; whereby many weak saints are discouraged, accounting that these reprobates have gone farther than themselves: whereas most of them never knew the right way, nor trode one step right in it; for, “*few there be that find it*” (Matt. 7:14). (4). Some of those ignorant zealots do inhumanly macerate their bodies with fasting, and other austerities, to kill their lusts; and, when they see their lusts are still too hard for them, they fall into despair, and are driven by horror of conscience, to make away with themselves wickedly, to the scandal of religion. Peradventure God may bless my discovery of the powerful means of holiness so far, as to save some one or other from killing themselves. And such a fruit as this would countervail my labour; though I hope, God will enlarge the hearts of many by it, to run with great cheerfulness, joy, and thanksgiving in the ways of his commandments.

## **Direction 2**

*Several Endowments and Qualifications are necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of the Law. Particularly, we must have an inclination and propensity of our hearts thereunto; and therefore we must be well persuaded of our reconciliation with GOD, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform all duties acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of that happiness.*

## **Explication**

Those *means* that are next to the attainment of the grand end aimed at, are first to be discovered, that we may learn how to get them by other means, expressed in the following directions. Therefore I have named here several *qualifications* and *endowments* that are necessary to make up that holy frame and state of the soul, whereby it is furnished and enabled to practise the law immediately, and that not only in the beginning, but in the

continuation of that practice. And therefore, note diligently, that these endowments must continue in us during the present life, or else our ability for an holy life will be lost; and they must be before practice, not in any distance of time, but only as the cause is before the effect. I do not say, that I have named particularly all such necessary qualifications; but this much I dare say, that he that gaineth these, may, by the same means, gain any other that should be ranked with them: and this is a matter worthy of our serious consideration; for few understand that any special endowments are required to furnish us for an holy practice, more than for any voluntary actions. The first Adam had excellent endowments bestowed upon him for an holy practice, when he was first created according to the image of God; and the second Adam had endowments more excellent, to enable him for a harder task of obedience. And seeing obedience is grown more difficult, by reason of the opposition and temptations that it meeteth with since the fall of Adam, we that are to be imitators of Christ, had need have very choice endowments, as Christ had; at least as good or something better than Adam had at first, as our work is harder than his. *“What king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?”* And shall we dare to rush into battle against all the powers of darkness, all worldly terrors and allurements, and our own inbred domineering corruptions, without considering whether we have sufficient spiritual furniture to stand in the evil day? yet many content themselves with such an ability to will and do their duty, as they would have to be given to men universally; whereby they are no better enabled for the spiritual battle, than the generality of the world, that lie vanquished under the wicked one; and therefore their standing is not at all secured by it. It is a hard matter to find what this universal ability is, that so many contend so earnestly for, of what it consisteth, by what means it is conveyed to us, and maintained.

Bodily agility hath spirits, nerves, ligaments, and bones to subsist by; but this spiritual universal ability seemeth to be some

occult quality, that no sufficient account can be given how it is conveyed, or of what it is constituted. That none may deceive themselves, and miscarry in their enterprises for holiness, by depending on such a weak occult quality, I have here shewed FOUR ENDOWMENTS, of which a true ability, for the practice of holiness, must necessarily be constituted, and by which it must subsist and be maintained; I intend to shew afterwards, by what means they are given to us, and whether the inclination or propensity here mentioned be perfect or imperfect. And they are of such a mysterious nature, that some who own the necessity of endowments, to frame them for holiness, are prone to think, that less than these will serve; and that some of these frame us rather for licentiousness than holiness, as they are here placed before any actual performance of the moral law; and that some things contrary to them would put us into a better frame for holiness. Against all which surmises, I shall endeavour such a demonstration of these endowments particularly, as may gain the assent of right reason; insisting on them in the same order wherein I have placed them in the direction.

In the FIRST place, I assert, that an *inclination* and *propensity* of heart, to the duties of the law, is necessary to frame and enable us for the immediate practice of them. And I mean not such a blind propensity as inanimate creatures and brutes have to their natural operations, but such a one as is meet for intelligent creatures, whereby they are, by the conduct of reason, prone and bent to approve and choose their duty, and averse to the practice of sin. And therefore I have intimated, that the three other endowments, mentioned in the direction, are subservient to this as the chief of all, which is sufficient to make it a rational propensity. This is contrary to those, that, out of zeal for obedience, but not according to knowledge, contend so earnestly for free will, as a necessary and sufficient endowment to enable us to perform our duty, when once we are convinced of it, and of our obligation to it; and who extol this endowment, as the great benefit that universal redemption hath blessed all mankind with; though they consider this free will without any actual inclination to good; yea, they

cannot but acknowledge that, in most of mankind that have it, it is incumbered with an actual bent and propensity of the heart altogether to evil. Such a free will as this is, can never free us from slavery to sin and Satan, and fit us for the practice of the law; and therefore is not worthy the pains of those that contend so hotly for it. Neither is the will so free as is necessary for the practice of holiness, until it be endued with an inclination and propensity thereunto; as may appear by the following arguments.

1. The duties of the law are of such a nature, that they cannot possibly be performed while there is wholly an aversion, or mere indifferency of the heart to the performance of them, and no good inclination and propensity towards the practice of them, because the chief of all the commandments is, to love the Lord with our whole heart, might and soul; to love every thing that is in him; to love his will, and all his ways, and to like them as good. And all duties must be influenced, in their performance, by this love; we must delight to do the will of God; it must be sweeter to us than the honey or honey comb (Psa. 40:8; Job 23:12; Psa. 63:1; 119:20; 19:10). And this love, liking, delight, longing, thirsting, sweet relishing, must be continued to the end; and the first in deliberate motion of lust must be regulated by love to God and our neighbour; and sin must be lusted against (Gal. 5:17). and abhorred (Psa. 36:4). If it were true obedience (as some would have it) to love our duty only as a market man loveth foul ways to the market, or as a sick man loveth an unpleasant medicinal potion, or as a captive slave loveth his hard work for fear of a greater evil; then it might be performed with averseness, or want of inclination; but we must love it, as the market man gain, as the sick man health, as pleasant meat and drink, as the captive liberty. Doubtless there can be no power in the will for this kind of service, without an agreeableness of our inclination to the will of God, a heart according to his own heart, an aversion of our hearts from sin, and a kind of antipathy against sin; for we know the proverb "Like loveth like." There must be an agreeableness in the person or thing beloved, to the disposition of the lover. Love to God must flow from a clean heart (1 Tim. 1:5); a heart cleansed

from evil propensities and inclinations. And reason will tell us that the first motions of lust which fall not under our choice and deliberations, cannot be avoided without a fixed propensity of the heart to holiness.

2. The image of God (wherein God, according to his infinite wisdom, judged it meet to frame the first Adam in righteousness, and true holiness and uprightness) (Gen. 1:27; Eph. 4:24; Eccl. 7:29). consisted in an actual bent and propensity of heart to the practice of holiness: not in a mere power of will to choose good or evil; for this in itself, is neither holy nor unholy, But only a ground work, on which either the image of God, or of Satan may be drawn: nor in an indifference of propensity to the choice of sin or duty; for this wicked disposition in an intelligent creature that knoweth his duty, and fitteth us only to halt between God and Baal. God set Adam's soul at first wholly in a right bent and inclination, though Adam might act contrary to it, if he would; as we may be prevailed upon to do some things contrary to our natural inclinations: and it is easy to fail of our duty, though great preparation and furniture be required for the performance of it. The second Adam also, the Lord Jesus Christ, was born an "*holy thing*" (Luke 1:35), with a holy disposition of his soul, and propensity to goodness. And can we reasonably hope to arise to the life of holiness, from which the first Adam fell, or to be imitators of Christ, since duty is made so difficult by the fall, if we be not renewed in a measure according to the same image of God, and enabled with such a propensity and inclination?

3. Original corruption (whereby we are dead to God and godliness from the birth, and made willing slaves to the performance of all actual sins, until the Son of God make us free) consisteth in a propensity and inclination of the heart to sin, and averseness to holiness. Without this propensity to sin, what can that *law of sin in our members be, that warreth against the law of our mind, and leadeth us captive to the service of sin?* (Rom. 7:23). What is that poison in us, for which men may be called serpents, vipers? What is that spirit of whoredoms in men, by reason of which they will not frame their doings to turn to God?

(Hos. 5:4). How is the tree first corrupt, and then its fruit corrupt? (Matt. 12:33). How can man be said to be abominable and filthy, that drinketh iniquity like water? (Job 15:16). How should the mind of the flesh be continual enmity to the law of God? (Rom. 8:7). I know there is also a blindness of understanding, and other things belonging to original corruption, which conduce to this evil propensity of the will; but yet this propensity itself is the great evil, and indwelling sin, which produceth all actual sins; and must of necessity be removed or restrained, by restoring the contrary inclination, wherein the image of God consisteth; or else we shall be backward and reprobate to every good work, and whatever freedom the will hath, it shall be employed only in the service of sin.

4. God restoreth his people to holiness, by giving to them *a new heart, and a new spirit, and taking away the heart of stone out of their flesh, and giving them an heart of flesh* (Ezek. 36:26, 27); and he circumciseth their heart to love him with their whole heart and soul. And he requireth, that we should be transformed *in the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is his acceptable will* (Rom. 12:2), and David prayeth for the same end, *that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him* (Psa. 51:10). If any one can judge, that this new, clean, circumcised heart, this heart of flesh, this new right spirit, is such a one as hath no actual inclination and propensity to good, but only a power to choose good or evil, undeservedly called a free-will, with a present inclination to evil, or an indifference of propensity to both contraries, it will not be worth my labour to convince such a judgment: only let him consider, whether David could account such a heart to be clean and right when he prayed (Psa. 119:36). *“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”*

The SECOND ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of holiness, and concurring with the two others that follow, to work in us a rational propensity to this practice, is that we be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God. We must reckon, that the breach of amity which sin hath made



between God and us, is made up by a firm reconciliation to his love and favour. And herein I include the great benefit of justification, as the means whereby we are reconciled to God, which as described in scripture, either by *forgiving our sins*, or by the *imputation of righteousness* to us (Rom. 4:5-7). because both are contained in one and the same justifying act; as one act of illumination comprehends expulsion of darkness, and introduction of light, one act of repentance containeth mortification of sin, and vivification to righteousness; and every motion from any thing to its contrary, is but one and the same, though it may be expressed by divers names, with respect either to the two contrary terms, the one of which is abolished, the other introduced by it. This is a great mystery (contrary to the apprehensions, not only of the vulgar, but of some learned divines) that we must be reconciled to God, and justified by the remission of our sins, and imputation of righteousness, before any sincere obedience to the law; that we may be enabled for the practice of it. They account, that this doctrine tendeth to the subversion of a holy practice, and is a great pillar of Antinomianism; and that the only way to establish sincere obedience, is to make it rather a *condition* to be performed before all actual justification, and reconciliation with God. Therefore some late divines have thought fit to bring the doctrine of former Protestants concerning justification to their anvil, and to hammer it into another form, that it might be more free from Antinomianism, and effectually to secure a holy practice. But their labour is vain and pernicious, tending to Antinomian profaneness, or painted hypocrisy at best; neither can the true practice of holiness be secure, except the persuasion of our justification and reconciliation with God, be first obtained without the works of the law, that we may be enabled thereby to do them, as I shall now prove by several arguments: in tending also to shew, in the following directions, that such a persuasion of the love of God, as God giveth to his people, tendeth only to holiness, though a mispersuasion of it be, in many, an occasion of licentiousness.

1. When the first Adam was framed for the practice of holiness at his creation, he was highly in the favour of God, and had no sin

imputed to him, and he was accounted righteous in the sight of God, according to his present state; because he was made upright according to God's image. And there is no reason to doubt but that these qualifications were his advantage for a holy practice, and the wisdom of God judged them good for that end: and, as soon as he lost them, he became dead in sin. The second Adam also, in our nature, was the beloved of the Father, accounted righteous in the sight of God, without the imputation of any sin to him, except what his office was to bear on the behalf of others. And can we reasonably expect to be imitators of Christ, by performing more difficult obedience than the first Adam's was before the fall; except the like advantages be given to us, by reconciliation and remission of sins, and imputation of a righteousness given by God to us, when we have none of our own?

2. Those that know their natural deadness under the power of sin and Satan, are fully convinced, that if God leave them to their own hearts, they can do nothing but sin; and that they can do no good work, except it please God, of his great love and mercy, to work it in them (John 8:36; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:7, 8). Therefore, that they may be encouraged and rationally inclined to holiness, they must hope that God will work savingly in them. Now, I leave it to considerate men to judge, whether such a hope can be well grounded, without a good persuasion of such a reconciliation and saving love of God to us, as depends not upon any precedent goodness of our works, but is a cause sufficient to produce them effectually in us? Yea, we know further (if we know ourselves sufficiently) that our death in sin proceeded from the guilt of the first sin of Adam, and the sentence denounced against it (Gen. 2:17); and that it is still maintained in us by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law; and that spiritual life will never be given us, to free us from that dominion, except this guilt and curse be removed from us; which is done by actual justification (Gal. 3:13, 14; Rom. 6:14). And this is sufficient to make us despair of living to God in holiness, while we apprehend ourselves to be under the curse and wrath of God, by reason of our transgressions and sins still lying upon us (Ezek. 33:10).

3. The nature of the duties of the law is such, as requireth an apprehension of our reconciliation with God, and his hearty love and favour towards us for the doing of them. The great duty is love to God with their whole heart, and not such a contemplative love as philosophers may have to the object of sciences, which they are concerned in no further than to please their fancies in the knowledge of them; but a practical love, whereby we are willing that God should be absolute Lord and governor over us and all the world, to dispose in us and all others according to his will, as to our temporal and everlasting condition, and that he should be the only portion and happiness of all those that are happy; a love whereby we like every thing in him as he is our Lord; his justice as well as any other attribute, without wishing or desiring that he were better than he is; and whereby we desire that his will be done upon us, and all others, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death; and whereby we can heartily praise him for all things, and delight in our obedience to him, in doing his will, though we suffer that which is ever so grievous to us, even present death. Consider these things well, and you may easily perceive, that our spirits are not in a fit frame for the doing of them, while we apprehend ourselves under the curse and wrath of God, or while we are under prevailing suspicions that God will prove an enemy to us at last. Slavish fear may extort some slavish hypocritical performances from us, such as that of Pharaoh in letting the Israelites go, sore against his will: but the duty of love cannot be extorted and forced by fear, but it must be won, and sweetly allured by an apprehension of God's love and goodness towards us; as that eminent, loving, and beloved disciple testifieth (1 John 4: 18, 19). *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us."* Observe here, that we cannot be beforehand with God in loving him, before we apprehend his love to us. And consult your own experience, if you have any true love to God, whether it were not wrought in you by a sense of God's love first towards you? All the goodness and excellency of God cannot render him an amiable object to us,

except we apprehend him an agreeable good to us. I question not but the Devils know the excellency of God's nature, as well as our greatest metaphysical speculators; and this doth but fill them the more with tormenting horror and trembling, that is contrary to love (James 2:19). The greater God's excellency and perfection is, the greater evil he is to us, if he hate us and curse us. And therefore the principle of self-preservation deeply rooted in our natures, hindereth us from loving that which we apprehend as our; destruction. If a man be an enemy to us, we can love him for the sake of our loving reconciled God, because his love will make man's hatred to work for our good; but if God himself be our enemy, for whose sake can we love him? who is there that can free us from the evil of his enmity and turn it to our advantage, until he be pleased to reconcile himself to us?

4. Our conscience must of necessity be first purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God. And this is done by actual remission of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and manifested to our consciences, as appeared by Christ's dying for this end (Heb. 9:14, 15; 10:1, 2, 4, 14, 17, 22), That conscience, whereby we judge ourselves to be under the guilt of sin, and the wrath of God, is accounted an evil conscience in scripture, though it perform its office truly; because it is caused by the evil of sin, and will itself be a cause of our committing more sin, until it can judge us to be justified from all sin, and received into the favour of God. Love, which is the end of the law, must proceed from a good conscience, as well as from any other cleanness of heart (1 Tim. 1:5). David's mouth could not be opened to shew forth the praise of God, until he was delivered from blood guiltiness (Psa. 51:14, 15). This evil, guilty conscience, whereby we judge that God is our enemy, and that his justice is against us to our everlasting condemnation, by reason of our sins, doth strongly maintain and increase the dominion of sin and Satan in us, and working most mischievous effects in the soul against godliness, even to bring the soul to hate God, and to wish there were no God, no heaven, no hell, so we might escape the punishment due to us. It so disaffecteth people toward God, that they cannot endure to think,

or speak, or hear of him and his law; but strive rather to put him out of their minds, by fleshly pleasures and worldly employments. And thus they are alienated from all true religion; only blinding it, and stopping the mouth of it. It produceth zeal in many outside religious performances, and also false religion, idolatry and the most inhuman superstition in the world. I have often considered, by what manner of working any sin could effectually destroy the whole image of God in the first Adam; and I conclude, it was by working first an evil guilty conscience in him, whereby he judged that the just God was against him, and cursed him for that one sin. And this was enough to work a shameful nakedness by disorderly lusts, a turning his love wholly from God to the creature, and a desire to be hidden from the presence of God (Gen. 3:8, 10), which was a total destruction of the image of God's holiness. And we have cause, to judge, that from the same cause proceedeth the continual malice, rancour, rage and blasphemy of the Devil, and many notorious wicked men, against God and godliness. Some may think Job uncharitable in suspecting, not merely that his sons had sinned, but that they had been so abominably wicked as to curse God in their hearts (Job 1:5). But Job well understood, that if the guilt of any ordinary sin lies upon the conscience, it will make the soul to wish secretly, that God was not, or that he were not so just a judge; which is a secret cursing of God, that cannot be avoided, until our conscience be purged from the guilt of sin, by the offering of Christ for us, which was then figured out by the burnt-offering of Job for his sons.

5. God hath abundantly discovered to us, in his word, that his method in bringing men from sin to holiness of life, is, first to make them know that he loveth them, and that their sins are blotted-out. When he gave the ten commandments on mount Sinai, he first discovered himself to be their God, that had given them a sure pledge of his salvation, by their delivery from Egypt, in the preface (Exod. 20:2). And during all the time of the Old Testament, God was pleased to make the entrance into religion to be by circumcision; which was not only a sign, but also a seal of the righteousness of faith, whereby God justifieth people, while

they are considered as ungodly (Rom. 4:5, 11). And this seal was administered to children of eight days old, before they could perform any condition of sincere obedience, for their justification, that their furniture for a holy practice might be ready beforehand. Furthermore, in the time of the Old Testament, God appointed divers washings, and the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, to prepare and sanctify them for other parts of his worship in his tabernacle and temple: to figure out his purging their consciences from dead works by the blood of Christ, that they might serve the living God (Heb. 9:10, 13, 14, 22). This, I say, was then figurative sanctification, as the word sanctification is taken in a large sense, comprehending all things that prepare us for the service of God, chiefly the remission of sin (Heb. 10:10, 14, 18). Though if it be taken in a strict sense, respecting only our conformity to the law, it must necessarily be placed after justification, according to the usual method of Protestant divines. God also minded them of the necessity of purging away their guilt first, that their service might be acceptable, by commanding them to offer the sin-offering before the burnt-offering (Lev. 5:8; 16:3, 11). And lest the guilt of their sins should pollute the service of God, notwithstanding all their particular expiations, God was pleased to appoint a general atonement for all their sins one day every year, wherein the scape-goat was to *“bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited”* (Lev. 16:22, 34). Under the New Testament God useth the same method, in loving us first, and washing us from our sins by the blood of Christ, that he may make us priests, to offer the sacrifices of praise, and all good works to God, even the Father. He entereth us into his service, by washing away our sins in baptism: he feedeth and strengtheneth us for his service by remission of sins, given to us in the blood of Christ at the Lord’s supper: he exhorteth us to obey him, because he hath already loved us, and our sins are already pardoned. *Forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: and walk in love, as Christ hath loved us* (Eph. 4:32; 5:1, 2). *“I write unto you, little children,*

*because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"* (1 John 2:12, 15). I might quote abundance of texts of the same nature. We may clearly see by all: this, that God hath accounted it a matter of great importance, and hath condescended to take wonderful care in providing plentiful means, both under the Old and New Testament, that his people might be first cleansed from guilt and reconciled to himself, to fit them for the acceptable practice of holiness. Away then with all the contrary methods of the new divinity.

The THIRD ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the practice of holiness, without which, a persuasion of our reconciliation with God would be of little efficacy to work in us a rational propensity to it, is, that we be persuaded of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness. This must precede our holy practice as a cause disposing and alluring us to it. This assertion hath several sorts of adversaries to oppose it. Some account, that a persuasion of our own future happiness, before we have persevered in sincere obedience, tendeth to licentiousness; and that the way to do good works, is rather to make them a condition necessary for the procuring of this persuasion. Others condemn all works that we are allured or stirred up to by the future enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, as legal, mercenary, flowing from self-love, and not from any pure love to God; and they figure out sincere godliness by a man bearing fire in one hand, to burn up heaven, and water in the other to quench hell; intimating, that the true service of God must not proceed at all from hope of reward, or fear of punishment, but only from love, To establish the truth asserted, against the errors that are so contrary to it, and to each other, I shall propose the ensuing considerations.

1. The nature of the duties of the law, is such, that they cannot be sincerely and universally practised without this endowment. That this endowment must be present in us, is sufficiently proved already, by all that I have said concerning the necessity of the persuasion of our firm reconciliation with God by our justification, to prepare us for this practice; because that includeth a persuasion

of this future happiness, or else it is of little worth. All that I have to add here, is, that sincere obedience cannot rationally subsist, except it be allured, encouraged, and supported by this persuasion. Let me therefore, suppose a Sadducee believing no happiness after this life, and put the question, *can such a one love God with his whole heart, might, and soul?* Will he not think it reasonable, rather to lessen and moderate his love towards God, lest he should be over much troubled to part with him by death? We account it most reasonable to sit loose in our affections from things that we must part with. Can such a one be satisfied with the enjoyment of God as his happiness? will he not rather account, that the enjoyment of God and all religious duties are vanities as well as other things; because in a little time we shall have no more benefit by them, than if they had never been? How can such a one be willing to lay down his life for the sake of God, when, by his death, he must part with God, as well as with other things? How can he willingly choose afflictions rather than sin, when he shall be more miserable in this life for it, and not at all happy hereafter? I grant, if afflictions come unavoidably upon such a person, he may reasonably judge, that patience is better for him than impatience; but it will displease him, that he is forced to the use of such a virtue, and he will be prone to fret and murmur at his creator, and to wish he had never been, rather than to endure such miseries, and to be comforted only with vain transitory enjoyments. I think I have said enough to shew how unfurnished such a man is for holiness. And that he will burn up heaven, and quench hell, that he may serve God out of love, doth thereby leave himself little better furnished than the Sadducee. The one denieth them, the other will not have them at all to be considered in this case.

2. The sure hope of the glory of heaven, is made use of ordinarily by God since the fall of Adam, as an encouragement to the practice of holiness, as the scripture doth abundantly shew. Christ, the great pattern of holiness, *“for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame”* (Heb. 12:2). And though I cannot say, that the first Adam had such a sure hope,



to preserve him in innocency; yet he had instead of it, the present possession of an earthly paradise, and a happy estate in it, which he knew would last, if he continued in holiness, or be changed into a better happiness. The apostles did not faint under affliction, because they knew that it wrought for them *“a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”* (2 Cor. 4:16, 17). The believing Hebrews *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance* (Heb. 10:34). The apostle Paul accounts all his sufferings unprofitable, were it not for a glorious resurrection; and that Christians would be of all men most miserable, and that the doctrine of the epicures were rather to be chosen; *“let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.”* And he exhorts the Corinthians to be *abundant in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord* (1 Cor. 15:58). As worldly hope keepeth the world at work in their various employments; for God giveth his people the hope of his glory, to keep them close to his service (Heb. 6:11, 12; 1 John 3:3). And it is such a sure hope as shall never make them ashamed (Rom. 5:5). Those that think it below the excellency of their love, to work from a hope of a heavenly reward, do thereby advance their love beyond the love of the apostles and primitive saints, and even of Christ himself.

3. This persuasion of our future enjoyment of everlasting happiness cannot tend to licentiousness, if, we understand well, that perfect holiness is a necessary part of that happiness, and that though we have but a title to that happiness by free justification and adoption, yet we must go to the possession of it in a way of holiness, (1 John 3:1-3). Neither is it legal or mercenary, to be moved by this persuasion; seeing the persuasion itself is not gotten by the works of the law, but by free grace through faith (Gal. 5:5). And if it be a working from self-love; yet, for certain, it is not that carnal self-love which the scripture condemneth as the mother of sinfulness (2 Tim. 3:2); but a holy self-love, inclining us to prefer God above the flesh and the world, such as God directeth us unto, when he exhorteth us to save ourselves (Acts 2:40; 1 Tim. 4:16). And it is so far from being contrary to the pure love of God, that it

brings us to love God more purely and entirely. The more good and beneficial we apprehend God to us to all eternity, doubtless the more lovely God will be to us, and our affections will be the more inflamed towards him. God will not be loved as a barren wilderness, a land of darkness to us, neither will he be served for nought (Jer. 2:31; Isa. 14:19). He would think it a dishonour to him to be owned by us as our God, if he had not prepared for us a city (Heb. 11:16). And he draweth us to love him by the cords of a man, such cords as the love of man useth to be drawn by, even by his own love to us, in laying his benefits before us (Hos. 11:4). Therefore, the way for us to keep ourselves in the love of God is to look for his mercy unto eternal life (Jude, verse 21).

The LAST ENDOWMENT, for the same end as the former, is, that we will be *persuaded of sufficient strength* both to will and perform our duty acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of the heavenly happiness. This is contrary to the error of those that account it sufficient, if we have strength to practise holiness, if we will, or to will it, if we please; and this is sufficient strength which they earnestly contend for, as a great benefit bestowed on all mankind by universal redemption. It is also contrary to the error of those that think the practice of godliness and wickedness to be alike easy, excepting only some difficulty in the first alterations of vicious customs, and in bearing persecutions, which they account to be a rare case; since the kingdoms of the world have been brought to the profession of Christianity: or that think that God requireth of men only to do their endeavour, that is what they can do; and it is nonsense to say they cannot do what they can do. According to their judgment, it is needless to concern ourselves much about sufficient strength for holy practice. For the confirmation of the assertion, against those errors, take these arguments.

1. We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, unable to will or to do any thing that is spiritually good, notwithstanding the redemption that is by Christ until we be actually quickened by Christ (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:7-9). Those that are sufficiently enlightened and humbled, know themselves to be naturally in this

case; and that they do not only want executive power to do good, but chiefly a heart to will it, and to be pleased with it; and that if God work it not in them both to will and to do, they shall neither will nor do any thing pleasing to him (Phil. 2:13); and that, if we leave them to their own corruption, after he hath begun the good work, they shall certainly prove vile apostates; and their latter end will be worse than their beginning. We may conclude from hence, that whosoever can courageously attempt the practice of the law, without being well persuaded of a sufficient power whereby he may be enabled to be heartily willing, as well as to perform when he is willing, until he hath gone through the whole work of obedience acceptably: such a one was never yet truly humbled and brought to know the plague of his own heart; neither doth he truly believe the doctrine of original sin, whatsoever formal profession he makes of it.

2. Those that think sincere conformity to the law, in ordinary cases, to be so very easy, shew that they neither know it nor themselves. Is it an easy thing to wrestle, not against *flesh* only, but *against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places*? (Eph. 6:12). Is it an easy thing not to lust or covet according to the tenth commandment? The apostle Paul found it so difficult to obey this commandment, that his *concupiscence* prevailed the more by occasion of the commandment (Rom. 7:7, 8). Our work is not only to alter vicious customs, but to mortify corrupt natural affections, which bred those customs; and not only to deny the fulfilling of sinful lusts, but to be full of holy love and desires: yet even the restraining the execution of corrupt lusts, and crossing them by contrary actings, is, in many cases, like *the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye* (Matt. 5:29, 30). If obedience be so easy, how came it to pass that the heathens generally did those things, for which their own consciences condemned them as worthy of death? (Rom. 1:32); and that many among us seek to enter into this *strait gate, and are not able* (Luke 13:24); and break so many vows and purposes of obedience, and fall back to the practice of their lusts, though, in the mean time, the fears of eternal damnation press hard upon their consciences:

As to those that find persecution for religion to be so rare a thing, in late days, they have cause to be suspected that they are of the world, and therefore the world loveth its own; else they would find the national profession of religion will not secure those that are truly godly from several sorts of persecutions. And suppose men do not persecute us for religion, yet there is great difficulty in bearing great injuries from men on other accounts, and losses, poverty, bodily pains, long diseases, and untimely deaths, from the ordinary providence of God, with such hearty love to God, and to injurious men for his sake, and such a patient acquiescence in his will, as the law of God requireth. I acknowledge that the work of God is easy and pleasant to those whom God rightly furnisheth with endowments for it; but those that assert it to be easy to men, in their common condition, shew their imprudence in contradicting the general experience of heathens and Christians. Though many duties do not require much labour of body or mind, and might be done with ease, if we were willing, yet it is easier to remove a mountain, than to move and incline the heart to will and affect the doing of them. I need not concern myself with those that account that all have sufficient strength for a holy practice, because they can do their endeavour, that is, what they can do; for God requireth actual fulfilling of his commands. What, if by our endeavours we can do nothing in any measure according to the rule, shall the law be put off with no performance? and shall such endeavours be accounted sufficient holiness? And what if we cannot so much as endeavour in a right way? If a man's ability were the measure of acceptable duty, the commands of the law would signify very little.

3. The wisdom of God hath ever furnished people with a good persuasion of a sufficient strength, that they might be enabled both to will and to do their duty. The first Adam was furnished with such a strength; and we have no cause to think that he was ignorant of it, or that he needed to fear that he should be left to his own corruptions, because he had them not in him, until he produced them in himself, by sinning against strength: and when he had lost that strength, he could not recover the practice of

holiness, until he was acquainted with a better strength, whereby the head of Satan should be bruised (Gen. 3:15). Our Lord Christ, doubtless, knew the infinite power of his Deity to enable him for all that he was to do and suffer in our nature. He knew the Lord God would help him, *therefore he should not be confounded* (Isa. 50:7). The scripture assureth what plentiful assurance of strength God gave to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, when he called them to great employments: and to the Israelites, when he called them to subdue the land of Canaan. Christ would have the sons of Zebedee to consider, whether they were able *to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with the baptism that he was to be baptized with* (Matt. 20:22). Paul encourageth believers to the life of holiness, by persuading them that sin shall not prevail to get the dominion over them, because *they "are not under the law, but under grace"* (Rom. 6:13, 14). And he exhorteth them to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil* (Eph. 6:10, 11). John exhorteth believers, *not to love the world, nor the things of the world, because they were strong, and had overcome the wicked one* (1 John 2:14, 15).

They that were called of God, heretofore, to work miracles, were first acquainted with the gift of power to work them; and no wise man will attempt to do them, without knowledge of the gift: even so, when men that are dead in sin are called to do the works of a holy life, which are in them great miracles, God maketh a discovery of the gift of power unto them, that he may encourage them, in a rational way, to such a wonderful enterprise.

The first of seven booklets.

