

The Reign of Grace

Chapter 8

By Abraham Booth

HAVING treated upon that relative change, which takes place in the state of God's people in justification and adoption, I now proceed to consider, that real change which is begun in sanctification and made perfect in glory. This real change is absolutely requisite. For though Christ is proclaimed in the gospel, as entirely free for the sinner; and though we are considered as ungodly, when the obedience of the righteous Jesus is imputed to us for our justification before God; yet, before we can enter the mansions of immortal purity, we must be sanctified. Christ, indeed, finds his people entirely destitute of holiness, and of every desire after it; but he does not leave them in that state. He produces in them a sincere love to God, and a real pleasure in his ways. Hence they are called *an holy nation*. As holiness is the health of the soul, and the beauty of a rational nature; as it is the brightest ornament of the church of God, and essential to true blessedness; so, in a treatise on reigning grace, it must by no means be overlooked; for we may assure ourselves that grace reigns in it.

The vast importance of sanctification, and the rank it holds in the dispensation of grace, appear from hence. It is the end of our eternal election—a capital promise and a distinguished blessing, of the covenant of grace; a precious fruit of redemption by the blood of Jesus; the design of God in regeneration; the primary intention of justification; the scope of adoption, and absolutely necessary to glorification. So that in the sanctification of a sinner, the great design of all the divine operations, respecting that most glorious of all works, REDEMPTION, are united.

Sanctification, therefore, may be justly denominated a capital part of our salvation, and is much more properly so termed, than a *condition* of it. For, to be delivered from that bondage to sin and Satan, under which we all naturally lie, and to be renewed after the image of God, must certainly be esteemed a great deliverance and a valuable blessing. Now, in the enjoyment of that deliverance, and in the participation of this blessing, consist the very essence of sanctification. Hence the word is used to signify, *That word of Divine grace by which those that are called and justified are renewed after the image of God*. The effect of this glorious work is true holiness: or a conformity to the moral perfections of the Deity. In other words, love to God, and delight in him as the chief Good. *The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart*. So to love the Supreme Being, is directly contrary to the bias of corrupt nature. For as natural depravity consists

in our aversion to God, which manifests itself in ten thousand various ways; so the essence of true holiness consists in love to God. This heavenly affection is the fruitful source of all obedience to Him, and of all delight in Him, both here and hereafter. Nor is it only the true source of all our obedience; for it is also the sum and perfection of holiness. Because all acceptable duties naturally flow from love to God; nor are they any thing else but the *necessary expressions* of that divine principle.

Though justification and sanctification are both them blessings of grace, and though they are absolutely inseparable; yet they are so manifestly distinct, that there is in various respects a wide difference between them. This distinction may be thus expressed. Justification respects the person in a legal sense, is a single act of grace, and terminates in a relative change; that is, a freedom from punishment, and a right to life. Sanctification regards him in a physical sense, is a continued work of grace, and terminates in a real change, as to the quality both of habits and actions. The former is by a righteousness without us; the latter is by holiness wrought in us. That precedes, as a cause; this follows, as an effect. Justification is by Christ as a priest, and has regard to the guilt of sin; sanctification is by him as a king, and refers to its dominion. The former annuls its damning power; the latter its reigning power. Justification is instantaneous and complete, in all its real subjects; but sanctification is progressive, and perfecting by degrees.

The persons on whom the blessing of sanctification is bestowed, are those that are justified, and in a state of acceptance with God. For concerning them it is written, and it is the language of reigning grace; *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*. The blessing here designed, and the favour here promised, are, that love to God, and that delight in his law and ways, which are implanted in the hearts of all the regenerate; constantly inclining them to obey the whole revealed will of God, so far as they are acquainted with it. Sanctification is a new covenant blessing; and in that gracious constitution it is promised as a choice privilege, not required as an entitling condition.

Those happy souls who possess the invaluable blessing, and are delivered from the dominion of sin, *are not under the law*; neither seeking justification by it, nor obnoxious to its curse; *but under grace*; are completely justified by the free favour of God, and live under its powerful influence. This text strongly implies, that all who are under the law, as a covenant, or are seeking acceptance with the eternal Judge by their own duties, are under the dominion of sin; whatever their character may be among men, or however high their pretences may be to holiness. And as those that are under the law have no holiness, they can perform no acceptable obedience. For *they that are in the flesh*, in their carnal, unregenerate state *cannot please God*. Every one that is under the law, is condemned by it; and while his person is accursed, his duties cannot be accepted. A man's person must be accepted with God, before his works can be pleasing to him.

To set the subject in a clearer light, it may be of use to consider, that to constitute a work truly good, it must be done from a right principle, performed by a right rule, and intended for a right end. It must be done from a right *principle*. This is the love of God. The great command of the unchangeable law is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. Whatever work is done from any other principle, however it may be applauded by men, it is not acceptable in the sight of Him who searches the heart. For by Him principles, as well as *actions, are weighed*. It must be performed by a right *rule*. This is the revealed will of God. His will is the rule of righteousness. The moral law, in particular, is the rule of our obedience.*

* See my *Death of Legal Hope, the Life of Evangelical Obedience*, sect. vii. where this subject is professedly discussed, in opposition to the Antinomians.

It is a complete system of duty; and considered as moral, is immutably the rule of our conduct. However chargeable therefore any work may be to him that performs it; or however diligent he may be in its performance; yet, if it be nowhere commanded by the authority of Heaven, it stands condemned by that Divine query; *Who hath required this at your hands?* And though it be pretended that the love of God is the principle, and the glory of God the end, as the dupes of superstition, both ancient and modern, have generally done; yet being nowhere enjoined in our only rule of faith and practice, it is no better than *reprobate silver*, and will certainly be rejected of God. So that, however highly the performer may please himself, or gratify his own pride by the deed, he cannot be commended for his obedience. For where there is no command, explicit or implied, there can be no obedience; consequently no good work. It must be intended for a right end. That is, the glory of the Supreme Being. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, is the peremptory command of the Most High. And as this is the end for which Jehovah himself acts, in all his works, both of providence and grace, so it is the highest end at which we can possibly aim. No man, however, can act for so sublime an end, but he that is taught of God, and fully persuaded that justification is entirely by grace; in such a sense by grace, as to be detached from all works dependent on no conditions to be performed by him. For till then he cannot but refer his supposed good actions principally to self, and his own acceptance with God. This is the highest end for which such a person can possibly act, though other and baser ends are often proposed by him. But those works that are truly good, and which the Holy Spirit calls *the fruits of righteousness, are*, in the design of their performer, as well as in the issue, *to the glory and praise of God*. Now, though an unregenerate man may do those things which are materially good, and by a right rule; yet none that are ignorant of the gospel of Divine grace can act from that generous principle and for that exalted end, which are absolutely necessary to constitute a good work.

To confirm the argument, and to illustrate the point, I would observe, that man is a fallen creature; entirely destitute of the holy image and love of God. So far from loving his Maker, or delighting in his ways, he is an enemy to him. The language

of an unregenerate man's heart and conduct, is that of those profane wretches in the book of Job, who say to God, *Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?**

* Job xxi. 14, 15. I humbly conceive that the unregenerate man's habitual forgetfulness of God, the uneasiness he feels when the thoughts of his Maker and Judge dart into his mind, and his endeavours to ex-elude them as unwelcome intruders—his passion for sinful pleasures, and his love to present enjoyments—the enmity he has to the people of God, and his aversion to serious, religious, heavenly conversation, and, finally, the treatment with which the gospel meets in his breast, even the gospel of saving grace, that brightest mirror of the Divine perfections; are evidences of this humbling truth, and fully prove the opprobrious charge. Is not this striking proof; that a Divine power, sad invincible agency, is necessary to regenerate the soul and convert the heart?

Neither the commands of the Divine law, though the strictest and purest imaginable, nor all the vengeance threatened against disobedience to those commands, can work in our hearts the least degree of love to God, the lawgiver: nor, considering ourselves as apostate creatures and under the curse, is it in the nature of things possible. For the more pure its precepts are, so much the more contrary to the bias of corrupted nature: and it is evident, that its awful sanction cannot be approved by a person obnoxious to its condemning power. Consequently, the Divine Lawgiver can have no share in our affections, while we continue in this deplorable condition.

Fallen man therefore cannot love God, but as he is revealed in a Mediator. He must behold his Maker's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, before he can love him, or have the least desire to promote his glory. Now, as there is no revelation of the glory of God in Christ, but by the gospel, and as we cannot behold it but by faith, it necessarily follows, that no man can unfeignedly love God, or sincerely desire to glorify him, while ignorant of the truth. But as there is the brightest display of all the Divine perfections in Jesus Christ, and as the gospel reveals him in his glory and beauty; so, through the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit, sinners behold the infinite amiableness and transcendent glory of God, in the person and work of Immanuel. The gospel being a declaration of that perfect forgiveness which is with God, and of that wonderful salvation which is by Christ, which are full, free and everlasting; by whomsoever the gospel is believed, peace of conscience and the love of God are in some de-gree enjoyed. While in proportion to the believer's views of the Divine glory revealed in Jesus, and his experience of Divine love shed abroad in the heart, will be his returns of affection and gratitude to God as an infinitely amiable Being, considered in himself; as inconceivably gracious, to needy, guilty, unworthy creatures. His language will be, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that it within me, bless his holy name!* Being born from above, he *delights in the law of God, after the inward man*; and is habitually desirous of being more and more conformed to it,

as it is a transcript of the Divine purity, and a revelation of the Divine will. Now he is furnished with that generous principle of action, love to God. The obedience he now performs, and that which God accepts, is not the service of a mere mercenary, in order to gain a title to life, as a reward for his work; much less of a slave, that is driven to it by the goad of terror, but the obedience of a child, or of a spouse; of one who regards the divine commands as coming from a father, or from an husband. Being *dead to the law, he lives to God*.

I said, being *dead to the law*. This is the case of none but those that are poor in spirit, and have received the atonement in the blood of Christ; those who rely on his work alone, as completely sufficient to procure their acceptance with God, and as perfectly satisfying an awakened conscience, respecting that important affair. So the apostle; *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ — We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held*. In these remarkable words, the believer is described as being dead to the law, and the law as dead to him. By which are signified, that the law has no more power over a believer to exact obedience, as the condition of life, or to threaten vengeance against him, in case of disobedience, than a deceased husband has to demand obedience from a living wife; or, on account of disobedience, to threaten her with punishment. That the real Christian, being dead to the law, has no more expectation of justification by his own obedience to it, than a living wife has of assistance from a dead husband. And that, as she can have no expectation of receiving any benefit from him, he being dead; so she cannot rationally have any fears of suffering evil at his hand.

But though the law, as a covenant, ceases to have any demands on *them that are in Christ Jesus*; yet, as a rule of conduct, and as in the hand of Christ, it is of great utility to believers, and to the most advanced saint Nor, thus considered, is it possible that it should be deprived of its authority, or lose its use. For it is no other than the rule of that obedience which the nature of God and man, and the relation subsisting between them, render necessary. To imagine the law vacated, in this respect, is to suppose that relation to cease, which has ever subsisted, and cannot but subsist, between the great Sovereign and his dependent creatures, who are the subjects of his moral government. Nor, thus considered, are its commands burdensome, or its yoke galling to the real Christian. He approves of it; he *delights in it, after the inward man*. For, as a friend and a guide, it points out the way in which he is to manifest his thankfulness to God for all his favours; and the new disposition he received in regeneration, from his Law-fulfiller, inclines him to pay it the most sincere and uninterrupted regards. The obedience he now performs is in *newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*.

Should any pretenders to holiness, the genuine offspring of the ancient Pharisees, object, that *by faith we make void the law*, our answer is ready: *God forbid! Yea, rather, we establish the law*, both by the doctrine and the principle of faith. By the *doctrine* of faith. Because we teach, that there is no salvation for any

of the children of men, without a perfect fulfilment of all its righteous demands. This, though impossible to a fallen, enfeebled creature, was punctually performed by Messiah, the surety; which, being placed to the account of a believing sinner, renders him completely righteous. Thus the law, so far from being made void, is honoured, is magnified, and that to the highest degree. The obedience performed to the perceptive part of the law, by a Divine Redeemer, and the sufferings of an incarnate God on the cross, in conformity to its penal sanction, more highly honour it than all the obedience which an absolutely innocent race of creatures could ever have yielded; than all the sufferings, which the many millions of the damned can endure to eternity. By the *principle* of faith. For as it purities the heart from an evil conscience, through the application of atoning blood; so it works by love—love to God, his people, and his cause, in some degree conformable to the law, as the rule of righteousness. Hence it is that those who believe, are said to be *sanctified by that faith which is in Jesus*. If any one therefore, pretend to believe in Christ, to love his name, and to enjoy communion with him, who does not pay an habitual regard to his commands; *he is a liar, and the truth is not him*. For our Lord says, *If a man love me, he will keep my words*. He informs us also, that the reason why any one does not *keep his sayings*, is because he *does not love Him*, whatever he may profess to the contrary. That is no love, which is not productive of obedience; nor is that worthy the name of obedience, which springs not from love. Pretensions to love, without obedience, are glaring hypocrisy; and obedience, without love, is mere slavery.

The great and heavenly blessing of sanctification is the fruit of our union with Christ. In virtue of that union which subsists between Christ as the head, and the church as his mystical body, the chosen of God become subjects of regenerating grace, and are possessed of the Holy Spirit. According to those emphatical and instructive words: *Without me*, without vital union with me, similar to that of a living branch to a flourishing vine, *ye can do nothing* that is truly good, and acceptable in the sight of God. It is by the Spirit of truth and the word of grace, that any sinner is, or can be sanctified. As it is written, *Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit*. Hence we read, of the *sanctification of the Spirit*; of the *holiness of truth*; and, of being *sanctified by the truth*. (1 Pet. 1:2. 2 Thess. 2:13. Eph. 4:24. John 17:19) By comparing these passages together, it is evident that the Divine Spirit employs evangelical truth as the appointed instrument, in producing that holiness in the heart and life of a Christian, which is included in the blessing, and signified by the term, sanctification. For this reason it is that our great intercessor prays, *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth: and asserts, Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*. (John 17:17, and 15:3)

The truth of the gospel is that mirror in which we behold the gracious designs of God respecting us; the all-sufficiency of Christ, and his finished work wrought out for the guilty. Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. As the countenance of Moses, after his familiar converse with Jehovah, shone with such

dazzling radiance that the chosen tribes could not steadily behold it; so the believer, viewing the King of glory in his matchless beauty, derives a likeness to the glorious object of his views and his love. For the more frequently he beholds Him, the more fully he knows his perfections, of which his holiness is the ornament. The more he knows them, the more ardently he loves them. The more he loves them, the more he desires a conformity to them; for love aspires after a likeness to the beloved. The more he loves the transcendently amiable God, the more frequently, attentively, and delightfully will he behold him. Thus he obtains, by every fresh view, a new feature of Jehovah's glorious image. (WITSII CEcun. Faed. 1. iii. c. xii. Pg. 111.) Hence it appears, that our advances in true holiness will always keep pace with our views of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Or, in other words, that a life of holiness to the honour of Christ, as our King and our God, will always bear an exact properties to a life of faith upon him, as our Surety and our Saviour.

As the word of grace is the proper warrant and ground of faith, the more clear our conceptions are concerning its truth and certainty, the more firmly shall we confide in it: consequently, the fruits of holiness will more abundantly adorn our conversation. For the gospel *brings forth fruit in all from that know it in truth*: and it is by the *exceeding great and precious promises* contained in it, that we are made partakers of a divine nature. Hence the gospel is compared, by an infallible author, to a mould into which melted metals are cast; from which they receive their form and take their impression. *God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that type of doctrine, into which ye were delivered.* (Rom. 6:17) As the gospel of peace is the doctrine here designed, and as it is according to godliness; so those that receive impressions from it, must, in proportion to its heavenly influence, have their tempers and conduct conformed to the law of God as the rule of righteousness. Thus the truth becomes effectual, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, to produce that purity of heart which is the health of the soul; and those good works which are the only ornament of a Christian profession.

As all the ordinances of grace are calculated to increase our knowledge and love of Christ; so they are adapted to promote the work of sanctification. Whether, therefore, they be those of the closet or of the family; whether public or private; they ought, by all means, to be conscientiously observed, by all who profess themselves the disciples of the Holy Jesus. All that attend upon them in faith, shall certainly find them the happy means of promoting their knowledge of the true God, their growth in grace, and their advancement in real holiness.

We may now consider the principal motives, that are used in the book of God, to stir up the minds of believers to seek a larger enjoyment of sanctification, and to abound in every good work. These motives are various, yet all evangelical. Believers are exhorted to obedience, from the consideration of their distinguishing characters, as *the elect of God and a peculiar people.* (Col. 3:12-14. I Pet. 2:9) The *purchase* which Christ has made of his chosen, and the

unequalled *price* which he paid for their deliverance, afford a charming, a constraining motive, to be holy in all manner of conversation. The price with which they were bought, being nothing less than the infinitely precious blood of Jesus, our incarnate God; a remembrance of it should kindle in their hearts the most fervent glow of heavenly gratitude, and elevate them to a pitch of seraphic devotion; and this more especially, when they reflect on that abject slavery and miserable state, in which they were viewed by the Lord Redeemer, when he undertook their cause, and gave his very life a ransom for them. In the sufferings of Christ on the cross we behold his tenderest compassion to perishing souls, his intense regard to the rights of his Father's violated law, and the concern he had for the honour of his Divine government. Considerations these, most happily calculated to mortify our lusts and quicken our graces; to make us loathe sin and love the law, as being *holy, just, and good*.

Here we see the tenderest compassion to our perishing souls, expressed in a way superior to all the power of language; superior to all finite conception. This he expressed—be astonished, ye inhabitants of the heavenly world! while all the redeemed of the Lord are transported with holy wonder, and filled with adoring gratitude! This he expressed in tears and cries, in groans and blood. Consider Him, O believer, loaded with reproaches by his enemies, deserted by his friends, and forsaken even by his God. Consider him in these circumstances of unparalleled wo, and see whether it will not fire your heart with holy zeal, and arm your hands with an heavenly resolution, to crucify every lust, to mortify every vile affection. Did HANNIBAL, by the command of his father, swear at the altar, to maintain an irreconcilable enmity against the Romans! So should the Christian, when standing as it were at the foot of the cross, and beholding the sufferings of his dying Saviour, swear to maintain a perpetual opposition against every lust and every sin. Here he will form his firmest resolves, to enter into no alliance, to admit of no truce, with those enemies of his soul and murderers of his Lord. Such a consideration, set home by the blessed Spirit, will be instead of a thousand arguments to persuade, instead of a thousand incentives to prompt to cheerful obedience. So struck was Paul with a view of this astonishing love, and the righteous claim which Jesus has to every heart, that he accounted a want of love to him the highest pitch of ingratitude and wickedness; and boldly pronounced the state of such to be accursed to the last degree. (I Cor. 16:22)

Here we behold the Redeemer's love to his Father's law, and the superlative regard that he had to the honour of his Divine government. For though he was determined that the rebels should be saved from deserved destruction; yet, rather than the least reflection should ever be cast on the violated law, as though its precepts were unreasonable, or its penalty cruel, he himself would obey, he himself would bleed. By which procedure he declared, in the most emphatic, manner, that the law, in its precepts, is entirely holy and good; and, in its penal sanction, perfectly just. And at the same time he demonstrated, how justly those who die under its curse are punished with everlasting destruction. Reflect upon this, believer, and see whether it will not prove a noble incentive to labour, and

strive after a more perfect conformity to its holy precepts, in all your tempers, words, and actions; in all that you are, and in all that you do. Then you will see, that as the Lord, out of love to your soul and in honour to the law, refused not to die the most infamous death for your salvation; you are laid under the strongest obligations to love his name, and reverence the law; to confide in his atonement, and imitate his example.

When the Christian considers that his whole person is the object of redeeming love, and the purchase of Immanuel's blood; when he reflects that the end intended by this purchase, is, that he *should serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life*; and that he *should live to Him who died for him and rose again*: beholding such a deliverance, by such stupendous means, and for such a glorious end, he will exclaim with Ezra, on an infinitely less important occasion; *Seeing that thou, our God, hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?* The heart that is not moved, by such considerations as these, to love the Redeemer and to glorify his name, is harder than stone, and colder than ice; is entirely destitute of every grateful feeling. Were believers more fully acquainted with the love of a dying Saviour, and the infinite efficacy of his atoning blood; their dependence on him would be more steady, and their love to him would be more fervent. And, were this the ease, how patient would they be under all their afflictions; how thankful in all their enjoyments: how ardent in all their devotions; how holy in all their conversation; how useful in all their behaviour! Yea, how peaceful, how joyful, in the prospect of death and a future world! Then would their lives be happy indeed. The purchase made by the holy One of God is therefore a noble, a constraining motive to holiness of life.

Their *calling* is another consideration used to the same purpose. *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* The Christian should often meditate on the nature and excellence of his high, holy, heavenly calling. Being called by grace, he is translated *out of darkness into marvellous light; and from under the power of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son.* Out of a state of wrath, and of alienation from God, he is brought into a state of peace, and of communion with him. Now, the very end of his calling is, that he might be holy; that he might show forth the praises of his infinite Benefactor here below, and finally attain his glory in the upper world. How great the blessing itself? How gracious, how glorious the design of God in bestowing it? The remembrance of this must necessarily have a tendency to holiness, in every heart that is in the least acquainted with it.

The *mercies* of God in general, and more particularly that special mercy manifested in the free pardon of all their sins, and the everlasting justification of their persons, constitute the noblest attractive of the heart.* An attractive of sovereign efficacy, to draw forth all the powers of their souls, in a way of cheerful obedience to the ever-merciful God. *That forgiveness which is with our Sovereign*, and the manifestation of it; far from being an incentive to vice, causes

them to fear and reverence, to love and adore him. The state of believers, as not being *under the law*, is considered and improved to the same excellent purpose. *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* On what is this positive assertion grounded? Is it because they are bound to obedience, on pain of incurring the curse of a righteous law? Or, on the dreadful peril of suffering eternal ruin! Far from it. The reason assigned, which ought ever to be remembered, is, *For ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Here grace is described as having dominion. Here grace reigns. This consideration the apostle applies, as a powerful motive to holy obedience.

The *filial* relation in which believers stand to God, and their hope of life eternal, constitute another motive to answer the same important end. (Eph. 5:1. Phil 2:15) The inspired writers frequently take notice of that sublime relation, to remind them of the dignity and privileges attending it, and to promote a suitable conduct. And, surely, the children of God should act from nobler principles, and have more elevated views, than the slaves of sensuality and the servants of sin. A consideration of their heavenly birth, their honourable character and infinite inheritance, must animate them to walk as becomes the citizens of the New Jerusalem, and the expectants of an eternal crown. The *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit, together with the safety and comfort of believers, which in various respects arise from it; are considered and urged for their advancement in holiness. (I Cor 3:16, 17. Eph. 4:30) For the absolute necessity of his abiding presence with the people of God, is no small inducement not to grieve the sacred inhabitant, by a loose and careless conversation.

The *promises*, which are *all yea and amen in Christ Jesus*, those *exceeding great and precious promises*, which relate both to this world and that which is to come, are improved as a further motive, to induce the children of God to press forward after all holiness of heart and life. (2 Pet. 1:4. 2 Cor 7:1) The apostle Peter, as before observed, considering their tendency and design, scruples not to affirm, that it is *by them*, by their influence on the soul, that we are *made partakers of a divine nature*. (Psalm 139:30-32) These glorious promises are great as the heart of man can conceive; great as Jehovah himself can make.

The consideration of those chastisements with which the Lord, as a father, corrects his children, when remiss in their duty and negligent in the practice of good works, is another motive to stir them up to follow after holiness, and to make them watchful against the incursions of temptation. (Psalm 139:30-32) I said, with which the Lord as a father *chastises*; not punishes. For it is the property and business of a tender father to correct his children, when disobedient; but of a Judge and of an executioner, to pronounce a person worthy of punishment and to inflict it, which, in the proper sense of *punishment*, makes no part of the Divine conduct toward the heirs of glory. When their heavenly Father chastises them, it is not merely to demonstrate his own sovereignty, but to correct for faults committed; and that not in wrath, but in love. Yea, he does it because he loves them, in order to *make them partakers of his holiness, and that*

they may not be condemned with the world. (Heb. 12:5-11. I Cor. 11:32) This being the design of God in chastising his people, and the severest chastisements being a fruit of his paternal care; though the means be grievous, yet they are salutary, and the end is glorious. Correct them he will, but not disinherit them. He will make them smart for their folly, but he will not abandon them to ruin. According to that declaration; *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes.* Nevertheless, *my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* (Psalm 139:30-33) As the Lord corrects his children when disobedient; so he reveals more of his love to them when they walk steadily in the paths of duty. Such as maintain the closest communion with him, and most punctually obey his commands, have reason to expect richer manifestations of his love; to live more under the smiles of his countenance; and, consequently, to be more joyful in their pilgrimage here on earth, having larger foretastes of future glory. While those of his people that backslide more frequently, and are not so careful to perform his will, come oftener under his correcting hand, and their comfortable communion with him is more interrupted.

This motive, it must be confessed, is of a less generous kind than those before mentioned. Notwithstanding, in the present imperfect state, it has its use. Nor is it destitute of holy love. For though the redeemed of the Lord fear the frowns of their Father's face, and the lashes of his correcting rod; yet they do not live under the slavish apprehensions of eternal wrath, nor are they kept in the way of duty by the tormenting fears of that awful punishment. Though they may justly expect more copious manifestations of their Father's love, when they walk in obedience to him; yet they do not obey to obtain life, or to gain a right of inheritance. No, they are already heirs. They are not only servants, but sons; and are possessed of a filial affection for him who has begotten them to a lively hope. Though the motive therefore be not so free, and pure, and noble as those before mentioned, which are taken from blessings already conferred; yet it savours of love to God, and has a regard to his glory. The obedience performed under its influence, is of a different kind from all the duties of the most zealous moralist, that is unacquainted with salvation by grace. It must, however, be granted, that the more pure our views are of the glory of God, the more perfect is our obedience, and the more acceptable in the sight of our heavenly Father. Yet, far be it that we should indulge the thought of our duties, when performed to the utmost of our ability, being accepted of God for their own sake! The accept-ance with which they meet at the hand of God. is not because they are perfect, or we worthy; but in consequence of our union with Christ, and the justification of our persons in him. These duties, being the fruits of holiness, are produced in virtue of our union with him; are considered as evidences of that union; and accepted through him, as our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Accepted, not to the justification of our persons, but as a testimony of our love and gratitude, and of our concern for the glory of God.

That these are *all* the motives to obedience, with which the Scriptures furnish believers, and which they are bound to keep in their view, I am far from supposing; but they, I conceive, are some of the principal. If, therefore, these have their proper influence upon them, they will *be neither idle, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is evident, from the foregoing paragraphs, that sanctification is an important part of that salvation and blessedness, which are promised to the people of God, and provided for them. Let the reader, therefore, be careful to look upon it, and seek after it, under its true character. Be diligent in the pursuit of holiness, not as the condition of your justification; but as the brightest ornament of a rational nature, as the image of the blessed God, and as that by which you bring the highest honour to his name. In this the perfection of your intellectual powers consists, and everlasting glory is its genuine result. The children of God should always remember, that though holiness and good works give them no title to life; for that is the prerogative royal of Divine grace, through the Mediator's work; yet a higher, and still higher degree of holiness is to be sought with all assiduity. It being their proper business, as well as their great blessing, while they walk in Christ the Way, to evidence, by holiness and good works, that they are in him, and so free from all condemnation.

It also appears, that as no obedience is acceptable to God, except it proceed from a principle of love to his name, and be performed with a view to his glory; and as no man is possessed of that heavenly principle, or capable of acting for that exalted end, but the true believer, or the justified person: so it must be very preposterous, and entirely unavailing, to exhort sinners to do this or the other good work, in order to gain an interest in Christ; or as preparatory to justification by him. For an interest in Christ is not acquired by the sinner, but freely bestowed of God; and is a primary fruit of eternal, distinguishing love. Nor are the best works of an unbeliever, any other than splendid faults; neither spiritually good in themselves, nor acceptable to Him that searches the heart. Till we receive the atonement which is by Christ, and that forgiveness which is with Jehovah, all our duties arise from a slavish principle, and are directed to a selfish end. Without this, all that you do," says Dr. OWEN, however it may please your minds, or ease your consciences, is not at all accepted with God. You run, it may be, earnestly; but you run out of the way; you strive, but not lawfully, and shall never receive the crown. True gospel obedience is the fruit of the faith of forgiveness. Whatever you do without it, is but a building without a foundation; a castle in the air. You may see the order of gospel obedience, Eph. ii. 7-10. The foundation must be laid in grace; riches of grace by Christ, in the free pardon and forgiveness of sin. From hence must the works of obedience proceed, if you would have them to be of God's appointment, or find acceptance with him." (Psalm 130)

Hence it is evident, that as it is the gospel of reigning grace, under the agency of the Divine Spirit, which produces true holiness in the heart, and furnishes the Christian with such excellent motives to abound in obedience; this glorious truth

is absolutely necessary to reform the world, necessary to be known, experimentally known, that we may please God, or answer any valuable purposes in a holy conversation. For the gospel only can furnish us with such principles and motives to obedience, as will cause us to take delight in it. When we know the troth as it is in Jesus, then, and not till then, *the ways of wisdom will be ways of pleasantness*. Then faith will work by love to God and our neighbour.

Be it your concern, believer, to keep in view the many inducements to holiness, with which the book of God abounds and urges upon you. Always considering it as your indispensable duty and proper business, to glorify God by an holy, heavenly, useful conversation. Remember, you *are not your own: you are bought with a price*: your whole person is the Lord's. As nothing is a more powerful persuasive to holiness, than a consideration of the love of Christ and the glory of God, that are manifested in the atonement made on the cross; let that be the subject of your frequent meditation. For the cross, and the work finished upon it, exhibit the brightest view of the Divine perfections. Endeavour, then, to obtain clearer views of Jehovah's glory, and of your reconciliation to him by Jesus Christ; and you will have a greater abhorrence of all sin, and be more abased in your own eyes. Contemplate the bitter sufferings which Jesus underwent, not only for your good, but in your stead; and you will be pained at the heart on account of your past transgressions and present corruptions. (Zech. 12:10) The more you become acquainted with that Divine philanthropy which was manifested in the redemption of your soul from the pit of destruction; the more will it constrain you to love, to adore, and to glorify the Lord Redeemer. (2 Cor. 5:14) For as the love of God, manifested in Christ, proclaimed in the gospel, and experienced by faith, is that which first fixes our affections on him; so the more we view it, the more will our love be heightened. And as love to God is the only principle of true obedience, the more it is heightened, the more will it influence our minds and conduct in all respects. Thus grace, that very grace which provided, reveals, and applies the blessings of salvation, is the master who teaches, is the motive which induces, and the sovereign which sweetly constrains a believer to deny himself, and to walk in the ways of holiness. (Tit. 2:11, 12)

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