

Monergism

THE TRIAL OF A

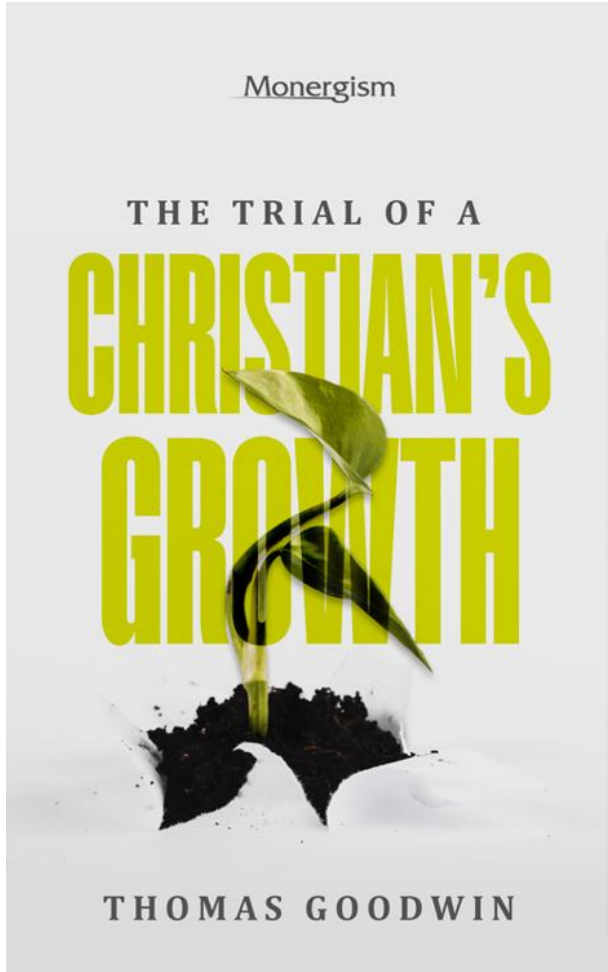
CHRISTIAN'S
GROWTH

THOMAS GOODWIN

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The Trial of a Christian's Growth

by Thomas Goodwin

THE TRIAL OF A CHRISTIAN'S GROWTH IN MORTIFICATION, OR PURGING OUT CORRUPTION; AND VIVIFICATION, OR BRINGING FORTH MORE FRUIT:

A TREATISE HANDLING THIS CASE,

'HOW TO DISCERN OUR GROWTH IN GRACE:' AFFORDING SOME HELPS RIGHTLY TO JUDGE THEREOF, BY RESOLVING SOME TENTATIONS, CLEARING SOME MISTAKES, ANSWERING SOME QUESTIONS, ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH. TOGETHER WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE PARABLE OF THE VINE, JOHN 15:1, 2.

'LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.'—2 COR. 7:1.

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TO THE READER

THIS following treatise, *The Trial of a Christian's Growth*, was formerly printed during the time of my absence out of my native country, and by reason thereof had many imperfections and incongruities both in style and matter; which, now being again (through the good hand of God upon me) returned, I have endeavoured to amend: so as, partly through some alteration in the method and frame of it, partly by cutting off some redundancies, I have reduced it to some better shape, and nearer proportion to its fellows.

The scope and way of handling this subject, growth, is not doctrinal so much, nor yet hortatory, as either persuading to, or discoursing of a Christian's growth in general, concerning which much hath been already written by others; but the more proper aim of this is to resolve a case of conscience, (like as those two other preceding tractates of mine have done,) namely this, How to discern our growth, and to answer more usual temptations about it. And so these three treatises being of like sort and kind, and properly belonging to that part of theology which we call case-divinity, I have therefore, in this new edition of the whole, ordered to put them together, (which is all the alteration I have made,) although in their first and single publishing some other came between.

If in the performance this falls short of many more raised experiments of growth which are found in such as the apostle John calls fathers, elderly Christians, who with Enoch have walked long with God; yet I have hoped that you that are young men, (as he also styles the middle sort of Christians,) that you may find many things helpful to your right understanding and judging of your growth, and which may free you from many mistakes in misjudging thereof, and so consequently of many tentations about it, which that age of believers are more peculiarly incident unto. I dare not say, 'I write these things to you, fathers;' I never presumed it in my thoughts. I

myself wrote and preached it when I was but young in years, and for the time far younger in grace and experience. And I dare not (if the great Apostle, 2 Cor. 10:14, would not) stretch myself beyond that measure which God hath distributed to me: a measure which yet may reach you that are young men, though more eminent grown Christians are gone far beyond the line of it.

The God of grace and peace grant us and all his children spirits endeavouring 'to speak the truth in love' in these dividing times, 'that we may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ,' Eph. 4:15.

THO. GOODWIN.

April 26, 1643.

INTRODUCTION

SOME OBSERVATIONS PREMISED UPON THIS PARABLE OF THE VINE:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taken away: and every beareth branch that fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.—JOHN. 15:1, 2.

The sum and division of the words, and subject of this discourse.

A FAIR and fruitful parable this is, spread forth into many branches, in which, under the pleasant shadow of a vine, (upon occasion they had but newly been real partakers of his blood in the fruit of the vine,) Christ elegantly sets forth himself in his relation to his visible

church, and the estate of his apostles, and in them of all visible professors to the end of the world; shewing withal, under that similitude, what his Father meant to do with Judas, now gone out to betray him, as with all other unfruitful branches like unto him; even 'cut them off, and throw them into the fire:' but, on the contrary, encouraging them, and all other fruitful branches, that they should still continue to abide in him, with promise that they should yet 'bring forth more fruit.'

The parable hath three parts:—

1. A vine here is, of all the fairest, ver. 1.

2. A husbandman, of all the carefulest.

3. The end of planting this vine, fruitfulness.

1. First, this vine, as all vines else, hath two sorts of branches:—

(1.) Such us, though green, bring forth no true fruit, nought but leaves.

(2.) Such as bring forth fruit, ver. 2.

2. The husbandman hath answerably offices of two sorts towards them both: αἶρειν, καθαίρειν, which is a witty paranomasia, amputare et putare, to lop and cut off. First, clean to cut off those that are utterly unfruitful, which thereupon are 'cast out, do wither, and are gathered and cast into the fire;' so ver. 2, 6. And thus now he meant to deal with Judas. But, secondly, to purge and but lop off the luxuriances and too much runnings out of the fruitful branches into springs, which they are subject to.

3. Thirdly, his end in all is, that fruit, and more fruit, might be brought forth. This is his end of planting this vine, this is the end of purging these branches of it, which he being frustrated of in those other is the cause why he takes them clean away.

And to exhort these unto fruitfulness was one main end of Christ's using this parable, and unto this tends all in the following verses, either as means or motives unto fruitfulness.

First, as means—

(1.) He assures them of their being in the state of grace, ver. 3. Assurance is a means of fruitfulness.

(2.) He speaks of purging them by his word in the same verse, 'Ye are clean through the word I have spoken to you.' This is a means he further useth.

(3.) He inculcates into them the sense of their own inability 'to do any thing without him,' ver. 5.

(4.) Therefore to 'abide in him,' and suck from him, ver. 5.

(5.) And to let his 'word abide in them,' by which himself 'shall also abide in them,' and by which they may still be purged, and so be fruitful.

The motives are—

(1.) If not, they know their doom; to the fire with them, ver. 6.

(2.) If they do, their prayers shall be granted, ver. 7.

(3.) Hereby his Father is glorified, ver. 8.

(4.) They shall shew themselves his disciples, ver. 8.

(5.) They shall continue in his love, who loves them as dearly as his Father doth him, ver. 9, 10.

And so you have the sum of all this parable.

The principal subject I aim at in this scripture is this main case of conscience, which useth to be the exercise and inquisition of many good souls, How a Christian may discern his growth, both in purging out corruptions and increase of grace, and the fruits of it.

Therefore whatever other spreading fruitful observations grow upon this stock, and this vine affords many, we will but shortly, and as men in haste, view and take notice of, but as in our way to that other which I principally intend, and only so far stay upon the observation of them as the bare opening this similitude here used doth give sap and vigour to them.

First observation—How Christ is a vine, and only the true vine.

First, Christ, he is a vine. To explain this:—First, Adam indeed was a vine, planted in paradise, to bear all mankind upon, but he turned 'a wild one;' he proved not the true vine. God planted him (to allude to that, Jer. 2:21) 'a noble vine, a holy and right seed,' but he degenerated, and so have all engrafted on him, and so bring forth nothing but 'grapes of Sodom,' as Isaiah speaks.

But, secondly, God the Father having many branches of chosen ones, that grew by nature on this cursed stock of Adam, whom yet, as ver. 16, 'he had ordained to bring forth fruit,'—that is, to spring and spread forth in the earth in all ages, and then to be transplanted unto heaven, the paradise appointed for them, the earth being but the nursery of them for a while,—hence therefore he did appoint his own Son to be a new root, as into whom he meant to transplant them, and ordained him to be that bulk, and body, and chief branch, which they all should grow out of, who is therefore called 'the Root of David,' &c., Rev. 22:16, and that 'righteous Branch,' Jer. 23:5.

Whom, therefore, thirdly, he planted as a root here on earth with us, and clothed with a human nature, a weak and mean bark and body, and a rind and outside such as ours is, that so both root and branches might be of the same nature, and homogeneal. Which

nature of ours in him he likewise 'filled with his Spirit,' as with juice and sap, 'without all measure,' that so he might fructify and grow into all those branches appointed to be in him, by communicating the same Spirit to them.

And, fourthly, although he was of himself the fairest cedar that ever the earth bare, yet in relation to those multitudes of branches he was to bear, chooseth to be a vine, which is of all trees the lowest, the weakest, and of the meanest bark and outside of any other; only, because of all others it is the plentifullest of branches, and runs out and spreads its bulk in branches, and those, of all branches else of any other trees, the fruitfullest, it is therefore called 'the fruitful vine,' Ps. 128:3. And for that reason only doth he single out this comparison as suiting with his scope, shewing therein his love; that as he condescended to the lowest condition for our salvation, so to the meanest resemblances for our instruction, yet so as withal he tells us that no vine nor all the vines on earth were worthy herein to be compared, nor to be so much as resemblances of him.

For he, and he alone, is the true vine; that is the second observation.

For take those choicest excellencies in a vine, for which the comparison here is made, as, more particularly, that of fruitfulness either in boughs or fruit, and it is but a shadow of that which is in him. As God only is I am that I am, and all thing else have but the shadow of being, in Christ alone hath only all the excellencies in him in the true real nature of all things to which he is compared. So in like manner he is said to be 'bread indeed,' John 6:55, and, ver. 32, 'the true bread from heaven.' Manna, and all other meat, and all that sweetness which is in meat, is and was but a shadow to that which he affords. He excels and exceeds all things he is compared to in what they have, and they are but shadows to him, Heb. 10:1.

First, therefore, never any vine so fruitful. 'All our fruit is, found in him,' Hos. 12:8. 'If you abide in me, you shall bring forth much fruit.' He hath juice to supply you with every grace, to 'fill you with all the

fruits of righteousness;' which if the branches want, it is for want of faith in themselves to draw from him, not want of sap in him.

Secondly, This he is at all times, hath been in all ages, thus flourishing; this root never withers, is never dry or empty of sap; it is never winter with Christ. 'Every branch,' saith the 2d verse,—that is, every one that hath borne fruit in any age,—beareth all its fruit 'in him;' branches in him fear no drought, Jer. 17:8.

Thirdly, For largeness of spreading, no such vine as this. He, as the Psalmist says, Ps. 80:11, 12, 'sends out his boughs unto the sea, and his branches to the rivers;' all the earth is, or hath been, or shall be, filled with them.

Use—Is to persuade us to take Christ alone, and make him our all in all, because in him all excellencies are supereminently found. All creatures are not enough to serve for comparisons to set him forth, and when they do in part, for some particular thing that is the excellentest in them, yet therein they are but shadows, Heb. 10:1. He only is the truth, he is 'the true light,' John 1:9, The Baptist, Moses, and all lights else were but as twilight, but a shadow. So he is 'the true bread,' 'the true vine;' he hath really the sweetness, the comfort, the excellencies of them all. The like may be said of all those relations he hath taken on him; so he only is a true father and husband, &c., and the love and sweetness in all other fathers and husbands are but a shadow to what is in him.

Second observation—How the Father is the husbandman.

As Christ is thus a vine, so his Father is the husbandman, and as strange a husbandman as Christ a vine. For—

First, He is the very root of the vine itself, which no husbandman is to any vine; therefore he that is the vine calls the husbandman his Father, 'My Father is the husbandman.' This vine springs out of his bosom by eternal generation, for this is the derivation of our offspring, chap. 14:20, 'I am in my Father, and you in me.' And, chap.

5:26, 'The Father, he hath life' original 'in himself, and gives it to the Son,' and the Son to us, and thence spring living fruits, the fruits of righteousness.

Secondly, He is the engraffer and planter of all the branches into this vine. Isa. 60:21, he calls them 'his righteous people, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands.' Other husbandmen do but expect what branches their vines will of themselves bring forth, but God appoints who, and how many shall be the branches, and gives them unto, and engrafts them into his Son.

Thirdly, He appoints what fruit and what store of fruit those branches shall bring forth, and accordingly gives the increase, which other husbandmen cannot do: 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God only gives the increase,' 1 Cor. 3:6. Though Christ merited, yet the Father decreed every man's measure of fruitfulness.

Fourthly, He is the most diligent husbandman that ever was, for he knows, and daily views, and takes notice of every branch, and of all their fruit; for, says the text, 'Every branch that brings not forth fruit, he takes away,' &c., therefore knows who beareth fruit, and who doth not. He knows their persons, who are his, and who are not, 2 Tim. 2:19; not so much as one man could come in 'without a wedding garment,' but he spies him out.

Fifthly, The most careful he is daily to purge his vine; so says the 2d verse. And of all possessions, saith Cato, *nulla possessio majorem operam requirit*; vineyards need as much care, and more, than any other. The corn, when it is sown, comes up, and grows alone, and ripeneth, and comes to perfection, the husbandman sleeping and waking, he knows not how, saith Christ; but vines must be dressed, supported, sheltered, pruned, well-nigh every day.

And of all trees God hath most care of his vines, and regards them more than all the rest in the world.

Use 1—Is to honour the Father in all the works tending to our salvation, as much as we honour the Son. If Christ be the vine, his Father means to be the husbandman; and indeed it may teach us to honour all the three Persons in every work that is saving, for in all they bear a distinct office; the Father hath not only a hand in election, but also in sanctification, concerning which this parable was made. If Christ be the root that affords us sap, whence all fruit buds, the Father is the husbandman that watereth the vine, gives the increase, purgeth the branches, and is the root of that life which Christ affords to us; and then the Spirit also comes in to have a work and influence herein also: for he is the sap, though not here mentioned, yet which is implied, which lies hid in this parable of the vine, and appears in all the fruits that are brought forth, therefore called, Gal. 5, 'fruits of the Spirit.' None of the three Persons will be left out in any relation, or in any work, that is for our salvation. That ever three so great Persons should have a joint care of our salvation and sanctification, and we ourselves neglect it! That they should be so careful, we so negligent and unfruitful! If they do all so much for us, what should not we endeavour to do for ourselves!

Use 2.—Be careful of your words, thoughts, ways, affections, desires, all which are the fruits of your souls; for God takes notices of all, he walks in this his garden every day, and spies out how many raw, unripe, indigested performances, as prayers, &c., hang on such or such a branch, what gum of pride, what leaves, what luxuriant sprigs, what are rotten boughs and which are sound, and goes up and down with his pruning-knife in he hand, and cuts and slashes where he sees things amiss; he turns up all your leaves, sees what fruit is under, and deals with men accordingly.

Use 3.—When the church is in any distress or misery, go to him that is the husbandman; such is the usual condition of this his vine, spread over the face of the earth. Complain as they, Ps. 80:12, 'Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so as all they which pass by do pluck her? the boar out of the wood doth waste it.' Complain to him that the hogs are in his vineyard, and do much havoc and spoil

therein; and tell him that he is the husbandman who should take care for it. So they go on to pray, 'Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from Heaven, behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted,' ver. 14, 15.

Third observation—Two sorts of branches in this vine, fruitful and unfruitful: and the difference between temporary and true believers, as they are laid down in the text.

We see this vine hath branches of two sorts, fruitful and unfruitful, which is the third thing to be observed.

And herein our Saviour followeth the similitude; for experience shews the like in vines. And writers of vines observe it, and accordingly distinguish the branches of vines into pampinarios, which bring forth bought but leaves, and fructuarios, which bring forth fruit.

The unfruitful, they are such as make profession of being in Christ to themselves and others, and receive some greenness from him, but no true fruit. For their profession they are branches; for their emptiness, unfruitful ones.

Quest.—The only question is, How such as prove unfruitful are said to be branches, and to be in Christ; 'Every branch in me,' &c.

Ans. 1.—Many comparisons there are of Christ, as he stands in various relations to his church; whereof some serve to express one thing concerning him, some another. That of a vine here presents him only as he was to spread himself into a visible church on earth, in the profession of him; and so considered, he may have many branches that are unfruitful. That other, of 'a head over all the family in heaven and earth,' imports his relation only to that invisible company of his church mystical, which together make up that general assembly spoken of in Heb. 12, which are his fulness, Eph. 1:23. And agreeable to this meaning—in comparing himself to a vine, in this large and common relation of a root to both sorts of

professors, true and false—is that other expression also, whereby he sets forth his Father's office, when he calls him, not ἀμπέλουργος, a vine-dresser, or a tiller of a vineyard, in a strict sense, as Luke 13:7, but γεωργός, as it were at large, the husbandman. As thereby denoting out, not simply and alone that peculiar care that he hath to true believers only, that are branches of this vine, though including it, but withal importing that common care and providence which he bears to others of his creatures; and this because some of these branches of this vine are to him but as others out of the church, and of no more reckoning with him. The Father's relation herein answering to, and in a proportion running parallel along with, that which Christ bears towards them: those that Christ is head unto, those he is a father unto; those whom Christ is but as a vine unto, he is but γεωργός, a husbandman unto, whose office is seen as well in cutting off such branches, as in pruning and dressing of those other.

Ans. 2.—These unfruitful ones are not, in Christ's account, reckoned as true branches here; for, in the 5th verse, he calls those disciples of his that were there and then present with him, (when now Judas was gone forth before, as appears chap. 13:30,) them only, the branches; and therefore repeats it there again, 'I am the vine,' with this addition, 'ye are the branches.' Implying hereby, that as he is the true vine, so that these only were the true branches. The other he calls but ὡς κλῆμα, as a branch, ver. 6, 'He is cast forth as a branch,' giving them the name of branches, thereby the better to express his Father's dealing with such, that as they that are dressers of a vineyard use to do with such branches, so my Father with them; but they themselves are but tanquams, quasi palmites, as branches—not really and in truth such.

Ans. 3.—That expression which seems most to make for it is that in the 2d verse, when he says, 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit;' but those words in me may as well, yea rather, be understood to have reference to 'their not bringing forth fruit in him,' than to their being properly branches in him: so as the meaning should be, they are 'branches that bring not forth fruit in me.' Though they do

some good, yet it is not fruit; if so, not in me, though from me, and from my assistance. And so his meaning is not so much to declare that they are branches in him, as that they bring not forth fruit in him, which indeed is one of the characteristical differences between true and unsound branches, and one main scope of the parable; and this the Syriac translation makes for also, and confirms it: *Omnem palmitem qui in me non fert fructum*,—'Every branch which in me bringeth not forth fruit.' And there is this reason that this should be his meaning, that he never reckoned them at all true branches; because that is the difference God puts between these and those other, that 'those that bring forth fruit his Father purgeth, that they may bring forth more fruit.' He lets them not run so far out into sin as to become altogether unfruitful; but these 'he takes away:' so as true branches were never unfruitful.

Use.—The use is to stir up all that profess themselves to be in Christ to examine whether they be true genuine branches of this true vine or no. Here in this kingdom, Christ is spread forth into a fair and pleasant vine in show, as this earth affords. But if we ministers were able, with this husbandman here, to turn up the leaves of formal profession, and look with his eyes, we should discern that there are but a few true branches indeed to be found in flourishing congregations, as Isaiah foretold there should be in Israel: chap. 17:6, 'Like the gleaning grapes, two or three in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches.'

Now for a general help to discern whether you be true branches, consider, that union with Christ is it that makes men branches; that is, men are accounted branches of Christ in regard of some union with him: and such as their union is, such also is their communion with him, and accordingly such branches are they, and such their fruit.

1. Some, and indeed the most, are united to him but by the external tie of the outward ordinances, such as their obligation made in baptism; and are knit to him thereby, no otherwise than many graffs

are, that do not take or thrive in their stocks, only stand there as bound about by a thread. And suitable is their communion with him, even wholly external; they continuing to partake of the outward ordinances, but without any sap or inward influence derived, without any inward work of the Spirit, or stirring of affection. And answerable also is their fruit, when no other are found on them but such as you shall find grow in the waste of the wilderness among heathens, which ingenuity, and modesty, and natural honesty, and natural conscience do bring forth; but not any such as an inward sap from Christ useth to produce. Civil men are not true branches; for look on Christ, the root, and see what fruits abounded in him moat, as fruits of holiness did; and therefore if such were true branches, the same would abound in them likewise, for every tree brings forth according to its kind.

2. You have some, they living in the church, Christ begins to shoot some sap of his Spirit into their hearts, quickening them with many good motions, and stirring up some juiciness of affections in the administration of the word and sacraments, which causes them to bud forth into good inward purposes and outward good beginnings; but this being not the communication of the Spirit, as sanctifying and changing the branch into the same nature with the root, therefore it comes to pass they are still nipped in the bud, as the stony ground was, and the sap stricken in again, like rath ripe fruit, which looking forth upon a February sun, are nipped again with an April frost. Many, when young, and their affections are green and tender, are wrought upon, and bud, but the scoffs of men nip them, and their lusts draw the sap another way, as hopes of preferment, and the pleasures of sin, and so these buds wither and fall off, and the Spirit withdraws himself wholly in the root again. Again—

3. Some there are, as the thorny ground, in whom this inward sap communicated to them, though not spiritually changing and renewing them, yet being communicated in a further degree, abides in them longer, shoots up farther, and these prove exceeding green branches, and are owned for true, even by the people of God

themselves, as Judas was by the apostles, and therefore are outwardly like unto them; for how else are they said to 'be cast out?' ver. 16, who therefore had once some fruit to commend them, for which they were accounted of by the people of God, and received amongst them, 'who judge of trees by the fruit.' Neither are their fruits merely outward, like Solomon's 'apples of gold, in pictures of silver,' merely painted; but they have a sap that puts a greenness into what they do, and by reason of which they bear and bring forth; for how else are they said 'to wither' also? ver. 6, which is a decay of inward moisture and outward greenness. And these also have some kind of union with Christ as with a Lord, 2 Pet. 2:1, he 'ascending to bestow gifts, even upon the rebellious also,' Ps. 68:18, so far to enable them to do him some service in his vineyard. They are not united unto Christ as unto an Head; neither is it 'the spirit of adoption' which they do receive from him. And such a branch was Judas, who was not only owned by the disciples, who knew him not to be false, but who surely at the first had inward sap of gifts derived from Christ, to fit him for the ministry, he being sent out as an apostle to preach; whom therefore Christ here aimed at in this place.

Now for a more particular differencing of these branches and their fruits, it is not my scope to engraft a large commonplace head of all the differences between temporaries and true believers upon this stock; this root is not big enough to bear them, those differences being many. Only I will explain those differences which the text affords, because they are in our way, and will further open the words.

Difference 1.—That which they do bring forth is not true fruit; the Holy Ghost vouchsafeth it not that name; they are said here not to bring forth fruit. That speech in Hos. 10:1 will give clear light to understand this, with the ground of it also; Israel is there called 'an empty vine, which brings forth fruit to herself.' It implies a seeming contradiction that it should be called an empty vine, and yet withal to bring forth any fruit. And these bring forth, not leaves, good words only, but good works, good actions, and those green; and therefore, Jude 12, their fruit is said to wither, as themselves are said to wither

here, ver. 6. And as there Israel is said to be an empty vine, though it hath fruit, so here these are said 'not to bring forth fruit' at all. Now the meaning of both is one and the same; for a thing is said to be empty when it wants that which is proper to it, and ought to be in it, as wells are called empty when they are not full of water, they are full of air: for non datur vacuum. So they are called an empty vine, and these branches to have no fruit, because not such as ought to grow upon them, such as is proper to the root they seem to grow upon. Therefore, in Heb. 6:7, that epithet is added, 'meet herbs,' or fruit,—that is, such as should grow there. So Luke 3:8, they are to 'bring forth fruit worthy amendment of life,' or else they were to be cut down,—that is, such as became true repentants, as were answerable, suitable thereunto: as we say a man carries himself worthy of his place, when answerably to what is required of him in it. That place forecited out of Hosea further acquaints us with the true ground why their fruits, though green, which, chap. 6:4, is called goodness also, yet were not to be accounted meet fruit, and so not fruit at all; even because of this, that it brought forth all its fruit, whether good or bad, to itself,—that is, those ends that did draw up the sap, and did put it forth in fruit, were drawn but from themselves, they bring them not forth principally to God, and for him. All their prayers, all their affections in holy duties, if they examine the reason of them all, the ends that run in them all, and whence all the motives that do actuate all they do in these, they will find they are taken from themselves. And though the assistance wherewith they are enabled to do what they do is more than their own, yet their ends are no higher than themselves, and so they employ but that assistance God gives them wholly for themselves. Now the end for which a true branch brings forth fruit is, that God might be glorified. Thus, Rom. 7:4, when 'married to Christ,' they are said to 'bring forth fruit to God;' which is spoken in opposition to bringing forth fruit to a man's self. Thus also Christ here useth this as the great and main motive to fruitfulness in ver. 8, 'Hereby is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit.' Now whom will this move? into whose affections will such an argument draw up sap and quicken them? None but those hearts who do make God's glory their utmost end; and so all

true branches do, or else this motive should have been used by Christ in vain unto them. And as this end makes their performances to be fruit, so this being wanting, all that is brought forth deserves not the name of fruit, for it is not fruit worthy, as the Baptist says, not meet fruit for the dresser to receive, as was noted out of the Hebrews, not such as ought to grow on that tree. They should be 'trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified,' Isa. 61:3. Again, not fruit meet or suitable for the root it seems to grow upon,—that is, such as Christ did bring forth, for he did all that his Father might be glorified; and therefore, says he, exhorting them to fruitfulness, ver. 8 of this chapter, 'If you do likewise, ye shall be my disciples.' Again, otherwise it is not such as is meet for the husbandman's taste and relish, it being equal that 'he that planteth a vineyard should eat of the fruit of it,' 1 Cor. 9:7. And in fruit, you know, above till we regard the taste, and esteem the relish of it. Eve first considered the 'fruit was good for food,' then 'pleasant to the eye,' Gen. 3. It is not the sap that is in fruit only makes it acceptable; crabs are as full of sap as apples. Nor is it the greenness, or colour, or bigness, but the relish that is the chiefest excellency in it, though those other, when joined with a good relish, do make it more desirable. So though thy performances be full of life and affection, and green, and long, and many, yet if they relish and taste of none but self-ends, God regards them not, they are not *ad gustum suum*; it is the end that gives the relish, and makes them fruits, and acceptable to God.

Difference 2.—The second difference this text holds forth is, that they bring not forth their fruit in Christ; for so the Syriac translation reads it, as making the sense to be that 'they bring not forth fruit in me:' and so this particle in me referreth not so much to their being branches in him as to not bearing their fruit in him. Which indeed seems to have been Christ's meaning, for his scope in this parable is to shew how that he is the root of sanctification; and how not the habitual power only, but every act of grace, and the performance, comes from him: 'Without me ye can do nothing,' ver. 5. And thereupon he exhorts his disciples to fetch all from him, and to 'abide

in him;' and therefore, also, when he speaks of these unfruitful branches at ver. 6, that which here he calls 'bearing not fruit in me,' he expresses there by 'not abiding in me,' as the cause of their not bringing forth fruit in him. Yea, and the principal scope of that phrase, 'Abide in me,' is, (as evidently appears by ver. 4, 5,) to depend upon him for bringing forth of fruit, and to fetch strength from him by faith. There is therefore this essential defect in the work that is upon such, that they do not do all in that dependence upon Christ, such a dependence as a branch hath upon the root in bringing forth its fruit. For, my brethren, this you must know, that as it is essential to evangelical sanctification to do all for another, as your end, namely, to God; so to do all in the strength of another as your sole assistant, namely, Christ, who works all in you, and 'through whoso strength,' saith Paul, 'I am able to do all things,' and nothing without it. 'The life we lead is by faith,' and it is 'not I, but Christ who lives in me.' Therefore we find both these joined, Phil. 1:11, 'The fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.' The latter, to the glory of God, is mentioned as the final cause; the other, by Jesus Christ, as the efficient cause. Both these are necessary unto true sanctification. For as we are to honour the husbandman by making him our end, so also the root, by doing all in him and from him. Now temporary believers, as they do all principally for themselves, so also all as from themselves; and as they do not make God their end, so nor Christ their root. And so some expound that phrase in the parable of the stony ground, Luke 8:13, when it is said they 'have no root,' (though I think he means also inherent habit of grace infused, for it is added, 'no root in themselves,' which Job calls the root of the matter which was in him,) it is because they fetch not their strength to do all they do from Christ by faith, and from their union with him. And the reason is this, because they are never emptied of themselves, which is the root we all do grow upon, either in regard of their own ends or of their own efficiency of working. Whereas we must all be brought to nothing in ourselves, both in regard of self-aims and also abilities of working; and till our hearts are inwardly taught that lesson, that 'we are not sufficient as of ourselves,' we will not go out of ourselves to

do all in Christ; and therefore there was nothing which Christ endeavoured more to engraft upon their hearts than this principle, now at his departure, as it is ver. 4, 5. And indeed it is as hard a thing for nature to live out of itself and fetch all from another, as not to live to itself but to another. We are full of our own strength as well as of our own ends. And although these unfruitful branches they do indeed receive all their strength from Christ, and so all they do in what is good is from him; yet they do not honour Christ in receiving it by doing all as in his strength, and so do not do it as in him. But though they receive all, yet they work with it as if it were their own stock, and so 'glory,' as the apostle says, 'as if they had not received it.' And thus though the sap and liveliness which stirs them is really and all efficiently from Christ, yet they may be said to bring forth fruit in themselves, because both they neither fetch nor receive it by faith, nor act by faith that strength received, as men that were acted by Christ, and as working all in Christ; but they do all as if all proceeded from their own root. Even as the ivy, though it clasping about the oak receives much sap from it, which it digesteth and turneth into itself, yet it brings forth all its berries by virtue of its own root, rather than as in the oak, which yet sustain and supplies it with juice and sap. Whereas a true believer bring forth fruit in Christ, as a branch that is in and of the oak itself, as its own root, and so 'from him all their fruit is found,' Hos. 14:8. He fetcheth his assistance from him; whereas the inward assistance of another unsound branch is strengthened and supported by pride, and self-sufficiency of gifts and parts, and not derived by faith, and maintained by confidence in Christ's strength to act all in them. So that, as it is said of the Corinthians, that they 'reigned, but without us,' says Paul; so I may say, temporaries perform duties, and pray, but as without Christ. But all true believers are emptied first of their own strength and ability, and so walk as those who can 'do nothing without Christ,' as those who are not able to love, believe one moment more without him. So Phil. 4:13, 'I am able to do all things,' but 'through Christ that strengtheneth me.' And this they lay for a principle in their hearts which they walk by, which therefore Christ presseth upon his disciples here, as the main requisite and

fundamental principle evangelical sanctification, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' And therefore such a one is sensible of that cursed self-sufficiency in him, and humbleth himself, checks himself for it, as for as great and foul a sin as any other; and humbleth himself not only for the want of what life and stirring, &c., should have been in the duty fallen short of in performing it, but also for that he sanctified not Christ in the strength he received to do it with. But another doth not so; if he finds strength, and power, and vigour to perform, and quickness in the performance, he looks no farther. That poor man in the gospel, as he acknowledged his want of faith, that he had much unbelief in him, so he goes out to Christ for the supply, 'Lord, help my unbelief,' for he knew that it was he was to be the worker of every degree of faith in him. And again, a true believer being thus sensible of his own inability, doth, when he is anything assisted, attribute all to Christ when he hath done; and honours him as the author of it in himself; confesseth in his heart, between Christ and himself, that it was not he, but Christ that strengthened him. 'It is not I,' says the Apostle, 'but the grace of God in me, though I have laboured more than they all.' But another, though he receives all, yet not being emptied of himself, 'boasteth as if he had not received it.' As the Pharisee, though he thanked God in words, yet in his heart attributed all to himself. Such a one is the more full and lift up when he hath done, but the true branch more empty and humble. A true believer glories not of himself as in himself, but only as he is 'a man in Christ;' and that as a man in Christ, he did thus or thus: as Paul did, and no otherwise. So, 2 Cor. 12:2, 'I knew a man in Christ,' &c. 'Of such a man I will glory, but of myself I will not glory.' And yet it was himself he spake of, but yet not in himself as of himself, but as he was in Christ.

Quest.—And if it be asked, Whether in every act a Christian doth thus?—

Ans.—I answer, it is in this as in that other parallel to this, the making God a man's end. Now, as it doth not require that in every action a man should actually think of that his end, whilst yet

habitually he makes it his aim;—as a man in his journey doth not think of the place he goes to in every step he takes, yet so habitually hath it in his thoughts as he keeps in the way to it;—parallel to this is it in doing all in Christ: it cannot be supposed that in every act a man hath such a distinct thought of recourse to Christ; but at the beginning and entrance of greater actions, he still hath such actings and exercise of faith; and also often in the progress he reneweth them; and in the conclusion, when he hath performed them, he doth sanctify Christ in his heart, by ascribing the praise of all unto him.

Quest.—If, in the second place, the question be, Whether every true believer doth from his first conversion thus distinctly and knowingly to himself fetch thus all power from Christ, and do all in him?—

Ans. 1.—The answer is, that to all believers this principle of having recourse to Christ for acting their sanctification may haply not presently be so distinctly revealed as it hath been to some. This indeed is common and absolutely necessary to all believers, to constitute and make them such,—namely, that their faith should have recourse to Christ, and to take him for their salvation, in the large and general notion of it, as it enfolds all under it that is to be done to save them; and thus many more ignorant do, when yet they have not learned explicitly in every particular that concerneth their salvation, to have frequently a distinct recourse unto him. It is probable that these very disciples of Christ, who yet savingly believed, had not this particular principle of bringing forth all their fruit of holiness in Christ as their root, until this very time and sermon whereby Christ informed them in it, so clearly revealed to them, nor till then so clearly apprehended by them. For ignorant they were of, and negligent in having recourse to, Christ in many other particulars, and making use of him therein, which are of as much concernment as this. They had not so distinctly and explicitly, as would seem, put their prayers up in Christ's name: 'Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name,' John 16:24. Neither had they so frequently exercised faith on Christ in all things as they had upon

God. Therefore, John 14:1, he calls upon them, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'

Ans. 2.—Many sorts of principles believers' hearts may secretly have been taught, which also habitually they practise, and yet they may be exceeding hidden and latent in them in respect of their own discerning them; as was the case also of these disciples. John 14:4, says Christ, 'The way,' namely, to heaven, 'ye know;' and yet, ver. 5, Thomas says, 'How can we know the way?' and then, ver. 7, Christ says of them again, that 'they knew him and the Father;' and yet, ver. 8, Philip again saith to him, 'Lord, shew us the Father,' speaking as if they were ignorant of him, for Christ rebukes him, ver. 9, and tells him he had 'both seen him and his Father.' Those principles of atheism and unbelief,—as those sayings in the heart, that there is no God, &c.,—of which the Scriptures speak so much, they are the principles that act and work all in men that are wicked and carnal, and are the encourages and counsellors to all the sins committed by them; and yet they are least of all discerned by them of all other corruptions, for they are seldom or never drawn forth into distinct propositions, or actually thought upon, but do lie as common principles taken for granted, and so do guide men in their ways. And thus it is, and may be long, with some of the contrary principles of faith; they may act all secretly in the heart, and yet not be discerned, until called forth by the ministry of the word, or some distinct information, when it comes more distinctly to clear such a practice to them.

Ans. 3.—Neither is union with Christ presently cleared up to all believers; I which, whilst it is darkly and doubtfully apprehended by them, Christ's communication of his grace and strength to them in every action remains doubtful also, and is not discerned by them. Of these disciples Christ says, John 14:20, 'That in that day'—namely, when they received the Comforter more fully, of the promise of whom he there speaks—'they should know that they were in him, and he in them.' But not so clearly was this as yet apprehended by them. And so likewise that intercourse betwixt Christ and them, both for

grace and comfort, &c., was not so clearly discerned by them, though continually maintained by him in dispensing all grace and power to them.

Ans. 4.—And yet, in the meanwhile, take the lowest and poorest believer, and he doth these five things, which put together is really and interpretatively a bringing forth their fruit in Christ, though not in their apprehensions:—

(1.) In that their hearts are trained up in a continual sensibleness of their own insufficiency and inability for any good thought or word, as of themselves; for 'poverty of spirit,' to see their own nothingness in this respect, is the first evangelical grace, Matt. 5:3. And if the contrary would arise in them, to think, through habitual grace alone received, they were able of themselves to do good, it is checked soon, and confuted by their own experience, both of their own weakness, being sure to be left to themselves, as Peter was when confident in his own strength; as also by those various 'blowings of the Spirit' in them 'as he pleaseth,' with which, when their sails are filled, they are able to do anything, but when withdrawn they lay wind-bound, though all habits of grace be hoist up and ready, and not able to move of themselves. Now this principle of self-emptiness, habitually to live by it, no carnal heart in the world hath it, or doth live by it. And—

(2.) For this assistance they are trained likewise up, from the first, to have a continual dependence upon a power from above, without which they find they are able to do nothing, to come from God and from the Spirit of Christ, with a renunciation of themselves; which implicitly is the same with this immediate intercourse with Christ, and is really equivalent thereunto, though they hit not at first haply on the right explicit notion thereof, as having not been taught it by the ministry of the word, or other ways, in that distinct manner that others do. And yet in honouring the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they honour Christ, who sends that Spirit into their hearts, even as in 'honouring the Son' Christ says that 'we honour the Father also,'

although our thoughts may sometimes more distinctly be exercised towards one of the three Persons more than to another.

(3.) And, thirdly, when they are once taught from the word that it is the duty of a Christian, and part of the life of faith, to live thus in Christ, and to bring forth all in him, and so come distinctly to apprehend this as requisite to a right bringing forth of fruit, then their hearts instantly do use to close with the truth of it, as being most suitable and agreeable to that holy frame of their own spirits, which are evangelically wrought to glorify Christ all manner of ways that shall be revealed. There is an instinct, a preparedness in their faith to make Christ their all in all, as any particular comes to be revealed to them, wherein they ought to exalt him in their hearts; and so this being once revealed to be one way whereby they are to honour him, if they have gone on before in a confidence on their own graces, 'henceforth they do so no more;' yea, they humble themselves as much for so robbing Christ of glory, or neglecting of him, in not having had that distinct recourse to him, as for any other sin. And—

(4.) Though haply after all this, yet still their union with him is not cleared to them, and so their communion with him herein, as must needs, doth still remain dark also. They therefore neither discern that they have any true communion with his person, nor can say how strength comes from him; yet having been thus taught to fetch all from him, as was formerly explained, they do, in a continual renunciation of their own strength, deny all offers of assistance from any other strength,—as, namely, that which their gifts and parts would make,—even as they deny unlawful lusts or by-end, and they still have their eyes upon Christ to work in them both the 'will and the deed;' and so by a faith of recumbency, or casting themselves on him for strength in all, such as they exercise towards him for justification, Gal. 2:16, 'they live by faith on the Son of God,' and have thereby such a kind of faith, a continual recourse unto him. Upon which acts of true faith being exercised by them towards him, he, as he is pleased to dispense it, moves them, and works and acts all in them, although still not so sensibly unto their apprehensions as

that they should discern the connexion between the cause and the effect; nor can they hang them together, that is to say, know how or that this virtue doth come from Christ, because their union with him is as yet doubtful to them, and also because the power that worketh in believers is secret, and like that of the heavens upon our bodies, which is as strong as that of phisic, &c., yet so sweet and so secretly insinuating itself with the principles of nature, that as for the conveyance of it, it is insensible, and hardly differenced from the other workings of the principles of nature in us: and therefore the Apostle prayeth for the Ephesians, 'that their eyes may be enlightened to see the power that wrought in them,' Eph. 1:18, 19. Yet so as—

(5.) Their souls walk all this while by these two principles firmly rooted in them, both that all good that is to be done must and doth come from Christ, and him alone; and that if any good be done by them, it is wrought by him alone, which do set their souls a-breathing after nothing more than to 'know Christ in the power of his resurrection.' And having walked thus in a self-emptiness and dependence upon Christ by way of a dark recumbency, when once their union with him comes to be cleared up unto them, they then acknowledge, as they, Isa. 26:12, that 'he alone hath wrought all their works in them;' that they are nothing, and have done nothing. And though before this revelation of Christ, as Christ said to Peter, 'What I do now thou knowest not, but thou shalt know,' so they knew not then that Christ had wrought all in them, yet then they know it; and when they do know and discern it, they acknowledge it with the greatest exaltation of him, they having reserved, even during all that former time of their emptiness, the glory for him alone, staying, as Joab did for David,* till Christ come more sensibly into their hearts, to set the crown of all upon his head.

This I thought good to add, to clear this point, lest any poor souls should be stumbled.

Fourth observation.—In the most fruitful branches there remain corruptions unpurged out.

The fourth doctrine is, That in the most fruitful branches there remain corruptions that still need purging out.

This is taken but as supposed in the test, and not so directly laid down, and I shall handle it but so far as it makes way for what doth follow. What shall I need to quote much Scripture for the proof of it? Turn but to your own hearts, the best will find proofs enough of it.

Reason 1.—That God might thereby the more set forth and clear unto us his justifying grace by Christ's righteousness, and clear the truth of it to all our hearts. When the Apostle, long after his first conversion, was in the midst of that great and famous battle, chronicled in that 7th of Romans, wherein he was led 'captive to a law,' and an army of sin within him, 'warring against the law of his mind,' presently upon that woful exclamation and outcry there mentioned, 'O miserable man that I am,' &c., he falls admiring the grace of justification through Christ,—they are his first words after the battle ended,—'Now,' says he, 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' Mark that word now; that now, after such bloody wounds and gashes, there should yet be no condemnation, this exceedingly exalts this grace; for if ever, thought he, I was in danger of condemnation, it was upon the rising and rebelling of these my corruptions, which, when they had carried me captive, I might well have expected the sentence of condemnation to have followed; but I find, says he, that God still pardons me, and accepts me as much as ever upon my returning to him, and therefore I do proclaim with wonder to all the world, that God's justifying grace in Christ is exceeding large and rich. And though there be many corruptions in those that are in Christ, yet there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, that walk after the Spirit, though flesh be in them. And this at once both clears our justification by Christ's righteousness alone, and also magnifies and extols it.

It clears it; therefore how doth this remaining of corruptions afford to our divines that great demonstration against the Papists, that we are not justified by works, nor are those works perfect, which they so impudently affirm against their own experience, even because corruption stains the best, and 'our best righteousness is but as a menstruous cloth.'

And as it clears it, so likewise it extols it; for how is grace magnified, whenas not only all the sins and debts a man brought to Christ to pardon at first conversion are pardoned, but after many relapses of us, and provings bankrupt, we are yet still set up again by free grace with a new stock; and though we still run upon new scores every day, yet that these should still be paid, and there should be riches of love enough and stock enough, that is, merit enough to hold out to pardon us, though we remained in this mixed condition of sinning to eternity, this exceedingly advanceth the abounding of this grace.

Reason 2.—It serves exceedingly to illustrate the grace of perseverance, and the power of God therein; for unto the power of God is our perseverance wholly attributed. 1 Pet. 1:5, 'Ye are kept,' as with a garrison, as the word signifies, 'through the power of God unto salvation.' And were there not a great and an apparent danger of miscarrying, such a mighty guard needed not. There is nothing which puts us into any danger but our corruptions that still remain in us, which 'fight against the soul,' and endeavour to overcome and destroy us. Now, then, to be kept maugre all these, to have grace maintained, a spark of grace in the midst of a sea of corruption, how doth this honour the power of God in keeping us! As much in regard of this our dependency on him in such a condition, as he would otherwise be by our service, if it were perfect, and we wholly free from those corruptions. How will the grace of God under the gospel triumph over the grace given Adam in his innocency; when Adam having his heart full of inherent grace, and nothing inwardly in his nature to seduce him, and the temptation that he had being but a matter of curiosity, and the pleasing his wife, and yet he fell; whenas many poor souls under the state of grace, that have but mites of

grace in comparison, and worlds of corruption, are yet kept not only from the unnecessary pleasures of sin in time of prosperity, but hold out against all the threats, all the cruelties of wicked persecutors in times of persecution, which threaten to debar them of all the present good they enjoy! And though God's people are foiled often, yet that there should still remain 'a seed within them,' 1 John 3:9, this illustrates the grace of Christ under the gospel. For one act in Adam expelled all grace out of him, when yet his heart was full of nothing else. Were our hearts filled with grace perfectly at first conversion, this power would not be seen. The angels are kept with much less care, and charge, and power than we, because they have no bias, no 'weight of sin,' as the Apostle speaks, hung upon them to draw them aside and press them down, as we have.

Reason 3.—Neither would the confusion of the devil in the end be so great, and the victory so glorious, if all sin at first conversion were expelled. For by this means the devil hath in his assaults against us the more advantages, fair play, as I may so speak, fair hopes of overcoming, having a great faction in us, as ready to sin as he is greedy to tempt; and yet God strongly carries on his own work begun, though slowly, and by degrees, backeth and maintains a small party of grace within us to his confusion. That as in God's outward government towards his church here on earth, he suffers a great party, and the greater still by far, to be against his church, and yet upholds it, and 'rules amongst the midst of his enemies,' Ps. 110:2, so doth he also in every particular believer's heart. When grace shall be in us but as a spark, and corruptions as much smoke and moisture damping it, grace but as a candle, and that in the socket, among huge and many winds, then 'to bring judgment forth to victory,' that is a victory indeed.

Reason 1.—Lastly, as God doth it to advance his own grace, and confound the devil, so for holy ends that concern the saints themselves; as—

(1.) To keep them from spiritual pride. He trusted the angels that fell with a full and complete stock of grace at first, and they, though raised up from nothing a few days before, fell into such an admiration of themselves that heaven could not hold them,—it was not a place good enough for them: 'They left,' the text says, 'their own habitation and first estate,' Jude 6. 'Pride was the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim. 3:6. But how much more would this have been an occasion of pride to a soul that was full of nothing but sin the other day, to be made perfect presently? Perfectly to justify us the first day by the righteousness of another, there is no danger in that, for it is a righteousness without us, and which we cannot so easily boast of vainly; for that faith that apprehends it empties us first of ourselves, and goes out to another for it. But sanctification being a work wrought in us, we are apt to dote on that, as too much upon excellency in ourselves. How much ado have poor believers to keep their hearts off from doting upon their own righteousness, and from poring on it, when it is, God wot, a very little! They must therefore have something within them to pull down their spirits, that when they look on their feathers they may look on their feet, which, Christ says, are still defiled, John 13:10.

(2.) However, if there were no such danger of spiritual pride upon so sudden a rise,—as indeed it befalls not infants, nor such souls as die as soon as regenerated, as that good thief,—yet, however, God thinks it meet to use it as a means to humble his people this way; even as God left the Canaanites in the land to vex the Israelites, and to humble them. And to have been thoroughly humbled for sin here will do the saints no hurt against they come to heaven; it will keep them nothing for ever, in their own eyes, even when they are filled brimful of grace and glory. For—

[1.] Nothing humbles so as sin. This made him cry out, 'O miserable man that I am! 'He that never flinched for outward crosses, never thought himself miserable for any of them, but 'gloried in them,' 2 Cor. 12:10, when he came to be 'led captive by sin' remaining in him, cries out, 'O miserable man!' And—

[2.] It is not the sins of a fore-past unregenerate estate that will be enough to do this thoroughly; for they might be looked upon as past and gone, and some ways be an occasion of making the grace after conversion the more glorious. But present sense humbly most kindly, most deeply, because it is fresh; and therefore says Paul, 'O miserable man that I am!' And again, we are not able to know the depth and height of corruptions at once, therefore we are to know it by degrees. And therefore it is still left in us, that after we have a spiritual eye given us, we might experimentally gauge it to the bottom, and be experimentally still humbled for sin. And experimental humbling is the most kindly, as pity out of experience is. And—

[3.] God would have us humbled by seeing our dependence upon him for inherent grace. And how soon are we apt to forget we have received it, and that in our natures no good dwells! We would not remember that our nature were a step-mother to grace, and a natural mother to lusts, but that we see weeds still grow naturally of themselves. And—

[4.] God would have us not only humbled by such our dependence on him, but by a sense of our continual obnoxiousness to him, and of being in his lurch; and therefore leaves corruption still, that we might ever acknowledge that our necks do even lie on the block, and that he may chop them off; and to see that 'in him we' should not only 'live and move' as creatures, but further, that by him we might justly be destroyed every moment, this humbles the creature indeed, Ezek. 36:31, 32.

(3.) As thus to humble them, so that they might have occasion to deny themselves; which to do is more acceptable to God than much more service without it, and therefore the great promise of 'having a hundred-fold' is made to that grace. It was the great grace which of all other Christ exercised. Now, if we had no corruption to entice and seduce us, what opportunities were there for us thus of denying ourselves? Christ indeed had an infinite deal of glory to lay down, not

so we. Unless there be a self in us to solicit us, and another self to deny those solicitations, we should have no occasions of self-denial or the exercise of any such grace. Therefore Adam was not capable of any such grace, because he had no corruption to seduce him. And therefore a little grace in us, denying a great deal of corruption, is in that respect, for so much as is of it, more acceptable than his obedience. Though we have less grace, yet in this respect of a higher kind in the exercises of it.

Use 1.—To be meek and charitable to those who fall into sin, as knowing corruption is not fully yet purged out of thyself. This is the Apostle's admonition upon this ground, Gal. 6:1, 'If a man be overtaken in a fault,'—he speaks indefinitely, that any man may,—if it be but an overtaking, not a sinning wilfully and obstinately, but a falling by occasion, through rashness, suddenness, and violence of temptation, &c.; 'ye which are spiritual, restore such a man with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' He would have every man be meek in his censure, and in his reproof of such a one, and restore him, and 'put him in joint again,' as the word signifies: for still he may be united to Christ, as a bone out of joint is to the body, though for the time rendered thereby unuseful. And do this, says he, with tenderness and pity, 'with the spirit of meekness,' which a man will not do unless he be sensible of his own frailty and subjection to corruption, unless he reflects on himself, and that seriously too. Considering, saith the Apostle there, as implying more than a slight thought,—I may chance to fall also; but the seeing and weighing what matter of falling there is in thine own heart, if God but leave thee to thyself a little while; this works a spirit of meekness towards such a one. For meekness and pity is most kindly when we are sensible of the like in ourselves, and make it our own case. And this he speaks to the most spiritual Christians; not to those who are as yet but as carnal, as he speaketh of the Corinthians, Christians newly converted, who—finding their corruptions at the first stounded with that first blow of mortification given them, and though but in part killed, yet wholly in a manner for a while laid asleep, and having not as yet, after their late conversion, had a fresh experience of the

dangers and temptations a man after conversion in his progress is subject to—are therefore apt to imagine they shall continue free from assaults, and think not that their lusts will get up again, and so are prone to be more censorious of the falls of others. But you, who are more spiritual, to you I speak, says the Apostle, for you are most meekened with a sense of your own weakness; and even you, says he, if you 'consider yourselves,' and what you are in yourselves, have cause to think that 'you also may be tempted.'

Use 2.—Never set thyself any stint or measure of mortification, for still thou hast matter to purge out. Thou must never be out of physic all thy life. Say not, Now I have grace enough, and health enough; but as that great Apostle, 'Not as if I had as yet attained,' for indeed thou hast not; still 'press forward' to have more virtue from Christ. If thou hast prevailed against the outward act, rest not, but get the rising of the lust mortified, and that rolling of it in thy fancy; get thy heart deaded towards it also; and rest not there, but get to hate it, and the thought of it. The 'body of death,' it must not only be 'crucified with Christ,' but 'buried' also, and so rot, Rom. 6:4, 6; it is 'crucified to be destroyed,' says the Apostle there,—that is, to moulder away more and more, after its first death-wound.

Fifth observation—That branches that have brought forth true fruit, God takes them not away.

The fifth doctrine is, That those who are true branches, and bring forth any true fruit pleasing to God, though they have many corruptions in them, yet God takes them not away, cuts them not off. The opposition implies this, he speaks of 'taking away' the other; not so of these, but 'purgeth them.' It is an elegant paranomasia, αῖρει, καθαιρει, which the Holy Ghost here useth.

For an instance to prove this, wherein I will also keep to the metaphor here used, I take that place, Isa. 27, where this his care of fruitful branches, with the very same difference put between his dealing with them and the unfruitful that is here, is elegantly

expressed to us. God professeth himself the keeper of a vineyard, his church, ver. 2, 3, 'I the Lord do keep it;' and, ver. 6, 'He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the earth with fruit.' But Israel having corruption in him which would hinder his growth, he must be lopped and cut. And so, in the next verses, God is said to deal with him; but not so as to cut them off, as he doth others that are both his and their enemies. 'Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote him?' No. For 'in measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it.' When Israel is but a tender plant, and first shooteth forth, he doth but in measure debate with it, that is, in such a proportion is not to destroy it, or cause it to wither; but that it may blossom more, lie measures out, as it were, afflictions to them, but 'stays his rough wind,' as it follows, that is, such afflictions as would shake that his plant too much, or quite blow it down; but such a wind as shall make it fruitful, and blow away its unkindly blossoms and leaves, so much, and no more, will he let out of his treasury, even he who holds the winds in his fists, and can moderate them as he pleaseth. For his scope and purpose is nothing less than to cut off Jacob, both root and branch, because of corruptions and sins that do cleave to him. 'But this is all the fruit to take away the sin,' says he, ver. 9,—that is, this is the fruit of that wind, and of all these his dealings with them; and it is all the fruit,—that is, all that he intends thereby, even to purge them.

But doth he deal so with others? No; for 'the boughs of the most fenced city wither, and are broken off and burned,' ver. 10, 11.

Reason 1.—First, because in Christ God accepts a little good, and it pleaseth him more than sin in his doth displease him. And therefore, as in nations he will not destroy the righteous with the wicked, so nor in men will he cast away their righteousness that is in them for a little wickedness' sake, but will rather purge out the one, and so preserve the other, This we have expressed under the same metaphor, Isa. 65:8, we have in hand:' Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a

blessing is in it;—that is, look as when a man is about to cut down a vine, and his axe is even at the root of it, and one standing by spies a cluster upon it that hath new wine in it, (which also argues there is sap still in the roots, which may yet bring forth more,) Oh, says he, destroy it not: even so says God of nations and men that fear him, of nations where he hath many holy ones. So there it follows, 'So will I do' with Israel, 'for my servants' sake I will not destroy them all:' so it follows there; and thus he likewise says of particular men, There is a blessed work in such a man's heart, though mingled with much corruption, 'Oh, destroy it not.' Take away the sin if possible, but cut not off the man. Why should his grace perish with his wickedness? Every dram of grace is precious; it cost the blood of Christ, and he will not suffer it to be destroyed.

Reason 2.—Because he hath ordained that all the fruits of his children should remain, John 15:16. Now, if they should be cut off, their fruit would wither, their work must perish with them. Now, no man's work shall prove in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. 15:58. But though the world, and all works and lusts of the world, will, with their makers, come to nothing, 'yet he that doth the will of God endureth for ever,' 1 John 2:17. As the works of Christ in himself are eternal, so his works in us are eternal also, because they are the fruits of what he did: 'He that soweth liberally, and gives to the poor, his righteousness remains for ever.'

Reason 3.—Because he loves the person, and hates only the sin; therefore he preserves the one, destroys only the other. 'This is all the fruit, to take away the sin.' Thus, Ps. 99:8, 'He forgave the persons, and took vengeance only on their inventions.' The covenant that is made with us in Christ is not a covenant made with works, but with persons; and therefore, though the works be often hateful, yet he goes on to love the persons; and that he may continue to love them, destroys out of them what he hates, but cutteth not them off. A member that is leprous or ulcerous, a man loves it as it is 'his own flesh,' Eph. 5:29, though he loathes the corruption and putrefaction that is in it; and therefore he doth not presently cut it off, but

purgeth it daily, lays plasters to it to eat the corruption out: whereas a wart nr a wen that grows to a man's body, a man gets it cut off, for he doth not reckon it as his flesh.

Reason 4.—Therein God shews his skill, that he is able to deal with a branch which hath much corruption in it, so artificially as to sever the corruption, and let the branch stand still. Utterly to cut down, and make spoil of all, there is no great skill required to it; but to lop the branches in the right place, and due time and season, so as they may become fruitful, this is from the skill of the husbandman. Come to unskilful surgeons with a sore leg or arm, and they seeing it past their skill, they talk of nothing but cutting it off, and tell you it is so far gone that there is no way else; but come to one that is skilful indeed, that discerns it is not so perished but it may be cured, and he will try his art upon it. And so doth God with branches and members that have much corruption in them: he tries his skill upon them, makes a great cure of a leg or an arm where he discerns some sound flesh, though much corrupted; he can cut out the dead flesh, and let the sound remain, and so makes it whole in the end.

Use 1.—Of comfort to those who are true branches, and continue to bring forth fruit in the midst of all the trials that befall them, that God will not suffer them to be cut off by their corruption. If anything in them should provoke God to do it, it must be sin. Now for that, you see how Christ promiseth that God will take order therewith, and will purge it out of them. In Ps. 89:28–30, this is the covenant made with David, (as he was a type of Christ, with whom the same covenant is made sure and firm,) that 'if his seed forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments,'—What! presently turn them out of doors, and cut them off, as those he meant no more to have to do with? What! nothing but utter rejection? Is there no means of reclaiming them? Never a rod in the house? Yes,—'then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes,' whip out their stubbornness and sinfulness; 'but my loving-kindness will I not take from him' as I did from Saul, as it is 1 Chron. 17:13.

Let the saints consider this, that they may return when they are fallen, and submit to him and his nature, and suffer him to do what he will with them, and endure cutting, and lancing, and burning, so long as he cuts them not off; endure chastening, and all his dealings else, knowing that all the fruit is but to take away the sin, to make them 'partakers of his holiness;' and 'if by any means,' as Paul speaks of himself, as Phil. 3:11, be the means what it will, it is no matter. And God, if at any time he seems to cut thee off, yet it is but as the incestuous Corinthian was cut off, that 'the flesh might be destroyed, and the spirit saved.'

Use 2.—Of encouragement to go on still to bring forth more fruit to God. For if you do, God will not cut you off; 'he will spare you as a man spares his son that serves him;' he will not take advantage at every fault to cast one off. It was his own law, Deut. 20:19, that such trees as brought forth fruit fit for meat, they should not destroy when they came into an enemy's country. 'Doth God take care of trees?' No, it was to teach us that if we bring forth fruit, he will not destroy us, if it be fruit indeed fit for meat. Oaks bring forth apples, such as they are, and acorns, but they are not fit for meat; such trees they might cut down. So, if thou bring not forth such fruit as is for God's taste and relish, wherein thou sanctifiest not God and Christ in thy heart, thou mayest and wilt be cut down, but else not. If thou beest betrothed to Christ, and he hath begotten children on thee, fear not a bill of divorce, he will not lightly cast thee off. And it is a good argument to use to him, desire him to spare thee by all the children he hath begotten on thee. Children increase love between man and wife; so between Christ and us.

Sixth observation—That unfruitful branches God in the end cuts off, and the several degrees whereby he cuts off professors that are unfruitful.

That unfruitful branches God in the end takes away,—as he did Judas, who was here especially aimed at,—for proof take Ps. 125. It is a psalm made of purpose to shew the different estate of the

professors of religion. Those that are 'upright,' ver. 4, he saith, God will continue to do them good, and 'they shall be us Mount Zion,' and all the gates of hell shall not be able to remove one of these mountains. But because there are many that like planets go the same course with the other orbs, and yet have some secret byway besides of their own, of these he says. 'Those that turn aside into crooked ways, God will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity,'—that is, in the end he will discover them to be what they are. And though they go amongst the drove of professors like sheep, yet God will detect them, either in this life or in the life to come, to be goats. Though they did not seem to be workers of iniquity, yet God will lead them forth with them.

Reasons why God dealeth thus with them:—

Reason 1.—Because they dishonour the root which they profess themselves to be graffed into. They profess themselves to be in Christ. Now, he is a fruitful root, full of sap, and for any to be unfruitful in him is a dishonour to him. When yon see unfruitful branches upon a tree, you blame the root for it; so doth the world blame the grace of Christ, the profession of Christ, yea, even the root itself, for the unfruitfulness of the branches. Therefore, that they may dishonour the root no more, he takes them away, cuts them off from that root they seemed to stand in, and then they run out into all manner of wickedness.

Reason 2.—Because the husbandman hath no profit by them: Heb. 6:8, 'The ground that bringeth forth thorns, and not fruit meet for him that dresseth it, is nigh to cursing.' In the 8th of the Canticles it is said, 'Solomon had a vineyard, and he let it out to keepers,' &c. He speaks this of Christ, of whom Solomon was a type, and of his church; and his comparison stands thus: Solomon being a king, and having many vineyards for his royalty,—for the riches of ancient kings lay much in husbandry,—he let them out to vine-dressers, and they had some gain by them; but 'Solomon must have a thousand,' and they 'but two hundred;' the chief gain was to come to Solomon.

So the vineyard that God had planted here below, he lets it out to men, and they shall have some profit by it, you shall all have wages for the work you do, yet so as the chief gain must return to God; he must have a thousand for your two hundred. But when men will have all the gains that is in what they do, set up their own ends only, and the husbandman shall have none, such branches he takes away, because they are not for his profit, for it is made a rule of equity, 1 Cor. 9:7, 'that he that planteth a vineyard should eat of the fruit of it.'

Reason 3.—Because of all trees a vine is good for nothing else but to bring forth fruit, as we see it expressed to us, Ezek. 15:4; it is good for nothing but the fire when it becomes unfruitful. Other trees are good for building, to make pins of, but not the vine. And this similitude God chose out to shew, that of all trees else, professors, if unfruitful, are good for nothing; their end is to be burned.

Now if you ask, How God taketh them away? the degrees he doth it by are set down here, ver. 6, 'If a man abide not in me,' &c.,—that is, fall away,—then, 1. They are cast out; and, 2. They wither; 3. They are gathered; 4. They are burned.

1. They are cast forth,—that is, out of the hearts of God's people, out of their company, out of their prayers, yea, and out of their society by excommunication often; and many times they cast out themselves, being given up to such errors as discover them to be unsound. As Hymenæus and Philetus, they were forward professors, so that their fall was like to have shaken many of the fruitful branches, insomuch that the apostle was fain to make an apology about their fall: 'Nevertheless the foundation of God remains sure,' 2 Tim. 2:19. God gave them up to such opinions and heresies as discovered their hearts to be rotten and unsound. So also he gives these carnal professors up to such sins as will discover them. This was the case of Cain; he brought forth some fruit, for he sacrificed; yet because not in sincerity, he envied his brother, and was given up to murder his brother, upon which it is said that 'he was cast out of the sight of the Lord,' Gen. 4:16,—that is, cast out of his father's family, and from the

ordinances of God there enjoyed, and made a vagabond upon the face of the whole earth, which of all curses is the greatest. Or else, as was said, they of their own accord 'forsake the assembly of the saints.' The Apostle makes this a step to the sin against the Holy Ghost, Heb. 10:25. He saith, that when men forsake the assemblies and company of the people of God, public and private, and love not to quicken and stir up one another, or begin to be shy of those they once accompanied, they are in a high degree to that which follows in the next verse, 'to sin willfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth.'

2. Being thus cast forth, they wither,—that is, the sap of abilities which they once had begins to decay; that life in holy duties and in holy speeches begins to be withdrawn, and their leaves begin to fall off; they cannot pray nor speak of holy things as they were wont. Thus it is said of such professors, Jude 12, that 'their fruit withereth,' even here in the eyes of men; for when God casteth them out, then he withdraws his Spirit from them; and then, although they come to the ordinances, yet they have no breathings. They come to prayer, and the Spirit of God is departed; and so by degrees God withdraws sap from them till they be quite dead. Thus he dealt with Saul; when he had discovered himself, by sparing the Amalekites and by persecuting David, it is said, 'the Spirit of God departed from him,' and he withered ever after, all his gifts vanished, and the spirit or frame of heart he once had departed from him. So likewise they that had not 'gained by their talents,' Matt. 25:26, their 'talents were taken from them,' even in this life, and the Spirit of God, which rested upon them, rested upon some other that were more faithful.

3. Lying long unfruitful, in the end it is said they are gathered. Our translation hath it, 'men gather them,' which either respects a punishment in this life, that when they are cast out from the society of God's people, wicked men gather them, they fall to those that are naught. Popish persons or profane atheists take them, as the Pharisees did Judas, when he cast himself out of the society of the apostles. Or else it may in a metaphor refer to the life to come; the

angels, they are the reapers, they 'gather them in the last day,' and bind them in bundles for the fire.

4. So, lastly, it is said, they are cast into the fire, and they burn. A man would think he needed not to have added that, for being cast into the fire they must needs burn; but his meaning is, that of all other they make the fiercest, hottest fire, because they are trees most seared, and 'fuel fully dry,' as the prophet speaks.

Use.—You, then, that profess the name of Christ, take heed that you be fruitful branches indeed. I say to you, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 11:19, 20, 'Because of unbelief they were broken off thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.' Take heed that it be fruit that you bring forth: do all for God, make him your end in all, bring forth more fruit every day, let your fruit be riper and more spiritual daily, labour to spread and root yourselves as much downward in inward holiness as you do upward in outward profession, and purge yourselves continually, lest that which is threatened here befall you, which are fearful things to be spoken, and yet concern many a soul. The Apostle compares such to 'trees twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.' You were born dead in Adam; since that you have had perhaps some union with Christ by common graces; if you wither again, then you are 'twice dead,' and therefore fit for nothing but to be stubbed up and cast into the fire. And if any soul begin to forsake the assemblies of the saints, or be cast out from them, let him look to himself lest he wither in the end, and be twice dead, and so he never come to have life put into him again; that is, repent and return again. And know this, that if you, being cast out by the church and people of God, break your hearts, so that you mourn for your sin, as the incestuous Corinthian did, it is a sign you are such branches as God will yet make fruitful; but if, being cast out, you begin to wither, as here, the end will be burning.

PART I

**OF GROWTH IN VIVIFICATION, AND
BRINGING FORTH MORE FRUIT.**

**He purgeth it, that it may bring forth
more fruit.—JOHN 15:2.**

CHAPTER I

That all true branches in Christ do grow.

GROWTH in grace is the main thing held forth unto us in these words; and therefore I make it the chief subject of this discourse.

Now as in the work of sanctification at first there are two parts, mortification and vivification, so our progress in that work hath two parts also apart to be considered, and both here in the text:—

1. A growth in mortification, or purging out of sin: 'He purgeth it.'
2. A positive growth in holiness, and all the fruits of it: 'That it may bring forth more fruit.'

And my purpose is accordingly to treat of these two distinctly and apart by themselves. And although purging out of sin is here first mentioned, yet our growth in fruitfulness shall have the first place in the method of handling of them; both because growth in positive holiness, and bringing forth more fruit, is the end and perfection of the other, and so chiefly intended; the other but subserving unto this, and is accordingly made mention of here by Christ, 'He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.'

Now, in handling this first head, I shall do three things:—

First, In general, shew that all true branches do grow in grace and fruitfulness, and the reasons of it.

Secondly, Propound such considerations by way of explication as may conduce to satisfy the tentations of such Christians as discern not their growth herein.

Thirdly, Explicate more largely, by way of trial, what it is to bring forth more fruit, thereby further to help believers to discern and judge aright of it.

My scope in this discourse being not so much to give means or motives unto growth as helps to judge of and try our growth, and prevent such mistakes herein as Christians are apt to fall into.

First, In general, to demonstrate that all true believers do grow more or less in fruitfulness. I shall give both proofs and reasons of it.

For proofs out of Scripture, those two places, Hos. 14:5 compared with Psalm 92, where the Holy Ghost singleth out the choicest trees and flowers in the world on purpose to express the saints' fruitfulness, and their growth therein, will suffice.

As, first, to shew the sudden springing up of the new creature, as it falls out upon some men's conversions, or upon the saints' recovery again after falls, he compares them to the lily, Hos. 14:5, whose stalk, though long hid in the earth, when once it begins to feel the dew, grows up oftentimes in a night. But yet a lily is but a flower, and soon decays.

Therefore, secondly, to shew their perpetuity and stability, together with their growth, the prophet there compares them to the cedar, whose wood rots not, proverbially put to express immortality—*Digna Cedro*—and which is not only most durable, but of all trees the tallest, and shoots up the highest.

But yet, thirdly, suppose the new creature be kept under and oppressed with tentations and oppositions, yet to shew that still it will grow and flourish again, therefore he further compareth them to a palm-tree, which useth to grow the more weight is hung upon it, and sprouts again even when it is cut down to the roots.

Fourthly, to shew that they grow with all kinds of growth, therefore the prophet expresseth their growth both by the spreading of their root and also of the branches, and so in a growth both upward and downward, 'He shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon,'—that is, grow inwardly in habitual grace in the heart, and then outwardly 'spread forth their branches,' and so grow in the outward profession of God's ways and truth, and external holiness in their lives.

Neither, fifthly, is it a growth merely in bulk, but also in fruitfulness, and therefore he compares them to the olive and the vine, (so in that place of Hosea,) which are of all trees the fruitfulest and most useful to God and man, Judges 9:9, 13.

But yet, sixthly, trees have a flourishing time of it but for some while, during which, although they may be thus green and fruitful, yet in their age they wither and rot, and their leaves fall off, and their fruit decays. The Holy Ghost therefore, as preventing this exception to fall out in the saints' growth, he adds, Ps. 92, 'They bring forth fruit still in their old age.' When nature begins to decay, yet grace renews its strength; which if it be wondered at, and how grace should grow and multiply, the soil of our hearts being a stepmother to it, 'From me,' says Christ, 'is thy fruit found,' ver. 8 of that 14th of Hosea. 'It is God that gives this increase, and I will be as the dew to Israel,' ver. 5.

The reasons why Christians do thus grow are drawn—

1. From Christ's being our head, and we his members. Now although clothes, though never so gorgeous, grow not, yet members do. This similitude the apostle useth in two places, to express the growth of the saints, Eph. 4:15, 16, and Col. 2:19, where he saith, Christ is a

head, 'from whom the whole body grows up to him in all things.' Now the consequence of this reason will many ways appear:—

(1.) If no more but that there might be a conformity of the head and members, it was meet we the members should grow; 'for we are predestinated to be conformable to the image of his Son,' Rom. 8. Now Christ 'did grow in wisdom,' Luke 2:40, 42; and therefore so must we. But—

(2.) As he is our head, he hath received all fulness, to that very end that we might grow even to 'fill all in all,' Eph. 1:23.

Now we are empty creatures at his first taking of us. John 10:10, 'I came,' says Christ, 'that they might have life;' and not only so much as will keep body and soul together, as we say, but 'that they might have it more abundantly.' Why is grace called life, and of lives the most excellent, but because it containeth all the essential properties of life in it? Now the main properties of life are to move and grow. The stars they have a moving life, but they grow not; the sun increaseth not, for all its tumbling up and down, as snow-balls do; plants they have a growing life, but they move not out of their place: but in grace there is both. It is an active thing, and it is a growing thing also; and because the more it is acted the more it grows, therefore its growth is expressed by its motion, Yea—

(3.) As his fulness is for our growth, so our growth makes up his fulness, even the fulness of Christ mystical, though Christ personal is full without us. Therefore the stature that every Christian grows up to is called, Eph. 4:13, 'the stature of the fulness of Christ.' In like speech to this, Eph. 1:23, it is said that 'his body is his fulness;' and, Eph. 4:13, the growth of these members is said to be 'the fulness of Christ.' So that as Christ should be a head without a body if he had no members, and his body a lame body if he wanted any of those his members; so it would be found a disproportioned body, as it were, if any of these members should not grow to that stature God hath appointed them. So that as there will be plenitudo partium, a fulness

of parts, no member lacking, so also plenitudo graduum, no degree of growth wanting in any part; that so Christ, who filleth all in all, may be fully full. And as there would be a deformity if any one should not grow,—as to have a withered member were a dishonour to the head,—so to have any one grow in immensum, to too great a stature, would breed as great a deformity on the other side; therefore be adds, that 'every member hath its measure.' The hand grows according to the proportion of a hand, and so the rest; and so in the 13th verse he hath it, that there is a 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' that every one attains to.

2. The second reason is taken from God the Father—

(1.) Who first hath appointed, as who shall be members, so also what growth each of these members shall attain to; therefore it is called 'an increasing with the increase of God,' Col. 2:19. Other parents appoint not what stature their children shall attain to, but the Lord doth, that when they meet in heaven there may be a proportion in the body; as all Christ's 'members were written in God's book,' so the growth of them also.

(2.) He hath promised that they shall grow; therefore it is said, Ps. 92, 'They shall bring forth fruit in their age, to shew the Lord is faithful,' which respecteth his promise; for faithfulness is the fulfilling a promise.

(3.) God the Father hath accordingly appointed means to that end, principally that they might grow. As—

[1.] Eph. 4, it is said he hath 'given gifts unto men,' not that they may be converted only, but also to 'build them up for the edifying of the body of Christ.' He speaks as if that were one main end. Therefore the word is not only compared to seed, that begets men, but to milk also, that so babes may grow, and to strong meat, that men may grow, and thus that all sorts of Christians may grow. So also sacraments, their principal end is growth, and not to convert, but to

increase; as meat puts not life in, but is ordained for growth where life is already.

[2.] He gives his Spirit, which works growth in the hearts of his people; and by him they have a nutritive power conveyed from Christ. For it might be said, though there be never so much nourishment, if they have no power to concoct it, still they cannot grow; therefore the Apostle says that there is an 'effectual working to the measure of every part,' Eph. 4:16, the same power working in us which raised up Jesus Christ from death to life, Eph. 1:19.

3. The last reason is taken from the saints themselves: they could not otherwise enter into heaven; which I take from that place, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' He speaks this to his disciples, who were converted before; but saith Christ, Unless ye grow, there being a further measure appointed you of my Father, you cannot enter into heaven. There is therefore as great a necessity to grow as to be born again, or else we cannot enter into heaven.

CHAPTER II

An explication how the saints do grow.

HAVING given you the reasons, I will now explicate the point.

And that chiefly for the satisfaction of those whose main doubts and troubles about their estate are occasioned by their want of discerning themselves to grow, and so call into question the work begun, because not carried on so sensibly unto perfection as they expect and desire.

Their objections are many and diverse.

They say, when they were young, they then had more spiritual enlivenings and quickness of affections, more joy in duties, &c.; that formerly they had more zeal in what they did for the good of others, and more fruit of their labours; that heretofore they have spent more time in duties, in conference, and hearing, &c.; that others start up who have more grace the first day than they have been getting many years. Yea, they are so far from discerning that they grow, that they rather think that they fall back, and therefore fear even the truth of grace in them, because all believers grow.

Now, the scope of all which I shall speak of this argument will tend to this, to help such to discern and judge aright of their estates herein, and to free them from such mistakes and errors as their objections are usually founded upon.

I. And, first, concerning this kind of tentation and trouble, let me premise this one observation, concerning what sort of converts this temptation is aptest to seize on.

You all know that there are two more eminent and conspicuous manner of conversions of God's people usual in the church. The conversion of some is more sudden and apparent, like the bringing of Joseph out of a dungeon into a marvellous glorious light. It is with a sudden change, which therefore is accompanied with a mighty violent inundation and land-flood of humiliation for sin, increased with many gracious enlargements and dews from heaven; which afterwards abating, and the stream settling and growing less, and coming to an ordinary channel, and failing but unto so much as the natural spring of grace, as I may he call it, will serve to feed, they then begin to call all into question for their want of growth. Others, on the contrary, whose conversion hath been insensible, and carried on with a still and quiet stream, and have had a more leisurely, gentle thaw; and their change from darkness to light hath not been sudden, but as the breaking forth of the morning, small at first, and not

discernible at what time day began then to break: these, on the contrary, are exercised rather about the truth of the work begun, about the work of conversion itself, and the right beginning of all at first; but their tentations arise not from a want of growth so much, for this to them is more evident and sensible, being like 'the morning light, which grows clearer and clearer unto the perfect day,' Prov. 4:18.

Now, observe the different condition of these two sorts. The former these hath a more apparent work at first to shew as the evidence of their estate, but are apt, through desertions, neglects, and carnal presumption, to call into question their progress in it, and from thence to question the truth of that first work begun. The other, on the contrary, sees a constant spring and stream increasing, but cannot shew the well-head, or when or where the spring began. So that so apparent a work of grace begun would become matter of assurance to the one, but is checked with want of discerning growth answerable to such beginnings. But an apparent growth, and fast going up of the building, comforts the other, but yet so as they still are apt to question whether the foundation of such a building be well and surely laid; that they are going on further to perfection, this they clearly see, but whether they come in at the right gate or no, that is the scruple which exerciseth their spirits. Thus hath our wise God, as in the work of Jus providence, so of his grace, 'set the one against the other,' as Solomon speaks, that unto both these there might be occasion of exercise left, that neither might confide in any works wrought upon them, but fly alone to Christ; and that neither should rejoice against the other, or be discontented with that way wherein God hath dealt with them.

II. In the second place, there are some considerations to be added concerning a Christian's discerning his spiritual growth, which will be profitable to the thing in hand.

1. As, first, that our growing in grace is a mystery to be apprehended by faith rather than by sense; our spiritual life itself is carried along

by faith, much more the discerning the increase of it. Yea, and it being carried on by contraries, as by falls and desertions, and even by our own opinions of our decrease, therefore it is rather discerned by faith than sense, for 'faith is the evidence of things not seen.'

2. Secondly, the eager desire that many Christians have to have more grace, together with their going on to discern more and more their wants, which in some respect is a growth, these do keep them from thinking that indeed they do grow. 'There is,' as Solomon says, 'that maketh himself poor, and hath great riches,' Prov. 13:7; because he enlargeth his desires still, therefore still he thinks himself poor. So hungry and greedy Christians, looking still to what they want, and not to what they have, are still complaining and unthankful. If thou wouldst discern thy growth, do not compare the copy with thy writing, but rather thy writing now with thy writing at the first. For this is a sure rule, that the better thou learnest to write, the better copy doth God daily set thee,—that is, gives thee to see more strictness in the rule, and so still mayest think that thou wantest as much, and art as far short as at first, if thus thou comparest thyself with nothing but thy sight of the rule itself.

3. The third consideration: that if growth at any time be made sensible, and be discerned by sense, yet so as after a while it is not so discernible as that great change which was made upon a man's first conversion; the reasons whereof are—

(1.) For at first conversion the change was specifical, wholly from want of grace unto beginnings of grace; but the change in our growth afterwards is but gradual,—that is, but addition of more degrees only, of something of the same kind still; and therefore it doth not so eminently affect the heart as the change at first conversion doth. To be translated out of a prison to a kingdom, as Joseph was, would affect more than to have new kingdoms added to one that is a king already, as Alexander had.

(2.) Because then the newness makes a great impression. One that begins anew to study any art, his growth is sensible, because everything he reads is new; whenas afterwards in his reading he meets with the same thing again and again, and with new notions but now and then, and yet he studies, it may be, harder, and learns what he know before more perfectly, and adds new to his old.

4. A fourth consideration to discern thy growth: there must be time allowed; 'For the time,' says the Apostle, 'they might have been teachers,' Heb. 5:12, implying they must have had time to grow up to perfection. Christians do not grow discernibly till after some space. The sun goes up higher and higher, but we discern not its progress till after an hour's motion. Things most excellent have the slowest growth: bulrushes grow fast, but they are weaker kind of plants; herbs, and willows, and alder-trees grow fast, but full of pith; oaks more slowly, yet more solidly, and in the end attain to a greater bulk.

5. Fifthly, consider the growth itself; there may be a great difference thereof in several men. You heard that every man hath a measure appointed to which he must grow; but men are brought to this fulness several ways, which makes a difference in their growth.

(1.) First, some have the advantage of others at first setting out; God gives them a great stock of grace at first, and that for these causes:—

[1.] When there is a present use of them. Paul was 'the last of the apostles, born out of time,' as himself complains, as one that was set to school long after the rest of the apostles, and yet came not behind any of them in grace, because God was to use him presently. To some God gives five talents, to others but two; so that he that hath five hath as much given him at first as he that had but two with all his gains all his lifetime.

[2.] When a man is converted late, as he that came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour was famished with abilities to do as much as the rest, for they all received but a penny.

(2.) Secondly, in the manner of their growth some have advantage of others.

[1.] Some grow without intermission, as that great Apostle, and the Colossians, who 'from the first day they heard of the gospel, brought forth fruit,' Col. 1:6. Others have rubs, and for some time of their lives stand at a stay. And thus some do presently after their first conversion, as the church of Ephesus, who 'fell from her first love.' Others in old age, as the Hebrews, 'who when for the time they might have taught others, were so far cast behind, that they had need be taught again the first principles' of religion, Heb. 5:12. Measure therefore not so your growth by a piece of your lives, but by comparing your whole life together.

[2.] Some die sooner, and therefore God fits them for heaven sooner. Dorcas died 'rich in good works;' Stephen died 'full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts 7. It is with several Christians as with several planets: the moon goes her course in a month, the sun in a year, the rest in many years, so as often they that live shortest grow fastest.

CHAPTER III

What it is to bring forth more fruit explicated negatively by removing many mistakes.

LET us now see what it is wherein Christians may be said to grow, that so you may be able to discern what it is to bring forth more fruit.

And this I will explicate two ways:—

I. First, negatively; what it is not to bring forth more fruit really, though in appearance and in show it be a growth in fruit, which occasions many mistakes.

II. Secondly, positively; what it is truly to bring forth more fruit.

I. For the first:—

1. First, to grow is not only or chiefly to grow in gifts or abilities, as to preach and pray, &c., but to increase in grace: in gifts only, so reprobates may grow; yea, and so true believers may grow, and yet not bring forth more fruit. The Corinthians grew fast this way in respect of gifts; they were 'enriched in all utterance and knowledge, and came behind in no gift,' 1 Cor. 1:7, and yet he tells them that they were 'babes and carnal,' chap. 3:2, 3. And therefore in the 12th chapter, after he had spoken of gifts, and endeavouring to excel therein, as they did, he tells them that indeed they were things to be desired, and therefore exhorts them to 'covet the best gifts;' but yet, says he, 'I shew unto you a more excellent way,' in the last verse of that 12th chapter. And what was that? It follows in the 13th chapter, even true grace, charity, love to God, and love of our brethren. A dram of that is, says he, worth a pound of the best fruit of gifts. And so his discourse, chap. 13, doth begin, ver. 1, 'Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, yet if I have not charity,' &c. Gifts are given for the good of others, to edify them especially, 1 Cor. 12:7; but graces, as love, faith, and humility, those are given to save a man's own soul, and therefore therein is the true growth. Yet as concerning this I will propound a caution or two:—

Caution 1.—Indeed, growth in gifts, together with growth in sanctification running along with it, will increase our account; for God will crown his own gifts in us, if, as they come from Christ, so they be used in him, and for him, in our intentions; but otherwise they puff up and hinder. They serve indeed to set out and garnish the fruit, and to help forward the exercise of graces; they are good fruit-

dishes to set the fruit forth. But if grace grow not with them, we bring not forth much fruit, for at best they are but blossoms, not fruit.

Caution 2.—Again, men are indeed to endeavour to grow in these gifts of memory, and instructing others, and conferences, &c. As was said to Timothy, 'Let thy profiting appear to all,' 1 Tim. 4:15; and to the Corinthians, 'Covet the best gifts,' especially whilst you are young; yet we are not simply thereby to take an estimate of our growth.

Caution 3.—Though this lot me withal add, that often by increasing in grace a man increaseth in gifts, and for want of increasing in grace, gifts also do decay. The talents being used faithfully, were doubled, and unfaithfully, were lessened.

And this consideration may help to answer some doubts and objections which some Christians have about their growth; as, because they cannot pray so well as others, nor do so much service to the saints as some do, therefore they bring forth less fruit. Thou mayest bring more fruit for all that, if thou walkest humbly in thy calling, and prayest more fervently, though less notionally or eloquently. By how much the more we are humble, prize ourselves less by them, and use them in Christ and for Christ, seeing they come all from him; the more we are contented to want them, find not envy others that have thorn; so much the more fruit we bring forth, even in the want of such gifts.

Again, decay in gifts, as in old age, doth not always hinder men from bringing forth more fruit. As, although they cannot remember a sermon so well as they had wont, nor preach with that vigour, and vivacity, and quickness when they are old, nor be so active, stirring, forward, it follows not that they bring not forth more fruit. David when he was old could not govern the kingdom, nor do the church that service he had done formerly, yet true fruit he might grow in, in regard of his personal carriage towards God for his own salvation. A musician when he is young is able to sing sweetlier than when he is

old; or when his vigour decays, his joints grow lame, he cannot play as he had wont; yet still he may grow a better musician, and have more skill, and set better. Affections, the quickness of them depends much upon bodily spirits.

2. Our bringing forth more fruit, it is not to be measured simply by our success towards others in the exercise of those gifts, though that be called fruit also; so, Jer. 17:10, they are called 'the fruit of our doings.' There are our doings, and the fruits of our doings,—that is, the success which our examples, or gifts, or graces, have upon others,—and so the conversion of the souls of men by the apostles is called by Christ 'their fruit,' John 15:16; yet simply by this we are not to reckon our growth, for in success and exercise of gifts a man may decrease when he grows older, and so see less fruit of his labours than formerly, or haply he may be laid aside. So says the Baptist of himself, 'I must decrease,' John 3:30. John, when Christ came to preach, had less comings in. And in this respect, old Christians and ancient ministers may decrease, and young ones increase, and yet they decay not in grace; for there are God's works in us, and God's works with us. Now, God's work with us in doing good to others may be less when yet his works in us may be more; for as there are 'diversities of gifts,' so of 'operations,' 1 Cor. 12:4, 6. The Holy Ghost may use one of less grace to do more good than one of more: though herein this caution is to be added, that he delights usually to honour those of most sincerity with most success; as in that eminent apostle, Paul, 'the grace of God was more in him,' and so wrought more with him in doing much good to others, 1 Cor. 15:10; and God also will reward 'according to the fruit of our doings,' as Jer. 17:10, when our desires are enlarged to do much good, and we intended and aimed to do that good which is done; there it is added there, in that Jer. 17, 'whose heart thou knowest.' When he sees the heart clearly enlarged to do much good, then the fruit that is done is reckoned him as his; otherwise, whatever it be he doth by us, he will reward but according to our works, as concurrent with his. So, 1 Cor. 3:8, the Apostle upon this occasion intimates that seeing it is 'God that gives the increase,' he says that 'God will reward men according to their own labours;'

not simply according to his works by them. As if God doth not go forth with a minister whose heart is much set to do good and to convert souls, to do so much good by him as with another, who is in his own spirit less zealous; yet if his heart was large in desires, and his endeavours great to do good, God will reckon more fruit to him than to another that had fewer endeavours, though more success.

3. This growth in grace, and bringing forth more fruit, is not simply to be reckoned by the largeness or smallness of those opportunities which men have of doing more or less good, and so, by the bringing forth of more fruit, in respect of more opportunities vouchsafed. Some that have more grace, and better gifts, have their shop-windows shut, night overtakes them, and the power of darkness, as it did Christ himself in the end, and then 'they cannot work.' Others have lesser shops to work in, and yet have more grace; yea, the same man may have larger opportunities when young and lesser when he is old, and yet grows and brings forth before God more fruit, because he accepts the will for the deed. So the Baptist was hindered in his latter time in prison, when yet he brought forth more fruit; and therefore he envied not Christ that got all his custom, his hearers, and disciples, but rejoiced that the work went forward, though not by himself. Here was as much grace expressed as in many sermons. So Paul, he was much of his time in prison, yet then he ceased not to bring forth more fruit that should tend to his salvation; for, Phil. 1:15, 16, whenas he being in prison, he heard others preached, and that out of envy to him, others out of good-will, I in prison rejoiced, says he, 'that Christ is preached,' though I cannot do it myself; and I know, says he, 'that this shall turn to my salvation,' ver. 19. These fruits were as much, and would bring him in as much glory as his preaching. Indeed, when a man shall prize opportunities of doing good, and for them voluntarily let go all opportunities of advancing himself and his credit, or ease, or carnal advantages, then the more fruit he brings forth in those opportunities, the more is reckoned on his score.

4. It is not always to be measured by accessory graces, as joy and spiritual ravishment, &c., which tend to the bene esse, the comfort of a Christian; but it is to be estimated rather by those substantial graces, as faith, humility, love, strong and solid affections to what is good. The other may decrease when these that are more substantial do increase. These sweet blooms may fall off when fruit comes on; though the gloss wear out, no matter, so the stuff be strong and substantial. Young Christians grow like new instruments; they have more varnish than old, but not so sweet a sound. Yea, often the decreasing of those superadded graces are a means of the increase of the other. Want of feeling causeth more exercise of faith, as taking away bladders exercises a man to swim. One that hath bladders, and the stream with him, seems to swim as well and as fast as one that hath learned long, and hath more skill and strength, but wanteth these, and swims against the stream, yet not so fast. Spiritual withdrawings cause more humility, more cleaving to God. A man, as the leper cleansed, haply at the first leaps more, but goes as fast afterward.

5. It is not increasing in outward professing, and a seeming forward, but especially in inward and substantial godliness; the other is but as increasing in leaves; but in growth there must be a bringing forth more fruit. When the root strikes not deeper downward and further into the earth, but spreads much upward in the branches, this is not a true growth; though look where there is more rooting, there will be more spreading also above ground. Growth, it lies not in this, 'that men should think of me above what I am indeed,' 2 Cor. 12:6. Many at first grow into so great a profession as they cannot fill up and grow up to all their days: make bigger clothes than they can grow to fill; as they say of elephants, that the skin is as big at first as ever after, and all their lifetime their flesh grows but up to fill their skin up. True growth begins at the vitals; the heart, the liver, the blood gets soundness and vigour, and so the whole man outwardly; this heart-godliness is the thing you must judge by.

6. And yet, even in inward affections many be deceived; even there the party for Christ in appearance may be greater than in truth. So, often in a young Christian, there is a greater army of affections mustered, but most of them but mercenaries: his affections are then larger, his joys greater, his sorrows violenter than afterwards. More of his heart joins in duties at first; but afterwards, though less, yet more spiritually and truly. The objects being then new, draw all after them: not only spirit, or that new principle of grace is stirred then, but flesh also. The unregenerate part becomes a temporary believer for a time, hath a work upon it per redundantiam, as an unregenerate man hath who is a temporary; which work on the unregenerate part doth decay, as in temporaries it doth, and grows less. Not only godly sorrow is stirred to mourn for sin, but carnal sorrow, being awakened by God's wrath, joins also, and so makes the stream bigger. Infidelity itself, like Simon Magus, for a while believes. Whilst the things of grace are a wonder to a man, as at first they are, presumption joins and ekes out faith. A great party in the heart 'cleaves by flattery,' as the phrase is in Daniel, and for by-ends, which, after some progress, fall off and faint in the way; and those lusts that, over and above their true mortification, were further cast into a swoon, begin again to revive.

All this was resembled to us by the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, when, by those plagues in Egypt, and Moses's call, not only the Israelites, but even many of the Egyptians were wrought upon, and began out of self-love to fear the Lord, Exod. 9:20, and so 'a mixed multitude,' it is said, went out with the Israelites, Exod. 12:38, to sacrifice to the Lord; but ere long, as Num. 11:4, this mixed multitude began to murmur, and to fall off. So, at a man's first setting out at his first conversion, mixed carnal affections, the unregenerate part, through the newness of the objects, and impression of God's wrath, and heavenly ravishments, are wrought upon, and go out with the new Israel to sacrifice, but after a while these fall away, and then the number is less; but the true Israelites may be increased. Hence it is that young Christians, if they know their hearts, complain more of hypocrisy, and old Christians of

deadness. So, in times of peace, presumption ekes out faith, and makes it seem a great deal, which in times of desertion and trial falls off; and then, though the believing party be less, yet more sincere. When the fire is first kindled, there is more smoke, even as much as fills the house; but after the flame comes, that contracts all into a narrow compass, and hath more heat in it. So it is in young Christians, their affections, which Christ compares to the smoking flax, their joy in duties, their sorrow for sin, their love of God, is more, but exceeding carnal; the flame after, though less, grows purer, and less mixed with vapours of corrupt self-love.

7. We must not measure our bringing forth more fruit by some one kind or sort of duties, but by our growth in godliness, in the universal extent and latitude of it, as it takes in and comprehendeth the duties of both callings, general and particular, and all the duties of a Christian. Thus it may be when grown up we are loss in some sort of duties than we were when we were young Christians. Haply we were more then in praying, in fasting, and reading and meditating; yea, spent the most, if not the whole, of our time in these. But because now we spend less time in those, we must not say therefore that we are fallen or decayed; for there are many other duties to be done besides these, which haply then we neglected, but now make conscience of. So that take all sorts of duties in the latitude of them, and we may be grown more, and do bring forth more fruit. Perhaps we bring forth less fruit of some one kind than afore, but if we be filled with all variety of fruits of the first and second table of our general and particular callings, this is to bring forth more fruit.

Men at their first conversion are necessitated often for to spend their whole time in such duties wherein they immediately draw nigh to God. Paul then spent three whole days in fasting and prayer. And then we allow them to do it, because their estates require it; they want assurance and establishment, they see grace to be that one thing necessary, and therefore we give them leave to neglect all things for it; they are new married to Christ, and therefore they are not to be pressed to war the first year, (as I may so allude,) as for

young married persons it was provided in Leviticus; and parents and masters are to give allowance to such, then in their travail of their new birth, to lie in, and not to be cruel to them, in denying them more time than ordinary.

So also when they are in desertion,—which is a time of sickness, and in sickness you allow your servants time from their work,—as the church when she wanted her beloved, Cant. 3:2, no wonder if she leaves all to seek him. As yourselves, when you want a child or a servant, you cry him in every street, and leave all to find him, as he left ninety-nine to find one lost sheep. And they then come new out of prison, out of their natural estate, and out of the fresh apprehension of the wrath of God, and therefore no wonder if they run so fast to haste out of it, and salute none by the way, stay to do no business; but when once they are gotten to the city of refuge, then they fall about their business and callings again. Hence young Christians are apt to be more negligent in their particular callings, and are all for the duties of religion, for their present distress and estate requires it. Ancienter Christians are apt to abound more in the duties of their particular calling. But he that hath learned to be conversant in both aright, to be conversant in his calling, so as to keep his heart up in communion with God, and so attend upon God without distraction, and to be conversant so in duties as to go about his calling cheerfully, and to 'do with all his might what his hand therein finds to do,' he is the best Christian. And therefore, 1 Thess. 4:10, when he had exhorted them to increase more and more in grace, he goes on, ver. 11, to exhort them also 'to do their own business, and to work with their hands,' that they may 'walk honestly towards them without;' for to neglect our callings gives offence to them without, and therefore masters stumble at young Christians. But both, you see by the Apostle's exhortation in that epistle, may stand together, increasing in holiness, of which he had spoken before, chap. 3:12, and chap. 4:1, 10, with diligence in a calling, of which he speaks, ver. 11, &c. To be conversant all day in holy duties is indeed more sweet to a man's self, and is a heaven upon earth; but to be conversant in our callings is more 'profitable to others,' and so

may glorify God more. And therefore, as when Paul would gladly have been with Christ,—for 'that is best for me,' says he,—yet, says he, 'to abide here is more profitable for you,' Phil. 1:24. So, to enjoy immediate communion with God in prayer, and to meditate all the week long, is more for the comfort of a man's particular; but to be employed in the business of a man's calling, the more profitable for the church, or commonwealth, or family. And therefore it is to be accounted a bringing forth of more fruit, when both are joined and wisely subordinated, so as the one is not a hindrance to the other. Though the child, out of love to his mother, and the sweetness he hath in her company, could find it in his heart to stay all day at home to look on her, yet it pleaseth her more for him to go to school all day, and at night to come home and be with her, and play with her; and she then kisseth him, and makes much of him. Children when they are young, they eat often, and do little, and we allow them to do so; afterwards you set them to work, and to school, and reduce them to two good meals, and they thrive as well with it.

CHAPTER IV

What it is to bring forth more fruit explicated positively; wherein many direct trials of growth are given.

II. THUS I have shewn you negatively what this growth is not to be measured by, and so by way of intimation wherein it consists; I will, secondly, do it more positively, and directly, and affirmatively.

1. We grow when we are led on to exercise new graces, and so to 'add one grace to another,' as the apostle Peter exhorts; as when in our knowledge we are led into new truths, and have answerable affections running along with those discoveries towards the things revealed. At first a Christian doth not exercise all graces, though all are radically in him. But as a man lives first the life of a plant, then of sense, then of reason, so is it in graces. There are many forms Christians go through, as scholars at school do, wherein their thoughts are in a more especial manner taken up about divine objects of a higher or inferior nature. The first form is to teach them to know their sinfulness of heart and life more; and so they go to school to the law, and are set to study it, even oftentimes a good while after conversion and faith begun. And then, after they have learned that lesson thoroughly, they are led up higher to have their faith drawn out, and to be exercised about free grace more, and towards Christ's person, union with him, and about the art and way of drawing virtue from him, and doing all in him. And herein it falls out with particular Christians as with the church in general; that as although the most infant days of the church, from Adam's time in the old world, had the knowledge of all fundamentals necessary to salvation, yet God went over *πολυμερῶς*, piecemeal, Heb. 1:1, age after age, to instruct his church in a larger knowledge of those fundamentals: so is it in God's dealing with particular Christians. Though a believer in his conversion hath the substance of all these taught him, yet he goes over them by piecemeal again throughout his whole life; and hath often such a distinct apprehension renewed of them, as if he had not known or minded them before. And sometimes his thoughts do dwell more about the emptiness of his own righteousness, sometimes about that fulness is in Christ, sometimes more about the spiritual strictness he ought to walk in. And because some are apt to give up the old work when they have new, hence that which is indeed but growth in grace in them many account to be but their first conversion; though every such eminent addition be to be accounted as a conversion, as Christ speaks to his disciples, 'Except ye be converted;' yet they were converted before. Now, the purpose I speak this for is a help to discern our growth; for when God thus is

leading us with further light and affection to a larger apprehension of spiritual things, or to the trying new graces, so long we grow. Therefore, Cant. 7:13, the church is said to 'lay up for her beloved fruits new and old;' and, Rom. 5, from patience a man is led to experience, and from experience to hope. As wicked men are led on from one sin to another, and so grow worse and worse; so godly men from one grace to another: and when it is so with us, then we increase.

2. When a man finds new degrees of the same grace added, and the fruits of them grow bigger and more plentiful: as when a man's love grows 'more fervent,' as 1 Pet. 4:8; when faith, from merely casting itself on Christ, comes to find sweetness in Christ, which is to 'eat his flesh and drink his blood;' and then from that grows further up to an 'assurance of faith,' which is an addition to it; when anything that 'was lacking in faith,' as the apostle speaks, 1 Thess. 3:10, is added. So when a man grows up to more strength of faith in temptations, and is less moved and shaken in them, more rooted in faith, as the apostle speaks. Thus in godly sorrow, when from mourning for sin as contrary to God's holiness, we go on to mourn for it as contrary to him who loves us, which follows upon assurance, as they 'mourned over him which once they had pierced:' not only that we mourn that we should offend a God hath so much mercy in him, but out of a sense of it to us, which many cannot find. So when our motives to hate sin grow more raised, more spiritual, these are additions of the same degree. So in prayer, when we find our prayers to grow more spiritual, as in that part of prayer, confession, when more spiritual corruptions are put into our confessions; and so, in like manner, stronger grounds of faith put into deprecation and petitions for pardon; more enlargedness to thankfulness; more zeal to pray for the churches; when we go on to 'pray with all prayer more,' as the Apostle speaks, Eph. 6:18. Or in obedience, when we 'abound more and more in the work of the Lord,' as, Rev. 2:19, it is said of that church, that 'their last works were more than the first;' so as the boughs are laden, and we are 'filled with the fruits of righteousness,' Phil. 1:11.

3. When the fruits and duties we perform grow more ripe, more spiritual, though less juicy, that is, less affectionate; and though they grow not in bigness nor in number,—that is, we pray not more nor longer,—yet they grow more savoury, more spiritual, more compact and solid. It is not simply the multitude of performances argues growth; when one is sick, and his body is decayed, he may be less in duties; but it is the spiritualness, the holiness of them. One short prayer put up in faith, with a broken heart, is in God's eye more fruit than a long one, or a whole day spent in fasting; even in the same sense that the 'widow's mite' is said to be 'more than they all' cast in, Luke 21:3. Young Christians perform more duties at first, and oftener, than after; as young stomachs eat more and oftener. As in noting sermons, so in performing duties, some will note more words but not more matter, because with less understanding. Young Christians perform more duties, and withal spoil more duties; young carpenters make many chips. But the more spiritual your performances grow, the more fruit there is to be esteemed that there is in them. It is not the bigness of the fruit, or juiciness of them, for then crabs were better than apples, but the relish it is that gives the commendation. And it is the end you have therein that puts this relish into them: when your ends are raised more to aim at God, and to sanctify him more, and to debase yourselves in a sense of your own vileness, and emptiness, and inability; and when your obedience proceeds more out of thankfulness, and less out of the constraint of conscience. As the greatest growth of wicked men is in spiritual wickedness,—in which the Pharisees grew, and sinners against the Holy Ghost do grow, when yet it may be they leave more gross evils,—so the greatest growth of grace is in spiritual holiness, in sanctifying God much in the heart, and 'worshipping him in spirit and truth.'

4. When a man grows more rooted into Christ, that is the true growth, and that which makes the fruit to be more in God's sight and esteem; therefore, Eph. 4:15, we are said 'to grow up in him,'—that is, to live the life we lead more out of ourselves and in Christ. As when, for the acceptation of our persons, we are emptied of our own

righteousness; so for strength to perform duties, we are emptied of our abilities, seeing 'without him we can do nothing.' So when for acceptance of our performances when we have done them, our hearts have learned habitually to say more and more with the apostle, 'Not I, but Christ in me;' when we interest Christ more and more in all we do, as the efficient and also the final cause. And therefore I observe, when growth of grace is mentioned, it is still expressed by 'growing in the knowledge of Christ;' so, 2 Pet. 3:18, 'Grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ;' as if to grow in grace without him were nothing, as indeed it is not. So in the Ephesians we are said both to grow up in him and for him. Philosophers did grow in moral virtues, but not in Christ; so do civil men and others. Temporaries do duties from him, but yet as in themselves; as the ivy that hath sap from the oak, but concocts it in its own root, and so brings forth as from itself. To do one duty, sanctifying Christ and free grace in the heart, is more than a thousand. Young Christians, it may be, do more works, but not as works of grace: and the more men think by duties to get Christ and God's favour, the more in duties they trust, and so they become as works of the law; but the more dead a man grows to the law, and to live to Christ and Christ in him, and the more free grace is acknowledged in all, trusted in above all, the more evangelical our works are, and the more to God, (for that is the end of the gospel, to honour Christ and free grace,) the more we grow. 'We are of the circumcision,' says the Apostle, 'who rejoice in the Lord Jesus, worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. 3:3. As these are the surest signs of true grace, so of true growth.

5. The more we learn to bring forth fruits in season, the more fruit we may be said to bring forth. For the seasonable performance of them makes them more. All the fruits in their season, how acceptable are they! which out of season they are not. In the 1st Psalm a righteous man is said to 'bring forth his fruits in due season;' and in the Proverbs, 'Words in season are as apples of gold and pictures of silver.' In Ezek. 47:12, they are said to 'bring forth pleasant fruits in their months.' As in reproofing he is not so much to reprove, as to

reprove in season; to have our 'senses exercised' to know fit seasons, and to 'consider one another to provoke to love,' as it is Heb. 10:24. Young Christians do more, but more out of season, and the devil abuseth them, putting them upon duties, when they would be at their refreshings, at their callings; he deceiving them with this, that holy duties in themselves, as alone simply compared, are better than to do anything else; whenas the season adds the goodness to our actions. Thus to recreate thyself at some seasons is better than to be a-praying. A 'righteous man orders his conversation aright,' Ps. 50:23, and order gives a rectitude, a goodness to things.

6. When, we grow more constant in performances, and more even in a godly course, and settled in spiritual affections without intermission, it is a sign we grow. It argues that 'our inward man is more renewed day by day,' when we can walk closely with God a long while together. A righteous man is compared to the palm-tree, 'whose leaf never fades,' Ps. 1; whereas other trees bring forth by fits. And by fits to be much in duties is not a sign of growth, but weakness; it is out of inordinacy. And of such a frame are young Christians' hearts, like new lute-strings, which, when they are wound too high, are still a-falling ever and anon; whereas strings settled long on an instrument will stand long, and not slip down.

7. A man may be said to grow and bring forth more fruit, when, although the difficulties of doing duties become greater, and his means less, yet he continues to do them, and this though it may be he doth no more than he did before. For a tree to bring forth much fruit in cold weather, or standing in the shade, is more than in summer, or when it stands in the sun. 'I know thy work, thy labour, and thy patience,' Rev. 2:19. When a man, though he do fewer works, yet with much labour, having it may be now a body grown weak; or holds out in the profession of the ways of God, with more scoffs, and hazarding more, in a place where 'Satan's throne is;' this makes a little done for Christ a great deal. So when a man thrives with a little trading, with small means of grace, and yet exceedeth those that have more; to pray, and to continue to do so, though the stream is against us, and

gales cease; to pray, and to continue to pray, when we hear no answers, but the contrary. It is noted of Daniel, that 'he did the king's business after he had been sick,' chap. 8:27; and so he prayed, you know, when he ventured his life for it. When we have less straw to make the same number of brick with, less wages, less encouragements, and yet do as much work with cheerfulness.

8. When a man, though he doth less for the outward bulk, yet grows more wise and faithful to lay out all his opportunities and abilities to the best advantage; this is to bring forth more fruit. Thus Moses, who at first began to hear himself all causes both small and great, but in the end he gave over the lesser causes to others, and reserved the hearing of the greater to himself, Exod. 18:13–26, yet still he continued to do more, and laid himself out to the greater advantage. His former course would in the end have killed him; 'Thou wilt wear away like a leaf,' saith Jethro to him. So the Apostle, who strived to preach the gospel 'where Christ had not been known,' Rom. 15:20. When a man forbears lesser things to lay out all for the church's advantage; less ventures himself in a smaller course, (unless particularly called to it,) not out of fearfulness but faithfulness, and will lay all the stock on it in a greater. Young Christians are as young fencers, they strike hand over head, downright blows; whereas if they would consider their brother, or a wicked man whom they would reprove, as skilful fencers do, and at an advantage hit them a good blow, is it not much better? When a man 'watcheth in all things,' as he exhorts Timothy, 2 Tim. 4:5, and 'serves the season,' as some read it, Rom. 12:11,—that is, waits for the best advantages of doing good, both which may stand with fervency of spirit, and enduring afflictions, for so the next words are in both those places. A man is no less liberal that studies how to lay out his money to most charitable uses, though he gives less to fewer particulars. We live in a wicked world, and godly men cannot do what they would, as wicked men also cannot. When therefore a man looks about him, and studies to improve himself to the utmost advantage for God in his place, to lay out his credit, his parts, and all for God, as a faithful factor in the best wares, though he deals in fewer particulars, he may

notwithstanding bring forth more fruit.—And thus much for matter of trial about the first thing, positive growth in fruitfulness.

PART II

OF GROWTH IN MORTIFICATION: OR, GOD'S PURGING OUT CORRUPTION.

**He purgeth it, that it may bring forth
more fruit.—JOHN 15:2.**

CHAPTER I

**The observation out of the text
propounded, That God goes on to purge
corruption out of true branches.—Bounds
set to this discourse about it, according to
the scope of the text.—The reasons of the
point.**

I COME now to the trial of our growth in that other part of sanctification,—namely, the mortification of lusts, and purging out of corruptions,—which the text also calls for; Christ here saying not only that they bring forth more fruit, but that God 'purgeth them' that they may bring forth more fruit.

The observation from which words is clearly this, That God chooseth true branches to grow, in a purging out of their corruptions, as in

true fruitfulness.

In the handling of this point, I shall do these four things:—

I. First, Set the bounds and limits of this discourse about it, according to Christ's intendment, as here he speaks of it.

II. Secondly, Give some reasons of the point.

III. Thirdly, Shew the ways which God useth to carry on the progress in this work.

IV. Fourthly, Give some helps of trial about it.

I. Now for the first, the explication and limiting this point unto Christ's intendment here, that so I may only so far handle it as the scope of the words will bear, I premise these three things about it:—

1. That purging here intended, which is indeed all one with mortification, and emptying out sin out of our hearts and lives, is to be restrained here to the progress of a Christian in that work, and not as taking in with it that first work of mortification wrought at a man's first conversion; so as I intend not now to lay open to you the nature of mortification, and what it is, by way of commonplace, but only intend to speak of growth in it: for of that Christ speaks, because it is such a purging as is after bringing forth some fruit, and whereof the end is to bring forth more fruit. Neither—

2. Are we so much to speak of it here as it is a duty to be done by us, though it be so, but as it is a work of God upon us, which he takes care to go through with and perfect in all those who are fruitful; for he speaks here of it rather as an act of God's—'he purgeth'—than as it is to be an act of ours, that we ought to purge ourselves; though both do go together, as in that speech, Rom. 8:13, 'We by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh;' so as that which is proper to the point in hand, for the explication of it, as here in this place it is laid down, is not so much to give you motives or means of purging yourselves,

as to shew you the ways and courses God takes still one way or other to purge his children by, that they may be more fruitful. And yet—

3. In this work of mortification, considered thus in the progress of it, we are not mere passives,—as at that final perfecting and finishing of it, and carrying away all sin at death we are, and are at that first habitual beginning of it, at conversion,—but therein we are 'workers together with God:' we being purged from sin as the body is by physic from humours; though the physic work, yet nature joins with the physic, being quickened and helped by it to cast out the humours; for give a dead man physic, and it carries not any humours away. So as those means whereby God purgeth us are not to be imagined to do it as mere physical agents, like as the pruning-hook cuts off branches from a tree, or as when a surgeon cuts out dead flesh; but these means do it by stirring up our graces, and quickening them, and by setting our thoughts, and faith, and affections a-work, and so God assisting with the power of Christ's death, he doth purge us daily, by making his word, afflictions, and the like, to set our thoughts a-work against sin, and so to cast it forth. It is certain, that unless our thoughts work upon the means, as well as the means work upon us, and so do mingle themselves with those means; that unless faith and Christ's death be mingled in the heart, it purgeth not. And therefore it is said as well that 'we purge ourselves,'—so 2 Tim. 2:21, and also 1 John 3:3, and Rom. 8, that 'we by the spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh,'—as it is said that 'God purgeth us,' which is the thing affirmed here, because God still, in going on to purge us, doth it by stirring up our graces, and useth therein acts of our faith, and love, and many motives and considerations, to stir up our graces so to effect it. Now

—

II. For the reasons that move God thus to go on to purge corruptions out of his children:—

1. Because Jesus Christ hath purchased an eternal divorce between corruption and our hearts. He hath bought off all our corruptions, and redeemed us from all iniquity. Titus 2:14, 'He gave himself for

us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people;' and God will have the price of Christ's blood out.

2. Because God desires more and more to have delight in us, and to draw nigh to us, and therefore he more and more goes on to purge us. For though he loves us at first, when full of corruptions, yet he cannot so much delight in us as he would, nor have that communion with us, no more than a husband can with a wife who hath an unsavoury breath or a loathsome disease. They must therefore be purified for his bed, as Esther was for Ahasuerus. 'Draw nigh to God,' says James, 'and he will draw nigh to you,' chap. 4:8, 9; but then you must 'cleansing your hands, and purify your hearts,' as it follows there; God else hath no delight to draw nigh to you.

3. He daily purgeth his that they may be fit for use and service; for unless he purged them, he could not use them in honourable employments, such as to suffer or to stand for him, in what concerns his glory; they would be unfit for such uses, as a vessel is that is unscoured. Therefore, 2 Tim. 2:21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour,'—that is, he shall be used in honourable employments, and not laid aside,—and he shall be 'meet for his master's use,' as vessels kept clean, when on the sudden the master hath occasion to use them, and to have them served in.

4. That as our persons, so that our services may be more and more acceptable; that our prayers and such performances may savour less of gifts, and pride, and self-love, and carnal desires: so, Mal. 3:3, 4, it is said, 'He shall sit as a purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, as gold is purified, from their dross, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness: and then shall their offerings be pleasant to the Lord.' The more the heart and life is purged, the more acceptable your prayers are, and your obedience, and all you do.

CHAPTER II

The ways God useth to purge out our corruptions; and means whereby he causeth us to grow therein.

III. Now, in the third place, for the ways whereby God goes on to purge us, there are many and diverse; he blesseth all sorts of means and dealings of his to accomplish it.

1. First, he useth occasional means to do it, and blesseth them; as—

(1.) Even falling into sins. Thus it was with David when he fell; thereby God set him anew upon this work, as by his prayer appears, Ps. 51, 'Oh, purge me, make me clean.'

(2.) Secondly, by casting them into afflictions. So, Dan. 11:35, 'They shall fall, to purge them and make them white.' What the word doth not purge out, nor mercies, that afflictions must. These vines must be cut till they bleed. Summer purgeth out the outward humours that lie in the skin by sweating, but winter concocteth the inward by driving in the heat, and so purgeth away the humours that lie in the inward parts; and so, what by the one, what by the other, the body is kept in health. Thus mercies prevail against some sins, and afflictions against others. Moses neglected to circumcise his child, (as we do our hearts, it is such a bloody work,) till God met him, and would have killed him. And in like manner God sometimes puts us in the fear or danger of losing our lives, casts us into sicknesses, and the like,

making as if he meant to kill us, and all to bring us off to this work of purging, to circumcise our hearts.

2. As these occasional, so also instrumental instituted helps, as his word. So, Eph. 5:26, Christ is said 'to cleanse his church with the washing of water by the word;' by the word spoken, either in preaching or in conference. So in the very next words to my text, 'Now ye are clean through the words I have spoken unto you;' they had then received the sacraments, and had heard a good sermon. The word at once discovers the sin, and sets the heart against it: 'I was ignorant, till I went into the sanctuary.' There goes a light with it to see sin after another manner, although a man did know it before, and then the word sets out the vileness of a sin; and to hear a sin declaimed against and reprov'd sets an exasperation upon the mind against it, and so a man goes home, and sets upon it to Kill it and destroy it. Or else by the word meditated upon, as by keeping some truth or other fresh and sweet in the mind, which the mind cheweth on. God fastens the mind upon some new promise, or new discovered sign of a man's estate, and these 'cleanse' him, 2 Cor. 7:1; or upon some attribute of his, and that quickens the inward man, and overcomes the outward. Some consideration or other every day God doth make familiar to a man's spirit, to 'talk with him,' (as the phrase is, Prov. 6:22,) and to keep him company, and usually some new one; God leading us through varieties of sweet truths to chew upon, one this day, and another to-morrow. And these have an exceeding purging virtue in them; they keep the purging issue open, even as those that have issues made in their arms or legs use to have a pea, or some such small thing, to lie in the orifice of the issue to keep it open; and so doth such a new truth, with spiritual light discovered, still keep the purging issue of sin open, and draws out the filth, and 'keeps the heart.' So says Solomon, Prov. 6:21, 22, 24: observe the coherence there, and it is as if he had said, Keep this command fresh in mind, and it shall keep thee.

3. God useth also the examples of others as means to provoke a man to purge himself.

(1.) Examples of those that have been professors, and fallen away. They provoke a man to set fresh upon this work, lest that the like sins should prevail against him also, and cause him to fall. Therefore the Apostle, when he heard of Hymenæus and Philetus's fall, 2 Tim. 2:19, 'Let every one,' says he, 'that calls upon the name of the Lord,' make this use of it, to 'depart from iniquity.' And it follows, 'If you purge yourselves from these, ye shall be vessels of honour.' It follows upon that occasion.

(2.) Examples of holy men. To hear very holy men speak what victory over lusts may be attained here doth much provoke another to purge himself, who else would content himself with a lesser degree; so Phil. 3:17.

4. In the last place, there are many inward workings upon the heart, whereby God goes on still to purge us.

(1.) First, by a further discovering of corruptions unto us; either a greater filthiness in the evils we saw before, or to see more of them, and by what one sees to suspect more. God never discovers lusts to his but to carry them away; he stirs the humours to purge them. Thus when David saw his sin, he sets anew upon cleansing himself. In the 19th Psalm, coming new from taking a view of his heart, and having seen such volumes of corruptions, so many errata in all that he did, he cries out, 'Who can understand his errors?' and withal, 'Oh, cleanse me from secret sins.' He then saw secret evils, and suspected more than as yet he saw; and this made him cry out, 'Oh, cleanse me,' and so to use all means, and to go to God to cleanse him. So when, in the 51st Psalm, God let down a light to let him but see the corruption of his nature afresh, that he was 'born in sin,' and had 'no truth' there, more falsehood than he could ever have imagined, 'Oh, purge me,' says he upon it.

(2.) Secondly, he sets the heart on work to make it a business to get one's lusts mortified more and more, and not to rest in the measure attained. Phil. 3:13, Paul 'forgot what was behind;' he did still desire

to have more fellowship with Christ in his death and sufferings, in the death of sin. When a man's heart is set upon the work, as that τὸ ἔργον he came into the world for, as David, who took up a resolution, 'I said I would look to my ways;' so when a man hath said unto himself, I will grow in grace, as they say, 'I will be rich,' 1 Tim. 6:9, and so looks at it as his business, being as much convinced of this, that he should be more holy, as he was at first that he was to be new born; when growth of grace is as much in a man's eye as getting grace at first was, and as great a necessity made of the one as of the other. This conviction many want, and so take no care to grow more holy and more pure. Phil. 3:15, 'If any be otherwise minded, says the Apostle, that there is no such absolute necessity of going on still to perfection, 'God shall reveal it to him.' God doth reveal and set on this upon every godly man's heart at one time or another, and so goes on to purge them. And this is also expressed to us, 1 Peter 4:1, 'Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, let us arm ourselves with the same mind,' namely, to mortify our lusts; for it follows, 'He that hath suffered in the flesh,' that is, hath mortified his lusts, 'hath ceased from sin.' That same 'arming' there is God's putting into the mind a strong and invincible resolution to go through with this work; when he arms and steels it against all difficulties, all encounters. This is meant by 'arming us with the same mind:' that as Christ looked upon it as his business why he came into the world, even to suffer for us; so for us to look upon it as our business to crucify our lusts. When therefore we intend all our endeavours upon this work, and mind nothing in comparison, pray for nothing more, receive sacraments for this purpose, and hear and perform all other duties with an eye to this, prosecute this business as the main; when God hath put such a resolution into a man, and preserves it, then he goes on to purge him.

(3.) Thirdly, God doth it by drawing the sap and juice of the affections of the heart more and more into holy duties and into obedience. When that intention of mind, as our morning thoughts and the like, which we formerly spent upon vanities, are now drawn into prayer and holy meditations, then lusts do wither; and when our

care is how to please God more, and our hearts are more in the duties of obedience, then doth corruption shale off more and more; and thus by diverting our intentions doth God work out corruptions. And look, as the sun doth draw up the sap out of the root, so doth Christ draw out the heart at some times more than at others to holy duties, and unto communion with himself in the duties. This Killeth sin, and causeth it to wither,—namely, by taking away the sap, that is, that intention of mind which doth usually nourish it. Thus, 1 Pet. 1:22, 'We purify our hearts by obeying the truth.'

(4.) Fourthly, by bringing the heart more and more acquainted with Christ, his Son, which is the Father's work to do, for 'none comes to the Son but whom the Father draws.' Now, how many souls are there who have gone puddering on, as I may so speak, in the use of other means, and though in the use thereof Christ hath communicated some virtue to them, yet because they did not trade with him chiefly in those duties, they have had little in comparison to what afterwards they have had when he hath been discovered to them, as that great ordinance who is appointed by God to get their lusts mortified. Before this they have washed and washed, but they have washed without soap, until Christ hath been thus revealed to them, and the virtue of his death and rising again, which is compared, Mal. 3:2, unto 'fuller's soap,' &c. In Zech. 13:1, it is said that 'God opens a fountain to the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness,' that is, for the guilt of sin and the power of sin. Now by that opening is not meant the promise of sending his Son into the world to be crucified, but the discovery of him to believers after his being crucified: for, chap. 12:10, he is supposed to be crucified already, for they there 'see him whom they have pierced;' therefore by that opening there is meant the discovery of him to his people, and him to be the great ordinance of cleansing them. Now, the more distinctly a man understands Christ, and how to make use of him, who is already made sanctification to us, the more easily he gets his lusts purged. Such a one, that trades immediately with Christ, will do more in a day than another in a year; for, seeing that the power of purging us lies immediately in him, and that he is the purging drug which

mingles itself with the word and all means else, and sets them all a-work, therefore the more of him we have, and the more immediate application we have of him to us, and of his power, the more recourse our hearts have to him, the more our lusts are purged. As it is in drugs or minerals, if the infusion and steeping of them in liquors will work, how much more if the substance of them be taken down inwardly and immediately? Now this comes to pass, as God doth go on to open our faith to see him, and know him, and to be acquainted with him; for so the Apostle expresseth it, Phil. 3, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' The more we look upon all means else in the use of them as ineffectual without him, the more power we shall find from him.

(5.) Fifthly, by assuring the soul of his love, and shedding it abroad in the heart, and by working spiritual joy in the heart, doth God also purge his people. And to work all these is in God's power immediately and solely. 'I am crucified with Christ,' Gal. 2:20. And how? By believing that 'Christ gave himself for me, and loved me.' This deadens a man to the world, makes a man crucify that which Christ was crucified for; and this makes a man hate sin, the more he loves Christ, or apprehends his love. And it doth this in a double relation or respect, not only because sin so displeaseth him, nor only as it is contrary to his will, but because it did afflict him so much once, and because to 'take sin away' was the intent he came into the world. For so (1 John 3:4) although a believer is said to mortify sin upon this consideration indeed, that it is 'the transgression of the law,' yet much more upon this other, because 'Christ was manifest to take sin away.' And the more assurance I have of another life and a better, and of being like Christ hereafter, the more a man purgeth himself to be fit for that condition. 'He that hath this hope in him purgeth himself, as he is pure;' so in 1 John 3:2. The more joy a man hath in Christ, the more deadened he must needs be to the world; the one eats up the other: for the ground of all sin is but the love of pleasure. Now, if I find it in God and Christ, it deadens me for seeking it in the world; for *omnis vita gustu ducitur*, all life is maintained by a taste of some sweetness. Now, when the sweetness

of sin, the relish of it, is spoiled by the taste of a greater, it must needs die and abate. And though that sweetness from God doth not always remain in the present taste and relish of it, yet it leaves such an impression behind it, that whatever a man tastes after, it hath no relish with him in comparison; still he says 'the old is better:' and though the taste of one sinful pleasure may take us off from another, yet none but a contrary pleasure doth kill the sin, and the pleasure in it.

CHAPTER III

The trial of mortification; and that first by negative signs, or such as argue much corruption yet remaining unpurged out.

IV. I WILL now come to that fourth thing which was propounded, namely, helps whereby you may discern what progress hath been made in this work. And as I said at first that my purpose was not so much to handle mortification in the commonplace of it, as only growth therein; so those things I shall now deliver about discerning the measure of it, I intend them not so much for signs of mortification, as rules whereby we may judge how the work goes forward in us, and how far we are still short in it.

1. And, first, I will handle it negatively, and give you such symptoms as argue much corruption, a great deal of humours yet remaining to

be purged out; such as argue little proficiency in this work, though such as withal true grace may be supposed to be in the heart.

(1.) When a man doth magnify and sets a high price upon worldly and carnal excellencies and pleasures; is much taken with outward things, and carried away with them; or when, though we restrain ourselves from the eager pursuit after them, yet if in our eyes and opinions they seem glorious and goodly things, and, oh, we secretly think, the enjoying such a pleasure, the obtaining such an excellency, or such or such a condition of life, accommodated with such and such conveniences and circumstances, would be so great an addition of happiness to us; this argues a green heart, much want of mortification, though truth of grace be there. These apostles to whom Christ spake this parable of the vine, and unto them especially, how were they affected and transported with a trifle! Even that very night that Christ was to be attached, they strive for precedency, and 'who should be the greatest amongst them,' Luke 22:24, who should be chief of that noble order. And it was such a precedency which they affected as noblemen have in kingdoms, as appears by the following words: they shewed themselves but Gentiles in it, (as, ver. 25, Christ insinuates,) who stand upon their blood and their outward privileges. It was not for nothing Christ tells them in this parable they needed purging; but the reason was, they were but children yet, and 'babes in Christ,' now in their minority, and were not weaned from rattles and trifles. Christ was not yet crucified, nor they so thoroughly crucified with him as they were afterwards. The Holy Ghost had not yet come upon them as fire to burn up their lusts, and to consume this their dross. That other apostle, Paul,—who says of himself that he was 'born out of time,' in comparison to them,—had attained to a greater measure, he glorying in this as his highest title, that he was 'the least of the apostles.' This magnifying of outward things in our conceits and opinions is indeed but 'knowing things after the flesh,' as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 5:16, because the flesh doth fascinate and corrupt the judgment, in judging ourselves by such things. And this argues exceeding much want of mortification, for it is lust that puts that lustre, and gloss, and

varnish upon the things of the world; for the things in themselves are vain, and we have had experience that they are such. How comes it, then, we should esteem them and be taken with them, that we should have such high conceits of them? It is by reason of our lusts unpurged out, which represent them falsely; and therefore it is observable that John, 1 Epist. 2:16, speaking of the things of this world, he puts the lust which is in us to express the things themselves. He says not, riches and preferment, &c., though he speaks of them, but the 'lusts of the eye' and 'pride of life;' so he expreseth them, because they are these lusts that make the things so glorious to us, and set a price upon them. And therefore so much magnifying and high esteem of outward things as there is in us, so much inordinate lust there is in the heart after them, and so much want of mortification; and when these lusts boiling in us fame up so high as to intoxicate and corrupt our esteem and judgments, which though grace should keep us from pursuing these vanities, that yet we look upon them with a wanton eye, and think great matters in them, and think ourselves, as it were, debarred and restrained of so much of our happiness, whilst we want and cannot enjoy them, this argues an unmortifiedness; for herein lies the power of mortification, even to 'count all things dross and dung,' to look upon them as 'crucified things,' to have them seem all as withered flowers, as 'small things,' as he speaks of man's esteem, 1 Cor. 4:3.

(2.) Secondly, when our minds are carried out to superfluities, and more than needs, and are discontented with our own condition, though it be such as might content us, this argues a great want of purging, this is from superfluity of humours abounding in the heart. When they in the wilderness, though they had manna, yet they must have quails also. When there are such extravagant affections in us, that we think any other condition would please us better than our own, this argues much unmortifiedness, though it run not out into acts; it is the 'superfluity of naughtiness,' the excess of corruption that thinks 'stolen meat sweet,' as in the Proverbs. When our longings are wild and humorous, like the longings of women with child, whom nothing but some one odd thing they have set their

fancy on will please; like sick men's stomachs, with whom nothing will down that is provided for them, but still they have a mind rather to something else; so nor we with what God allots us. And when we are environed about with comforts, yet all are nothing if some one be wanting. Such unmortified lusts we see in Samson; though a good man, yet none of the daughters of Israel could please, but he must have one of the Philistines, Judges 14:3.

(3.) Thirdly, when our minds are so glued to anything, as we cannot tell how to part with it, how to lose such a friend or such a convenience, we would think ourselves half undone if such or such a thing should fall out. David's heart was full of humours, and needed purging, when he ventured so much of his comfort in his Absalom alone, that when he was cast away he wished that he had died for him. It is good often to try our hearts, by supposing the worst that can befall us,—What if a change should come, such a thing I should be put to,—to see how the heart can bear it. When some men have a loss in their estates and riches, it is as it were raked out of their bellies, as Zophar speaks, Job 20:15, and a piece even of their very heart goes with them.

(4.) Fourthly, when a man is still distempered under variety of conditions and businesses, and is inordinate in them all, it argues much unmortifiedness. As if he be to recreate himself, he is inordinate in it, and knows not when to end, and fall to his calling again; if to study, then he is also as violent in it, and entrenches upon the duties should keep up his soul in health, as also upon the necessary refreshings his body requires. Broach the vessel where you will, if still it runs muddy and thick, it is a sign the vessel is full of ill liquor. To be distempered in some one particular is less, but when in every vein that is opened much corrupt blood comes forth, it is a sign the body is full of humours, and needs purging. A man that is in an ague, and when the cold fit takes him he is extreme cold, and when the hot fit comes he is on the contrary as extreme hot, it is a sign he is full of humours, which as they are purged out, one or the other abates, or both. If when a man abounds, then he is commonly

confident, and forgets God; if when he wants, then he is as much on the other side distempered, and grows solicitous, distrustful. Sound bodies can bear sudden alteration of heat and cold, but distempered weak bodies cannot. Nature cannot bear a sudden alteration, but much grace can; 'I know how to want, I know how to abound,' Phil. 4:12. He was much therefore mortified; he could work hard in summer, without much sweating, and he could undergo the cold of winter without catarrhs, and such weaknesses as others are subject to; his soul was well purged of humours. And so Job had learned to bless God when all was gone; he was a man thoroughly mortified before, he had carried himself in his best estate without security and carnal rejoicing; thus he says of himself, that he 'made not gold his hope, nor his confidence, nor had rejoiced because his wealth was great,' chap. 31:25, and answerably, he behaves himself in his worst estate with patience and thanksgiving.

(5.) Fifthly, the more carnal confidence we have in the creatures, and bear ourselves upon them, and have our spirits strengthened and upholden by them, the more want of mortification. 'The Corinthians, though godly, yet they were very unmortified; therefore the Apostle says, they were 'rather carnal than spiritual,' 1 Cor. 3:1. Now this their carnal-mindedness, among other things, was expressed in their carnal confidence they had in outward things. They had riches, and gifts, and learning, and they did swim in these; and reigned and domineered in their own thoughts, and excelled all other churches in their own opinions, and so despised others in comparison. They were carried aloft by these waxen wings, which I take to be the Apostle's meaning, 1 Cor. 4:8, 'Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned:' they had riches and gifts, &c., and they thought themselves as kings, full of happiness, having the world before them, and were filled with conceits of it; and 'I would to God you did reign,' says he, —that is, that it were not regnum in capite, in your own conceits only,—and that there were indeed such real cause to applaud your own conditions. 'We are of the circumcision,' says the Apostle, 'and have no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. 3:3. The more the heart is truly circumcised,—of which he there speaks, in opposition to those who

rested in outward circumcision,—it trusteth not, nor beareth not itself, upon outward things, privileges, and endowments, as riches, blood, credit, learning, righteousness; these, when the heart is not circumcised, do puff it up; 'but we,' says he, 'have no confidence in the flesh,' either for comfort, or for justification, or anything else; 'but we rejoice in Christ Jesus.'

(6.) Sixthly, the more full of envyings, and heart-burnings against others, and of breaking forth into strife, our hearts are, and of strivings and contentions to get the credit, or riches, or victory away from others, &c., the more unmortified are our hearts, and the more need of purging. These overflowings of the gall and spleen come from a fulness of bad humours. 'Whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal?' 1 Cor. 3:3. That is, this argues you to be such, for envy and strife are not only lusts in themselves, but further they are such lusts as are always the children and fruit of some other; they are rooted in, and spring from inordinate affections to some things which we contend for; and accordingly, if this fire of envy or strife prove great, it argues the fuel—that is, the lusts after the things we envy others for—to be much more. For envy is but an oblique lust, founded on some more direct lust; these are but the outward flushings, that shew the distemper to be much more within. James 4:1, 'From whence come wars and fightings amongst you? come they not hence, even of your lusts which fight in your members?' There is something the heart would have, as it follows in the 2d verse, 'Ye lust, and have not,' &c. A contentious spirit is an unmortified spirit; 'If we bite and devour one another,' Gal. 5:15. 'This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' Mark the coherence, it comes in upon biting one at another, for such walk not in the spirit, flesh doth prevail in them, that is his meaning.

(7.) Seventhly, the less able we are to bear reproofs for the breakings forth of our lusts, the more unmortified it argues our hearts to be. It is a sign we love those much whom we cannot endure to hear spoken against: therefore, says the Apostle, 'Be swift to hear, but slow to wrath;' take heed of raging when you are touched. And it follows a

verse after, 'Casting away all superfluity, receive the word with meekness,' for it is your lusts uncast out, unpurged, that cause that wrath and heart-boiling against reproof. That good king was in a great distemper of spirit when he cast the prophet in prison that reproved him, for 'he oppressed the people also at the same time,' as is said, 2 Chron. 16:10. He was then taken in the springtide and swelling of his lusts of covetousness and oppression; they brake down all that withstood and opposed the current of them: and if, as he in this fit at this time, so we be found in such passionate tempers upon such occasions of reproof ordinarily, it argues the habitual frame of our hearts to be much unmortified, as this argued him at this time to have been actually much distempered.

(8.) Eighthly, the more quick and speedy the temptation is in taking, the more unmortified the heart is: when an object at the first presenting makes the lust to rise, and passeth through at the very first presenting of it, and soaks into the heart, as oil into the bones, and runs through all; when a man is gunpowder to temptations, and it is but touch and take, so as there needs not much blowing, but the heart is presently on fire, as, Prov. 7:22, it is said, 'He went straightway after her.' A man will find that when his heart is actually in a good temper, a temptation doth not so easily take; his heart is then, though tinder, yet as wet tinder, that is more slow in taking. As there is a preparedness to good works, so there is a preparedness to evil; when the heart is in a covetous humour, 'and will be rich, then a man falls into temptations and a snare,' 1 Tim. 6:9. His lusts will nibble at every bait in everything he deals in; they will take presently. When the heart is thus bird-limed, then it cleaves to everything it meets with. It is a sign that the heart is not 'awake to righteousness,' as the Apostle speaks, but to sin rather, when a little occasion awakeneth a lust, and rouseth it; as when, on the contrary, if a great deal of jogging will not awaken a man's grace.

(9.) Ninthly, the more our lusts have power to disturb us in holy duties, and the more they prevail with the heart, then the more unmortified and profane the heart is; as to have unclean glances in

hearing, and worldly thoughts then ordinarily to possess the heart, and to take it up much: 'They are profane,' says God, Jer. 23:11, 'for in my house I have found their wickedness.' If the heart be carried away and overcome with unclean and worldly thoughts, then this argues much unmodifiedness, and that the flesh is indeed much above the spirit. For why, then a man is in God's presence, and that should overcome and overawe the unregenerate part, if it were not impudent and outrageous; and besides, then the regenerate part hath the advantage, for the word and the ordinance is a stirring of it up and provoking it to holiness. And therefore that at such a time a man's lusts should be able to tempt and seduce a man's heart, it argues sin hath a great part in the heart, when it affronts God in his throne, when grace is in solio, where it would be. For the disciples thon to be talking who should be greatest, when Christ had made so long a sermon to them, and had administered the sacrament to them, this argued much want of mortification in them; oven as it were a sign that the orthodox party were but a weak party in a kingdom, if, whilst they are at sermons, Papists durst come in and disturb them, and put them out.

(10.) Tenthly, when the recalling former acts committed by a man prove still to be a snare to him, and being suggested by Satan as a means to quicken his lust, the thought thereof doth rather stir up his lust afresh, it is a sign of an unmortified frame. Thus it is laid to the charge of that nation, Ezek. 23:21, that 'she multiplied her whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.' The remembrance of them was a snare to her, as appears by the 8th verse. It is a sign a man is deeply in love whenas he falls in love with the picture. When the remembrance of whence he is fallen should make him repeat, that it should, on the contrary, cause him to commit the same sin again, it is a sign flesh hath much the better. To have the mind stirred with new objects and new temptations may stand with far less corruption and more grace, than to have it stirred afresh with the remembrance of the old. To find sweetness in a lust twice sod, which we have also often steeped, as I may so speak, in

godly sorrow and hatred of it, and so boiled it in sour herbs; yet still to find sweetness in the remembrance of such an act, this argues much corruption. As the Apostle argues the sinfulness and strength of corrupt nature in him, that the law, which was holy and good, should stir up his lust whilst unregenerate; so may we, when the thought of a sin, which should stir up godly sorrow, should provoke and tickle corrupt nature again. Indeed, that the new scent of meat should have moved the Israelites would not have been so much, but that the remembrance of their flesh-pots should do it! That speech, Rom. 8, where we are commanded to 'mortify the deeds of the flesh,' may admit, among other, this interpretation also, that not only the lusts, but even former deeds and acts committed, which may prove an occasion of sin to us, and have a fresh verdure in our eye, are to be mortified.

CHAPTER IV

Positive signs of growth in mortification, and God's purging of us.

2. AND so now I come to the second sort of signs—namely, positive signs of growth in mortification, and of God's purging of us.

(1.) First, the more insight a man hath into spiritual corruptions, together with a conflict against them, the more growth he hath attained unto in purging out corruptions; so as that now the chiefest of his conflict is come to be with spiritual lusts, not worldly lusts and

gross evils; it is an evidence of his progress in this work. These ordinarily are sure rules, that whilst a man's conflict is with more outward gross evils, as uncleanness, worldly-mindedness, &c., so long and so much he is kept from the sight of those inward, hidden, close corruptions, which sit nighest to the heart. As also, on the contrary, the more a man is freed from, and hath got victory over such more outward evils, the more his thoughts and intentions are bent inward to the discovery of the other more spiritual wickednesses. And the reason is, for these spiritual lusts, as pride, carnal confidence in a man's own graces, self-flattery, presumption, and the like, these corruptions lie, as I may so express it, more up in the heart of the country; but those other, of worldly lusts, he, as it were, in the frontiers and skirts of it: and therefore, until such time as a man hath in some good measure overcome those that encounter him at the borders, he comes not to have so through a discovery and constant conflict with those that lie higher up in the heart: 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit,' says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 7:1, which implies that there are two sorts of corruptions, one of the flesh or body, the other of the spirit or soul: for so the opposition there is to be taken, for else all lusts are lusts of the flesh; that is, of corrupt nature. Again, such corruptions cause 'a blindness, that a man cannot see afar off,' as 2 Pet. 1:9. Whilst a scholar that learns a tongue hath not learned to escape all grosser faults in grammatical construction, he cannot be supposed to have come to know the elegancies of the tongue, nor see his errors therein; so nor do men come to be critics indeed, and cunningly skilful in the more curious errata of their hearts and spirits, till they have attained to such a degree of mortification as to be free from grosser evils. And indeed, those who are grown in grace have attained ordinarily some freedom from such sins; therefore, says John, 1 Epist. 2:14, 'You young men are strong, and have overcome that evil one:' they have attained so much strength as to overcome the grosser evils. So as, to allude to what the Apostle says in another case, they then come to conflict not so much with 'flesh and blood' and outward evils, as with 'spiritual wickednesses' within,—that is, with affections and dispositions contrary to the work of grace; and therein lies their

chiefest exercise, which is not till they have some freedom and victory over the other, and so are at leisure to view these.

(2.) Secondly, we may discern our victory over our lusts by our ability more or less to deny ourselves. The more we grow up to a readiness, willingness, and freeness, and cheerfulness of heart to deny ourselves when we are called and put upon doing of it, the more are lusts purged out; for the reason that our hearts consult so much with carnal ends in business, that we have so much ado with them ere we can bring them off to part with such and such things, as God and our own consciences do call us unto, is through want of purging. For all want of self-denial is from an adhesion to outward things. Were we free and unmarried men to the world, wore our hearts loosened from all, and were all the secret fibræ, those stings of lusts that shoot into things, cut, it would lie nothing to us to part with them: this was in that great Apostle, bow ready was he to lay down his life! 'My life is not dear to me, so I may fulfil my ministration with joy;' and so when the time of his departure was at hand, says he, 'I am ready to be offered,' 2 Tim. 4:6. He speaks it in the present tense, σπένδομαι, 'I am offered;' it was done in his heart already. As in like phrase of speech it is said, Heb. 11:17, that 'Abraham offered up his son,' because in his heart he fully purposed it. When men must be forced by terrors of conscience, as Pharaoh with plagues, to let their credits or estates go by restitution, or for God and good uses, &c., it is a sign of want of purging. The more loosened a man is from the world and the things of it, the more prepared that man is for all works of self-denial, and the more purged. So when a man parts with all without sticking or higgling, as Abraham is said to 'believe without staggering,' it is a sign he hath attained to a good degree, even as that argued a strong faith, Rom. 4:20. When a man hath an open and a large heart to God, as a liberal man hath an open hand to men, as Abraham had when he was willing to let God have his only son, it was a sign he was much weaned; when God can command anything thou hast at an hour's warning, as we say. Abraham stood not long deliberating, Shall I, shall I? but went 'early in the morning,' even the next morning, God having called for his son that very night, as it is

likely by that in the 22d of Genesis, ver. 3; for the night was the time when God used to reveal himself by visions; and the next morning he went forth early.

(3.) Thirdly, the more constancy there is in our hearts and ways, the more even, stable in well-doing, and the more lasting, durable frame and temper for holiness we find our hearts to abide in, the more we are purged; for in that we find such sudden flowings and re-flowings in our hearts, that when a corruption seems to be at a low ebb, and our hearts in a good frame, within an hour or so a mighty tide comes in, and we find our hearts over-flown with a sea of filth, such sudden alterations from the better to the worse do come from those vast seas of corruptions that are still within us, that tumble and float up and down in our hearts. So the Apostle intimates, 'Purge your hearts, ye double-minded.' That their hearts are of so unequal a temper, sometimes in hot fits, sometimes in cold, and so suddenly altered, this cannot be but from much corruption. This double-mindedness comes from want of purging. The Galatians were surely very weak and foolish, as he tells them, when they were so soon transported. He marvels not so much that they were removed, as that so soon, οὕτω ταχέως, so suddenly, Gal. 1:6, and brings it in as an evidence of their weakness, that they who would have 'given him their eyes' should now so much be altered and carried away; so much mortifiedness, so much constancy. Therefore, in the 5th of Galatians, ver. 24, 25, when in the 24th verse he had said, 'Those that are Christ's have crucified the affections with the lusts,' he adds in the 25th verse, 'If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit:' the word imports a being constant in the spirit. Then when lusts are crucified, then the Holy Spirit will rule us in our ways, and a holy frame of heart will be discovered, in a constant tract of holiness; we shall walk in the spirit, keep ourselves long in a spiritual frame and course, and not be biased aside; that we step out so much, is from strong lusts unmortified.

(4.) Fourthly, the more a man comes to a spiritual taste of the spiritual word, and that which is most spiritual therein, the more it is a sign that corruption is purged out. When a man comes to his

stomach, it is a sign he is growing out of a sickness, and that the humours are much purged out. So, 1 Pet. 2:1, 'Laying aside all malice,' &c., 'as babes desire the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted.' Therefore the more corruption is laid aside, the more we taste the word, and God in it; the more we taste, the more we desire it; the more we desire it, the more we grow.

(5.) Fifthly, when we are ashamed of former carriages and ways, as seeing and discerning those weaknesses we saw not before, as scholars use to be of their exercises a year or two after; so if we be ashamed of former prayers, hearings, &c., as that great proficient discerned in himself, who, looking back upon his first days of conversion, says, 'When I was a child, I speak as a child:' he speaks it, applying it to his growth of grace.

(6.) Sixthly, when in ordinary times of temptation a man finds a lust not so violent and raging as it was wont, but more impotent and weak. Look to your fits of sinning whether they become greater or less, for then a man's strength or weakness is discerned most; as the bodily strength is, when a man either goes about to put himself forth, or is assaulted and set upon. Many that are sick, whilst they lie still in their beds think they have a great deal of strength, but when they attempt to rise and walk they sink down again. As a man's weakness to good is discerned when he comes to do and to act it,—Rom. 7, 'to do I am not able,'—so a man's weakness to sin, or strength against it, is then also best discerned. The weakness or strength of a kingdom is best seen and discerned in time of war, when all forces are mustered up. Now, God sometimes appoints some more frequent assaults, and on purpose suffers 'the law in the members to war,' and to muster up all their force, that, as it is said of Hezekiah, a man 'might know what is in his heart.' Now, if then a man finds that the motions of sin in his heart do every temptation after other meet a hotter encounter than they had wont; that the resistance against sin grows quicker and stronger; that sin cannot advance and carry on his army so far as formerly, but is still encountered and met withal at the frontiers, and there overthrown even at the first Betting out, so as it cannot carry it

through the camp, (as Zimri did his mistress Cozbi,) as sometimes it had wont, whenas grace stood at the tent door, as Moses, weeping, yet unable to resist it; and although assaults and temptations do continue, that yet there is ground kept and won upon the encroachments of a lust, insomuch that at least the outward forts are kept by grace,—that is, outward acts are abstained from: now so far as the lust is not fulfilled as it had wont to be, and not only so, but the inroads of it are confined and contracted also to a narrower compass, and to have a lesser ground and space in regard of inward acts; also so far it is purged more forth. As, for instance, be it a lust of fancy, when it cannot boil up to such gross fancies as it had wont; be it a lust of pride, or uncleanness, or grosser acts, when it falls from bringing forth fruit, to bring forth but blossoms, but inward burnings, and from blossoms only to bring forth leaves, it is a sign then it is withering more and more. When the intention of mind in the temptation, which is as the fire that makes it to boil, grows less and less; when the inordinate thirst is not so great in the time of the fit; when the inward acts are grown in their requests more modest, the lustings themselves pitch upon lower and inferior acts than they had wont; when their armies depart with lesser spoil, are content with than, whenas before they flew at the first onset to the highest kinds of villanies and outrages; when thus the overflowings of a man's lusts do abate and fall short, the tides lessen, overflow less ground, overspread less every day than another, this is another probable sign of a growth herein.

(7.) Seventhly, the more ability to abstain from occasions and opportunities of satisfying a man's lusts; as Job, a man much mortified, 'made a covenant with his eyes not to behold a maid,' and kept to it, chap. 31:1. When a man hates the 'very garment spotted with the flesh;' it is a sign of a strong hatred, when a man cannot endure to come where one he loves not is, cannot endure the sight of him, anything that may put him in mind of him, not so much as to parley or to speak with him.

(8.) Eighthly, when our hearts do not linger after such objects as may satisfy our lusts when absent, but when out of sight they are out of mind; this is a good degree of mortification. We may find it in ourselves, that when objects are not presented, that yet there is in our hearts oftentimes a lingering after them, and this from themselves, without any outward provocation; that is far worse. Many a man, when he sees meat, finds he hath a stomach to it, which he thought not till it was set before him; but when a man longs after meat he sees not, it is a sign he is very hungry. As we see against rainy weather, before the rain begins to fall, the stones will give, as we use to say, and grow dank; so a man that observes his heart may find, before objects are presented, or actual thoughts arise, a giving of his heart to such and such a lust, an inclination, a darkness, a moistness, a sympathising with such an object,—that is a sign of unmortifiedness. David was 'as a weaned child,' he had no thoughts of the dug, no longings after it; I have 'no high thoughts' after the kingdom, says he, Ps. 131. A child that begins to be weaned, it may be, at first cries after the dug, though he sees it not; but afterwards, though it may be when he sees it he cried after it, yet not when absent. Objects present have a far greater force to draw, when absent less; therefore this is a further degree of mortification attainable. It was in Joseph, when his mistress tempted him from day to day; opportunity was ready, the object present, but he denied her. So in Boaz, a woman lay at his feet all night. So in David, when he had Saul in his lurch, might as easily have cut off his head as the lap of his garment; and was egged on to do it, but he was then weaned indeed, and did it not. When a man can look upon beauty and preferment, and truly say, They are no temptations to me. It is a sign of an unsound temper, when upon eating such or such meats, a man is presently put into the fit of an ague; a healthful man is not so. The prophet calls them 'the stumblingblock of then iniquity.' When a man is going on his way, and though he did not seek occasions of falling, yet meeting with them, he cannot step over them, but is caught, and stumbleth, and falls, it is a sign of unmortifiedness.

CHAPTER V

Some cautions to prevent misjudging by false rules.—This case resolved, Whether growth in mortification may be judged by the ordinary prevailings of corruption, or actings of grace.

BESIDES these rules both these ways given, I will, in the third place, add some cautional considerations, to prevent misjudging of our growth in mortification, by such false rules as men are apt to be deceived, in judging worse or better of ourselves by, than the truth is, or than there is cause. Which considerations will also further serve as directions to us, as well as the former have done.

1. First, men may deceive themselves when they estimate their progress herein by having overcome such lusts as their natures are not so prone unto. The surest way is to take a judgment of it from the decay of a man's bosomsin, even as David did estimate his uprightness by his 'keeping himself from his iniquity,' Ps. 18:23; so a man of his growth in uprightness. When physicians would judge of a consumption of the whole, they do it not by the falling away of any part whatever, as of the flesh in the face alone, or any the like; such a particular abatement of flesh in some one part may come from some other cause; but they use to judge by the falling away of the brawn of the hands, or arms and thighs, &c., for these are the more solid parts. The like judgments do physicians make upon other diseases, and of

the abatement of them from the decrease in such symptoms as are pathognomical, and proper and peculiar to them. In like manner also the estimate of the progress of the victories of a conqueror in an enemy's kingdom is not taken from the taking or burning of a few villages or dorps, but by taking the forts and strongest holds, and by what ground he hath won upon the chief strength, and by what forces he hath cut off of the main army. Do the like in the decrease of, and victory over, your lusts.

2. Secondly, you must not judge of your mortification by extraordinary assistances or temptations; as you do not judge of the strength of a kingdom by auxiliary foreign forces, that are at extraordinary times called in. A young Christian shall, for his encouragement even in the heat of the battle, when he is ready to be overcome and carried away captive, find the Holy Ghost breaking in, and rescuing of him, as Jehoshaphat was (to allude to it) when 'he cried to the Lord;' whenas a Christian of much standing is left to fight it out hand to hand. Now it doth not follow that the other, because thus freed, hath the more strength. Again, on the other side, a man is not to judge of himself by his weakness in some one extraordinary temptation. A man that is very sick, and nigh unto death and dissolution, may, through much heat and stirring up of all his spirits, have the strength of five men in him, and much greater than when he was in health. And so a godly man, whose corruptions are weak, and more near to dissolution, yet in a fit may have all the corruption that is within him mustered up, and blown up by Satan, and so it may for the present appear to have more strength than ever in all his life, and yet he may be much mortified. Even as Sarah may, by an extraordinary means, have pleasure in her old age, and bring forth a child when she had left* child-bearing long, and yet her 'womb was dead,' Rom. 4:19. And as it may be true that one of small grace may have that little grace drawn out, and wound up to a higher strain, for one fit, brunt, and exercise; all the strings wound up to a higher note for some one lesson, than one haply of more grace ever felt, to higher acts of love to God, and of rejoicing in God, and purer strains of self-denial; yet take the constant strains of one's spirit that hath more

grace, and the strings will ordinarily endure to stand higher, and continue so. So, on the contrary, one of much mortification may have his lusts spurred on faster, and boiled up higher by Satan's fires than one of less. The estimate of our growth must not therefore be taken by a step or two, but by a constant course; for as a man's sincerity is to be measured, so is his growth: even as a man's health is to be measured by the constant tenor of his temper.

Only, I will add three things to give further direction concerning such extraordinary cases of temptation:—

(1.) First, that it is certain that so much corruption as at such a time, and in such a fit, a man felt a-stirring in him, so much indeed and in truth there is of corruption in his heart,' for the devil can put none in, but only acts and doth improve what is there already. For, as that speech of Christ implies, Satan can work but according to the matter he findeth in us: 'He cometh, and findeth no matter in me;' the wind adds no water to the sea, only can make the waves to rise and surge; the fire adds nothing to the water when it is set upon it, but attenuates it only, and causeth it to boil. And so in Hezekiah, when he was cast into that fit of pride, the text says that it was 'that he might know all that was in his heart; 2 Chron. 32:31. It was in his heart before.

(2.) Secondly, I add, that yet hence it cannot be infallibly inferred that a man hath, comparatively either to himself, more corruption in him than he had twenty years before, because more is stirred up; or that, comparatively to others, he hath more corruption than they, because more is now for a fit drawn forth. So that it follows not from hence that others which are kept free from such a temptation, that they have less mortification because they were never cast into so hot and burning a fit. One whose body is less full of humours, and naturally of a more moderate temper for heat, may yet, through some accident or other, or disease, suppose the plague, be cast into hotter fits of a burning fever, than one whose temper is more fiery, and humours more abounding in him. To have recourse to the former

instance. Hezekiah surely had more corruption twenty years before his recovery out of his sickness than at that time, and yet it wrought not so, that we read of, as it did then; not that the barrel was then fuller, but that now it was broached lower, and a greater vent given, and so it came more gushing out, dregs and all. That a man, after he is grown up to his full strength, falls into so great a sickness, such a one as he never had when he was a child, which maketh him weaker than when he was ten or twelve years old, doth not argue but that he is a man grown for all that. David, after a long growth, had a time of great sickness, whereby he lost the exercise, the lively, vigorous use of his graces; enfeebled by that sickness, he lost his taste in God's ordinances by it, and 'the joy of God's salvation,' as appears by the 51st Psalm.

(3.) And the third thing I would add is this, that such a one as is indeed much mortified, if it happens he falls into such a fit, yet the greater measure of his mortification will appear afterwards, in that the lust will be weaker after his recovery again. It is in this as with a man that is in a hot fiery fit of a fever, though he have at that instant the strength of two men in him, as was said, yet afterward, when the spirits are ebb'd and settled again, his body is the weaker for it; so is the body of sin, upon the resurrection of grace, after such a fall. Many grow more after sickness. For God's end being but to discover his weakness, and what he is in himself, and to rouse him out of his security, he then loves to manifest his power when once we have seen our weakness; and so 'makes his strength perfect in our infirmities,' when they are not ordinary, but beyond the ordinary temper and dispositions of our spirits.

Quest.—But then the question may be concerning the more ordinary passages of a man's life: Whether a man may measure and take a sure estimate of the inward root of corruption left in him, by the ordinary risings and stirrings of it, and his fallings into sin more or less? I speak not now of extraordinary fits, but of ordinary qualms and weaknesses.

Resolved.—To this I answer, that ordinarily men may conclude from the more or less busy they find corruption to be in them, that the more or less there is of corruption in them, and so thereby measure their growth; for grace and corruption are as two roots, and therefore the actions of them both are called their 'fruits,' Gal. 5:19, 22. Now Christ elsewhere gives us this rule of nature, to judge of the tree by the fruits, to proceed by in matters of grace also. And as by the fruit we may know of what species and kind the tree is, so likewise what plenty of sap there is at the root, by the plenty, or bigness, or fairness of the fruit it doth bring forth. The more inward corruption at the root, ordinarily the more fruit thereof appears in the life; and proportionably also of the tender fruits of the Spirit. And therefore Christ here says that the vine is to be 'purged, that it may bring forth more fruit;' because the more corruption is emptied, the more holiness will appear in your inward and outward fruitfulness. And the reason hereof is, because ordinarily as a thing is in being, so it is in working. *Læsa principia habent læsas operationes.* Children, the weaker, the more falls they have in their ordinary walkings; bodies, the more sickly, or the weaker and more unhealthy the *κρᾶσις* and constitution is, the more qualms; and as they recover strength more and more, they find they outgrow such weaknesses. And therefore, ordinarily, according to what activeness a man finds of grace or sin in him, according are the inward principles of either of them more or less in him. For the soul of man, as it is an active thing, so being left to its ordinary course, it acts according to the sway, and bias, and inclination of the habits that are in it, which are also active, as both grace and sin are. As a bowl, when the force of the hand that threw it begins to decay, it is swayed by the bias, and lead that is in it; and so the less grace, the less, ordinarily, it acts graciously, and the weaklier. And then also the opposite corruption must needs be so much the more active; for the soul being active, abates not of its mettle, but it will still shew itself one way or other. The flesh will 'lust against the spirit' so much the stronglier, as the spirit is weaker, 'for they are contrary.' Yea, and thus God judgeth of the principles of grace in us, according as they act in us: he will judge of our mortification by the fruits of it in our lives and hearts; the more the fruits of sin grow on

in us, the less mortified he will account us; as he will judge of faith by the works, so of mortification by the fruits. And therefore it is observable, that he bids us mortify the deeds of the body, as well as the body of sin, Rom. 8:13; for God will judge of the one by the other. Therefore the objects of mortification are the deeds of the body, as well as the inward principle of corruption, because the mortification of the inward principle will be seen and appear in the deeds.

Obj.—But it may be objected, that grace is acted, or lusts do stir, accordingly as the Spirit of Christ, who is a voluntary agent, doth act grace, or will leave a man; so that if he be pleased to stir that little grace in a weak Christian, he shall act it more, and if he leave a strong Christian to himself, he shall fall more.

But to this it is answered—

Ans. 1.—First, that though the Holy Ghost be a voluntary agent, and blows when and where he pleaseth, for his times of working, yet ordinarily he acteth grace in us, take our whole course, according to the proportion of grace given us, so as he that hath more habitual grace shall be more assisted and enlivened, which falls out according to that rule, which in this case will hold, *habenti dabitur*: Matt. 25:29, 'To him that hath shall be given,' if it be a true talent. Hence therefore he that had five talents gained more than he that had but two: for he gained his five more unto his five; the other but two more to his former two; though he that had but one is said to have gained none, because indeed it was not a true talent, for he 'seemed but to have it,' the text says. And the reason hereof is, because those habits of grace which God hath infused are his own works, and are ordained by him to be acted, and he delights still to crown his own works in us with more. And as he proportions glory to works, so he promiseth to act according to the principles of grace infused, which else would be in vain, they being ordained to that end. As the Apostle says of gifts, that they are 'given to profit withal,' so are graces to work, and therefore ordinarily God draws them out, where he hath bestowed them, as he doth gifts also, according to their proportion. And thus, è

contra, it is for leaving a man to sin; the more corruption a man hath, the more ordinarily he lets it vent and discover itself, that so men that have many corruptions in them might know what is in their hearts; and so when God doth mortify them in them to thank him the more, the grace of which else would be to them lost, if God should mortify their lusts in them, without their seeing and bewailing them, and crying to him, 'O miserable man that I am!' and ordinarily see and discern them men would not, unless left to them. As in case of humbling a man, though God sometimes doth humble a man that hath less sins more than one that hath greater, to shew that he can give a spiritual light to see more sin in a little than others in much; yet ordinarily those are most humbled that have been greatest sinners, as Manasseh 'humbled himself greatly,' and Mary Magdalene 'loved much,' and the Apostle thought himself 'the greatest of sinners.' And thus it is in acting grace, or letting forth corruptions; it is according to their principles within.

Ans. 2.—And, secondly, that very acting grace doth increase habits: so as the increase of habits and inward mortification is proportioned according to the acting of grace by the Holy Ghost; for every abstinence doth mortify, as was said, and every act of grace doth, through the blessing of the Spirit, further sanctify and increase the habit: Rom. 6, 'You have your fruit in holiness.' When they do any duty, it makes the heart more inwardly holy, so as indeed the one cannot be without the other; but the more a man doth abstain out of right principles, by the assistance of the Spirit, the more he grows: so as in the end all comes to one; he whose holiness is acted most hath in the end most habitual grace, and thereby often it comes to pass that 'he that is first comes to be last, and he that is last first.'

Yet there are two limitations to be put in about this:—

(1.) First, I grant, for some times of men's lives, that God doth act some men's graces more, who have yet less grace, and leave those to sins who have more grace. So he left Peter, who in all appearance had

more grace than any of the twelve, yet God left him to deny Christ more foully and falsely than any of the other.

But then let the ends of God be considered why he doth it:—

[1.] First, in case of too much confidence upon inherent grace, and the strength of it. When we trust to habitual grace received, then Christ, to shew that it is a new grace, to assist that grace, and to the end that it may be acknowledged that he that gives one grace is not bound to give another, may in this case leave one that hath indeed more grace to the prevailing of corruptions more. It falls out sometimes that when men are young Christians, and new born, God adds much assistance, and this for their encouragement; and as you carry young children in your arms, and so they are kept from falls more than some more elderly that are let go alone, thus, Hos. 11:3, 'God takes them by the arms when a child,' ver. 1, but then 'they acknowledge it not,' as it follows there, and are apt to think that that strength and life they have is from themselves, and so God afterwards leaves them, when grown more elderly. Those Christians who walk most sensibly of their own weakness, and observe God's keeping them from sin, and attribute this to him, such God delights to help, though for the present they have less habitual grace. And so those Christians that sooner come to the knowledge of that way of dependence upon Christ,—some come to see it the first day, and make use of it, others not so clearly a long while,—they shall be more assisted than another. To many that way so soon is not so clearly opened.

[2.] Again, secondly, sometimes God will magnify this his acting grace, as I may call it, more in one man than in another, seeing it is a grace. That one Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, did more than all the apostles; shall we thereby infallibly conclude he had more inherent grace than they all? but that he had more assistance. As God sometimes useth men of weaker gifts to do more than men of greater; so men of weaker graces, and less growth, to shame the other. As there are 'diversities of gifts,' so of 'operations and exercise'

of those gifts, 1 Cor. 12:6, the 'Spirit dividing as he will,' ver. 11. God casts aside one of eminent gifts into a place or condition wherein they are not useful, and so he may one of much habitual grace.

[3.] Thirdly, he acts often according to actual preparation; the habitual preparation lies in habits, and is more remote; as strings may be good, yet out of tune, and so not played upon.

[4.] Again, fourthly, God may leave a Christian of more grace and growth to more stirring of corruptions, in case he means yet to bring him to a higher pitch of humiliation, and that by sins. It is in this his dealing of leaving men to corruptions, and the vigorous conflicts with them, as it is in his leaving his people sometimes to those other evils of afflictions. God humbleth his either by afflictions or by sins, and his manner in both is sometimes alike. You shall see one who hath attained to a great measure of grace already, and that by affliction, and yet never to be out of the fire, but God still followeth him with one affliction or another; whereas one of less growth and grace, who in that regard hath more need, shall have fewer afflictions in his course. And what is the reason of this difference? It is not that the grown Christian hath simply more need of affliction than the other, but because God intends to bring him on yet to a further degree of grace. As refiners of sugar, taking sugars out of the same chest, some thereof they melt but once, and another part of it they melt and refine again and again; not that that which they refine twice hath more dross in it, but because they would have it more refined, doubly refined. And as God deals thus in afflictions, so also in leaving of his people to the stirring of corruptions, which of all afflictions is the greatest to humble a holy heart. And thus in experience it is found that he doth sometimes leave a grown Christian to conflict with corruptions more than a weaker Christian; not that he hath more in him, but because he means to bring on that grown Christian to a further degree of humiliation; he is not humbled as he means to have him yet. And whereas God humbleth some men by afflictions, he humbleth others by sins. And nothing humbleth more than sins, for crosses do but humble by revealing sin as the cause; and nothing will

humble a grown Christian more than to see such shameful soul-corruptions still stirring in him: the greatest aggravation of which to him will be in this, that after so long a time such lusts should be so lively in him; to have such gross faults in his exercises after he hath been so long at school, this shames him. For a grown Christian to be disguised with a corruption, and when his hair is grown, to have it shaven off, as David's messengers were ashamed of it, so how doth it shame and humble him! Thus Hezekiah, though he was much humbled by a sickness to death, but because he was not humbled enough, and so far as God meant to bring him, therefore God let loose pride on him, and then he further humbleth himself and all Israel, as it is 2 Chron. 32:26. Upon some men God shews his free grace in keeping them from sin; upon others he spends it in pardoning them. These are but two several ways he hath of laying it out. And so sometimes he shews his grace in keeping those of less grace, and again in letting those of more to struggle with their lusts: and such sicknesses are not to death or to weaken them, but for the glory of God and their further growth; for this will be the effect and consequent of such stirrings in grown Christians, that as their fits of corruptions stirring are great, so their humblings will be greater. Grace being much in them, will shew itself that way; great fits of sinning have intermingled with them great exercises of repentings, and the growth of their grace will shew itself in them, and appear in them. Even as in men that are cheerful naturally, but sometimes oppressed with melancholy, when those pressures are over they are most merry, their spirits breaking forth, being at liberty, they shew themselves as much on the contrary in mirth; so is it here when grace gets above again. As it is in the body when the spirits are not weak, but only are kept under by humours, when they do once get up, they then shew their strength in causing the body to grow the more,—as in many young men after a sickness, where strength of nature is,—and so thereby they become after often the better, and more lively; but if the natural spirits be weak, it is not so.

(2.) A second limitation is, that though one of less growth in mortification may sometimes by watchfulness keep under his lusts

more, and act that little grace he hath, more than haply he doth who hath yet radically more grace; therefore says the Apostle, 'Stir up the gift that is in thee.' To Timothy he speaks it, and he exhorts, Gal. 5, even young Christians 'to walk in the spirit;' that is, to have the spirit kept above the flesh, so as a man shall have great and over his corruptions, that they break not forth. Now, I say that this exhortation doth belong unto and concerneth the youngest Christians; for he speaks to all that have spiritual life begun in them: ver. 25, 'If we live in the spirit, let us,' says he, 'walk in the spirit,' and then 'we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,' ver. 16. A weak body, though weak, yet if he useth care, may keep himself from distempers as much as some man who is strong, but grows careless and neglects his health. But yet though one of less grace be thus actually more watchful, yet he may discern the want of growth by this:—

[1.] First, that still his lusts rise oftener, and that with delight, and are apter to catch fire presently, although they be smothered as fast as they catch. His case then is as if there were a heap of straw in a room where fire is, where sparks fly about, still taking fire upon every occasion; but he that keeps the straw is careful still to put it out.

[2.] And, secondly, in this case they shall find the strength of their corruptions in privative workings against grace, and distracting and disturbing them, deadening their hearts in duties; and therefore when the Apostle had exhorted such to 'walk in the spirit, so as not to fulfil the lusts,' mark what follows: Yet, says he, the flesh will discover itself in 'lusting against the spirit,' take what care you will, so as a man 'shall not be able to do what he would,' Gal. 5:16, 17; and the more strong it is, the more it will shew itself strong in disturbing: so as Christians not grown up, that are very watchful over their hearts, do keep as it were but negative Sabbaths, and are therein like unto those watchers and keepers of good rule in great churches, where there are many sleepers; they have so much to do to watch those boys that sleep and are idle at church, as they cannot attend the sermon. For though, by reason of watchfulness, corruption may be kept from discovering itself in open unruliness much, yet it can

never, by all the watchfulness in the world, be brought on to duties, but so much as is in the heart will discover itself either in opposition to them or a hypocritical joining in them. Although the Papists may be kept by a waking State from venting that malice of their hearts in rebellion, yet they cannot be brought to join with us in holy duties; no more will corruption, unless in hypocrisy; and therefore so much as is doth still discover itself in them.

CHAPTER VI

Five cautions more to prevent such misjudgings.

3. A THIRD caution to prevent misjudging: If a man will not be mistaken in judging his growth in mortification comparatively with others or with himself, he must consider his occasions and opportunities to draw him out. Thus, a man when he had more corruption, yet less occasions and provocations to sin, may have corruption less stirring in him than when he is more grown up in grace, if his temptations were then greater. The same tree standing in the shade, where also the rain comes not to it, when transplanted where both sun and rain fall upon it, may be more fruitful than formerly. David, when under afflictions in the wilderness, and wanting opportunities, how strict was he, and 'kept himself from his iniquity!' Ps. 18:23. But when he came to the delicacies of a kingdom, though he was grown up more and more in grace, yet how did he fall! As to aggravate the sin of not growing more, the proportion of means

every one hath had is to be considered; and for one who hath had much means to grow much, for him is less than one who hath less means: so in the stirring or declining of sin, opportunities and occasions are also to be considered; as if a man be transplanted out of a full condition into an empty, if then many of his lusts do not stir so much as before, no wonder. Even as if a man when cast into a sweat by reason of multitude of clothes, it is no marvel if, when clothes are taken off, he sweat less.

4. A fourth thing to be considered, to keep us from mistakes herein, is, that he whose spirit is naturally active, his lusts, though weaker than another man's whose spirit is slower, may be yet more quick and apt to break forth more than his. Peter was of a bold spirit, and so spake often rashly, and vented corruption more than the other disciples, insomuch as he once provoked Christ to call him Satan, not that he had less grace, but a more active spirit. Yea, he might have more grace, and less of corruption stirred in him, only a more forward natural spirit, that was apt to put itself forth. As an angry man, whose spirit is quick, may soon be stirred, and in the forwardness of his spirit to action, give a man a blow, when one given to malice will scarce give you an ill word, whose lusts of revenge yet burn inwardly more. Gunpowder will take and fall into a blaze sooner than lime, yet lime hath more innate heat, and burns more within; some have speedier vent. Those two brethren, John and James, 'sons of thunder,' as Christ calls them, how soon was their choler up! They had quick and hot spirits, as Christ tells them, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of,' Luke 9:55.

5. Fifthly, if we would judge aright what measure of true mortification is in us, we must not take into the reckoning what restraining grace doth in us, but observe that apart, and cast that up in a sum by itself. For this you must know, that even in the regenerate, all their abstinence from sins is not from mere mortification, but restraining grace continues even after regeneration to contribute to it, and so make mortification seem the greater. It was not merely and only mortification of the lust of anger

that made Moses so meek; for at another time, when he was left, what a chafe was he in, when he called them all rebels, and said in a heat that he must fetch water out of the rock for them! It was his temper and disposition of nature helped to make him so eminent in ruling that passion above any other, that he is said to be 'the meekest man on earth.' It was not simply, merely mortification that made that great apostle, Paul, so eminently chaste; but over and besides what mortification helped him in it, he had a 'peculiar gift,' as he calls it, 1 Cor. 7:7; he speaks of it as of a gift, not a grace, such as might be in reprobates. 'For,' says he there, 'every one hath his proper gift.' So it was not mere mortification that made Luther never troubled with covetousness, but the freeness and generousness of his spirit that helped him in it.

Now, if all these would have cast up what grace and mortification they had attained to, they must have reckoned restraining grace by itself, (which may be observed by what our virtues were before conversion,) which though now sanctified,—that is, helping forward sanctification, and making the abstinence easier,—yet is not to be reckoned true sanctification. As goldsmiths mingle in all the silver they work some other metals to make it more malleable, so are those common graces mingled with true in this life, where sanctification is imperfect, which do help them and eke them out. Grace set in a good nature seems a great deal more, and goes further than in a bad. Wine that is of itself somewhat pleasant, a little sugar will make it sweeter to the taste than a great deal of sugar will do sour wine. Therefore let every one consider what natural ingenuity, and modesty, and education did in him before conversion; and let him know that, now he hath true grace, these help him still, and stand him in stead as much as ever, although he hath a further new principle of grace in him beyond these. Grace in this life, and whilst imperfect, takes not away such common gifts, but sanctifieth and useth them, as the reasonable soul doth a quick fancy or memory, which are sensitive faculties, and do make his ability to abstain from such and such sins more easy. Indeed all such gifts will be swallowed up in glory. And therefore many who have less grace, yet seem in many carriages

more mortified than those who have more grace, they will be less impatient in a cross, less stirred and provoked with an injury. A man who hath been less helped by retraining grace before conversion, and had his lusts more outrageous, if he hath them now under, it is a sign he hath much more mortification in him than one who was naturally civil. And I appeal to every godly man's conscience, it is not only simply mortification that makes him always to abstain from sins, but shame, modesty, terrors of conscience strike in at a pinch, when strength of mortification had failed him else; and many accidental things, ordered by God's providence, hinder and keep God's people from sinning. And as David was fain to make use of Goliath's sword, and take in discontented persons that had not the same ends that he had, to strengthen himself against Saul; so is grace fain to take in fleshly dislikes and discontents against sin, to help it in a pinch, till it hath got the victory. For instance, it was not Judah's grace so much kept him from killing Joseph, for then he would not have consented to sell him, but nature wrought in him, and made him abhor the killing him: 'Is it not our brother, and our flesh? and what profit is it to kill him?' Gen. 37:26. So God prevented David in his murdering Nabal's family by an external means, whenas his grace else had not kept him from revenging himself causelessly upon his family, for they were in no fault; his grace alone had not done it, for his passion was up, and he in a rage, and fully resolved to do it. But God used another means, and sent Abigail submissively to meet him; and her lowly submission and elegant oration won him, and cooled him: though this David acknowledgeth God's hand in it, and was glad he was so kept, as a godly man will, and hath cause, when he is hindered of his purpose in sinning. As he says, Phil. 1:18, 'I rejoice that Christ is preached, though out of envy,' so if sin be abstained from, though by any means; yet God did rather by this means restrain him than by his fear of God, or the grace in his heart; but God kept him by her coming, 1 Sam. 25:34. 'For in very deed,' says David, 'as the Lord liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and met me, surely there had not been left a man unto Nabal.' So shame moved Judah. Fear of being destroyed moved Jacob to reprove the sin of his sons, and is all the argument he useth, Gen.

34:30. So that in an evening, when thou castest up thy abstinences of that day, think not how much thou hast abstained from sin or denied thyself, but how much out of hatred of it, and the spirit of mortification, how much of that there is in thy abstinence, and accordingly measure thy growth in it.

6. Sixthly, another false rule is, when men judge of their mortification, and the measure of it, by their present listlessness of the heart to sin: which though it be true, that where true mortification is there is a listlessness and a deadness, and so much mortification, so much deadness, Rom. 6:2, 'How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?'—and indeed, to live in it is to take pleasure in it;—but yet this you must know, there are many things which in a godly man may add to his deadness to sin besides true mortification, and so make it seem greater than it is in truth; and therefore it may be a false rule to judge by, if it be not warily considered and distinguished. Sickness breeds a listlessness; when we are sick, our lusts are sick together with us; and as we gather strength, they gather up their crumbs again: Job 33:19, 20, then his 'soul abhors dainty food.' Suppose he be a glutton, old age brings a listlessness: Eccles. 12:1, 'When the evil days come, wherein a man says he hath no pleasure in them;' as Barzillai had no taste in his meat, by reason of old age. So when our expectations or desires are crossed, or are like to be, and we begin to fail of those main props of the comfort of our lives, we are apt to have a listlessness to all other pleasures; when some one thing that was a sauce to all the rest is gone, or like to go, we then have no stomach to all the rest, and we are weary of living, as David was when Absalom was gone: 'Would I had died for thee!' Some great cross coming may, like thunder, sour all our joys and delights, and make them stale to us, and as dead drink to the stomach. Terror of conscience may, like an eclipse, overspread our spirits, and then all things lose their beauty and lustre, as things in the dark use to do; as Job gays of himself in his desertion, that his soul had no more sweetness in all comforts than in 'the white of an egg.' For such occasions as these do draw the intention another way, and do take the mind up about God's wrath,

or the afflictions we are in, so as it cannot run out to sin; and intention, you know, is the cause of all pleasure. As therefore, when by study the spirits are drawn up to the head, a man's stomach decays to that meat he most loved, so when terrors drink up the spirits, as Job speaks; but when that heat is over, and intention dismissed, a man recovers his stomach again: and so do men their appetites to sin, when they come forth of terrors.

And this will help you to find out the true reason why that young Christians are often more dead to all pleasures of sin than those who are grown up, or than themselves are when grown up. They are often then altogether dead to all mirth and other contentments, and yet they are not more mortified than afterwards, for then legal humiliation adds to their deadness. And besides that first deadly blow which Christ gave their lusts then in part, the law also and the bitterness of sin did lay that part of their lusts which remained unkilld in a swoon, that one would think all were dead. 'Sin revived,' saith Paul, 'and I died,' Rom. 7:9. He speaks of that time when he lay humbled for sin, during which time, we read in the Acts, he fasted. He had no mind to meat nor drink; for three days he forgot all. And again, as then they are usually so taken up about pardon of sin, and the obtaining thereof, that all the spirits retire to the heart to relieve it, and to encourage it to seek out for pardon, and so sin is left in a swoon, and it seems quite dead; but by degrees men come out of that swoon, and sin revives, and then men think they decay in mortification. Again, young Christians sometimes, and others afterwards, for some honeymoons of their lives, are entertained with raptures and ravishments, joy unspeakable and glorious, and then they seem in a manner wholly dead to sin, and walk so; but as the others are in a swoon, so they are in an ecstasy; but when they are out of it, then sin comes to itself again. Those joys, whilst they last, make a man's actual present deadness to sin seem more than habitually and radically it is indeed. As a man that hath tasted some sweet thing, whilst the impression upon his palate lasteth he hath no relish of meat, so whilst the impressions of spiritual joy; but when their mouths are washed once, and their sense of that sweetness

gone, they find their wonted relish of them. Thus spiritual joys do, for the time they are upon the heart, much alter the taste; but yet much of that alteration is adventitious and not wholly radical, or altering the sinful faculty itself; though it doth add much that way, yet not so much as they seem to do at that present, the sense of that sweetness is fresh in his heart.

Now therefore, to give a help or two to difference what is real and true mortification from this seeming listlessness and deadness to it:

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(1.) First, true mortification makes a man not only listless to sin, but to have a quick hatred against it, a hatred aiming at the destruction of it; but false listlessness takes but the heart off it, doth not set it against it. How often are these yoked together in Ps. 119, 'I hate sin, and every false way,' with this, 'Thy law do I love!' The heart being quickened with love to God and to his law, is carried out against sin, and not only taken off from it to have no mind to it, but to have a mind against it to destroy it. There is the same difference between mortification and listlessness that there is between true patience and senselessness. Senselessness is a dull, stupid bearing of pains, but patience is joined with a quick sense of them, which ariseth from strength of spirits, that, being quick and vigorous, are the more sensible of pain or pleasure; so true mortification is joined with an active hatred that flies out against sin, which comes from liveliness of affection to the contrary.

(2.) Secondly, true mortification is joined with activeness and life in the contrary duties: Rom. 6:11, 'Reckon yourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God.' That false listlessness is but a dead palsy that doth take these members of sin, but true mortification is with a new life, a resurrection, strengthening a man to walk so much the more nimbly in the ways of God, Rom. 6:4, 5. Young Christiana, and such as have a false listlessness and deadness, yon shall find them complain that their mortification is more than vivification; they will find they are more dead to the world than quickened to God. True

mortification doth not dull the spirits, but sets them at liberty, as purging the humours out doth. It makes the body more light and nimble; whereas false listlessness causeth a deadness, a dulness to everything else. Those false causes of listlessness contract the mind, as a bladder that is clung, and dried, and 'hung up in the smoke,' as David compared his condition in terrors of conscience; but mortification empties it of the sin, and fills it with grace, so as the mind is as full and wide as before, only filled with grace now instead of sin.

7. Seventhly, a man is not to judge of his growth in mortification simply by the keenness of his affection against sin, though that is good and blessed, but by his strength against it. As there is a fond love, which is not so strong and solid, which will not do so much for one, or hold, if it come to the trial and be put to it, that yet hath a more seeming edge in it; so there is a keenness of hatred that hath not so much strength. A man that is angry seems to have more keenness of affection against him he falls out with, and in his rage vows never to be reconciled, and could eat him up; whenas yet a malicious man hates more strongly. So do young Christians their sins, having lately felt the bitterness of them; and then many other inconveniences, besides the contrariety of them to God, do egg on and provoke their spirits against them; but like as a sharp knife that is weak, the edge is soon turned and blunted, so in a temptation, they are for all their edge soon overcome. For all those concurring inconveniences and apprehensions of their hurt by them makes their spleen indeed greater, but it adds not to their strength and courage to resist them; like a stomachful boy, that cries he cannot have the victory, yet is weak, and easily laid on his back; his stomach is more than his strength. The hurt that comes by sin to us at first lately felt, helps to sharpen the edge, but adds no metal, and so our weapons are beaten to our heads again when we use them. What an edge of spirit had Peter raised up against denying Christ! He would die rather; he spake then as he thought, and he would have died in the quarrel, for he drew his sword, but afterwards he wanted strength to his stomach; how easily was he overcome, being yet but weak in

grace! Therefore judge of your growth herein by your strength to resist. Hence the Apostle prays, 'they may have strength in the inward man,' Eph. 3:16; and in chap. 6:13, he speaks of 'ability to stand in the evil day.' Although this let me add, that every man should keep up his heart in this continual keenness and edge of spirit against sin, and whet his heart against it; for that will cause a man to use his strength the more against it, and to put it forth. A man that keeps his heart in a revengeful, vexed, spleenful spirit against sin, he will easier cut through a temptation: and though if a Christian want metal, though he hath an edge, he may be foiled; yet when edge and metal both meet, a man walks above his lusts. If either be wanting, a man may be foiled.

PART III

RESOLVING SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING GROWTH IN MORTIFICATION AND VIVIFICATION.

CHAPTER I

Two questions resolved concerning growth in mortification.

I WILL now conclude this discourse about growth in grace with answering some questions which may be made concerning this our growth, both about mortification and about increase in positive graces; which I did reserve to this last place, that I might handle them together.

Quest. 1.—The first question concerning the purging out of sin is, Whether every new degree of mortification, and purging out of sin,

be always universal, extending itself to every sin? So as the meaning of this, that God goes on to purge, should be, not only that he goes on first to purge forth one sin, then another, but that he goes on to purge out, by every new degree of mortification, every sin together; so as when any one sin is more weakened, all the rest in a proportion grow weak also.

Ans.—To this I answer affirmatively, that every new degree of mortification is universal. Because when the Scripture speaks of our growth therein, he speaks of it as extending itself to every sin. So, Eph. 4:22, when he exhorts the Ephesians, who were mortified already, to a further progress in it, he exhorts them to 'put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.' It is not one lust that is the object of mortification, and the growth of it, although he mentions particular lusts afterwards, but the whole man that is corrupt, and all its lusts. And thus he there speaks of daily growth therein; for of that he had spoken in the former verses, from the 12th verse, and goes on to speak of it and exhort to it. Thus, in like manner, Gal. 5:24, it is called 'crucifying the flesh with the lusts;', not one lust, but the flesh, the whole bundle, the cluster of them all; and in that it is called crucifying, it implies it also, for of all deaths that did work upon every part, it did stretch every nerve, sinew, and vein, and put all the parts to pain: and this going on to mortify sin is called, Rom. 6, 'the destroying of the body of sin,' of the whole body. It is not the consumption of one member, of the lungs, or liver, &c., but it is *consumptio totius*, a consumption of the whole body of sin, so as every new degree of mortification is the consuming of the whole. And therefore also, Col. 3, where in like manner he exhorts to growth therein, he exhorts to 'mortify earthly members'—every member. And the reasons hereof are, because—

(1.) First, true mortification strikes at the root, and so causeth every branch to wither: for all sinful dispositions are rooted in one, namely, in 'love of pleasure more than of God;' and all true mortification deadens a man to the pleasure of sin, by bringing the heart more into communion and into love with God; and therefore

the deading to any sin must needs be general and universal to every sin. It is as the dying of the heart, which causeth all the members to die with it; for that is the difference between restraining grace, which cuts off but branches, and so lops the tree, but true mortification strikes every blow at the root.

(2.) Secondly, every new degree of true mortification purgeth out a sin, as it is sin, and works against it under that consideration; and if against it as sin, then the same power that works out any sin works against every sin in the heart also. Now that every new degree works against a sin, as it is sin, is plain by this, because if it be purged out upon any other respect, it is not mortification.

(3.) Thirdly, the Spirit, and the virtue that comes from Christ, which are the efficient causes of this purging out a sin, do also work against every sin, when they work against any one; and they have a contrariety to every lust; they search into every vein, and draw from all parts. Physicians may give elective purges, as they call them, which will purge out one humour, and not another; but Christ's physic works generally, it takes away all sorts of distempers.

Obj.—And whereas the objection against this may be, that then all lusts will come to be equally mortified—

Ans.—I answer, No, for all lusts were never equally alive in a man; some are stronger, some weaker by custom, through disposition of body and spirit; and therefore, though mortification extends itself to all, yet there being an inequality in the life and growth of these sins in us, hence some remain still more, some less mortified: as when a flood of water is left to flow into a field, where many hills are of differing height, though the water overflows all equally, yet some are more above water than others, because they were higher before of themselves. And hence it is that some sins, when the power of grace comes, may be in a manner wholly subdued,—namely, those which proceed out of the abundance of naughtiness in the heart, as swearing, malice against the truth; and these the children of God are

usually wholly freed from, and they seem wholly dead; being as the excrements of other members, and being as the nails and the hair, they are wholly pared off, as was the manner to a proselyte woman; the power of grace takes them away, though other members continue vigorous. And therefore of swearing Christ says, 'What is more than Yea, yea, and Nay, nay, is ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ,' out of a profane heart. As when a man is a-dying, some members are stiff and cold, and clean dead long afore, as the feet, whilst others continue to have some life and heat in them; so in the mortification of a Christian, some lusts that are more remote are wholly stiff and stark, when others retain much life in them.

Quest. 2.—The second question is, Whether, when I apply Christ, and the promise with the virtue of Christ, for the mortification of some one particular lust or other, and do use those right means, as prayer, fasting, &c., for the special mortification of some one lust, whether that lust thereby doth not become more mortified than other lusts do?

Ans.—I answer, Yes, yet so as in a proportion this work of mortification runs through all the rest; for as in washing out the great stains of a cloth, the lesser stains are washed out also with the same labour, so it is here. Therefore the Apostle in all his exhortations to mortification, both Eph. 4 and Gal. 5 and Col. 3, though he exhorts to 'the putting off the old man,' the whole body of sin, yet instances in particular sins, because a man is particularly to endeavour the mortification of particulars, as it were apart; and yet because in getting them mortified the whole body of sin is destroyed, therefore he mentions both the whole body and particular members thereof apart, as the object of mortification. And to that end also doth God exercise his children, first with one lust, then with another, that they may make trial of the virtue of Christ's death upon every one. And therefore Christ bids us to 'pull out an eye,' and 'cut off a hand,' if they offend us: for mortification is to be by us directed against particular members; yet so as withal, in a proportion, all the rest receive a further degree of destruction. For as a particular act of

sin, be it uncleanness, or the like, when committed, doth increase a disposition to every sin, yet so as it leaves a present greater disposition to that particular sin than any other, and increaseth it most in potentia proxima, though all the rest in potentia remota: so in every act of mortification, though the common stock be increased, yet the particular lust we aimed at hath a greater share in the mortification endeavoured, as in ministering physic to cure the head, the whole body is often purged; yet so as the head, the party affected, is yet chiefly purged, and more than the rest.

CHAPTER II

Three questions resolved concerning positive growth.

OTHER questions there are concerning that other part of our growth, namely, in positive graces and the fruits thereof.

Quest. 1.—As, first, Whether every new degree of grace runs through all the faculties?

Ans.—I answer, Yes: for as every new degree of light in the air runs through the whole hemisphere, when the sun shines clearer and clearer to the perfect day, which is Solomon's comparison in the Proverbs; so every new degree of grace runs through, and is diffused through the whole man. And therefore also, 1 Thess. 5:23, when the Apostle there prays for increase of grace, he prays they may be 'sanctified wholly, in body, soul, and spirit.' And every new degree, though it begins at the spirit, the understanding, yet goes through all; for so, Eph. 4:23, 24, 'Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man:' it runs therefore through the whole man, having

renewed the mind; as the work of grace at first, so after still continually 'leaveneth the whole lump.'

Quest. 2.—Whether one grace may not grow more than another?

Ans. 1.—I answer, first, that it is certain that when a man grows up in one grace, he doth grow in all; they grow and thrive together. Therefore, in Eph. 4:15, we are said to 'grow up into him in all things.' Growth from Christ is general; as true growth in the body is in every part, so this in every grace. Therefore, 2 Cor. 3:18, we are said to be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory.' Every increase stamps a further degree of the whole image of Christ upon the heart. So the Thessalonians, their faith and their love did both overflow, 2 Thess. 1:3.

Ans. 2.—Yet, secondly, so as one grace may grow more than some other:—

(1.) Because some are more radical graces, as faith and love, therefore of the Thessalonians' faith the Apostle says, 2 Thess. 1:3, that it did 'grow exceedingly;' and then it follows, their love 'did overflow.'

(2.) Some graces are more exercised, and if so, they abound more; as though both arms do grow, yet that which a man useth is the stronger and the bigger, so is it in graces. In birds, their wings, which have been used most, are sweetest to the taste. As in the body, though the exercise of one member maketh the body generally more healthful, yet so as that member which is exercised will be freest from humours itself; so it is here. So 'tribulation worketh patience, patience experience,' Rom. 5. Many sufferings make patience the less difficult, and much experience, many experiments, make hope greater.

(3.) Again, thirdly, that some graces are more in some than others, appears hence; for what is it makes the differing gifts that are in Christians but a several constitution of graces, though all have every

grace in them? As now in the body every member hath all singular parts in it, as flesh, bones, sinews, veins, blood, spirits in it, but yet so some members have more of flesh, less of sinews and veins, &c., whence ariseth a several office in every member, according as such or such similar parts do more or less abound in a member. The hand, because it hath more nerves and joints in it than another member, though less flesh, yet how strong is it, and fit for many offices! The foot is not so. So in Christians, by reason of the several constitution of graces, and the temper of them more or less, have they several offices in the church, and are fitted for several employments. Some have more love, and fit for offices of charity; some more knowledge, and are fit to instruct; some more patience, and are fitter to suffer; some for self-denial, and accordingly do grow in these more specially.

Quest. 3.—The third question is, Whether this increase be only by radicating the same grace more, or by a new addition?

Ans.—I answer, that by adding a new degree of grace, as in making candles, which is done by addition; when a candle is put anew into the fat of boiled tallow, every time it is put in it comes out bigger, with a new addition; or as a cloth dipped in the dye comes out upon every new dipping in with a deeper dye. And this is done by a new act of creation, put forth by God. Therefore when David, being fallen, prayed for increase of grace, he says, 'Create in me a new heart.' And therefore, Eph. 4:24, when the Apostle exhorts to further putting on the new man, and speaketh of growth, he adds, 'which is created;' for every new degree is created as well as the first infusion, which shews the difference between natural growth and this. In natural growth there needs not a new creation, but an ordinary concurrence; but it is not so in this: that God that begun the work, by the same power perfects it. And therefore, Eph. 1:19, he prays that the believing Ephesians might see that power that continued to work in them to be no less than that which raised up Christ: for though natural life may with a natural concurrence increase itself, because the terminus à quo, the term from whence it springs, is but from a less degree of life

to a greater; yet it is otherwise in this life, and our growth in this is from a greater degree of death to a further degree of life. And therefore, Phil. 3:11, the Apostle calls growing in grace a going on 'to attain the resurrection from the dead.' And therefore the same power that raised up Christ must go along to work it. Hence also every new degree of grace is called a new conversion,—'Except ye be converted,' says Christ to his disciples converted already,—because the same power that wrought to conversion goes still to this. And therefore it is said that 'God gives the increase,' 1 Cor. 3:7; and it is called 'the increasing of God,' Col. 2:19; so, Hos. 14, shewing the ground why they grow so fast, 'Thy fruit is found in me,' says God, ver. 7. Although this is to be added by way of caution and difference, that therein God doth proportion his influence to our endeavours, which in conversion at first he doth not. Therefore we are said to be fellow-workers with him, although it be he that gives the increase, 1 Cor. 3:6–8; the same you have also Rom. 8, 'We by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh.' We, as co-workers with the Spirit.