

A
GRAINE OF
MVSTERD-SEED:

OR,
THE LEAST MEASURE OF
GRACE THAT IS OR CAN BE
effectuall to saluation.

Corrected and amended by M. W. Perkins.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOVABLE
AND VERTVOVS LADIE, THE LADIE
MARGARET, COVNTESSE OF
Cumberland, Grace and Peace.

Right Honourable, the kingdome of heauen, of which the Scripture speaketh so oft, is properly a certaine state or condition, whereby we stand in the fauour and love of God, in and by Christ. And this kingdome is compared to a Graine of Musterd-seede, to teach vs that a man is euen as that instant already entred into the kingdome of heauen, when the Lord, that good husbandman, hath cast but some little portion of faith or repentance into the ground of the heart; yea though it be but as one Graine of Musterd-seede. Of this little graine I haue penned this Treatise, in quantitie answerable thereto: and now I present the same to your Ladiship, not to supply your want, (for I hope you are stored with many graines of this kinde) but to performe some duty on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladiship will reade and except the same, I take my leave, commending you to the blessing and protection of the Almighty.

Your Honours to command,

WILLIAM PERKINS.

A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE:

OR, THE LEAST MEASURE OF GRACE

that is, or can be effectual to saluation.



I T is a very necessary point to be knowne, *What is the least measure of grace that can befall the true childe of God, lesser then which, there is no grace effectual to saluation.*

For first of all, the right vnderstanding of this point, is the very foundation of true comfort vnto all troubled and touched consciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to stirre vp thankfulness in them that haue any grace at all; when they shall in examination of themselves consider, that they haue receiued of God the least measure of grace, or more. Thirdly, it will be an inducement and a spurre vnto many carelesse and vnrepentant persons, to imbrace the Gospell, and to begin repentance for their sinnes; when they shall perceiue, and that by the word of God, that God accepts the very seedes and rudiments of faith and repentance at the first, though they be but in measure, as a graine of musterd-seede. Now then for the opening and clearing of this point, I will set downe fixe severall conclusions, in such order, as one shall confirme and explaine the other, and one depend vpon the other.

I. Conclusion.

A man that doth but begin to be conuerred, is euen as that infant, the very childe of God, though inwardly he be more carnall then spirituall.

The Exposition.

I N a man, there must bee considered three things; the substance of the body and soule whereof a man is said to consist; the faculties placed in the soule, and exercised in the bodie, as vnderstanding, will, affections: the integritie and puritie of the faculties, whereby they are conformable to the will of God, & beare his image. And since the fall of *Adam*, man is not deprived of his substance, or of the powers and faculties of his soule, but onely of the third, which is the puritie or integritie of nature: And therefore the conuersion of a sinner, whereof the conclusion speaketh, is not the change of the substance of man, or of the faculties of the soule, but a renewing and restoring of that puritie and holinesse, which was lost by mans fall; with the abolishment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the soule. This is the worke of God, and of God alone, and that on this manner. First of all, when it pleaseth God to worke a change in any, hee doth it not first in one part, then afterward in another, as hee that repaires a decayed house by peece-meale:

A but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment, is in the whole man, and euery part at once, specially in the mind, conscience, will, and affections: as on the contrary, when *Adam* lost the image of God, he lost it in euery part. Secondly, the conuersion of a sinner, is not wrought all at one instant, but in continuance of time, & that by certaine measures and degrees. And a man is then in the first degree of his conuersion, when the holy Ghost by the meanes of the word, inspires him with some spirituall motions, and begins to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his soule. And he may in this case very fitly be compared to the night, in the first dawning of the day, in which, though the darkenesse remaine, and be more in quantitie then the light, yet the Sun hath already cast some beames of light into the ayre: whereupon we teame it the breaking of the day. Now then the very point which I teach, is, that a man at that instant, & in this very state, (God as yet hauing but laid certaine beginnings of true conuersion in his heart) is the very childe of God, (& that not onely in the eternall purpose of God,) as all the elect are (but indeed by actual adoption;) and this is plaine by a manifest reason. There be foure severall workes of grace in euery childe of God: his vnion with Christ, his adoption, iustification, and conuersion: and these foure are wrought all at one instant, so as for order of time, neither goes before or after other, and yet in regard of order of nature, vnion with Christ, iustification, and adoption, goe before the inward conuersion of a sinner, it being the fruit and effect of them all. Vpon this it followeth necessarily, that a sinner in the very first act of his conuersion, is iustified, adopted, and incorporated into the mysticall body of Christ. In the parable of the prodigal sonne, the father with ioy receiues the wicked childe; but when? surely when hee saw him comming as farre off, and when as yet he had made no confession or humiliation to his father, but only had conceived with himselfe a purpose to returne and to say; Father, I haue sinned against heauen and against thee, &c. and *Paul* saith of many of the Corinthians, that he would not speake vnto them as spirituall men, but as carnall, euen babes in Christ. When *Dauid* reprooued by *Nathan*, did but begin to repent & say; I haue sinned: presently *Nathan* the Prophet of the Lord said; *The Lord hath taken away thy sinne.* Of this thing *Dauid* seemes to speake in the 32. *Psal.* v. 5. *I said [that is, I purposed and thought with my selfe] I will confesse against my*

1. Cor. 3.
1.

2. Sam.
12. 13.

selfe

Aug.
Hom. 14.Chriſt.
hom. 9.
de penit.

ſelfe mine vnrighrouſnes, and thou forganeſt mine iniquities. Vpon theſe words Auguſtine ſaith: Marke, he daſt not confeſſe, but promiſeth to confeſſe, and God forgiveth him. Again, There bee (ſaith he) three ſyllables, peccauit, I haue ſinned: and from theſe three ſyllables, the ſame of a ſacrifice did aſcend into heauen before God. Chryſoſtome ſaith, Say thou haſt ſinned, and thou haſt loſed thy ſinne. And Ambroſe ſaith, If he ſaid, I will confeſſe, and obtained pardon before he confeſſed, how much more when he had confeſſed, ſaying: I know mine iniquitie, was his ſinne pardoned? Gregorie on this Pſal. ſaith, Marke how ſpeedily pardon comes, and how great is the commendation of Gods mercy: in that pardon comes together with the deſire of confeſſion, and remiſſion comes to the heart, before confeſſion breaks forth in ſpeech.

II. Conclusion.

The firſt materiall beginnings of the conuerſion of a ſinner, or the ſmalleſt meſure of renewing grace, haue the promiſes of this life, and the life to come.

The Expoſition.

THe beginnings of conuerſion muſt bee diſtinguiſhed. Some are beginnings of preparation, ſome beginnings of compoſition. Beginnings of preparation are ſuch, as bring vnder, tame, and ſubdue the ſtubbornnes of mans nature, without making any change at all. Of this ſort are the accusations of the conſcience, by the miniſtery of the law, feares and terrors ariſing thence, compunction of heart, which is the apprehending of Gods anger againſt ſinne. Now theſe and the like, I exclude in the concluſion; for though they go before to prepare a ſinner to his conuerſion following, yet are they no graces of God, but fruits both of the law, being the miniſtery of death, as alſo of an accusing conſcience. Beginnings of compoſition, I tearme all thoſe inward motions & inclinations of Gods ſpirit, that follow after the work of the law vpon the conſcience, and riſe vpon the meditation of the Goſpel, that promiſeth righteouſnes and life cuerlaſting by Chriſt: out of which motions the conuerſion of a ſinner ariſeth, & of which it conſiſteth: what theſe are, it ſhall afterward appeare. Again, grace muſt be diſtinguiſhed; It is two-fold, reſtraining grace, or renewing grace. Reſtraining grace; I tearme certaine common gifts of God, ſeruing onely to order and frame the outward conuerſation of men to the law of God, or ſeruing to bereaue men of excuſe in the day of iudgement. By this kind of grace, heathen men haue bin liberal, juſt, ſober, valiant, mercifull. By it, men liuing in the Church of God, haue bin enlightened, and hauing taſted of the good word of God, haue reioyced therein, & for a time outwardly confirmed themſelues thereto. Renewing grace, is not common to all men, but proper to the elect, & it is a gift of Gods ſpirit, wher-

by the corruption of ſin, is not onely reſtrained, but alſo mortified, & the decayed image of God, reſtored in righteouſnes and true holines. Now then the concluſion muſt onely be vnderſtood of the ſecond, and not of the firſt: for though a man haue neuer ſo much of this reſtraining grace, yet vniſſe he haue the ſpirit of Chriſt, to create faith in the heart, and to ſanctifie him, he is as farre from ſaluation as any other. Thus then the ſenſe and meaning of the concluſion is, that the very leaſt meſure of ſauing grace, and the very beginnings or ſeedes of regeneration do declare, and after a ſort, giue title to men, of all the mercifull promiſes of God, whether they concerne this life, or the life to come; and are therefore approoued of God, if they be in truth, and accepted as greater meſures of grace. That which our Sauour Chriſt ſaith of the worke of miracles; *Math. 17. 20. If ye haue faith as a graine of Muſterd ſeede, ye ſhall ſay vnto this mountaine, Remove hence to yonder place, and it ſhall remove,* muſt by the law of equall proportion, be applied to ſauing faith, repentance, the feare of God, and all other graces; if they bee truly wrought in the heart, though they bee but as ſmal as one little graine of muſterd ſeed, they ſhall be ſufficiently effectuall to bring forth good workes, for which they are commendeth. The Prophet, *Eſa. 42. 3.* ſaith, *that Chriſt ſhall not quench the ſmoking flaxe, nor breake the bruiſed reed.* Let the compariſon be marked. fire in flaxe muſt be both lite and weak, in quantity as a ſparke or twaine, that cannot cauſe a flame, but onely a ſmoke, ſpecially in a matter ſo eaſie to burne. Here then is ſignified, that the gifts & graces of Gods ſpirit, that are both for meſure and ſtrength as a ſparke or twaine of fire, ſhall not be neglected, but rather accepted and cheriſhed by Chriſt. When our Sauour Chriſt heard the young man make a confeſſion of a praſtiſe but of outward and ciuill righteouſneſſe, *Hee looked vpon him, and loved him, Mark. 10. 21.* and when hee heard the Scribe ſpeake diſcreetly but one good ſpeech, that to loue God with all the heart is aboue all ſacrifices, he ſaid vnto him, *Thou haſt beene not farre from the kingdome of heauen. Mark. 12. 34.* Therefore no doubt, he will loue with a more ſpeciall loue, and accept as the good ſubiects of his kingdome, thoſe that haue receiued a further mercie of God, to bee borne anew of water and of the ſpirit.

III. Conclusion.

A conſtant and earneſt deſire to be reconciled to God, ſobeleene, and to repent, if it be in a touched heart is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance is ſelfe.

The Expoſition.

IF it or deſire is two-fold, naturall, and ſupernaturall. Natural is that, whoſe beginning and obiect is in nature, that is, which

ariſeth

a riseth of the naturall will of man, and affecteth such things as are thought to bee good according to the light of nature. And this kind of desire hath his degrees, yet so as they are limited within the compasse of nature. Some desire riches, honours, pleasure, some learning and knowledge, because it is the light and perfection of the minde: some goe further, and seeke after the vertues of iustice, temperance, liberalitie, &c. and thus many heathen men haue excelled. Some againe desire true happinesse, as *Balaam* did, who wished to die the death of the righteous: because it is the propertie of nature to seeke the preservation of it selfe. But here nature stayes it selfe: for where the mind reveales not, the will affects not. Supernaturall desires are such, as both for their beginning and object, are aboue nature: for their beginning is from the holy Ghost; and the object or matter about which they are conuersant, are things diuine and spirituall, which concerne the kingdome of heauen: and of this kind are the desires, of which I speake in this place. Againe, that we may not be deceiued in our desires, but may the better discern them from flittering and fleeting motions, I adde three restraints. First of all, the desire of reconciliation, the desire to beleue, or the desire to repent, &c. must be constant and haue continuance, otherwise it may iustly be suspected. Secondly, it must be earnest and serious, though not alwaies, yet at sometimes, that wee may bee able to say with *Danid*, My soule desires after thee, O Lord, as the thirly land. And, As the Hart braieth after the riuers of waters, so panteth my soule after thee: O Lord, my soule thirsteth for God, euen the liuing Go:l. Thirdly, it must be in a touched heart; for when a man is touched in conscience, the heart is cast downe, and as much (as it can) it withdrawes it selfe from God. For this cause then, if there be any spirituall motions whereby the heart is lifted vp vnto God, they are without doubt from the Spirit of God. Thus then I auouch, that the desire of reconciliation with God in Christ, is reconciliation it selfe: the desire to beleue, is faith indeede; and the desire to repent, repentance it selfe. But marke how: A desire to be reconciled, is not reconciliation in nature (for the desire is one thing, and reconciliation, another.) But in Gods acceptation: for if we beeing touched throughly for our sinnes, doe desire to haue them pardoned, and to bee at one with God, God accepts vs as reconciled. Againe, desire to beleue, it is not faith in nature, but onely in Gods acceptation, God accepting the will for the deede. That this doctrine is the will and word of God, it appeares by these reasons. First of all, God hath annexed a promise of blessednesse, and of life everlasting to the desire of grace, *Math. 5. 5. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall bee satisfied. Iob. 7. 37. If any man thirst, let him come to mee and*

drinke. Renel. 21. 6. I will giue vnto him which is athirst, of the well of the water of life freely. Now what is this to thirst? properly it is, when wee are in a drought or drinnesse and want drinke to refresh vs, to desire it. And therefore by all resemblance, they are said to thirst after righteousness, that want it, and would faine haue it. And they thirst after Christ, that feelee themselves out of Christ, & desire, ye along after the blood of Christ, that they might be refreshed with it in their consciences. Here then we see, that the desire of mercy, in the want of mercy, is the obtaining of mercy; & the desire to beleue in the want of faith, is faith. Marke then: though as yet thou want firme and liuely grace, yet art thou not altogether void of grace, if thou canst vnfaignedly desire it: thy desire is the seed, conception or bud of that which thou waneest. Now is the spring time of the ingrafted word, or the immortall seed cast into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, vsing the good means to this end appointed, and thou shalt see the leaues, blossomes, and fruite will shortly follow after. Secondly, the desire of any good thing is accepted of God, as the liuely inuocation of his holy name, *Psal. 10. 17. God heareth the desire of the poore, Psal. 145. 19. He will fulfill the desire of them that feare him.* What *Moses* said nothing, but onely desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the red sea, the Lord said vnto him, *Why cryest thou vnto me? Exod. 14. 15.* And when we know not to pray as we ought, *Paul* saith, *That the spirit maketh request by the inward groanes of the heart, Rom. 8. 26.* Hence I gather, that when a man in his weakness prayes with sighes and groanes, for the gift of liuely faith, the want whereof he finds in himselfe, his very prayer on this manner made, is as truly in acceptation with God, as the prayer made in liuely faith. And here it is further to be considered, that *Paul* calls these groanes *unspeakable*, and why? O most interpreters they are thought to be unspeakable, by reason of their greatnesse, and this I will not denie: it seemes neuerthelesse that they are so tearmed by reason of their weakness; for they are commonly small, weak, and confused in the hearts of Gods children when they are distressed. And the words following seeme to import thus much: for when it had bin said, that Gods spirit in vs makes request with groanes not to bee vttered, some man might haply reply and say, If wee cannot discern & utter these groanes in our selues, what are we the better? *Pauls* addes therefore, that although we know not, yet God a searcher of all things hidden in the heart, *knowes the minde and meaning of the spirit.* And thus the words yet further afford a comfortable instruction to the children of God, namely, that beeing in distresse, whether in life or death, if by grace wee can but sigh, or sobbe vnto God, though it bee weak and feeble, like the faint pulse in the time of death; wee, or the

spirit of God in vs, doe indeed make request vnto God that shal be heard, yea (as the words are) we doe more then make request: & though we do not alwaies see what Gods spirit makes vs to sigh after, yet God doth. To the testimonie of Scripture I adde the testimonie of godly and learned men, not to prooue the doctrine in hand, but to shew a consent, and to prooue thus much, that the thing which I a-
 nounce, is no private phantasie of any man. *Easily* (saith *Ambrose* of God) is he reconciled,

(a) If he bee instantly intreated. *Augustine* saith, Let thy desire be before him, and thy Father which seeth in secret shal reward thee openly: for thy desire is thy prayer, & if thy desire be continual, thy prayer is continual. He adds further in the same place, that the desire is a continual voice, and the crye of the heart, and the inward inuocation of God, which may be made without intermission. Again, To desire the helpe of grace, is the beginning of grace. A-
 gain, (b) The whole life of a good Christian, is an holy will and desire. And that which thou desirest, thou seest not: but by desiring (as it were) enlarged & made capable, that when it shall come, which thou shalt see, thou maiest bee fulfilled. *Basil* saith, Onely thou must will, and God will come of his owne accord. (c) *Bernard* saith, What, is not desire a voice? yea, a very strong voice. God heareth the desire of the poore, and a continual desire, though we
 speake nothing, is a voice continued. (d) *Luther* saith, Christ is then truly omnipotent, & then truly reignes in vs, when we are so weak that wee can scarce giue any groane. For *Paul* saith, that one such groane is a strong crye in the eares of God filling both heauen & earth. (e) Again, very few know, how weak and small faith and hope is under the crosse, & in temptation. For it appeares then to bee as smoking flaxe, which a good blast of wind would presently put out: but such as beleue in these combats and terrours against hope, under hope, that is opposing themselves by faith in the promise of Christ against the feeling of sinne, and the wrath of God, do find afterward that this little spark of faith (as it appeares to reason, which hardly percei-
 ueth it) is peradventure as the whole Element of fire which filleth all heauen, and swalloweth up all terrours and sinnes. (f) Again, The more we find our unworthinesse, & the lesse we finde the promises to belong vnto vs, the more must we desire them, being assured that this desire doth greatly please God, who desireth and wills that his grace should be earnestly desired. This doth saith, which iudgeth it a precious thing, and therefore greatly hungereth & thirsteth after it, and soobornes it. For God is delighted to fill the hungry with good things, and to send the rich vnprie away. (g) *Theodore* Beza saith, If thou find not thine heart inwardly touched, pray that it may bee touched: for then must thou know that this desire is a pledge of the Fathers will to thee. (h) *Kemnitius* saith, When I haue a good desire, though it do scarcely shew it selfe in some little and slender sigh, I must be assured that the spirit of God is present, and worketh his good worke. (i) *Vrbanus* saith, Faith in the most holy mch in this life is imperfect & weak. Yet neuertheless, who so

enueeles in his heart an earnest desire, and as-
 suming against his naturall doubtings, both can and must assure himselfe that hee is indued with true faith. Again, Wicked men doe not desire the grace of the holy spirit, whereby they may resist sinne. And therefore they are iustly deprived of it: for hee that earnestly desireth the holy Ghost, hath it already: because this desire of the spirit cannot bee but from the spirit: as it is said, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, after righteousness: for they shall bee satisfied. (k) *Bradford* saith, Thy sinnes are undoubtedly pardoned, &c. for God hath giuen thee a penitent and beleeking heart: that is, an heart which desireth to repent and beleue: for such an one is taken of him (hee ac-
 cepting the will for the deed) for a penitent and beleeking heart indeede. (l) *Tatius* saith, Our faith may bee so small and weak, as it doth not yet bring forth fruites, that may be liuely felt in vs; but if they which feele, themselues in such estate, desire to haue these feelinges [namely, of Gods fauour and loue] if they aske them at Gods hands by pray-
 er, this desire and prayer are testimonies that the spirit of God is in them, and that they haue faith already: for is such a desire a fruit of the flesh, or of the spirit? it is of the holy spirit, who bringeth it forth vnto vs in such as he dwells in, &c. Then those holy desires and prayers, beeing the motions of the holy Ghost in vs, are testimonies of our faith, al-
 though they seeme to vs small and weak. As the woman that feeleth the mooning of a child in her bodie, though very weak, assureth her selfe that she hath conceived, and hath the goeth with a liue child: so if we haue these motions, these holy affectiones, and desires before mentioned, let vs not doubt but that we haue the holy Ghost (who is the author of them) dwelling in vs, and consequently that we haue also faith. Again he saith, 1. If thou hast begunne to hate and flee sinne, 2. If thou feelest that thou art displeased at thine infirmities and corruptions: 3. If hauing offended God thou feelst a grieffe, and a sorrow for it: 4. If thou desire to abstaine: 5. If thou avoidst the occasion: 6. If thou trauesttest to doo thy thidancour: 7. If thou prayest to God to giue thee grace: all these holy affectiones proceeding from none other then from the spirit of God, ought to be so many pledges and testimonies that hee is in thee. *Mat-
 thew* Kiokes saith, Albeit your paines sometimes bee so horrible, that you find no release or comfort, neither in spirit nor bodie, yet if thy heart can onely sob vnto God, desire that you shall obtaine your heart's desire. And if thou art not of faith for at such time as the flesh, naturall reason, the law of God, the present torment, the euill at once doe crie, God is angry, and therefore there is neither helpe nor remedie to bee hoped for at his hands: at such time if say, I so lobe vnto God, as the demonstration of the secret seede of God, which is hidde in Gods elect children: and that they so lobe as to God a way, acceptable sacrifice, then what is this crosse, to giue our bodie to bee burnt enen for the trinitie sake. More testi-
 monies might bee alledged, but these shall suffice.

Against this point of doctrine it may bee
 al-

Lib. 7. in
 Luc. c. 66.
 a: i im-
 penite ro-
 gatur.
 On Psal.
 36.

b Expositi.
 Epi. ioh.
 tract. 4. c.
 3.
 c Tom. of
 humility.
 c Sup.
 Cant.
 Ser. 24.

d Tom.
 4. p. 124.

e Ibid.
 fol. 156.

f Ibid.
 fol. 300.

g Resp.
 ad A. G.
 Colloq.
 Monpel.
 a Loc.
 compar.
 1.

i Cate-
 chiz.

k Epistle
 to Care-
 lesse.

l Boeke
 of the
 maries of
 Gods
 children.

n Psal. 6.

is alleadged, that if desire to beleue in our weaknesse be faith indeed; then some are iustified and may be saued wanting a liuely apprehension and full perswasion of Gods mercie in Christ. *Ans.* Iustifying faith in regard of his nature is alwaies one and the same, and the essentiall proprietie thereof, is, to apprehend Christ with his benefits, & to assure the very conscience thereof. And therefore without some apprehension and assurance, there can bee no iustification or saluation in them that for age are able to beleue. Yet there bee certaine degrees and measures of true faith. There is a strong faith, which causeth a full apprehension and perswasion of Gods mercie in Christ. This measure of faith the Lord vouchsafed *Abraham, David, Paul*, the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs of God. It were a blessed thing if all beleuers might attaine to this height of liuely faith, to say with *Paul*, I am perswaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing else, shall bee able to separate vs from the loue of God in Christ: but all cannot; therefore there is another degree of faith lower then the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weake faith, & it also hath a power to apprehend and apply the promise of saluation, but as yet by reason of weaknesse, it is infolded (as it were) and wrapt vp in the heart, as the leaue and blossom in the bud. For such persons as haue this weake faith, can say indeed, that they beleue their finnes to bee pardonable, & that seriously in their hearts they desire to haue them pardoned; but as yet they cannot say, that they are without all doubt pardoned. And yet the mercy of God is not wanting vnto them. For in that they doe, and can desire, and indeauour to apprehend, they doe indeede apprehend; God accepting the desire to doe the thing, for the thing done. This which I say wil the better appeare, if the grounds thereof be considered. Faith doth not iustifie in respect of it selfe, because it is an action or vertue: or because it is strongly, liuely, and perfect: but in respect of the object thereof, namely Christ crucified, whom faith apprehendeth as hee is set forth vnto vs in the Word and Sacraments. It is Christ that is the author and matter of our iustice, and it is hee that applieth the same vnto vs: as for faith in vs, it is but an instrument to apprehend and recieue that which Christ for his part offereth and giueth. Therefore if faith erre not in his proper object, but follow the promise of God, though it doe but weakly apprehend, or at the least cause a man onely to endeauour and desire to apprehend, it is true faith, and iustificeth. Though our apprehension be necessary, yet our saluation stands rather in this, that Gods apprehends vs for his owne, then that we apprehend him for ours, *Phil. 3. verse 12.* And rather in this, that wee are knowne of him, then that we know him, *Gal. 4. 9.*

Out of this conclusion springs another not to bee o-

mitted, that God accepts the endeauour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it selfe.

That is, if men endeauour to please God in all things, God will not iudge their doings by the rigour of his law: but will accept their little and weake endeauour, to doe that which they can do by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But here remeber, I put this caveat; that this indeauour must be in and by the whole man; the very mind, conscience, will, & affections, doing that which they can in their kinds: and thus the indeauour to obey, which is a fruit of the spirit, shall bee distinguished from ciuill rightconnesse, which may be in heathen men, & is onely in the outward, and not in the inward man. The truth of this conclusion appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachi* saith, *Mal. 3. 17.* that God will spare them that feare him, as a father spares his childe, who accepts the thing done, as well done, if the child shew his good will to please his father, and doe what he can.

IV. Conclusion.

To see and feele in our selues the want of any grace pertaining to saluation, and to be grieved therefore, is the grace it selfe.

The Exposition.

Vnderstand this conclusion as the former, namely, that grieft of heart for the want of any grace necessarie to saluation, is as much with God as the grace it selfe. When beeing in distresse, wee cannot pray as wee ought, God accepts the very groanes, sobbes, and sighes of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it selfe, *Rom. 8. 29.* When wee are grieved, because wee cannot bee grieved for our finnes, it is a degree and measure of Godly sorrow before God. *Augustine* saith well: Sometimes our prayer is like warme, or rather colde, and almost no prayer: nay sometime it is altogether no prayer at all, and yet we cannot with grieft perceiue this in our selues: for if we can but grieft because wee cannot pray, wee now pray indeede. *Hierome* saith, Then wee are iust, when wee doe acknowledge our selues to be sinners. Againe, This is the true wisdom of man, to know himselfe to bee imperfect: and (that I may so speake) the perfection of all iust men in the flesh is imperfect. *Augustine* againe saith, That the vertue which is now in iust man is thus farre forth perfect, that vnto the perfection thereof, there belongs a true acknowledgment, and an humble confession of the imperfection thereof. A broken and a contrite heart after an offence, is as much with God, as if there had beene no offence at all. And therefore so soone as *Dauid* after his grieuous fall, in heauinesse of heart confessed his sinne, saying in effect but thus much, I haue sinned, the Prophet in the name of the Lord pronounceth the pardon of his sinne in heauen, and that presently.

Tom. 4. l. 1. ad simplic. in fine.

Lib. 1. contra Pelag. anos.

2. Sam. 12. 13.

V. Conclusion.

He that hath begun to subiect himselfe to Christ & his word, though as yet hee bee ignorant in most points of religion, yet if he haue a care to increase in knowledge, and to practise that which hee knowes, he is accepted of God as a true beleuer.

The Exposition.

SVndry persons by the Euangelists are said to beleue, which had onely seene the miracles of Christ, and as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledge Christ to be the Messias, and to submit themselves to him and his doctrine, which afterward should bee taught. On this manner the woman of Samaria beleueed, and many of the Samaritans vpon her report: and a certaine ruler, by reason of a miracle wrought vpon his sonne, is said to beleue, and all his household, *Iohn 4.42-53*. When our Sauour Christ commended the faith of the Apostles, tearing it a rocke, against which the gates of hell should not preuaile, it was not for the plentiful knowledge of the doctrine of saluation (for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely of the death, resurrection, ascension, & kingdome of Christ) but because they beleueed him to be the Sonne of God, and the Sauour of mankind, and they had withal resolved themselves to cleaue vnto him, and the blessed doctrine of saluation which he taught, though as yet they were ignorant in many points. The holy Ghost commends the faith of *Rahab* when shee received the spies. Now this her faith was indeed but a seed & beginning of liuely faith: for then shee had onely heard of the miracles done in *Egypt*, and of the deliuerance of the Israelites, & was thereupon smitten with feare, and had conceived a resolution with her selfe, to ioyne her selfe to the Israelites, and to worship the true God. Now these and the like, are tearmed beleuers, vpon iust cause: for though they be ignorant as yet, yet their ignorance shall be no continuing or lasting ignorance: and they haue excellent seedes of grace, namely, a purpose of heart to cleaue to Christ, and a care to profit in the doctrine of saluation, whereof they haue some little knowledge.

VI. Conclusion.

The fore-said beginnings of grace are counterfeits, vlesse they increase.

The Exposition.

THe wickednesse of mans nature, and the depth of hypocrisie is such, that a man may and can easily transforme himselfe into the counterfeits and resemblance of any grace of God. Therefore I put downe in this last conclusion a certaine note whereby the gifts of God may be discerned, namely, that they

A grow vp and increase as the Graine of Musterd-seed to a great tree, and beare fruit answerably. The grace in the heart is like the Graine of Musterd-seed in two things. First, it is smal to see to at the beginning: secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the heart, it increaseth speedily & spreads it self. Therefore, if a man at the first haue but some little feeling of his wants, some weake and faint desire, some small obedience, he must not let this sparke of grace goe out, but these motions of the spirit must be increased by the vse of the word, Sacraments, & praier: and they must daily be stirred vp by meditating, endeauouring, straining, asking, seeking, knocking. The master deliuering his talents to his seruants, saith vnto them, *Occupy till I come*, and not hide them in the earth, *Matth. 25. 26*. *Paul* vseth an excellent speech to *Timothie*: I exhort thee to stirre vp the gift of God which is in thee, namely, as fire is stirred vp by often blowing, and putting to of wood. *2. Tim. 1. 6*. As for such motions of the heart that last for a weeke, or a moneth, & after vanish away, they are not to be regarded: and the Lord by the Prophet *Ose* complains of them, saying, O Ephraim, thy righteousness is like the morning dew, *cha. 6. 4*.

Therefore considering, grace vnlesse it be confirmed and exercised, is indeed no grace; I will here reade certaine rules of direction, that we may the more easily put in practise the spirituall exercises of inuocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby also quicken and reuiue the seedes and beginnings of grace.

1. In what place soeuer thou art, whether alone or abroade, by day or by night, and whatsoeuer thou art doing, set thy selfe in the presence of God, let this perswasion alwaies take place in thy heart, that thou art before the liuing God: and doe thy endeauour that this perswasion may smite thy heart with awe and reuerence, and make thee afraid to sinne. This counsell the Lord gaue *Abraham*, *Gen. 17. 1*. *Waile before me and be vpright*. This thing also was practised by *Enoch*, who for this cause is said to walke with God.

2. Esteeme of euery present day as the day of thy death: and therefore liue as though thou wert dying, and doe those good duties euery day, that thou wouldest doe if thou wert dying. This is Christian watchfulness; and remember it.

3. Make catalogues and bills of thine owne finnes, specially of those finnes that haue most dishonoured God, and wounded thine owne conscience: set them before thee often, specially then, when thou hast any particular occasion of renewing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may bee further humbled. This was *Davids* practise when he considered his waies, & turned his feet to Gods comandements, *Pf. 119. 59*. And when he confessed the sins of his youth, *Pf. 25*. This was *Iobs* practise, when he said, he was not able to answer one of a thousand of his finnes vnto God, *Iob 9. 3*.

4. When thou first openest thine eyes in a morning, pray to God, and giue him thanks heartily: God then shall haue his honour, and thy heart shall bee the better for it the whole day following. For we see in experience, that vessels keep long the taste of that liquor where-with they are first seasoned. And when thou liest downe, let that bee the last also: for thou knowest not whether fallen asleepe, thou shalt euer rise againe aliuē. Good therefore it is, that thou shouldst giue vp thy selfe into the hands of God, whilst thou art waking.

5. Labour to see and feele thy spirituall pouerty, that is, to see the want of grace in thy self, specially those inward corruptions, of vnbelleefe, pride, selfe-loue, &c. Labour to be displeased with thy selfe: and labor to feele, that by reason of them thou standest in need of euery drop of the blood of Christ to heale and cleanse thee from these wants: and let this practise take such place with thee, that if thou be demanded, what in thine estimation is the vilest of the creatures vpon earth? thine heart & conscience may answer with a loud voice, *I, I, I, by reason of mine owne finnes*: and againe, if thou be demanded, what is the best thing in the world for thee? thy heart and conscience may answer againe with a strong and loud cry, *One drop of the blood of Christ to wash away my finnes*.

6. Shew thy selfe to be a member of Christ, and a seruant of God, not only in the generall calling of a Christian, but also in the particular calling in which thou art placed. It is not enough for a Magistrate to be a Christian man, but he must also be a Christian Magistrate: it is not enough for a matter of a family to be a Christian man, or a Christian in the Church, but he must also be a Christian in his family, and in the trade which he followeth daily. Not euery one that is a common hearer of the word, and a frequenter of the Lords table, is therefore a good Christian, yflesse his conuersation in his private house, and in his private affaires and dealings bee futable. There is a manto be seene what he is.

7. Search the Scriptures, to see what is sin, and what is not sin in euery action: this done, carry in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sin in any thing: for faith and the purpose of sinning can neuer stand together.

8. Let thine indeauour bee futable to thy purpose: and therefore do nothing at any time against thy conscience, rightly enformed by the word: exercise thy selfe to eschew euery sin, and to obey God in euery one of his commandements, that pertaine either to the generall calling of a Christian, or to thy particular calling. This did good *Iosias*, who turned vnto God with all his heart, according to all the law of *Moses*, 2. King. 23. 25. and thus did *Zacharie*, and *Elizabeth*, that walked in all the commandements of God without reproofe, *Luke* 1. 6.

9. If at any time against thy purpose and resolution, thou be ouertaken with any sinne

A little or great, lie not in it, but speedily recouer thy selfe, confessing thine offence, and by prayer entreat the Lord to pardon the same, and that earnestly, till such time as thou findest thy conscience truly pacified, and thy care to eschew the same sinne increased.

10. Consider often of the right and proper end of thy life in this world, which is not to seeke profit, honour, pleasure, but that in seruing of men, wee might serue God in our callings. God could, if it so pleased him, preferre man without the ministry of man, but his pleasure is to fulfill his worke and will, in the preferuation of our bodies, and saluation of our soules, by the imployment of men in his seruice, euery one according to his vocation. Neither is there so much as a bondslauē, but he must in & by his faithfull seruice to his master, serue the Lord. Men therefore doe commonly profane their labours and liues, by aiming at a wrong end, when all their care consisteth onely in getting sufficient maintenance for them & theirs, for the obtaining of credit, riches, and carnall commodities. For thus men serue themselves, and not God, or men: much lesse doe they serue God in seruing of men.

11. Giue all diligence to make thy election sure, and to gather manifold tokens thereof. For this cause obserue the workes of Gods providence, loue, and mercy, both in thee, and vpon thee, from time to time: for the serious consideration of them, and the laying of them together when they are many and severall, minister much direction, assurance of Gods fauour and comfort. This was the practise of *Dauid*, 1. Sam. 17. 34. 36. *Psal* 23. all.

12. Thinke euermore thy present estate whatsoeuer it be, to be the best estate for thee: because whatsoeuer befalls thee, though it bee sicknesse, or any other affliction or death, befalls thee of the good providence of God. That this may the better be done, labour to see, and acknowledge a providence of God, as well in pouerty, as in abundance, as well in disgrace as in good report, as well in sickness as in health, as well in life as in death.

13. Pray continually, I meane not by solemne and set prayer, but by secret and inward reiculations of the heart, that is, by a continual eleuation of minde vnto Christ, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that either by prayer, or giuing of thanks, so often as any occasion shall be offered.

14. Thinke often of the worst and most grievous things that may befall thee, either in this life, or death, for the name of Christ; make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy selfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not seem strange, but be borne the more easily.

15. Make conscience of idle, vaine, whoonest, and vngodly thoughts, for these are the seedes and beginnings of actual sinne in word and in deede. This want of care in ordering and composing of our thoughts, is often punished with a fearefull temptation in the very

thought, called of Diuines, *Tentatio blasphemiarum*, a tentation of blasphemies.

16. When any good motion or affection riseth in the heart, suffer it not to passe away, but feede it by reading, meditating, praying.

17. Whatsoever good thing thou goest about, whether it be in word or deede, do it not in a conceit of thy selfe, or in the pride of thy heart, but in humilitie, ascribing the power whereby thou doest thy worke, and the praise thereof to God; otherwise thou shalt finde by experience, God will curse thy best doings.

18. Despise not ciuill honestie: good conscience and good manners must goe together: therefore remember to make conscience of lying, and customeable swearing in common talke: contend not either in deed or word with any man, bee courteous and gentle to all, good and bad: beare with mens wants and frailties, as hastineffe, frowardnesse, self-liking, curiosities, &c. passing by them as beeing not perceived: returne not euill for euill, but rather good for euill: vse meate, drinke, and apparell, in that manner and measure, that they may further godlines; and may be as it were signes, in which thou maiest expresse the hidden grace of thy heart: Striue not to goe beyond any, vnlesse it be in good things: goe before thine equals in giuing of honour, rather then in taking of it: making conscience of thy word, and let it be as a bond: professe no more outwardly then thou hast inwardly in heart: oppresse or defraud no man in bargaining: in all companies, either doe good, or take good.

19. Cleane not by inordinate affection to any creature, but aboue all things, quiet and rest thy minde in Christ, aboue all dignity and honour, aboue all cunning and policy, aboue all glorie and honour, aboue all health and beauty, aboue all ioy and delight, aboue all fame and praise, aboue all mirth and consolation, that mans heart can feele or deuise beside Christ.

With these rules of practise, ioyned rules of

A meditation; whereof I propound fixe vnto thee, as I finde them set downe by a learned Diuine called *Victorinus Strigelius*.

I.

We must not fall away from God for any creature.

II.

Infinite eternity is farre to be preferred before the short race of this mortall life.

III.

Wee must hold fast the promise of grace, though wee lose temporall blessings, and they also in death must needes be left.

IV.

Let the loue of God in Christ, and the loue of the Church for Christ, be strong in thee, and preuaile against all other affections.

V

It is the principall Art of a Christian: to beleeue things inuisible, to hope for things deferred, to loue God when he shewes himselfe to be an enemy, and thus to perseuere vnto the end,

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet our selues in a confidence of the presence and helpe of God, and to aske of him, and withal, to waite either for some easement, or deliuerance.

VII.

All the workes of God are done in contrary means.

FINIS.