

of faith may save a sick soul. Prayer is the best physic can be used in a desperate case; you that have felt the disease of sin, and the mercy of your physician, learn to pity others.

4. And lastly, Is Christ a soul physician? then let us go to Christ to cure this sick, dying nation. Britain, God knows, is a sick patient, "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint." The body politic hath a *cachexy*, it is ill all over: magistracy, ministry, commonalty are diseased; and those who pretend to be our healers, are physicians of no value. We have spent our money upon these physicians, but yet our sores are not healed, Jer. xiv. 19. "Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?" Instead of healing us, those who should have been our physicians, have increased the nation's malady, by giving a toleration; this is like giving strong water in a fever, which doth more inflame the disease. Ah, sick Britain, because sinful Britain! sick of error, uncleanness, drunkenness; so sick, that we may fear our funerals are approaching: and, which is the worst symptom, though balm hath been poured into our wounds, the precious ordinances of God have been applied, yet we

are not healed; a sign of bad flesh that is so ill to be cured.

This sin-sickness in the land hath produced many direful effects; division, oppression, bloodshed, the very bowels and arteries of the nation are almost torn asunder, so that now God hath fulfilled that threatening upon us, Mic. vi. 13. "I will make thee sick with smiting thee." We had made ourselves sick with sinning, and God hath made us sick with smiting. Now what remains, but that we should go to the great physician, whose blood sprinkles many nations, that he should apply some healing medicines to dying Britain; God can with a word heal; he can give repentance as well as deliverance; he can put us in joint again. Let all the people of the land lie between the porch and the altar, saying, "Spare thy people, O Lord," Joel iii. 17. Our prayers and tears may set Christ on work to heal us, Psal. cvi. 23. "Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his servant stood in the breach to turn away his wrath." Let us never leave imploring our heavenly physician, till he lay a fig on England's boil, and cause it to recover.

THE BEAUTY OF GRACE.

1 Pet. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

THE blessed apostle having felt the efficacy and sovereignty of grace, is taken up with the thoughts of it; and so sweet is this wine of paradise, that he commends it to those dispersed Christians to whom he writes, wishing them all increase. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

The words run in the form of a salutation, "grace unto you, and peace." When we salute our friends, we cannot wish them a greater blessing than grace and peace: other mercies lie without the pale, and are dispersed in common to men; but grace is a special congiary and gift bestowed on them who are the favourites of heaven. In the words observe,

1. The connexion. 2. The order.

1. The connexion, Grace and peace. The

way to have peace. is to have grace; grace is the breeder of peace; the one is the root, the other the flower; peace is the sweet water that drops from the limbeck of a gracious heart.

2. The order, First grace, then peace; grace hath the priority; grace and peace are two sisters, but grace is the eldest sister; and give me leave at this time to prefer the elder before the younger. "Grace unto you be multiplied." For the illustration, consider,

1. What is meant by grace.

2. The Author of it.

3. Why it is called grace.

4. The cogency of it.

1. What is meant by grace. This word

GRACE hath various acceptations in scripture.

1. Grace is sometimes taken for the favour of God, Gen. vi. 8. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;" God did cast a gracious aspect upon him.

2. Grace is taken for beauty; as we say such a thing is graceful, James i. 11. "The flower falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth."

3. Grace is taken figuratively, and improperly, for the show of grace; as we call that a face in a glass which is but the idea and resemblance of a face; so John ii. 23. "Many believed in his name:" that believing was but a show of faith, as Austin and Theophilact note.

4. Grace is taken in a genuine and proper sense; so in the text, "Grace be multiplied;" it may admit of this description; grace is the infusion of a new and holy principle into the heart, whereby it is changed from what it was, and is made after God's own heart. Grace makes not only a civil, but sacred change; it biasseth the soul heaven-ward, and stamps upon it the image and superscription of God.

2. The author or efficient of grace; namely, the Spirit of God, who is therefore called the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. The spirit is the fountain from whence crystal streams of grace flow. Man, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, is God's harp or timbrel; the harp will not sound unless touched with the finger; so the heart of man cannot put forth any sweet melody or harmony, till first it be touched with the finger of God's Spirit; this blessed Spirit works grace in the subject,

1. Universally. 2. Progressively.

1. Universally; 1 Thess. v. 10. "The God of peace sanctify you wholly." The Spirit of God infuseth grace into all the faculties of the soul; though grace be wrought but in part, yet in every part; in the understanding light, in the conscience tenderness, in the will consent, in the affections harmony; therefore grace is compared to leaven, Matt. xiii. 33. because it swells itself in the whole soul, and makes the conversation to swell and rise as high as heaven.

2. The Spirit of God works grace progressively, he carries it on from one degree to

another. The Pelagians hold that the beginning of grace is from God; but the progress of grace is from ourselves; so God shall be the author of our faith, and we the finishers. God shall lay the first stone, and we the superstructure; but alas, there needs the continual influence of the Spirit to the carrying on the work of grace in our hearts. Should God withdraw his Spirit from the most holy men, their grace might fail and annihilate: if the sun withdraw its light, though ever so little, there follows darkness in the air; we need not only habitual grace, but assisting, exciting, subsequent grace. The ship needs not only the sails, but the winds to carry it; there needs not only the sails of our abilities and endeavours, but the wind of the Spirit to blow us to the heavenly port.

3. Why is the work of holiness in the heart called grace?

Ans. 1. Because it hath a supereminency above nature; it is a flower which doth not grow in nature's garden; it is of a divine extraction, James iii. 17. By reason we live the life of men, by grace we live the life of God.

2. It is called grace, because it is a work of free grace; every link in the golden chain of our salvation is wrought and enamelled with free-grace; that one should be sanctified, and not another, this is of grace; that God should pass by many of the noble, rich, learned, and graft his heavenly endowments upon a more wild and luxuriant stock, a crabbed nature, weaker parts, well may it be called grace.

Quest. But why is not grace bestowed upon all?

Ans. We must hold with Zanchy, there is always a just reason of God's will; but in particular, I answer,

1. God gives grace to one, and denies it to another, to show his prerogative; God is not bound to give grace to all, Rom. ix. 15. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Suppose two malefactors brought before the king, one he will pardon, but not the other; if any demand the reason, he will answer, it is my prerogative: so God will give grace to one, not to another; he will make one a vessel of mercy, the other a vessel of wrath, this is his prerogative. The apostle hath silenced all disputes of this kind,

Rom. ix. 20, 21. "Who art thou that repliest against God? hath not the potter power over the clay?" If we could suppose a plant to speak, why was not I made a bird, or a beast? why should not I have reason? just so it is when vain man enters into contest with God; why should not I have grace as well as another? dispute not against prerogative; let not the clay syllogize with the potter.

2. I answer, God may justly deny his grace to any wicked man, for two reasons.

1. Because once he had grace, and lost it; if a father gave his son a stock to trade with, and the son breaks, the father is not bound to set him up again. God gave Adam a stock of grace to begin the world with; Adam did break, and make all his children bankrupts; God is not tied to give him grace again.

2. God may justly deny his grace to every wicked man, because he is a despiser of grace, he tramples this pearl under foot, Prov. i. 7. Is God bound to give grace to them that despise it? if a king's pardon be rejected once, he is not bound to tender it any more; but I shall not launch forth any further into this.

4. The eogeneity and necessity of grace; it is most needful, because it fits us for communion with God, 2 Cor. vi. 14. "What communion hath light with darkness?" God can no more converse with an ungracious soul, than a king can converse with a sow; it is by grace that we keep a constant intercourse with heaven.

Use 1. Exhort. Let me with the greatest zeal and earnestness persuade all who have souls to save, to endeavour after grace; grace will be desirable at death; it is as useful now, and more seasonable to look after, Prov. iv. 7. "With all thy getting get understanding." Alexander being presented with a rich cabinet of king Darius, he reserved it to put Homer's works in, as being of great value. The heart is a spiritual cabinet into which the jewel of grace should be put; we should desire grace above other things; above the gifts of the Spirit; nay, above the comforts of the Spirit. Comfort is sweet, but grace is better than comfort; bread is better than honey: we may go to heaven without comfort, not without grace; it is grace makes us blessed in life and death. I shall

show you twelve rare excellencies in grace: I shall set this fair virgin of grace before you, hoping that you will be tempted to fall in love with it.

1. Grace hath a soul-quickenning excellency in it, Heb. x. 38. "The just shall live by faith." Men void of grace are dead; they have breath, yet want life; they are walking ghosts, Eph. ii. 1. The life of sin is the death of the soul: a sinner hath all the signs of one that is dead; he hath no pulse; the affections are the pulse of the soul; his pulse doth not beat after God, he hath no sense, Eph. iv. 19. "Who being past feeling." Dead things have no beauty, there is no beauty in a dead flower; dead things are not capable of privilege: the dead heir is not crowned; but grace is the vital artery of the soul; it doth not only irradiate, but animate; therefore it is called "the light of life," John viii. 12. And believers are said to have their grave clothes pulled off, and to be alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 13. By grace the soul is grafted into Christ the true vine, John xv. 5. and is made not only living but lively, 1 Pet i. 3. Grace puts forth a divine energy into the soul.

2. Grace hath a soul-enriching excellency, 1 Cor. i. 5. "Ye are enriched in all knowledge." As the sun enricheth the world with its golden beams, so doth knowledge bespangle and enrich the mind. Faith is an enriching grace, James ii. 5. "Rich in faith;" faith brings Christ's riches into the soul, it entitles to the promises; the promises are full of riches, justification, adoption, glory: faith is the key that unlocks this cabinet of the promises, and empties out their treasure into the soul. The riches of grace excel all other riches. "The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver," Prov. iii. 14.

1. These riches make a man wise: wisdom is the best possession; other riches cannot make one wise. A man may have a full purse, and an empty brain. Many a rich heir, though he lives till he become of age, yet he never comes to years of discretion: but these riches of grace have power to make a man wise, Psal. cxl. 10. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The saints are compared to wise virgins, Matt.

xxv. Grace makes a man wise to know Satan's devices and subtleties, 2 Cor. ii. 11. it makes him wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Grace gives the serpent's eye in the dove's head.

2. These spiritual riches sanctify other riches. Riches without grace are hurtful, they are golden snares; they are the bellows of pride, the fuel of lust; they set open hell gates for men; they are unblest blessings; but grace sanctifies our riches, it corrects the poison, it takes away the curse, it makes them beneficial to us; riches shall be certificates of God's love, wings to lift us up to paradise. Thus grace, by a divine chemistry, extracts heaven out of earth, and gives us not only venison but the blessing.

3. Grace satisfies; other riches cannot, Eccl. v. 10. Riches can no more fill the heart, than a triangle can fill a circle; but grace fills up every chink and hiatus of the soul; it dilates the heart, it ravisheth the affections with joy, Rom. xv. 13. which joy, as Chrysostom, saith, is a foretaste of heaven.

3. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-adorning excellency, it puts a beauty and lustre upon a person, 1 Pet. iii. 4, 5. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves." If a man hath plate and jewels, cloth of gold, hangings of arras, these adorn the house, not the man; the glory of a man is grace, Prov. iv. 9. "She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace." The graces are a chain of pearl that adorns Christ's bride; the heart inlaid and enamelled with grace, is like the "King's daughter, all glorious within," Psal. xlv. 13. A gracious soul is the image of God, curiously drawn with the pencil of the Holy Ghost; a heart beautified with grace, is the angels' joy. Luke xv. 7. and is God's lesser heaven, Isa. lvii. 15. Eph. iii. 17. Reason doth not so far exceed sense, as grace doth reason; grace changeth corruption into perfection; nothing so graceth a man as grace doth; grace is the purest complexion of the soul, for it makes it like God.

Grace is the flower of delight which Christ loves to smell to; grace is to the soul, as the eye to the body, as the sun to the world, as the diamond to the ring, it doth bespangle and beautify. A soul decked with grace, is as the dove covered with silver wings, and golden feathers.

4. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-cleansing excellency. By nature we are defiled; sin is an impure issue, it is a befiling thing, 2 Cor. vii. 1. A sinner's heart is so black, that nothing but hell can pattern it; but grace is a spiritual laver; therefore it is called "the washing of regeneration," Tit. iii. 5. The grace of repentance cleanseth; Mary's tears, as they washed his feet, so they washed her heart; faith hath a cleansing virtue, Acts xv. 9. "Having purified their hearts by faith." Grace lays the soul a-whitening, it takes out the leopard spots, and turns the cypress into an azure beauty. Grace is of a celestial nature; though it doth not wholly remove sin, it doth subdue it; though it doth not keep sin out, it keeps it under; though sin in a gracious soul doth not die perfectly, yet it dies daily. Grace makes the heart a spiritual temple, which hath this inscription upon it, "Holiness to the Lord."

5. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-strengthening excellency, it enables a man to do that which exceeds the power of nature. Grace teacheth to mortify our sins, to love our enemies, to prefer the glory of Christ before our own lives. Thus the three children by the power of grace marched in the face of death; neither the sound of the music could allure them, nor the heat of the furnace affright them, Dan. iii. 17. Grace is a Christian's armour of proof, which doth more than any other armour can; it not only defends him, but puts courage into him. Tertullian calls Athanasius an invincible adamant; grace makes us not only bear suffering, but glory in suffering, Rom. v. 3. A soul steeled and animated with grace, can tread upon the lion and adder, Ps. xciii. 13. and with the leviathan, can laugh at the shaking of a spear, Job xli. 29. Thus doth grace infuse an heroic spirit, and drive strength into a man, making him act above the sphere of nature.

6. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-raising excellency; it is a divine sparkle that ascends; when the heart is divinely touched with the load-stone of the Spirit, it is drawn up to God. Prov. xv. 24. "The way of life is above to the wise:" grace raiseth a man above others; he lives in the altitudes, while others creep on the earth, and are almost buried in it; a Christian by the wings of grace flies aloft; the saints "mount up as eagles," Isa. xl. 31. A believer is a citizen of heaven, there he trades by faith. Grace shoots the heart above the world, Ps. cxxxix. 17. Phil. iii. ult. Grace gives us conformity to Christ, and communion with Christ, 1 John i. 3. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus." A man full of grace, hath Christ in his heart, and the world under his feet; grace humbles, yet elevates.

7. *Excellency.* Grace hath a perfuming excellency; it makes us a sweet odour to God. Hence grace is compared to those spices which are most odoriferous and fragrant. "Myrrh, cinnamon, frankincense," Cant. iv. 13. There is a double perfume that grace sends forth.

1. It perfumes our names, Heb. xi. 2. "By faith the elders obtained a good report." Grace was the spice which perfumed their names. How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness, Phinehas for his zeal? what a fresh perfume do their names send forth to this day! the very wicked cannot but see a resplendent majesty in the graces of the saints; and though with their tongues they revile grace, yet with their hearts they reverence it. Thus grace is aromatical, it embalms the names of men; a gracious person when he dies, carries a good conscience with him, and leaves a good name behind him.

2. Grace perfumes our duties, Psal. cxli. 2. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense." Noah's sacrifice was a perfume, Gen. viii. 21. The Lord smelled a sweet savour. The sighs of a wicked man are an unsavoury breath, his solemn sacrifice is dung, Mal. ii. 3. There is such a noisome stench comes from a sinner's duties, that God will not come near, Amos v. 21. "I will not smell in your solemn assemblies."

Who can endure the smell of a dead corpse? but grace gives a fragraney and redolency to our holy things, Heb. xi. 4. "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, God testifying of his gifts." Abel's sacrifice was better scented, God smelled a sweet savour of it; for he testified of his gifts. If it be asked what this testimony was God gave of Abel's sacrifice? Hierom saith, God set his sacrifice on fire; 1 Kings xviii. 38. so from heaven testifying his acceptance of Abel's offering; and if grace doth so perfume you, wear this flower, not in your bosoms, but in your hearts.

8. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-ennobling excellency, it doth ennoble a man: grace makes us vessels of honour, it sets us above princes and nobles. Theodosius thought it more dignity to be Christ's servant, and wear his livery laced with the silver graces of the Spirit, than to be great and renowned in the world, Isa. lxiii. 4. "Since thou wert precious in my sight thou hast been honourable." Sin doth debase a man, Christ tells wicked men their pedigree, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil:" they may put the cloven foot in their scutcheon; an ungracious person is a vile person; Nah. i. 14. "I will make thy grave, for thou art vile:" the Hebrew word for vile signifies to be lightly esteemed: there is nothing so vile but an ungracious man will do; he is ductile and facile to any thing, like wire, which will be bent awry; he will snare his conscience, stain his credit, run as a lackey after the sinful injunctions of men; but grace ennobles; he who is divinely inspired, as he is high born, 1 John iii. 1. so he acts suitably to his birth, he hates whatever is disingenuous and sordid. The saints are called kings and priests for their dignity, Rev. i. 6. and jewels for their value, Mal. iii. 17.

9. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-securing excellency, it brings safety along with it. You all desire to be safe in dangerous times; if sword or pestilence come, if death peep in at your windows, would you not now be safe; nothing will secure you in times of danger but grace; grace is the best life-guard; it sets Christians out of gunshot, and frees them from the power of hell and damnation, Prov. x. 2. "Righteousness delivers from death."

Do not righteous men die? yes, but righteousness delivers from the sting of the first death, and the fear of the second. It was the saying of one, "I am not afraid to die, but to be damned:" but here is a believer's comfort, the fire of God's wrath can never kindle upon him; grace is God's own image stamped on the soul, and he will not destroy his own image. Xerxes, the Persian, when he destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure; that soul which hath the beauty of holiness shining in it, shall be preserved for the glory of the structure; God will not suffer his own temple to be destroyed: would you be secured in evil times? get grace and fortify this garrison; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet, saith he, "I laid me down and slept," Psal. iii. 5. A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon; grace is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace may be shot at, but can never be shot through; grace puts the soul into Christ, and there it is safe, as the bee in the hive, as the dove in the ark, Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

10. *Excellency.* Grace hath a heart-establishing excellency, Heb. xiii. 9. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Before the infusion of grace, the heart is like a ship without a ballast; it wavers and tosseth, being ready to overturn; therefore a man void of grace is called a double-minded man, James i. 8. He acts for and against, as if he had two souls; he is unresolved, to-day of one mind, to-morrow of another; to-day he will hear a preacher that is orthodox, to-morrow one that is heterodox: he will be as the times are, and change his religion as fast as the chameleon doth his colour. Hearts unsanctified will be unsettled; they will face about to the rising side; they will follow not what is best, but what is safest; they are not for that religion which hath the word to guide it, but for that which hath the sword to back it; this Seneca calls a mind that rolls up and down, and settles no where.

But grace doth consolidate and fix the

heart, Psal. lvii. 7. "My heart is fixed, O God." Hypocrites are like meteors in the air; David was a fixed star; grace keeps the heart upright; and the more sincere, the more steadfast; grace carries the heart to God as the centre, and there it rests, Psal. exvi. Psal. vii. A gracious heart cleaves to God, and let whatever changes come, the soul is settled as a ship at anchor.

11. *Excellency.* Grace hath a preparatory excellency in it; it prepares and fits for glory. Glory is the highest peg of our felicity, it transcends all our thoughts; glory can have no hyperbole. Now grace tunes and fits the soul for glory, 2 Pet. i. 3. "Who hath called us to glory and virtue." Virtue leads to glory. First you cleanse the vessel, and then pour in wine. God doth first cleanse us by his grace, and then pour in the wine of glory; the silver link of grace draws the golden link of glory after it: indeed grace differs little from glory; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the flower. In short, glory is nothing else but grace commencing and taking its degrees.

12. *Excellency.* Grace hath an abiding excellency; temporal things are for a season, but grace hath eternity stamped upon it, it is called durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. Other riches take wings and fly from us; grace takes wings and flies with us to heaven. Some tell us of falling away from grace; I grant seeming grace may be lost; a blazing comet will spend and evaporate; nay, saving grace may fail in the degree, it may suffer an eclipse, it may lose all its sweet fruit of joy and peace; but still there is sap in the vine, and "the seed of God remains," 1 John iii. 4. Grace is a blossom of eternity; 1 John ii. 27. "The anointing that abides;" colours laid in oil are durable; those hearts which are laid in oil, and have the anointing of God, hold their colours, and endure for ever: grace is compared to a "river of the water of life," John vii. 38. This river can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring that feeds it. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires; so the Pelagians would make it; to-day a believer, to-morrow an unbeliever; to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified; this would be like a lease soon run out; but God settles grace on the saints

as an inheritance, and he will see that the entail shall never be cut off. He who hath true grace, can no more fall away than the angels, which are fixed stars in their heavenly orbs.

The arguments to prove the perpetuation of grace are:

1. God's election; this I ground upon Rom. viii. 29, 30. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." Predestination is the grand cause of the saints' preservation; God chooseth as well to salvation as to faith, 2 Thess. ii. 13. What shall make God's election void?

2. The power of God, 1 Pet. i. 5. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." I deny not but grace in itself may perish, (our grace is no better coin than Adam's,) but grace in God's keeping cannot; the saints' graces of themselves may break as glasses, but these glasses in the hand of God never break.

3. God's solemn engagement; the Lord hath passed it under hand and seal; he hath given bond for the saints' perseverance, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, and they shall not depart from me." A believer's charter is confirmed under the broad seal of heaven; and if grace doth not endure to eternity, it is either because God wants power to make good what he hath decreed, or truth to make good what he hath promised; either of which to assert were blasphemy.

Besides all this, Jesus Christ our blessed high priest, who hath the golden plate on his forehead, appears in the court; and as he poured out blood on the cross, so he pours forth prayers in heaven for the saints' perseverance, Heb. vii. 25. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And Christ is not only a priest, but a son; therefore likely to prevail; and which puts the matter out of doubt, what Christ prays for as he is man, he hath power to give as he is God, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will:" "Father," there he prays as man; "I will," there he gives as God.

So that grace is an abiding thing; Christians, you may lose your friends, your estates, your lives, but you shall never lose your

grace. Those who hold falling away from grace, would make a believer wear Cain's mark, which was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh; they would spill a Christian's cordial, and break a link of the chain of salvation.

2. *Use.* Trial: let us try whether our grace be true; there is something looks like grace which is not. Chrysostom saith the devil hath a counterfeit chain to all the graces, and he would deceive us with it. Lapidaries have ways to try their precious stones; let us try our grace by a Scripture touchstone: the painted Christian shall have a painted paradise.

1. The truth of grace is seen by a displacency and antipathy against sin, Psal. cxix. 104. "I hate every false way:" grace sets itself against complexion sins, Psal. xviii. 23. and against the sins of the times, Rev. ii. 2.

2. Grace is known by the growth of it, growth evidenceth life. Dead things grow not; a picture will not grow; a hypocrite, who is but a picture of religion, doth not grow; a good Christian grows in love to Christ, in humility, in good works, Psal. xcii. 12. Hos. xiv. 5. "He shall grow as the lily, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." When the Spirit of God distils as dew upon the soul, it makes grace flourish, and put forth into maturity.

3. True grace will make us willing to suffer for Christ. Grace is like gold, it will abide the "fiery trial," 1 Pet. i. 7. And if upon a serious scrutiny and trial we find that we have the right jewel, "the grace of God in truth," Col. i. 6. this will be a deathbed cordial; we may with Simeon, "depart in peace," being assured that though we cannot resist death, yet we shall overcome it.

Use 3. Direction. Let me lay down two or three directions for the attaining of grace.

1st *Direction.* If we would be enriched with this jewel of grace, let us take pains for it; we are bid to make a hue and cry after knowledge, and to search for it, as a man that searcheth for a vein of gold, Prov. ii. 2, 3. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat. 5 D

2. Let us go to God for grace; he is called "the God of all grace," 1 Pet. v. 10. We could lose grace of ourselves, but we cannot find it of ourselves. The sheep can wander from the fold, but cannot return without the help of the shepherd; go to the God of all grace; God is the first planter, the promoter, the perfecter of grace; God is the Father of lights, James i. 17. He must light up this candle of grace in the soul; grace is in his gift; it is not an impropriation, but a donative: O then go to God in prayer, lay thy heart before him; Lord, I want grace; I want an humble, believing heart, and thou art "the God of all grace, all my springs are in thee." O enrich me with grace, deny me not this before I die: what is gold in the bag, if I have no oil in the lamp? give me "that anointing of God." I read in thy word of "the fruits of the Spirit;" Lord, my heart is a barren soil, plant some of these supernatural fruits in me, that I may be more useful and serviceable; Lord, I cannot be put off with other things. Who wilt thou give grace to, if not to such as ask, and are resolved not to give over asking?

3. If you would have grace, engage the prayers of others in your behalf; he is like to be rich, who hath several stocks going; he is in the way of spiritual thriving, who hath several stocks of prayer going for him. If you had a child that were sick, you would beg the prayers of others; thou hast a soul that is sick, sick of pride, lust, "sick unto death;" O beg the prayers of godly friends, that God will heal thee with his grace; a Moses and Jacob have much power with God: believers can prevail sometimes not only for themselves, but for their friends, James v. 16. A godly man's prayers may

do you more good than if he should bestow upon you all his lands of inheritance.

4. If you would have grace, frequent the means of grace, lie at the pool of Bethesda, wait at the posts of wisdom's door. Inward grace is wrought by outward means; the preaching of the word is God's engine that he useth for working grace; it is called "the rod of his strength," Psal. cx. 2. and "the breath of his lips," Isa. xi. 4. By this he causeth breath to enter; out of this golden pipe of the sanctuary, God empties the golden oil of grace into the soul; the ministry of the gospel is called "the ministry of the Spirit," 2 Cor. viii. because the Spirit of God ordinarily makes use of this to work grace; this ministry of the Spirit is to be preferred before the ministry of angels.

Quest. Why is the word preached the ordinary means to convey grace? why not conference or reading?

Ans. The reason is, because God hath appointed it to this end, and he will grace his own ordinances, 1 Cor. i. 21. "it pleased God." What reason could be given why the waters of Damascus should not have as sovereign virtue to heal Naaman's leprosy as the waters of Jordan? only this, because the Lord did appoint and sanctify the one to this work, and not the other; if therefore we would have grace, let us wait where the manna falls, and there expect the dew of the Spirit to fall with manna; the power of God goes along with his word.

How should we delight in ordinances! Sleidan saith there was a church in France formerly, which the Protestants called Paradise; as if they thought themselves in paradise while they were in the house of God; those ordinances should be our paradise which are "the power of God to salvation."

THE TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BLOSSOMING, AND BRINGING FORTH FRUIT.

PHIL. i. 11. "*Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*"

THE blessed apostle in this chapter makes a solemn prayer to God for these Philippians; and amongst the rest, he puts up two rare petitions for them.