

## CHAP. IX.

*On Growth in Grace. What it consists in, and how it is manifested;—the way in which it is increased, and carried on in fellowship with God: with the knowledge which the Believer hath of it by comparing his experience with the word, which treats on that subject.*

**WE** have taken a view of and treated on the office and work of the Holy Ghost in the regenerate and called people of God; in which he has been considered as the great and divine agent of their regeneration, effectual calling, conversion, sanctification, and personal holiness; who hath wrought all their works *in* and *for* them, and whose continued influence is the cause of their final perseverance, till grace is swallowed up in glory. Regeneration produces conversion. The former is the act of God within us and upon us: the latter is our act towards God. We being turned by the Lord return to him. In conformity with this acknowledged truth the prophet prays, "Turn thou us  
" O Lord! and we shall be turned." Personal, internal, practical sanctification, godliness, and gospel holiness are the fruits and effects of spiritual regene-

ration and conversion to the Lord God, as our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, and under views and apprehensions of him as such, through the sacred and inward teaching of the Lord the Spirit. Sanctification is the fruit of spiritual life communicated to us from Christ the fountain of it, and conveyed to our souls in our new birth by the Spirit of Christ. It is expressed by the apostle to be "Living unto God." The effects of which are two-fold, *viz. mortification of sin and a living exercise of grace.* All those seeds of everlasting life, those principles of holiness, those graces, and holy dispositions implanted in the new nature, which the Holy Ghost hath begotten in us by the word and through his own divine energy, are drawn forth into act and exercise in our spiritual walk with God, and before him to the view of others; and also in our spiritual warfare against sin, satan, the world, self, death, and hell: and hereby proof is given that *we have been with Jesus.* The believer, in his living unto God and as admitted into real communion with him, learns from the word and by the Spirit to know, that the Father loves him in Christ with an everlasting love,—that he hath accepted him in the beloved,—that his person and state in Christ are immutably blessed,—that he

is called to make use of Christ and his fulness for all the purposes of spiritual life, and that he cannot die to sin, live unto God, nor grow in grace, but as he liveth out of, and entirely off himself, and all that he is in himself, on the fulness of him *that filleth all in all*.

Growth in Grace is inseparably connected with an INCREASING KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Thus saith Peter, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen<sup>a</sup>."

It is commonly asserted, and even by some who are great divines, and also champions for the free and sovereign grace of God and doctrinal divinity, that sanctification is a progressive work in the soul. There is, say they, something wanting in our faith, and hope, and love; and consequently there are increase and growth in sanctification and holiness. To which I would reply, if regeneration be at once complete, and sanctification and personal holiness be the real fruits of it, then what is commonly styled growth in sanctification and holiness will be found, on the strictest examination, to be but the fruit of faith. In that case, though

<sup>a</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 18.

there be a growth in faith, it will not follow that it can be strictly and properly said, that there is a growth in sanctification and holiness; unless bringing forth the fruits of it in our life and conversation be called by that name. To this it may be objected, that the apostle *John* speaks of babes in Christ, also of young men, and Fathers in Christ, which evidently proves, that all God's children are not of one and the same spiritual growth and advancement in the school of Christ: and that consequently there must be allowed to be a spiritual growth in real christians. It is most readily acknowledged, that the scriptures treat of true, real, and spiritual growth in the called people of God, which is styled in the infallible word *Growth in Grace, growing up into Christ, &c.* But though there are innumerable circumstantial differences in the cases and experiences of the called people of God, and though there is a growth which is suited to them, considered as *babes, young men, and fathers*; yet there is but one *common life*, in the various stages and degrees of the *same life carried on to its perfection* by the Holy Spirit, until it issues in glory eternal. The work of God the Holy Ghost in regeneration is *eternally complete*. It admits of *no increase nor de-*

crease. It is *one* and the *same* in *all* believers. There will not be the *least* addition to it in *Heaven*:—not one grace, holy affection, desire, or disposition *then*, which is not in it *now*. The whole of the Spirit's work, therefore, from the moment of regeneration to our glorification, is to draw out those graces into act and exercise, which he hath wrought within us. And, though one believer may abound in the fruits of righteousness more than another, yet there is not one of them *more regenerated* than another. This work of the Spirit, in which our meetness for the eternal fruition of God consists, *is alike in all, in each, and every one, that is born of the Spirit*. And the babe in Christ; dying as such, is as capable of as high communion with God *as Paul* in the state of glory. Because all depends on the eternal Spirit's drawing out the graces of the new creature into an actual exercise on God in Christ as his exceeding joy. The regenerate soul cannot have any addition to the holiness of that new principle imparted from the Spirit to eternity. He cannot be a *partaker of every grace* of the Holy Spirit *more completely* than he is already. He is *in Christ complete*. And *he can be but complete in glory*. So that it appears to me to be most scrip-

tural to say, that though there is a *growth of Grace*, yet *none in inward sanctification and holiness*. And the believer's view of his spiritual state, as a new creature in Christ Jesus, hath a divine influence on his growth in grace. He should consider his *heavenly Father's love* to him to be *without increase or diminution*: as *one eternal and consummate act* in the infinite mind, which *knows no changes towards him*. He should view the *finished work of the Son* to be his *everlasting salvation*, in which he stands before the throne *eternally complete*. He should remember, that the *revelation of the Father's love* and the *Son's redemption* is *once for all made and applied to him by the Holy Ghost*; so that, *in all these respects*, he cannot have greater evidence than he has of his union with Christ, and of his title to all spiritual blessings in him; and that the *Father's love* and *these inestimably precious truths* are made *realities to his spiritual mind by the witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost*.

This leads into an *acquaintance with grace* in its *original*, — *with grace* in the *doctrine, influence, and efficacy of it*; which is, as considered in God the fountain, his free, sovereign, and royal favour, wherein there is life. All

the blessings flowing from it are the expressions of God's eternal delight and complacency in his beloved ones. The whole doctrine of it, as recorded in the word, is one grand display of the love and bounty of the **THREE PERSONS** in the one *ever blessed* **JEHOVAH** towards the elect. It declares how freely God loves them. It sets forth how he bestows every blessing of his love on them out of his hearty good will unto them, and how he continues the blessings he bestows with the same everlasting good-will both in time and eternity; hereby proving that they are "The bleis'd of the Lord who made Heaven and earth." The influence and efficacy of divine grace on the mind of the believer are divinely quickening and powerful; and there is a rich variety of expressions made use of in the *volume of inspiration* to set this forth. The communication of spiritual and eternal life being the immediate consequence of union with the person of Christ, believers are said to live *through him*, sometimes *by him*, and at other times *on him*; and sometimes Christ is said to be *their life*, to *live in them*, to *be in them*. Even our Lord in the sixth chapter of John's gospel sets himself before us as the giver of life, and also as the giver of the bread or meat which en-

dures unto eternal life,—as that bread which came down from Heaven, the proper sustenance of spiritual and eternal life; and as sent into the world by the Father for that very purpose. He hath *the words of eternal life*. The exercises and actings of spiritual life are all under his immediate direction and influence. The preservation, continuance, growth, and increase of it in its acts and exercises are wholly from him. By his Holy Spirit he carries on all the operations of grace in the souls of his people: and as they are the objects of his love and mercy, so he fulfils in them all the good pleasure of his will agreeably to what he hath uttered in his most precious promises. Hereby he promotes spiritual growth and vigour in their souls. It is an everlasting truth, that it is wholly impossible that a regenerate person should be kept alive to God and his Son Jesus Christ in heart and affections, let him be already favoured with ever so great and supernatural a knowledge of and communion with the Father and the Son, unless the Holy Ghost be pleased continually to give new light and life to the mind by setting home afresh with his own divine unction, power, and energy, what is known. Hence in the soul's real experience it is found, that though divine

truth dwells in the mind, yet the person is shut up, and remains dull, barren, and low in spiritual activity, notwithstanding what is already known, hath been received through the channel of regeneration and from the word and spirit, except the same truths receive a fresh light, life, and influence from the Holy Ghost. If we be kept alive to God, if the Lord Jesus be increasingly precious to us, it must be owing to the Holy Spirit's opening the mind to perceive fresh glories and perfections in him and his great salvation, and to his giving us such apprehensions of the Father's love in him as exceed all ever before discovered.

As it respects Growth in Grace, it consists in growing into a greater acquaintance with ourselves, with Christ and spiritual things, and in growing *out of ourselves into CHRIST*, rooted, grounded, and settled *in him*. This will appear if we consider those scriptures which treat of it, the promises which refer to it, and the prayers offered for it to the God and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. That spiritual growth consists in growing into a greater acquaintance with ourselves appears from the case of Paul, who, as he learnt to know himself and the grace of God exercised *towards* and bestowed *on* him, styles himself "The least of the apostles," "Less than the

“least of all saints,” and “The chief of sinners.” This was the fruit of his high advancement in divine fellowship with Jesus.

In treating on this subject, Growth in Grace, and in shewing what it consists in, and how it is manifested, I will briefly cite some scriptures which treat of it, the Lord’s promises which have immediate reference to it, and take a view of the apostle’s prayers for it, which by God’s blessing will lead us to right apprehensions of the subject before us. I will begin with Peter’s words, “Grow in grace.” I conceive that by *grace here* all those faculties, graces, habits, and dispositions, which are wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, are to be understood. And to have our spiritual faculties, graces, habits, and dispositions exercised distinctly and supernaturally on their proper objects and subjects is to grow in grace, agreeably to this apostolic exhortation. What follows in the text is explanatory of it; “And in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” He is the object, on which all our graces are to be exercised. He is the life of all our grace. Therefore growing into a greater knowledge of him and of the Father’s love in him is to grow in grace; for hereby all our graces are quickened, strengthened, ex-

exercised, and drawn forth to the praise and glory of God. It is of vast importance on this subject to know that all apostolical exhortations, as also the apostolical prayers on divine record, are founded on divine promises, in which the interest of the Holy Trinity in the elect is included. Paul, speaking of spiritual growth, says to the Ephesians, “ But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love<sup>a</sup>.” Here the relation of believers unto Christ is stated. He is the Head, and they have union and relation to him as members of his mystic body. And in these words it is expressly affirmed, that as in the natural body, there are supplies of nourishment and natural spirits communicated from the head unto the members by the subserviency of all the different parts of the body, designed for that purpose, to the growth and increase of every part; so from Christ, the Head of his church, there is a supply of spiritual life, strength, and nourishment administered unto every member of the

<sup>a</sup> Eph. iv. 15, 16.

body unto the increase, growth, and edification of it: "For we are members of his "body, of his flesh, and of his bones<sup>b</sup>." We were made out of Him, as *Eve* was out of *Adam*: and yet we so continue in him as to have all our supplies from him: We being in him, and he in us. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians speaks the same truth. He affirms, that "from the "head all the body by joints and bands "having nourishment ministered, and "knit together, increaseth with the in- "crease of God." Our Lord treats the subject *thus*: "I am the true vine, and "my Father is the husbandman. Abide "in me, and I in you. As the branch "cannot bear fruit of itself, except it "abide in the vine: no more can ye, ex- "cept ye abide in me. I am the vine, "ye are the branches: he that abideth "in me, and I in him, the same bringeth "forth much fruit: for without me (or "separated from me) ye can do no- "thing<sup>c</sup>." The inbeing of the branches in the vine is the mean of communicating life, sap, and nourishment from it to them. So the inbeing of believers in Christ, the holy-making vine, is the mean whereby they receive that influx of light, life, grace, and influence from him, which makes them holy and fruitful. The fulness of Christ, God-man,

<sup>b</sup> Chap. v. 30.<sup>c</sup> John xv. 1, 4, 5.

Head and Mediator, is for the use and benefit of his people. And all those gifts and graces, in all their extent and diversity, which he received, and hath most richly and freely bestowed on his prophets, apostles, and evangelists, and also on the pastors and teachers of his church, are for their edification; “Till they all  
 “come in the unity of the faith, and of  
 “the knowledge of the Son of God,  
 “unto a perfect man, unto the measure  
 “of the stature of the fullness of Christ<sup>d</sup>.” These scriptures shew what spiritual growth is: so do those promises which follow. The grace of the Holy Spirit implanted in regeneration is incorruptible. It cannot be extinct. It is of heavenly extraction. Concerning which the Lord saith, “I the Lord do keep it, I  
 “water it every moment; lest any hurt  
 “it, I will keep it night and day<sup>e</sup>.” How the Lord is pleased to nourish and make his people fruitful is most sweetly set forth in the following promise. “I will  
 “beas the dew unto Israel: he shall grow  
 “as the lily, and cast forth his roots as  
 “Lebanon. His branches shall spread,  
 “and his beauty shall be as the olive-  
 “tree, and his smell as Lebanon<sup>f</sup>.” Dew is of a fructifying nature. The Lord being as dew unto Israel makes him grow up like a lily, and as the olive in beauty.

<sup>d</sup> Eph. iv. 13.    <sup>e</sup> Is. xxvii. 3.    <sup>f</sup> Hosea xiv. 5, 6.

Again the Lord says, " But unto you  
 " that fear my name shall the Sun of  
 " righteousneſs ariſe with healing in his  
 " wings; and ye ſhall go forth and grow  
 " up as calves of the ſtall." From the  
 promiſes it appears, that ſpiritual growth  
 is wholly of the Lord, and that it con-  
 ſiſts of growing out of ourſelves into  
 Chriſt, ſo as to be rooted, grounded,  
 and ſettled in him, and brought to a  
 continual dependance on him; having  
 received this truth into our hearts, that  
 " without him we can do nothing."

The apoſtle's prayers for ſpiritual  
 growth on behalf of the Ephesians run  
 thus; " That the God of our Lord Je-  
 " ſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may  
 " give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and  
 " revelation in the knowledge of him<sup>s</sup>."  
 " I bow my knees unto the Father of our  
 " Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole  
 " family in heaven and earth is named,  
 " that he would grant you according to  
 " the riches of his glory to be ſtrength-  
 " ened with might by his ſpirit in the  
 " inner man, that Chriſt may dwell in  
 " your hearts by faith; that ye being  
 " rooted and grounded in love may be  
 " able to comprehend with all ſaints  
 " what is the breadth, and length, and  
 " depth, and height; and to know the  
 " love of Chriſt, which paſſeth know-

“ledge, that ye might be filled with all  
 “the fulness of God<sup>h</sup>.” For the Phi-  
 lippians he pleads *thus*; “And this I pray,  
 “that your love may abound yet more  
 “and more in knowledge and in all judg-  
 “ment; that ye may approve things that  
 “are excellent; that ye may be sincere  
 “and without offence till the day of  
 “Christ; being filled with the fruits of  
 “righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ  
 “unto the glory and praise of God<sup>i</sup>.”  
 For the Colossians he prays that they  
 might “Be filled with the knowledge of  
 “the Lord’s will, in all wisdom and spi-  
 “ritual understanding: that they might  
 “walk worthy of the Lord unto all  
 “pleasing<sup>k</sup>.” These prayers contain the  
 very essence of grace. They are all indit-  
 ed by the Holy Ghost. They are all of-  
 fered up for knowledge, as the mean of  
 increasing faith, experience, and a true  
 walk with God. They are founded on  
 the covenant-acts and transactions of  
 the COETERNAL THREE. Their relation  
 to us and covenant-offices on our behalf  
 are very carefully attended to. They are  
*not* presented to God for inherent grace  
 and holiness, but for the strengthening  
 and exercise thereof; for communion  
 with God, for being strengthened with  
 all might by the Spirit in the inner man,  
 that we may have Christ dwelling in our

<sup>h</sup> Ch. iii. 14—19. <sup>i</sup> Ch. i. 9, 10, 11. <sup>k</sup> Ch. i. 9, 10.

hearts by faith, and have it exercised distinctly and particularly on him, that we may abound in the knowledge of the Lord's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to approve things that are excellent, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness. These are the blessings requested; of which I may boldly say, greater cannot be requested *for us*: nor can God himself bestow greater *on us*. In them we may see what it is to *grow in grace*, what promotes spiritual growth, and that really spiritual prayer is founded on our true knowledge of the persons in God, their relation to and interest in us, and their everlasting love and favour towards us. In the view of those divine truths, which serve to draw out our hearts, and increase our confidence in the Lord our God, believers pray in the Holy Ghost; and, under his divine unction and influence, enjoy such communion with God and his Son Jesus Christ, as affords them a real foretaste of Heaven and eternal glory. But although the scripture treats of growth in grace, though the promises, which are so many expositions on the covenant, refer to it, and though the apostolical prayers shew us what it consists in; yet there are some of the Lord's people, in whom the essence and reality of holiness dwell, who

do not perceive in themselves any spiritual growth. It should therefore be remembered that there is real growth in grace where it is not perceived. We should judge of it, not by what we experience of it in ourselves, but by the word. It is a subject for faith to be exercised on. The seasons of spiritual growth are seasons of soul distress, when we are in heaviness through manifold temptations, and when we feel and mourn most on account of a body of sin. It is common for us to think, that when we enjoy most of God in a manifestative way, then we thrive most. No. When we are favoured with the clear sunshine of divine favour our spiritual graces and fruits are ripened; but they thrive and grow most, when we are in our own views in the lowest cases and frames. Spiritual Growth is a mystery, and is more evident in some than in others. The more the Holy Spirit shines into the mind, and puts forth his life-giving influences in the heart, so much the more sin is seen, felt, and loathed, as the greatest of all evils. And this is an evidence of spiritual growth, *viz.* to hate sin, as sin, and to abhor it on account of its contrariety to the nature of God. The quick perception and insight which we have of inherent sin, and our feeling of it, so as to look on ourselves as most

vile, to renounce ourselves and all we can do for ourselves, and look wholly and immediately to Christ for relief and strength, are growth in grace, and a sure and most certain evidence of it. To see more into the excellency and spirituality of spiritual truths and to prize and esteem them with an increasing pleasure, on account of their sublimity and divinity, are real growth in grace. To see more of our need of depending continually on the person, work, intercession, and word of the Lord Jesus is the effect of spiritual growth. To become more spiritual in worship, esteeming ordinances more by divine quickenings, and by God-glorifying and Christ-exalting thoughts created in our minds by the Holy Ghost, and not being contented with the use of means, unless we have real communion with the Father and the Son through the spirit, is to grow in grace.

A young convert is much taken with his own importunity in prayer, with his own enlargements and affections, (they being very warm and lively) with the multitude of ordinances, and the much time he spends in the use and observance of them: whereas a believer of longer standing and greater measure of spiritual growth values those discoveries, which the Holy Spirit gives him in

prayer and inward converse with the Lord, of the Father's free love, and the Son's personal, particular, and prevalent intercession on his behalf; and he is more taken with those, than with his own fervour and his own supplications at the throne of grace. There is indeed a spiritual growth in all the called people of God suited to, and corresponding with their age and state in christianity, *as babes, young men, and fathers.* The babes in Christ are particularly affected with a sense and enjoyment of pardoning mercy, and with calling God Father. Hence it must necessarily follow, that the blessings of pardon of sin, peace with God, the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry *Abba Father, i. e. Father, Father,* and advancement in an increasing spiritual perception of these inestimably precious realities, must be a Growth in Grace, such as is quite suited to their spiritual stature and circumstances. The young men in Christ, whose graces are particularly active, resist unto blood, striving against sin. The glory of young men is their strength, says Solomon. And the spiritual strength of these young men in Christ is exercised in fighting the Lord's battles against the world, the devil, and the flesh; so that their growing strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, or

their growing strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, is quite suited to their spiritual state, case, and experience. The apostle John writing to these saith, "Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." And then he gives them the following exhortation, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Their learning the use of every part of their spiritual armour, fighting the good fight of faith, wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, looking wholly *to*, and depending entirely *on* Christ, the captain of salvation, for strength, success, and victory over all their enemies, are *Growth in Grace*. To know Christ more clearly, spiritually, and distinctly, in the eternity, glory, and excellencies of his person, as God-man, the head and Mediator of his church, and the perfection, worth, and eternal excellency of his righteousness and atonement, is the sig-

nal honour, and the peculiar distinction of the *Fathers in Christ* from the *babes* and *young men*. And, as peculiarly suited to their age and state in christianity, their Growth in Grace, in the very essential part and proof of it, consists in their increasing in the knowledge of Jesus and of the Father in him, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and in growing up into Christ, *viz.* into real and personal communion with him, whereby they become more deeply rooted in him, and more firmly grounded on him. Thus by the sacred unction of the Holy Ghost leading the believer on from strength to strength; Growth in Grace is promoted, increased, and carried on in fellowship with God. Agreeably to which the apostle says, “ But “ we all with open face, beholding as in “ a glass the glory of the Lord, are “ changed into the same image from “ glory to glory, even as by the Spirit “ of the Lord<sup>1</sup>.” It is by a supernatural light shining on the word and reflecting on the renewed mind that the believer takes in views of Christ from the word. The glory of his person is viewed, and the believer apprehends Christ, as he is in truth, “ The only be- “ gotten of the Father. full of grace and “ truth.” And the beholding of Christ,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

in the light of the word and Spirit is quickening. It fills the mind with wonder, the heart with love, the conscience with peace, and the affections with holy delight. And the believer is hereby changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. In the gospel, as in a mirror, is Christ set forth as the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. In the face, or person, of Jesus Christ revealed in the gospel the glory of God shines forth. Believers have a clear view of it; as they in a spiritual way take into their enlightened minds Jesus Christ. He dwells in their hearts by faith; and by the Holy Spirit thus revealing Christ in the word *to* them and *in* them they are changed into the same image, which consists in a conformity to him. Yet it is by degrees: for, from our regeneration to our glorification, we are growing up into Christ. When he first manifested himself to us he apprehended us as his beloved ones, and took hold of us, as the objects of his Father's love, to work *in* us and to bestow all grace *on* us. And as he shines *in* us and reflects his glory *on* us, and as we take in increasing apprehensions *of him*; so we are in a gradual way changed from one degree of glory to another. This glorious image

of Christ is perfected by little and little, till we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Paul speaking of his own conversion to the Lord says, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me<sup>m</sup>." Paul was a perfect man in Christ on the first day of his translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He had a full and complete knowledge of Christ. Whereas *we*, even *all* of us, are but growing by degrees, and sometimes very slowly, into the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. And *thus* "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." This evidently refers to Growth in Grace. And it receives its accomplishment as the Holy Ghost is pleased to lead us into more enlarged views *of* and acquaintance *with* Christ and spiritual things, which is effected by spiritual revelation or a new creating act of God within us. So says the apostle: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ<sup>n</sup>." The believer finds the reality of divine things, and

<sup>m</sup> Gal. i. 15, 16.<sup>n</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

that they carry their own evidence to the mind; and by comparing his experience with the word, which treats on spiritual growth, he hath a knowledge and spiritual perception of his own growth in the things of God. He finds, as he is enabled to centre in Christ and live on him, as the fountain and spring of all his spiritual and eternal life and light, that the Holy Spirit is pleased to put forth his influential power and energy. In consequence of which such measures of life, light, holiness, consolation, and joy are produced, as evidently manifest growth in the fruits of faith, grace, and holiness. The believer's high prizings of Christ, his increasing estimation of the person of Jesus, and his spiritual desires after close and intimate fellowship with Christ are thus expressed by the apostle. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship

“ of his sufferings, being made conform-  
 “ able unto his death.”

O my soul! here is a subject which requires close consideration, and should lead thee to self-examination, that thou mayest know what thy real state is respecting spiritual Growth in Grace in the exercise of thy graces; and what real communion *with* CHRIST and growth *into* him thou hast in thy own experience. Look up to the ETERNAL THREE, and pour out thy heart at the throne of grace, saying, O thou IN-COMPREHENSIBLE, ESSENTIAL, and EVER BLESSED JEHOVAH, thou GOD OF ALL GRACE! I beseech thee to look down from the habitation of thy holiness and glory, and behold me, Holy Father! *in the* BELOVED, and help me to view and consider thee in thy high title, THE GOD OF ALL GRACE. Teach me from thy word and by thy Spirit what grace is. Give me to conceive rightly how freely thou dost bestow all the blessings of thy love on me in Christ Jesus. Thou hast been pleased to shew forth thy greatness and goodness, the exceeding riches of thy grace, and thy kindness towards me IN CHRIST JESUS in the holy Gospel. Thou hast made me thine for ever: and thou, Lord, art become my God. According to thine

own heart thou hast done all these great things for thy word's sake; and thou hast made thy servant to know them. Teach me, I beseech thee, more effectually to apprehend what thy word promises respecting Growth in Grace. Let me view thy promises concerning it. Grant me to mix faith with them, that I may receive thereby that grace which shall enable me to live on the fulness of Jesus. Send down thy Holy Spirit afresh into my heart to glorify thy Son, and lead me into communion with *THYSELF in HIM*. O Holy Ghost! be unto my soul all that is contained in thy own word of promise, wherein thou sayest, "I will be as the dew unto "Israel." Make fresh discoveries of *CHRIST*, as he is revealed in the word, to my understanding. Let me, under thy own divine and most gracious influences, grow into an increasing knowledge of his person, and into more bright views of his worth and excellencies. Breathe, O Holy Ghost! on my soul. Water me every moment, and make me as a fruitful garden, whose waters fail not, that I may appear to be the blest of the Lord. I ask it, Holy Father! for the honour of thy co-equal Son, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be unceasing praise. Amen, and Amen.