

# **Sermon 1 Com. July 3 B~n Con. 124 2 Peter.3.18.P 32 pages 6 7/8"x 7 1/2"**

Com. July 3 B~n. Con. 124 2. Peter.3.18.P Ps. 148 to P.  
H. S. 82

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ.

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On a previous occasion I proposed to consider the doctrines inculcated in these words and the inquiries suggested by them in the following order.

- I. To show what is meant by the doctrine growth in grace.
- II. Show that it is a duty enjoined on Christians.

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III. Inquire wither [sic] true believers do increase in grace.

IV. Show what are the evidences of growth in grace.

V. Point out some of the means by which they may

increase in grace. Our attention has been directed to the two first of these propositions, let us now proceed to the

III.[sic] To inquire whether true believers do increase in grace?

We are not to inquire here whethe [sic] all who are called

Christians by profession, increase in grace for this is not expected in the present

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imperfect state of the Church; for they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Those who are not the genuine disciples of Christ, like all others of the wicked, wax worse and worse. They may be called Christians, but Christ never knew them as his true worshippers.

If it be admitted [sic] that Christians use the means which God has appointed for their increase in grace, it would be speaking diminutively of his wisdom to say that they had tryed [sic] the means and found them inadequate to the object designed. We must then admit that

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they do increase in grace, but not without the use of the appointed means; for God will never cause the ground of the sluggard to bring forth fruit spontaneously. There must be culture.

We know not a christian in the world except by his fruits; and if he brings forth fruit, we with equal certainty know that he uses the appointed means. By this I do not intend to say that they uniformly increase, or that there are no seasons in which they do not increase in grace, but that they do increase in the exact ration of their using the appointed means.

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Regeneration is the commencement of moral life, and the evangelical powers expand as the natural do under the fostering hand of God. When means for expanding the natural powers are not used, then they ~~natural powers~~ cease to grow; So also with the evangelical powers. They grow in the exact ratio of the use of means. Reason brings us to the same conclusion, but the scripture establishes this point beyond a doubt. The seed sown on good ground alone, was that which brought forth fruit some thirty, some sixty and some an hundredfold.

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We may here add, that all Christians do not advance alike; for some have two while others possess five talents. The same is inculcated by the parable of the seed sown on good ground; although [sic] the ground was not productive alike, nevertheless it was good ground and produced some fruit. This is the result of reason. But

2. Scripture brings us to the same conclusion.

In Job 17.9 we find these words. The righteous also, shall hold on his way; and he that hath [clean] hands, shall be stronger and stronger.

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Again, the Psalmist also says, The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; 92.12-14. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not be faint. Isa. 40.31. But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness [sic] arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go

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forth and grow up as calves in the stall. Mal. 4.2. To these passages may be added what was said of Thessalonians, that their faith grew exceedingly; that the love of every one of them abounded towards their fellow saints. And of the Romans it was said that their faith grew so exceedingly, that it was spoken of throughout the world.

Hence it appears that growth in grace is indispensable [sic] to the character of the saint, and no one can claim this exalted name and not increase in grace

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and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

IV. Show what are the evidences of growth in grace.

The evidences of increase of grace are too numerous to be particularly dwelt upon here. There is a prevailing increase of love to God and man, an increasing desire to do good, and a constant increasing inclination to live more devoted to God, peace of conscience and joy in the holy ghost. These are some of the precious fruits of increase of grace. The two last only

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can be particularly noticed here.

1. Peace of mind.

This peace is like a river, and one of those rich blessings bequeathed to his disciples before Christ left the world. To his disponding [sic] friends he saith, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you.

Jn. 14.27. This was a soul cheering promise left by our Saviour as he was departing to take his seat in heaven. It supposes that the conscience is vigorous & active and not dull and slumbering, as in the case of a false

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peace which arises from infidelity. Such is the peace mentioned by inspiration. He hath said in his heart, I shall never be moved; for I shall never be in adversity. God hath forgotten: he hideth his face, he will never see it. Ps. 10. 6 & 11. This is the peace of all those who are slumbering on the bed of carnal ease, and crying peace and safety when God hath said there is no peace.

There are various other sources of false peace, which arises from an ill grounded hope as that of the hypocrite, or false notions

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of religions. These hopes which now give peace will not stand when God taketh away the soul.

But the peace which our Savior giveth is not like unto this, which is fluctuating, sometimes abounding and then vanishing away and becoming a source of anxiety and even distress; but it flows like a peaceful river, gathering strength as it advanced. It sometimes may be interrupted by rapids and falls, but it nevertheless maintains its course towards the boundless ocean of everlasting peace. This peace results from assurance of

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hope, of pardon and acceptance through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is grounded not upon the judgement and dogmas of men, but upon evidences carefully examined and approved of by those rules laid down in God's word. This peace is not fluctuating and irregular in respect to its source or the object of pursuit, but flows along independent of those consequences which interrupt the peace of the men of this world. Though there may be times, when it will not be so clear as when faith is strong, yet the true believer knows that

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built  
the foundation on which has ^ his hope is sure and steadfast  
against which the gates of hell cannot prevail .

## 2. Joy in the holy ghost.

This joy, which is continually increasing, from an increase  
of grace, results from communion with Spirit of God. It arise  
es  
from the pos^sion [sic] of something really good, holy and lasting.  
As it is wrought in the soul by the immediate communications of  
the holy spirit, it is of a holy character unspeakable and pure. The  
world cannot

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produce this joy, neither with all its varied changes of fortune take it away; for even in the midst of the severest trials, he who is thus associated with holy Trinity can say Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, Hab. 3.17 & 18. Such is the influence of this state of things in the human mind reserved for

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all those who give themselves up to the worship and service of the Almighty. Not like the joys of earth, which creates satiety and disgust, but pure and satisfying to the soul, yet never cloyed, and these are some of the scriptural proofs which amply sustain this position. Great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The fruit of the Spirit is love, and joy. Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let

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the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea let them exceedingly rejoice.

These are some of the precious fruits of increase of grace, which make all the trials and tribulations of this world sink into comparative nothings, and continue in operation [sic] increasing in strength when all other joys cease in their influence.

The peace and joy of the world cease at the approach of death, & fear arises and awful forebodings of a miserable eternity. But the peace and joy which spring

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from communion with God, increasing in grace and holiness, then begin to shine forth with peculiar luster, lighted up by the pleasing anticipation of a glorious immortality. Death then comes as a welcome messenger; the kind angel of the covenant whispers peace: joy springs up in the soul afresh: the world secedes, heaven opens on the enraptured vision.

V. Point out some of the means by which they may increase in grace.

These are various, and found

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wherever the gospil [sic] is preached or the word of God is read or the works of creation seen. God has not left his children without ample means for religious culture and spiritual improvement.

And

1. The reading the holy scriptures.

In the scriptures is found deliniated [sic] under various forms the beauties, the excellencies & the perfections of the Divine character. To be assimilated unto the character of the Deity is the grand aim and object

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of all those who aim at the exalted attainments of the Children of God. This word points out the way and encourages them to walk therein, and obtain that degree of excellency so clearly  
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vouch<sup>a</sup>fed to them, who earnestly desire and seek for holiness & purity. To read this word then leads to the character which is the image of God in which man was originally created.

## 2. Meditation on Divine things.

Meditation is peculiarly calculated to advance the Christian

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in the Divine life. By this faculty of the mind, the Christian may engage his attention, when all objects of sense and motion are excluded, and the mind fixed, intensely on those subjects so well calculated to elevate the affections [sic]. The character of God, in all his glorious attributes [sic], his love of benevolence as manifested [sic] in the plan of Redemption; his mercy in forgiving sinful man; his goodness in all the works around man to supply his wants and raise his grateful [sic] heart to him the

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fountain and source of every blessing; his justice which will render to every one according to his deserts [sic]; his Omniscience to know and well understand every thing and action of the human character and not a hair of our head falleth to the ground without his notice; his wisdom in forming every thing with such exactness to accomplish the end of its being; his power in creating and sustaining the universe, his awful majesty at the day of judgment in bringing his

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children home to glory. These and innumerable other things pertaining God and his government engage his attention on which he delights to meditate day and night.

### 3. Self examination.

All duties enjoined are requisite, to be performed, to perfect ourselves [sic] in godliness and no one holds a more important place than self-examination. This is enjoined upon us by inspiration of God and cannot be dispensed and laid aside without serious danger. Examine

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yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.

Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobated? 2. Cor.13.5. This pointed injunction of inspiration cannot be too carefully observed by every one. We may be admitted into the family of Christ upon the judgment of charity and may possess many marks common to christians and still like multitudes who have gone before us be in the gaul [sic] of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. This work should be done

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with great seriousness, and solemn and pointed scrutiny; for we may believe our foundation is firm as a rock, whereas it may be nothing but sand. With what care ought every one to use this mean of grace, and pray God to search us as he did Jerusalem with candles, and show us clearly if there be any thing wrong in us and direct our footsteps in the ways of peace and joy.

#### 4. Public worship.

This is an institution of God for the spiritual good and edification of his children, and no

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one can absent himself from it for a slight reason. Here sacred truth is presented drawn from God's word; the duties of the Christian inculcated and enforced. This calls up serious thought with and impresses the mind ^ solemn considerations of the present past & future, and awakens it to a lively hope and activity in the cause of Christ, and advances in the Divine life, and they ^ praise & adore the Lord of the Sabbath. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they shall still be praising thee. Psal. 74.4.

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This employment elevated the affections and raises the desires to be more assimilated to him whom they thus worship, praise & adore.

#### 5. Prayer and watchfulness.

Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation is an injunction of our Saviour which cannot be too carefully regarded by every one [sic]. No one of him self [sic] can keep his footsteps in the path of peace and safety, it is the work of God. He has appointed the means, which man must use, and God will bless

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the means of his own appointment. To ask him for aid and assistance in the divine course, is enjoined and a promise is given that the aid required shall be given. Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find is an injunction of our Saviour grateful to the ears of every saint. He knows his own weakness and this strength is almighty. On the bended knees of his soul he communes with his heavenly Father, who saith I dwell in the high and holy place; with him

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also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isa.57.15. To commune with his heavenly Father, and pour out his soul to him in prayer is one of the richest blessings he can enjoy, for prayer opens heaven and lets down upon his consecrated head all those mercies which he needs, to prepare him for new advances in the Divine life. While in, the praying Christian lives above the world. Though low in the vally [sic] of humiliation, yet far above the

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contentions, turmoils, strifes and temptations of the world, for he dwelleth high in the pavillion [sic] of God, which shelters him from the scorching rays of the sun & beholds playing harmless at his feet, the storms, the tumults and convulsions below. He fears them not, because he is with his Divine and Almighty protector. He grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. Frequent renewal of covenant with God at his table.

This is one of the grand designs

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of our blessed Saviour in instituting this ordinance, to keep in remembrance [sic] his dying love, and gratitude and fidelity which they owe to him. Here at his table they meet their dying Lord and hear from his lips, My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Here they see him breaking and presenting to them the lively symbols of his body and blood; here they see him suspended upon the cross; here they see him bow his head and give up the Ghost! Here they displayed  
see ^ in a most lucid manner, the

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the [sic] love of God and the desert of sin! All of which combine to show the value of the immortal soul with a power, energy and pathos, which nothing else could accomplish. He now binds himself wath [sic] bands stronger than those of death, to live to the glory of God; to cultivate his soul for heaven; to dedicate himself anew to the great and glorious object for which the Saviour died; to exert all his influence to bring sinners to Christ to the same table of his dying love, that they may serve him on earth together and unitedly reign with him in heaven.