

Growing in Grace

"But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Peter was careful to put growth in grace before growth in knowledge and to identify the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the proper content of spiritual knowledge. That one whose growth in knowledge precedes a growth in grace, and whose growth in knowledge consists only of a growing mass of scriptural facts becomes divisive, judgmental, and ever smaller in his knowledge of Christ. Such a one is constantly finding "new things" which he then injects into a continually growing mass of knowledge which he feels is necessary before one can truly be saved.

But that one whose growth in knowledge is a product of a growth in grace realizes that the fact that believers do grow in knowledge is proof of the fact that complete knowledge is not necessary for justifying faith. Such people are patient with those who yet cling to some error, willing to give them the benefit of the doubt until, by grace, "we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13). Such a one whose growth in knowledge of the personal Christ, does not need to despise his past, immature, infant knowledge of Him, as though it were somehow inadequate. Rather, each new step in growth is received with gladness, giving thanks to God whose grace enables the growth, and whose Son, whether known only a little or deeply, is equally mighty to save.

Pastor Joe Terrell

GROWTH IN GRACE

When I speak of "growth in grace" I only mean increase in degree, size, strength, vigor, and power of the graces which the Holy Spirit plants in a believer's heart. I hold that everyone of those graces admits of growth, progress, and increase. I hold that repentance, faith, hope, love, humility, zeal, courage, and the like may be little or great, strong or weak, vigorous or feeble, and may vary greatly in the same man at different periods of his life. When I speak of a man "growing in grace," I mean simply this -- that his sense of sin is becoming deeper, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, his love more extensive, his spiritual-mindedness more marked. He feels more of the

power of godliness in his own heart. He manifests more of it in his life. He is going on from strength to strength, from faith to faith, and from grace to grace. I think the truest and best account of such a man's condition is this -- he is "growing in grace."

J. C. Ryle