

Harold Burkholder - Growing in Grace

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Thank you, Brother Albert.

I should put some different cheetahs on brethren. In a situation like this, it's real good to be among friends.

The Lord's saints who are still in the flesh today have been through somewhat different experiences than those of the period earlier. In the earlier truth movement, in the early days of harvest, many saints were in the nominal system and they were mostly hungering for truth. Of course they would be hungering for truth if they are the Lord's saints. Those who are consecrated and alert welcomed the harvest truth, knowing that the call to come out of Babylon applied to them. They obeyed the call and came out realizing that this was indeed the harvest spoken by our lord in Matthew 13:30 when he said, let both grow together until the harvest and in the time of harvest.

I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. Those who came out of Babel when they heard the call were the obedient children who desired to do the Lord's will, even though it meant the breaking of close friendship ties, sometimes disrupting family ties also, and the Lord in His due time was getting the word to them, not true Babylon, but by his own chosen source that the harvest time had arrived. These brethren were all under trial and the true wheat. The Israelites, indeed the wise virgin class, were intent on one thing, to grow in grace and to grow in knowledge and make their calling and election sure.

And so why? What is different about the Lord's saints today? Those who are still in the flesh, all still under trial, all intent on making their calling and election sure of growing in grace and knowledge. This they have in common with the saints of the early harvest period. One difference in today's saints who are still on this side of the veil is that many of them were born and raised in the truth.

The present truth was taught them from early childhood. The decision they must make is that of consecration. They knew of the precious promises. Are they willing to make their vocation, the seeking for the great prize of eternally being with the Lord in the work of restoring all who are willing of mankind to original human perfection, and then for eternity assisting with whatever works our Heavenly Father has planned. So the saints still in the flesh today, whether born and raised in the truth, or whether having been called from the world, have a good and honest desire to be pleasing to the Lord.

We know that to be pleasing to the Lord, we must show that we appreciate his truth. So we utilize all available opportunities to learn more of his plan. In our Christian walk we all desire to make progress. We desire to be pleasing to the Lord, to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Master, and to be more Christlike, to acquire all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, all the graces of the Holy Spirit. We desire to develop perfect love as a part of our character and as a result our desire will be to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.

We desire to be active in the work of harvest. We desire to support our ecclesia by regular attendance at the meetings and by doing all that we can to be helpful. We keep up in the study of the Word, proving all things with a Thus saith the Lord. Well, brethren, we could go on and on, on with our desires, and as new creatures in Christ, and as our desires grow and as we make progress, we are growing in grace. This, we believe, is what is meant by the term spoken by the

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apostles and in use so universally among our brethren.

Growing in Grace A definition of the word grace given in Strong's dictionary is graciousness, gratifying of manner or act, abstract or concrete, literal, figurative, or spiritual, especially the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life, including gratitude. In reprint 3215 brother Russell says, and we to grow in grace is to grow in favor with the Lord through the intimate personal acquaintance and fellowship of Spirit with Him. It implies first a knowledge and recognition on our part of our redemption through his precious blood, and a personal faith in and dependence upon all the promises of the Father made to us through him and then an intimate communion with him in our daily life of prayer and of observation of his will and obedience to it.

The Apostle Peter, when he wrote his two epistles first and Second Peter was advanced in years, and to me he seemed a very fine example of someone who had matured as a Christian. He had grown in Grace. In second Peter 1:12 he addresses this epistle to them, and we're quoting now to them that have received like precious faith with us through righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. We think this is a beautiful salutation, and in pondering how best to express our thoughts, we were reminded of Brother Maguson's notes, which then we checked, and as expected, we found them to our liking.

So I think I thought it best to just quote direct from Brother Maguson, because it's real fine and I'm quoting Grace the Christian Virtue and the Christian virtues and graces favor before God beauty of character and peace. As our intimate knowledge of the Divine plan and character increases, so must also our grace increase. For those who do not attempt to come into harmony step by step with that which they can see of the Divine character will soon lose interest in such knowledge. While those who have the interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually, and as they grow in grace, so also will they grow in peace.

For peace also is progressive. We had peace when we first found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins. But those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan and character have found that their peace have found their peace to be an ever increasing one, and these who have advanced some and realize it in their heart as being the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Philippians 4:7 and that's the end of that quote.

And we think that Brother magazine's comments, they're very outstanding and that's the reason I wanted to repeat them to you. Possibly you've read them anyway, but they're always worth repeating when they're that good. We are to advance step by step when we first gave our heart to the Lord, when we decided to make the important move to place our sacrifice upon the altar, and from that time on and for eternity to do the Father's will, we began to grow in grace, and our growth is in accordance with our zeal for the Lord and His cause. Our decision to make a consecration to sacrifice our little all was based upon a certain amount of knowledge and of appreciation of our Heavenly Father's love for us in sending his only begotten Son, that through the sacrifice of his precious blood we have the promise of redemption.

We realized something of our calling. We were aware of some of the exceeding great and precious promises. We had at least a duty love for God and for his dear Son Jesus. But we were then just entering the great race course, the great race course that in our minds we divide into quarters to measure our progress in developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the greatest of which is love, love even for our enemies. Our growth in grace depends upon our own effort.

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Our Heavenly Father is faithful, we can be sure of that, and if we daily commune with him in prayer and supplication with a sincere desire to know and to do his will. If we are properly exercised by our trials and experiences, and if we hunger and thirst for more and more knowledge of his him and his great plans and purposes, we believe that our growth can be assured of course, when we embark on this way, a narrow way, which is often difficult, we encounter obstacles which must be overcome, obstacles that without the help of our heavenly Father, could throw us off course. We believe some practical example would be helpful to illustrate this danger. We might, for instance, consider the situation that the apostle Paul faced when the brethren at Corinth became misdirected and divided.

And I'm going to quote quite a bit from first Corinthians, so if you care to follow, you might turn to that Beginning in the first chapter, the apostles first epistle to them indicated that they had not made progress in spiritual matters, or at least that they had made very little progress and had become confused as to their allegiance. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:12 now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, or I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. We remember that every one of these confused brethren were spirit begotten. They had been addressed by the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12 as them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. So we see that these were brethren who had entered the school of Christ, but who were not advancing, not growing in grace.

The time that had elapsed since the church at Corinth was established, noted in Acts 18 to the time the news of their lack of growth, their inclination to sectarianism reached Paul, was approximately five years, and during this time they had no doubt been visited by various teachers as those influencing the different factions or divisions of the church. Not that Apollos or Paul or Cephas themselves would in any way cause or approve their faction, but no doubt a lack of true spirit of love, and an evil spirit of rivalry and jealousy, and too much worldly pride was the cause. Corinth was a city which for that period was quite large, the population estimated to be about 400,000. This would seem. This would make it necessary, no doubt, to have the church divided into groups.

They didn't have transportation facilities then, as we know them now. We are sure of that. But we're not sure, of course, what their public transportation was like, if they had any, and possibly a borough or something. But anyway, they probably walked to their place of meeting, and being thus divided in small groups, it is possible that in a spirit of rivalry, a worldly spirit, or in a spirit of pride, they tried to lord it over one another, much as we see worldly groups of this day, who through pride and vainglory, try to lord it over others.

Those brethren in Corinth at that time were faced with the temptations that abound in larger urban areas. Paul's epistle to them was written to try to get them to realize their lack of growth as new creatures. So we note in 1 Corinthians 1:10-16 as follows. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment for it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Guy, lest any should say that I baptize in my own name, and I baptize also the houses, the household of Stephanas. Besides, I know not whether I baptize any other. Here we see that the apostle Paul wanted these Corinthians to be as one in all

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things pertaining to the truth, as all the Lord's people should be.

He wanted them to avoid rivalry, jealousy, vainglory, sectarianism, and all the evils that accompany this wrong spirit. Though they were probably made up of several small ecclesiast, they should act in one accord. They needed to develop the oneness that is so important and necessary to the successful growth of the Lord's children.

In John 17:17-23, we read in Jesus prayer to the Father, Sanctify them through thy truth Thy word is true. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them and that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. We certainly can see by this that necessity and desirability for the divine family, being closely knit together in oneness of purpose, in one bond of love and fellowship, sympathy and harmony, as Brother Russell expressed it, the honor and glory of one being, the honor and glory of all the oneness, dear brethren, should certainly be our ideal, and our goal to completely accomplish this while we are still in our fleshly tabernacle, is something that we doubt will be completely accomplished. But we must be at one in all the vital points of doctrine, and strive mightily to follow our Master's admonition that we be one, as he and the Father are one.

We get the feeling from the further writings in the first Epistle to the Corinthians that they were much impressed by the worldly wisdom that was abroad in the city of Corinth and in all the large cities of Greece at that time.

Just prior to the days of the apostles, the Greeks were the most advanced people in the world of that day in the science of mathematics, architecture, art, astronomy, and so forth. In chapter one, verses 21 to 31, Paul seems to be pointing out the fact that the wise of this world are not the ones God is looking for. We can only conjecture as to the exact difficulties the Corinthians were experiencing, but they must have needed this admonishment that they received here. Living in the midst of so many of the worldly wise of that day must have been quite a test for the brethren, most of whom were probably people of humble means, some of little or no formal education. Remember, it had only been about five years since Paul arrived at Corinth and established the church, but the news he received of their failure to grow caused quite a lot of concern.

We in this day can certainly sympathize with the brethren at Corinth in many respects, because we know the meaning of the word worldly wise. We are now living in the Laodicean period of the church, with which comes the hour of temptation, Revelation 3:10. So many of the trials and pitfalls of today are similar to theirs. They lived among the worldly wise of their day, and the many who felt superior in their views on religious subjects, and what was considered at that time advanced philosophy. We certainly must agree that this epistle is helpful to us at this time, as it was helpful to the Corinthians.

It seems quite obvious that our Heavenly Father overruled to have had an epistle of this nature written. It is bound to have been a means of encouragement all through the gospel age to the large jewels, most of whom were of humble background, and probably having some doubts as to their calling. Probably they would wonder at being called by the heavenly Father, when the very noble persons were obviously not called. Many of them were not called. This epistle is indeed comforting

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to those who have been concerned about their calling, thinking surely that something was wrong, or that they may not have after all been called by the Father to such a lofty calling as that of joint heirship with his beloved son.

In chapter 2, verse 9 it is eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. These things spoken of in the text are not described in Scripture, because our mind could not grasp anything of that nature. But Paul was calling attention to Isaiah's Description In Isaiah 64, 4 and he was anxious that the Corinthians not lose sight of the great honor our Heavenly Father is extending to us in calling us out of darkness, inviting us to abandon all earthly hopes and ambitions, and devote all our lives and energies toward making our calling and election sure to be joint heirs with our Lord and Master. In chapter three we note that the lack of growth of the Corinthians is alarming, and that Paul must speak to them as he would to those of the world because of the lack of spiritual growth. In other words, they could not yet understand spiritual things.

In verse 2 he reminds them, I have fed you with milk, and not with for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able and in verse 3 for ye are yet carnal for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? And Paul continues in verse four for when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? We notice now that Paul is still addressing the Corinthian Church, which at the beginning of the epistle is addressed as the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. So we see that he certainly had not lost hope, and that the lack of growth had not meant that they were out of the running. They no doubt would be, though, if they continued in this vein.

However, as we mentioned before, the admonition given to them in this epistle is good in our day, and obviously has been good throughout the gospel age. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believe, even as the Lord gave to every man? Paul explains in verse 6 I have planted Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. This terminology reminds us of the parable of the sower, where some of the seed would fall on stony ground, some by the wayside, some among the thorns, and some on good soil. Matthew 13:3 8 this gives us food for thought.

Paul said he planted. Was he now addressing some who represented stony ground or wayside planting or weedy soil? We think not. We do not doubt that some or even a good many of the ones to whom Paul ministered did represent this class. But we think Paul was writing to those who represented the good ground.

Looking again at the picture Paul used in verse 6 I have planted Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. What takes place when a good seed is placed in well prepared soil and properly watered? When a little seed begins to send roots into the ground and to grow upward to form a stalk, it is quickened. This growth, which is the sole purpose of the planting, is a God given phenomena. Neither the planter nor the waterer can glory in this growth because it is a part of the mystery of life which our finite minds cannot fully grasp.

I think we can all see what a fitting example this is. Most people of our day are inclined to take this miracle for granted. Possibly in Paul's day they really appreciated the meaning of this analogy. We believe it was meant to illustrate the littleness of the planter and the water compared to the God given laws that produce life and growth. This would surely help in the correction of the sectarian influence that was creeping in and causing rivalry among God's people at Corinth.

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Paul continues then with another picture in verse 10 according to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, diligent, skilful architect, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. In this very meaningful picture we see how Paul is illustrating the importance of proper progress by using the construction of a building for an example.

The foundation has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. But it is up to each one of the consecrated to build upon this existing foundation. By use of the gold, silver and precious stones as building materials, the builder is assured of a properly constructed building containing divine characteristics, truth, and the various graces of the Holy Spirit. This type of building will endure, and the builder shall receive a reward, and the reward will be greater, we believe, than any of the builder's grandest dreams. But the careless builder, the user of such materials as wood, hay, stubble, and so forth, traditional errors along with unstable character, will find his work burned.

It will simply not stand the fiery trials that are bound to come. To try every man's work of what sort it is for all must be tried thoroughly, and unless we have built with good materials using the precious promises, Gold represents the divine and with their inspiring values, and silver, yes, silver represents truth. Psalm 12:6 and we must guard the truth faithfully, never in any way compromising, never considering a slight deviation from this truth unimportant. The precious stones representing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, are important items of our building.

Also we must take heed to the admonitions given us by Paul in Galatians 5:22,23 but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law. Peter also enumerates the fruits and graces of the spirit in second Peter 1:4:7 and the dialogue reading is as very great and precious promises have been bestowed upon us, so that through these you might become partakers of the Divine nature, having fled away from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and for this very reason also using all diligence, superadd to your faith, fortitude and to fortitude, knowledge and to knowledge, self control and to self control, patience and to patience, piety and to piety brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love.

We believe the precious stones are well represented in the foregoing list given by the apostles. The wood, hay, and stubble, we believe, would represent a careless or passive manner, sort of drifting along, with little regard to growth in the graces of the Spirit, possibly being more concerned with worldly matters and traditions than we should be, so that when the fire of adversity strikes, we are unable to withstand the trials with sufficient tenacity, and then we would most certainly suffer loss. Chapter 3, verse 16 do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Brother Don called our attention to God's temple being built up of living stone. This is a little different facet of this, this temple, and I think it's very appropriate for this particular discourse.

Do you not know that the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Brother Russell, in an article titled the Temple of God, in reprint 1981 comments on this verse as follows, we're quoting the thought the apostle would impress on the minds and hearts of all God's people, that is the sanctity of the temple of God. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy. For the temple of

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God is holy, which temple ye are.

If the Spirit of God does not dwell in us, then we are not the class addressed. For if any man have not the Spirit of God of Christ, he is none of his and those who have that Spirit are led by it in the path of righteousness and truth and not only so, but those who have and are led by the Spirit of God, have therein an earnest or pledge of their future inheritance as the sons of God. As the apostle tells us, after that ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the deliverance of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.

It is in view of our relationship to God that Paul would impress upon our minds the sanctity of these temples of the Holy Spirit, that is, after he had been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, through the enlightening and guiding influence of that Spirit, has tasted the good word of God, and the powers, privileges of divine instruction, and so forth of the coming age, he should stifle all these blessed influences, refusing to be further led by the Spirit of God, and turn again, whether suddenly or gradually, to the Spirit of the world. Such a one is destroying his spiritual life, destroying the temple of God, which was holy and consecrated to God, and if such a one should hope thereby to have his portion in the coming age with the restitution class, let him quickly undeceive himself, for the judgment against all such is him will God destroy. The Lord has no pleasure in those who draw back from such a high privilege, and that's the end of that quotation.

And we were very, very happy when we ran across this, because as we were following in this chapter and read this, we were a little bit puzzled. In fact, we were entirely puzzled at first, didn't know just where to turn. But of course we can always turn to the reprints, and when we found this, we were real happy with it. The remaining verses in Chapter 3, 18-23, are valuable admonitions for continuous growth in grace. We plan to have some additional comments on these a little later.

In the remaining verses in chapter 3, 18 to 23 are valuable admonitions for continuing growth in grace, and we plan to have some. Well, I said that, didn't I? Excuse me. In chapter four, verses one to six, I'll read that from here.

Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. Yes, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing of myself, yet am I not hereby justified. But he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God and these things. Brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. Paul was concerned, apparently by some judging or examining that seems to have caused a wrong course of activity on the part of the Corinthians. These verses must not conflict with the text in 2 Corinthians 7:1, however, where Paul says, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We know that to grow in grace we must put off the deeds of the flesh, and must develop the fruits of the Spirit. So we ask, just what is Paul concerned about in directing the Corinthians attention to to some improper judging? Well, it seems that some of those Corinthians must have been rather severe with their own judgment of themselves, thinking possibly in the attitude of the Pharisees in their prayers. They may have been thanking God, for instance, that they were not as other men,

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thinking themselves to be perfect. Paul wanted them to realize that they were not saved by works of the flesh.

If we were perfect, we would need no advocate, we would not need the robe of Christ's righteousness. Our confidence must be in the Lord. We must strive to walk in his footsteps. He is our ideal, but he also knoweth our frame, that we are dust, we are weak in the flesh, and so must have an advocate to plead our case, and thus, if we are perfect, as far as desire and effort are concerned, the Lord is pleased, and we are acceptable in the beloved.

Hence the apostle's remarks. I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing of myself, or I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Judge nothing. Before the time when you are perfected and glorified with the Church, you will be capable of righteous judgment. While we are in the flesh, we must not condemn others who claim to be walking conscientiously as children of the Lord.

Nor should we condemn ourselves. If we are striving to walk righteously, we must keep on striving to develop the fruits of the Spirit and leave the rest to the righteous judge. The apostle found it necessary to call the attention of the Corinthians to the fact that the Church had not yet been exalted and was not yet reigning. By means of a few, sometimes ironic remarks, Paul chided the Corinthians for apparently having some grand ideas of beginning to reign, or of being exalted to positions of importance as members of the church, and in that respect I think we should read verses six to 13.

That's in chapter four, and these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men more than that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee different from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive now? If thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?

Now ye are full, now ye are rich. Ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God that ye did reign, that we might reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us, the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world and angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake. But ye are wise in Christ. We are weak, but ye are strong, we are honorable, ye are honorable. We are despised even unto this present hour. We both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place and labor working with our own hands.

Being reviled, we bless being persecuted, we suffer it being defamed, we entreat. We are made as filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you, Paul could see the seriousness of their falling into the error of supposing the Church. This side of the veil would in any way be exalted. The Corinthians had not as yet come to realize that until the Church is completed, they are all sacrificing priests.

The admonishment to them is still to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ to suffer with him, that they also may be glorified together. When we consider this incident in the Church at Corinth, this desire on their part to be something of importance in this world, we can understand better this falling away of the Church in later years, after the strong leadership of the apostles was lost, that is, after they had fallen asleep. The history of the early Church in the second and third

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centuries confirmed the falling away to the fleshly desires and to the influence of the adversary, who was and still is ever on the alert to take advantage when fleshly desires and weaknesses appear to try to disrupt God's plan in the selection of his true Church, and of course we know how what happened. Papacy was reigning in Christ's place and all these things.

So Satan took advantage as soon as he had the opportunity to mislead those brethren. But Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in this respect was very timely. Paul could readily see the danger here in connection with the desire on the part of the Corinthians to avoid any hardship and their seeming desire to be exalted among men.

The brethren at Corinth had not yet come to realize the necessity of experiencing adversity in the shaping and polishing of each individual who will make up the Church. They must be fitted for the particular place they are to occupy in the glorified Church. Paul was calling these things to their attention to try and get them back on the right track, and of course, our lesson this morning was along those lines. It isn't difficult to understand the apostle's great concern when he received the news regarding the course the Church at Corinth was taking and all the problems that were facing the brethren there.

The difficulties were very serious. But as we can observe when reading the Epistle, Paul sent them, the advice and admonitions given them were so important for their welfare as new creatures, and of course we can say it was good for their everlasting welfare. They were, as are all of God's consecrated people who are still in the flesh on trial for life, and they seem to be taking it lightly, as implied by the situation or condition of affairs mentioned in chapters five and six, which we will not go into at this time.

This discourse is as announced at the beginning designed to be helpful to the Lord's people who are striving to grow in grace. But in bringing to your attention the early experiences of the church at Corinth, we were probably inclined to approach it from a negative in a negative manner. But the reason we decided to bring some of their experiences and difficulties to your attention was that in looking at their problems and struggling, we may have indications of the difficulties that can befall the Lord's people while still in this fleshly tabernacle which we find ourselves. The brethren there were fighting fleshly propensities, just as we are today. So we remind you again that Paul addressed them as them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints, indicating that they were begotten of the Holy Spirit.

But you see, they did have that treasure in earthen vessels the new creature begotten in them must grow. This was the reason for the apostle's letter to them, and we today have this first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, from which we may benefit greatly in our struggle to grow in grace, that we may become meet for the Master's youth, heirs of God, and joint heirs with our Lord and Master, and we not only find this epistle helpful to us, but we have the whole counsel of God in His Word, and if our appetite for truth remains strong and healthy, we're sure to find all the counsel we need to direct us to the way in which we must walk to secure the wonderful prize of the one hope of our calling.

We have good reason to believe that under the good counsel of Paul, and from the help extended by Apollos, Timothy, Titus, and others, the Corinthians were able to overcome the problems that were besetting them, as related in the first Epistle of Paul to them. His second Epistle to them, which we believe was written very soon after the first one, indicates that they were overcoming many of the obstacles that had been causing difficulty. In Second Corinthians chapter 7, we happily read the account of the reaction to the first Epistle. I'm not sure that it was a reaction to the first

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Epistle. I've got it here.

But it was a letter that had been written at least to the Corinthians, and it may have been the first Epistle, and we realized the evidence of growth and grace of the brethren there. So I'm going to go over this, and I'm going to read chapter seven from verses four, and using Moffat's translation, I thought it was quite good. Beginning with verse four, I have Absolute confidence in you. You are a perfect comfort to me. I am overflowing with delight for all the trouble I have had to bear, for I got no relief from the strain of things.

Even when I reached Macedonia, it was trouble at every turn, wrangling all around me, fears in my own mind. But the God who comforts the dejected comforted me by the arrival of Titus. Yes, and by more than his arrival, by the comfort which you had been to him. For he gave them such a report of how you longed for me, how sorry you were and how eagerly you took my part that it added to my delight. In fact, I did pain you by that letter.

If I did pain you by that letter, I do not regret it. I did regret it when I discovered that my letter had pained you for even the short time being. But I am glad now. Not glad that you are pained, but glad that your pain induced you to repent. Or you were pained, as God meant you to be pained, and so you got no harm from what I did.

The pain God has allowed. The pain God.

I'll have to look that over. Careful. The pain God has allowed to guide ends in a saving repentance, never to be regretted. Whereas the world's pain ends in death. See what this pain divine has done to you, how serious it has made you.

How keen to clear yourselves, how indignant, how alarmed, how eager for me, how determined, how relentless. You have shown in every way that you were honest in business. So my letter was written to you but on account.

But. But not on account of the offender, nor for the sake of the injured party, but in order to let you realize before God how seriously you do care for me. That is what comforts me over and above my personal comfort. I was especially delighted at the delight of Titus. You have all set his mind at rest.

I have told him of my boasting of you, and I have not been disappointed. No. Just as all I have had to say to you has been true, so all I said about you to Titus, all my boasting of you has been proved true. His own heart goes out to you all the more when he remembers how you all obeyed him and how you received him with reverence and trembling. I am glad indeed to have full confidence in you.

And I'm sure that Paul is not anyone to give into flattery so we can take from there that those Corinthians were actually showing good growth in grace, and so, brethren, let us all have good courage as we travel this narrow way, and in closing this, I'm going to close it like Brother Russell did one of his discourses at a Washington convention, and we quote, remember that God is for us and that our Master and head is for us, and that all the children of God are for us. Everything is on our side.

All things are yours if you are Christ, for Christ is God. First Corinthians 3:23 May the Lord add his blessing.

Harold Burkholder - Growing in Grace

Thank you, Brother Burkholder, for the lesson this morning on growing in grace. There are many examples of that the apostles bring to our attention and even our Lord Jesus himself of those who failed, and it is used as a warning to us that if others have failed, that if we are not any more careful than they have been, we can likewise fail. So I think the admonition was helpful and encouraging to us. Let us close with hymn number 98.

Hymn number 98, Sa Ra Brother Burkholder, would you lead us in closing prayer, closing this service and also asking a blessing on the temporal provisions?

Our kind loving Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy Holy name. We again come into thy presence to give thanks, dear Father, for the many, many blessings and favors given us. Thank Thee for the all of the help we have, all the provisions made for our all our welfare in both spiritual and temporal things. We thank thee that we have the advantages of printed pages, recordings and our dear brethren to help us along this path that we are that we are attempting to trod to eventually hear that well done, good and faithful servant. Now we ask Thy blessing be upon us throughout this day and we ask that blessing upon the temporal provision and we ask Thy forgiveness, dear Father, where we err in any way, where we come short, we ask these favors and give all thanks in the precious name of Jesus.