

Growth

by Andrew Murray

The spiritual life grows through divine growth, and we must trust and rest in God's care for our growth, removing any hindrances and giving it time to develop.

Scripture: Mark 4:26

Topics: "Trusting God's Timing", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the natural process of spiritual growth, likening it to the growth of a seed in the ground, which occurs without the farmer's understanding of how it happens. He teaches that spiritual growth is self-sufficient and must be nurtured by removing hindrances and providing nourishment through prayer and the Word. Murray encourages believers to trust in God's timing for their growth, understanding that it is a gradual process that requires faith and patience. He reminds us that the divine life within us is powerful and destined to increase, leading us to maturity in Christ. Ultimately, he prays for believers to recognize the precious life God has implanted in them and to actively participate in their spiritual growth.

Transcript

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring forth and grow up, he knoweth not how. The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, after that the ear, then the full corn in the ear" Mark 4:26-28.

"The Head, from which all the body increaseth with the increase of God" Colossians 2:19.

"That we may grow into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body maketh the increase" Ephesians 4:15,16.

Life is continual movement, progressiveness. Increase or growth is the law of all created life. Consequently, the new life in man is destined to increase--always by becoming stronger. As there are in the seed and in the earth a life and power of growth which impels the plant to achieve its full height and fruit, so is there in the seed of the eternal life an impelling force by which that life always increases and grows. This divine growth continues until we come to be a perfect man--measuring up to the stature of the fullness of Christ.

In this parable of the seed that springs up of itself, and becomes great and bears fruit, the Lord teaches us two of the most important lessons on the increase of the spiritual life. The one is that of its self-sufficiency;

the other is that of its gradual timing.

The first lesson is for those who ask what they are to do in order to grow and advance more in grace. As the Lord said of the body, "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow" (Matthew 6:27,28). So He says to us here that we can do nothing, and need to do nothing, to make the spiritual life grow.² Do you not see how, while man slept, the seed sprang up and became high? Do you not see that he did not know how the earth brought forth fruit by itself? Once man has sown, he must believe that God cares for the growth. Man does not have to care. He must trust and rest.

And must man then do nothing? You must understand that he can do nothing. The power of life must come from within--from the life and the Spirit implanted in him. He can contribute nothing to the growth itself. His growth will be given to him.³

All he can do is to let the life grow. All that can hinder the life, he must take away and keep away. He can take away any thorns and thistles in the soil which occupy the place and power that the plant should have.⁴ The plant must have its place in the earth alone and undivided. The farmer can care for this. Then it is able to grow further of itself. Likewise, the Christian must take away what can hinder the growth of the new life. He must surrender his heart entirely and completely for the new life, allowing it alone to possess his heart, so that it may grow free and unhindered.⁵

The farmer can also bring forth what the plant requires in the way of food or drink. He can manure or moisten the soil as it is needed. So must the believer see to it that for the new life nourishment is brought forth out of the Word, the living water of the Spirit, by prayer. It is in Christ that the new life is planted. From Him it increases with divine increase. Stay rooted in Him by the exercise of faith, and the life will grow of itself.⁶ Give it what it must have, take away what can hinder it, and the life will grow and increase of itself.

Then comes the second lesson of the parable--the gradual timing of the growth, "first the blade, after that the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Do not expect everything at once. Give God time. By faith and endurance we inherit the promises--faith that knows that it has everything in Christ, and endurance that expects everything in its time according to the rule and the order of the divine government. Give God time. Give the new life time. It is by continually remaining in the earth that the plant grows. It is by continually standing in grace, in Christ Himself--in whom God has planted us--that the new life grows.⁷

Yes, give the new life sufficient time--time in prayer, time in communion with God, time in continuous exercise of faith, and time in persistent separation from the world. Give it time. The divine inner growth with which the life of God perfects man in Christ is slow but sure, hidden but real, and weak but endowed with heavenly power.

Lord God, graciously strengthen the faith of Your children, showing them that their growth and progress are in Your hands. Enable them to see what a precious, powerful life was implanted in them by You--a life that increases with a divine increase. Enable them, by faith and patience, to inherit the promises. And teach them in that faith to take away all that can hinder the new life, and to bring forward all that can further it, so that You may make Your work in them glorious. Amen.

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