

Christian growth essentially consists in the development of spiritual life. Whatever is endowed with a vital principle is adapted and tends to self-development. The acorn of a summer's growth and of a pebble's size, develops into the oak of centuries, with giant root and trunk, spreading branch and towering top. The infant of a day and of a span develops into the man of noble stature, herculean strength, and regal intellect. In social organizations—which are but higher unities—whether civil or religious, the same principle obtains. In every instance, also, growth is the development of life, after its kind.

Christianity, in each true believer, in each genuine, local Christian church, and in the one true catholic church of Christ, whose names are written in heaven, has a vital principle and a vital development. The church universal, which is Christ's body, has had its infancy, has now its youth, and has in certain prospect the colossal proportions of maturer years,—“the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Every genuine, local Christian church, is composed of living members, and has a vital organism peculiar to the earthly state, and subservient to the interests of the believer and of the church universal, by which it exercises its powers and absorbs and assimilates surrounding material. But the basis of all life and growth in churches local, or in the church universal, is the personal and spiritual vitality and vital development of believers, individually. Life flows from Christ directly, and not mediately, to each member of His mystical body. That life He imparts to them at first, by uniting them to Himself; and, by their abiding union with Him, He subsequently strengthens and develops it through all succeeding time. He came into the world, in human nature and under Divine law, that His people might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. The life imparted to the soul in regeneration is life in embryo; but it has vigour and growth for