

byterians, who seem to have fallen away from the grand old conception of the church, and from the principles of Knox and Melville, with whom the ark of God was a magic word to arouse the people, and make Scottish nobles draw their swords from the scabbard, and flash them in the faces of kings.

And now to return to the subject. The church has everything to do with the success of the spiritual husbandman. It is easy to see how some churches succeed. They would succeed whoever they had for a minister; they are warm, and lively, and sociable. When a stranger appears, they receive him with open arms. They are full of love and good works. They are attentive in their places; for they feel that they are not waiting upon man, but God, and they would on no account be absent from the presence chamber of the King of kings. They are not too dignified to open their mouths to sing the praises of the church. They are not ashamed to do what angels glory and delight in, share in that song which prolongs its harmonies in the courts of heaven. They are not ashamed to appear interested, but feel that as, when they have returned into the business of the world, men will see them full of joy and sorrow, hope and fears: in short, *interested*; so it is right, that when they worship God they should appear interested also, and not degrade their worship with a hollow form—a poor and chilling ceremony.

And it is easy also to see why the seed does not grow in an atmosphere where the worshippers are so stiff, so starched and so cold, so fashionably afraid of showing the least feeling or sympathy; so dreadfully alarmed lest people should think that they are anything but formal Christians; that an occasional stranger, instead of finding himself in a warm clime, where the fires of love burn with a clear, fine flame, feels as if he had got into the vicinity of an iceberg. His sympathies are chilled in that cold air. His nature and his hopes have received a shock. He is offended with a gospel that can so abuse and pervert human nature. He will return thither no more. Nothing that any minister could say there could be profitable. He is preaching one gospel with his mouth, and they are preaching an-

other gospel with their manners. They are dashing out the fires which he is vainly endeavouring to kindle and to brighten. The church must preach, if the plant of grace is to flourish in the earth.

Men and brethren! let us direct our earnest attention to this matter, and fight against a religion which is doing much injury to the cause of Christ. Let us realize the greatness of the kingdom, independent of the functionary. Christ presides over this great assembly of the first-born. Its membership embraces the noblest part of the human race—the true heroes of history—men who have covered humanity with glory, who have salted society, who have quickened civilization, and shed a halo of peace over great portions of the human race—men of whom the world was not worthy. The Church of Christ is a kingdom compared with which the most ancient are but of yesterday; and when all others have descended into the gulf of oblivion, it shall fill the heavens and the earth. The name of its Redeemer-King shall endure forever. Through ages no longer measured by the sun or lighted by the moon, it shall spread out its splendours in the light of an everlasting day. The plots of devils, though they fabricate their thunder-bolts in the bottomless pit, shall never prevail against it. It is the sanctuary of time, the asylum of the poor, the home of our affections, the only true home of afflicted humanity,—our holy and beautiful house where our fathers have worshipped, and where are our heavenly things. When we have left the plough in the furrow, and resigned our employment into other hands, we shall find the church of the living God the centre where we shall be able to meet with dear departed ones, beings beauteous, who are now saints in heaven. Away with our cold, contracted notions. It is the altar that sanctifies the gift; let us therefore be churchmen and not followers of men.

IV. Let me now characterize some of the effects of life in this divine plant; such as *growth, organization, missions, and catholicity of spirit*. Life and growth are almost synonymous: such also is organization. The God we worship is a God of order. The life of the church, like that of the plant, is an organic life!