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## Religious.

### Christian Growth.

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THERE is practically no middle ground between development and decay in Christian life and character. The only safeguard against error, the only preventive of declension, is continual advancement from one degree of grace and knowledge, holiness and strength, to another. The very attempt to become stationary is, as in the case of a boatman resting on his oars in the current which he is stemming, really to go backward. Accordingly, we frequently find in Scripture warnings against spiritual declension, and exhortations to spiritual growth in juxtaposition. Growth is the Christian's normal condition, and the very design of his circumstances; and on it his interests and usefulness, his dignity and happiness, depend.

Christian growth necessarily pre-requires the existence of spiritual life. Nothing that is destitute of life can properly be said to grow. In the natural world, stones or other inorganic substances, having no capacity for life, and plants or animals which have been deprived of life, are incapable of growth. The Scriptures declare emphatically that all mankind, in their natural condition, are abiding in spiritual death; that they are "alienated from the life of God," and "dead in trespasses and sins." The corruption of the de-