

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

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PERFECT holiness should be the ambition of every believer, an ambition which he cannot expect to have realized in this life, it is true, yet one toward which he should ever earnestly strive to rise. Holiness is a growth, and is governed by laws the same as, or similar to, those that govern physical growth.

For instance, it is *spontaneous*. We cannot make ourselves grow. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God alone who gives the increase. All that we are asked to do, and all that we can do, is to see that our plant is supplied with those elements that growth requires. The boy grows, not as a result of his own effort, not as a consequence of his own willing or striving (no one, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature), but simply because in his daily life certain conditions of growth are complied with—he breathes in the pure air, takes food, exercise, rest. Such conditions as these being supplied, his development asks no more. His growth is not a matter of anxiety or care to him, it, perhaps, never once gives him a thought; all that is to be noted in his case is that, day after day, the conditions are complied with, and he steadily increases in stature.

So with regard to growth in grace. We need not be anxiously careful about our actual advance or progress, as it is God alone who gives the increase. That that we should be careful about is to see that we are complying with the conditions of spiritual growth—to see that we are living in the proper atmosphere (the atmosphere of communion with God), partaking of the proper food (the sincere milk of the Word), engaged in the right exercise (running in the way of God's commands), finding the true rest (resting in the Lord), for spiritual development.