

evermore; and (to vary the figure) the deepest root and highest fruit of spiritual life are but its natural development. Upon the branch that is grafted into Christ, the various Christian graces cluster and ripen, like grapes upon the vines of Eshcol. The Christian, without growth, could no more subserve the end of his being, than would life in the vegetable or animal kingdom, were it to remain for ever in its incipient state. The design of the vivification of the Christian's soul, is its development into fruitfulness of Christian character. Strength and holiness, generousness and zeal, humility and love, are principal parts and germinal forces of Christian character, and from these are evolved innumerable varieties of grace, in fragrant bloom and savoury fruit.

Herein we see a fundamental distinction between saint and sinner. The excellences of the Christian are evolved spontaneously, and by cultivation, from the spiritual life derived from Christ. The excellences of the worldling are enlarged and multiplied by accretion, as a stone, and not by growth, as a tree; and if there be a species of vitality in his character, it springs from his own corrupt and carnal nature, and not from Christ, the fountain of all spiritual life. From confounding these things, which differ widely, arises the prevalent error of mistaking mere external reformation and extraneous acquisitions for vital godliness and Christian growth.

It is to be borne in mind, that, while Christian growth is in some respects spontaneous, in other respects it is voluntary; that while primarily it results from Divine energy alone, proximately it results, in part, from human agency. Hence the force of Scripture injunctions to Christian growth. Natural life, though ultimately dependent upon Divine power, is nevertheless sustained and developed by means of food, air, light, cleanliness, exercise, rest and sleep. By suitable culture, men may have the bodies of athletes or the