

cise, and so devout, all confirm him in supposing that there must be in his particular case, some natural defect which prevents him from being possessed of the same character. The person of whom we are speaking is, at times, prepossessed in favor of the people of God. He has heard good things of them—and perhaps the holy and consistent life and conversation of some of his relatives, has made him desirous of casting in his lot with them, and of partaking in their privileges. But then he feels that he is possessed of a nature which seems to differ widely from theirs. He has long been a transgressor of the law of God, and although he does not disbelieve that the mercy of God can be extended to him—for he has been told that Jesus Christ died for the chief of sinners, and therefore he does not feel so much difficulty on the subject of pardon. But he feels that although he was pardoned, it would not avail him, for he is conscious of an utter incapacity to live according to the scriptural standard. He, therefore, puts off all attempts to turn in good earnest unto God, for he supposes that the effort would be, altogether, unavailing, seeing that there exists within him a power of sin which no effort can possibly restrain. He, therefore, gives up the notion of reformation, as a hopeless thing, and with the plain offers of the pardon of the gospel, placed before his eyes, he cannot move a step, in proceeding to accept of that pardon, and enter into a state of favor with God, because he imagines that the reformation of his character is hopeless. We believe that the character, here alluded to, is by no means an uncommon one; and, while we think that there is much in the character of such persons, deeply to interest every true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we must, at the same time, say of them that they greatly err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God. The statement, which is here made in the text, we would beg to urge upon this class of persons. If they are only candid in their professions, we think that they are in the very condition, in which they are peculiarly fitted to receive the gospel, in its life-giving power.—For what is the condition in which they are? They are persons who profess not to doubt that the blood of Christ can wash away all their sins, but they cannot see what effect this would have, in altering their condition, because they are conscious of a dead load of carnality dwelling within them, which they possess no power of removing. They feel that there is such a strength, as well as subtlety, in the sin which dwells within them, that it is, altogether, the

dominant principle in their souls—and this is not a mere opinion, which, possibly, may not be well founded, but they have the experience of their whole past life to convince them that their besetting sin is the dominant principle within them. They have often tried to put it under restraint, but they have never been successful. Sin has always gained the victory when the hour of trial came, and, therefore, they have, in a measure, given up the contest, and have confessed themselves to be willing slaves, and sin, which at a former period of their history, had to contend with the strong remonstrances of conscience, now rules without a rival; and when they look forward to the future, they can only sigh at the prospect of the contempt and misery into which it is hurrying them. Now I would beg to ask whether it has ever occurred to them that the gospel, not only provides for all such persons as they are, an immediate pardon of all their sins, but that it provides an immediate power, by which they are delivered from the tyranny of sin. We ask them, calmly, to meditate on the statement which is here made by the beloved disciple John, “that as many as received the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” They should know that there are truths in the bible fitted for men, at every stage of their progress in the spiritual life; and the truth which the text contains, is just the very truth which is most suitable for the persons to whom we have alluded. We would, therefore, with all earnestness, beseech them to meditate upon it with a personal reference to themselves. The statement which is made in these words, leads us to the great truth, that whenever a man receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he receives, also, a new and a holy nature.

It is not my intention to enter into any metaphysical discussion, as to the manner in which this great renovation is produced, because such discussions have no sanction in scripture, and because they have no tendency to make the weary and the heavy laden sinner a participator in this holy and divine nature, but rather to encourage a spirit of pride and vain curiosity, and so to remove him farther than before from the glorious blessing. I would rather direct his mind to the fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ makes all those persons to be partakers of a holy nature like unto himself, who submit themselves to him as their Saviour. The great truth, that a regenerating power is applied by God to the hearts of those who come to him for help, is not peculiar to the New Testament.—