

praved nature, the pollution of the sinful life, the insensibility of soul to spiritual things and eternal realities, the moral inability to perceive, appreciate or practice true holiness, demonstrate the dread accuracy of the description. But the fundamental and distinguishing characteristic of the Christian is spiritual life. Life is what was lost in Adam; life is what is regained in Christ. Jesus, not only by imputation of His finished righteousness to the believer's person, delivers him from that death which is the penalty of the law, but also, by the impartation of vital holiness to the believer's soul, through His quickening spirit, delivers him from that death which constitutes the virulent and essential principle of sin, the transgression of the law. This heavenly principle may well be called life; it is life indeed, and life eternal. There is nothing in all the natural world but the highest and most mysterious principle of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, natural life, that is worthy to be its symbol. Its functions are all essentially and supremely vital. It has its nutritive functions, by which it feeds upon and refreshes itself with Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed, and who is constituted, to the Christian, the bread and water of life eternal. It has its senses of discernment, by which, when exercised, it "discerns both good and evil," and by which alone it perceives the things of the Spirit. It has its sensitive properties, by which it experiences the joys and sorrows peculiar to the Christian. It has its vital energy, by which it is enabled to do and to dare whatever the divine will may require. It has its reproductive power, by which, through the Word of God and prayer, it multiplies its existence and perpetuates its kind. Without possession, therefore, of this life, divine and spiritual, derived from Christ, its fountain, no one, whatever his natural qualities or cultivated attainments, can possibly be a Christian, or be the subject of Christian growth.