

virtue which religious men may well imitate. Perhaps, in some one constituent element of character, the natural man shall be found surpassing the spiritual man. In many cases, he at least rivals him in what is outward or visible. This is more to the shame of the Christian, than it is to the praise of nature; what is attributed to nature, is perhaps due in such instances, to an indirect or secondary influence of grace. But even where meekness, or temperance, or generosity, or good faith may be referred to original temperament, or merely human culture, it will be found in the long run, that the heavenly plant as far excels the earthly, as the work of God does the work of man. "The flesh" and the "Spirit" are still opposites. The nature, so fair and beautiful in some one development, gives forth in other directions its fruits of gall, and clusters of bitterness. There is nothing constant, nothing harmonious, in the characters of unconverted men. Kind to the body, they are cruel to the soul. Generous and honourable to man, they bear enmity to God. Can you call him truly and fully generous, of whom it is true that God is not in all his thoughts, He who gives him all things to enjoy—all his powers of benefitting or profiting his fellow-man. The very tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. And you never have a certain hold of the good faith, or the honor, nor of the charity of those, whose consciences have never yet known the blood of sprinkling. Those hearts only are "true hearts" that know the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, On the passage at large, we remark that though these graces may be unequally developed in different Christians, and certain of them less developed than others in the same Christian, yet they do all belong to the new nature. The renewing, wherever accomplished, is a renewing of the whole man. He may well suspect

his Christianity, who is a stranger to any one of these lineaments of the image of God. And the child of grace who is far behind in any one grace or fruit of the Spirit, is just so far, at least, wanting in one evidence that he is "Christ's."

Let us now consider one of these graces, or fruits—"Peace." This fruit of the Spirit is of unspeakable value, and holds an important place among the privileges and characteristics of every true Christian; as may be seen from the many promises and precepts with which the word of God abounds in relation to it. "Peace on earth" was a note in the song of the heavenly host, when they hailed the Saviour's birth, and congratulated the world on his coming. The Son of God has it for one of his honourable titles—"Prince of peace." "Abundance of peace" is promised as a distinguished consequence of his reign. These and other passages refer, indeed, to peace as an external as well as internal blessing; that is, to peace, not merely as the fruit of the Spirit in the soul, but as denoting our reconciliation to God by the cross of Christ; not so much the feeling of peace, as the state of peace. It denotes, also, in some such passages, peace, as enjoyed among men and nations in opposition to contention and war. Our text leads us to think of internal peace—the peace not of the world generally, but of the soul; not of peace as the work of Christ, accomplished by his doing and dying that he might reconcile us to God, but as the work of the Spirit on the heart—the consequence, indeed, and fruit of the other.

I would consider this Peace, in its nature or source; 2dly in some of its distinguishing properties; 3rdly, in the causes of its interruption occasionally, and the means of its being cherished or regained.

I. Its nature or source: Peace of con-