

CHRIST THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

ISAIAH ix. 6,

His name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

THIS is the last syllable of the name of our glorious Redeemer. It consists of two letters. (1.) He is a Prince, an eminent one. (2.) Peace. He is the Prince of Peace. As the Father of eternity is the everlasting Father; so the Prince of Peace is the peaceful Prince.

Doct. Jesus Christ presented and given to us of the Father, is the peaceful Prince.

Of Christ's principality we have already spoken; we are now to consider him as the peaceful Prince. And in prosecuting this doctrine, I shall only show in what respects Christ is the peaceful Prince; and then make some practical improvement.

In what respects is Christ the peaceful Prince? And,

First, More generally, we take it up in these three particulars. He is the peaceful Prince,

1. In respect of disposition. He is a prince of the most peaceful disposition; Matth. xi. 29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Peace is woven into his nature. Though he is the mighty One, who is of such power as to frown a sinner to destruction; yet his great power is tempered with the greatest meekness and peacefulness. The prince of this world is the roaring lion; the Prince of heaven, the Lamb, John i. 29, even on his throne, Rev. v. 6.

2. In respect of action and operation. Peace is his work he pursued all along, and doth still pursue; Eph. ii. 14, "For he is our peace." He is the great peace-maker. Adam's sin and the sin of his posterity set all at red war, and kept them so: but Christ the second Adam travels for peace. "Blessed are the peace-makers," and he is blessed for ever on his peace-making, Phil. ii. 8, 9.

3. In respect of the state of his kingdom; Rom. xiv. 17, "The kingdom of God is peace." Peace in the language of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament is prosperity; so a peaceful prince is a prosperous one. Thus Solomon was a type of him, who had a reign of the greatest peace and prosperity, Psalm lxxii. 7. His subjects may enjoy peace whoever want it.

Secondly, More particularly. And,

1st, He is the peaceful Prince, peaceful of disposition, in the following respects.

1. He bears long with his enemies, he is long-suffering, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Many calls he gives them which they neglect; but he calls them still; many affronts they do to him, yet his deserved wrath is held in; and still he waits, if so be they may be brought to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. There must be a mighty inclination to peace where it is so.

2. He bears much at the hands of his friends, but never casts them off, John xiii. 2. O the weakness, witlessness, and folly that hangs about them! O the ingratitude, untenderness, and backslidings they fall into! They reflect dishonour many times on him by their way; but they experience him to be the Prince of peace, Psalm lxxviii. 38.

3. He is easy of access, for poor sinners. The worst of sinners may have access to him if they will; John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Papists make mediators to him; but there needs none to him; whoever comes to him is welcome. And there needs none to God but him. Whatever is their business in the court of heaven, he will readily do it for them.

4. He is ready to forgive, Psalm lxxxvi. 5. His offending friends are readily pardoned, and restored to wonted favour; his rebellious enemies are readily pardoned on their submission, and received into the number of his friends. His peacefulness is such, that peace is his delight.

5. He is very familiar with his true subjects. He treats all his servants, not as servants, but as friends; and communicates to them his secrets; John xv. 15, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." Love and good-will shines forth in his countenance.

6. The afflicting of his people, is as it were against the grain with him; Lam. iii. 33, "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." There is a necessity for it, for which he is obliged to do it; 1 Pet. i. 6, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." The apostle distinguisheth between men's correcting and his in Heb. xii. 10, "They verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." And in it he carries along the pity of a father, Psalm ciii. 13, 14, and so is afflicted in their affliction, Isa. lxiii. 9.

7. *Lastly*, He bore his own sufferings with the utmost peaceableness, meekness and patience. The angels sang at his birth, Peace on earth; and the earth never saw such a pattern of peace. In his

life, which was a continued suffering, he never shewed the least discomposure. In his death, he prayed for his enemies.

2dly, He is the peaceful Prince, peaceful in action and operation. He acted for peace, as never another did. He brought about such peace as had never been known, if he had not taken it in hand. And here we may consider,

1. What peace is effected by this Prince of peace.

(1.) Peace with God ; Isa. liii. 5, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." Sinners were at war with God, and God with them ; and there could be no peace betwixt the parties, till the Prince of peace turned to be-Mediator of the peace. The war went on, sinners doing as they could against God, and God in a state of war with the sinner, blocking up all commerce with heaven of a saving sort, &c. But he steps in, lays hands on both, and makes up the peace.

(2.) Peace among men. Men's peace with God being lost, the peace among themselves was broken too. See the case of mankind by nature in this point ; Tit. iii. 3, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." But Christ brings them together in him again, to love and charity one to another, Isa. xi. 6. And wherever he makes peace with God for a man, he implants love to men in that man's heart. Particularly, he made peace between Jews and Gentiles, Eph. ii. 14.

(3.) Peace within men, peace of conscience ; Rom. xiv. 17, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Sin by itself breaks the peace within one's own breast. The guilt of it is like a thorn in the flesh, that till it be plucked out ceases not to gall ; the reign of it is like a tyrant in the house, that enslaves, and keeps in disturbance all therein. Christ the Prince of peace, by his blood and Spirit, only can restore the true peace within.

2. What is his work about the peace, that threefold peace ?

(1.) He purchased it by his precious blood, Eph. ii. 14, 15. There is a peace the wicked have, that is a stolen and usurped peace, known by this mark that it is a peace in sin, James iii. 17. But the peace of the Prince of peace is a dear-bought peace. It cost him to be denied to his own peace, and swim through a red sea of suffering for it ; Isa. liii. 5, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him."

(2.) He makes the peace by his own efficacy. The covenant of grace is the covenant of peace, and he is the Mediator of it. He travels betwixt God and the rebel sinner, till the reconciliation is made. He does by his Spirit bring the sinner into the covenant of

peace, and by his intercession obtains peace with God for him. He by the same Spirit unites men to himself by faith, and to one another in love. And by his blood sprinkled on the soul, he removes the guilt of sin, and plucks out the thorn; and by his sanctifying Spirit breaks the power of turbulent lusts, and so creates peace, Isa. lvii. 19.

(3.) He maintains the peace made; Isa. xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." He is the believer's resident at the court of Heaven, that takes up emergent differences, and hinders matters to come to a total rupture betwixt God and them any more. And it is by the efficacy of his blood and Spirit that peace within men, and love among men who are his, are continued.

(4.) He restores the peace, when at any time it is brangled; Isa. lvii. 18, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners." While believers are in this world, they are upon a sea; and in that sea they often meet with storms. Sometimes the storm blows from above, sometimes from without, sometimes from within; sometimes fightings without, and fears within; yea sometimes all three blow together. But the Prince of peace again clears the sky above, Job xxxiii. 23, 24. He "stills the tumult of the people," Psalm lxxv. 7, and quells all disturbance within, Isa. lvii. 19.

(5.) *Lastly*, He perfects the peace. It is begun now, but he will not leave it imperfect; Psalm cxxxviii. 8, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." He began Israel's peace in bringing them out of Egypt, and perfected it in bringing them to Canaan; so he begins his people's peace in their conversion, and perfects it in glorification. Their peace now is liable to a great mixture of disturbance; but he will render it perfect at length, without the least trouble, Rev. xxi. 4.

3dly, He is the peaceful Prince, in the peaceful state of his kingdom, in the prosperity attending it. He is the true Solomon (peaceful); and no king of Israel had such a peaceable and prosperous reign as Solomon; that his kingdom might be a type of Christ's, the Prince of peace, as David's was a type of it in the wars thereof. And,

1. Every one of his subjects is, by his wise management, put in a state of peace; Micah iv. 4, "They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." He has procured them peace with God, among themselves, and within themselves; what then should discompose them? It is true, in the world they must have tribulation; but in their prince they have

peace to balance that, John xvi. 33. Having a good God, communion with good people, and a good conscience; they may, in peace, bear through all the troubles of a present evil world.

2. The peace of his kingdom is the fruit of war, and victory in that war. What made Solomon's reign so peaceable, was David's wars and victories. Our Lord Christ was a man of war; he fought and overcame sin, death, and the devil; and the peace of his kingdom now, is the fruit of that. The wicked's peace is the fruit of a conquest, like that of Issachar, who "saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute," Gen. xlv. 15; and like that of the strong man's keeping the house, in which case all things are at peace. So their peace is merely precarious; but God's people's peace is sure.

3. Hence in his kingdom is the greatest wealth and abundance. There is abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, which his subjects receive, Rom. v. 17; so that they are made a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9. The fruits of the victory over sin, death, and Satan are among them; they are enriched with the spoil of their enemies; free commerce is settled between heaven and them; and all that oppose their entrance into the heavenly Canaan, are overcome.

4. The good of his kingdom is advanced from all airths, and there is nothing but it is turned to the profit thereof, by the infinite wisdom of the Prince, Rom. viii. 28. Go matters what way they will, his kingdom is advanced by them; his subjects reap benefit by them. Out of the eater is brought forth meat by our Lord Jesus; yea, peace, order, and prosperity, out of war, by the Prince of peace. Is not that a prosperous kingdom that prospers in all emergencies?

5. *Lastly*, In end the peace of his kingdom will be absolute. Solomon's reign was more peaceable in the beginning of it, than toward the end. But Christ's kingdom is contrariwise: though indeed it will never end. But at last all occasion of disturbance from without or from within, will be utterly cut off.

USE 1. Is Jesus Christ presented and given to us the peaceful Prince, peaceful in action and operation, the procurer, maker, maintainer, restorer, and perfecter of peace? Then,

1. Sinners in a state of enmity with God, ye may have peace with God through him. There is a mediator of peace provided for you, able and willing to make up the peace betwixt God and you. This is the good news the Gospel brings, Luke ii. 14. If ye perish in a state of enmity with God, it is not because ye could not, but because ye would not have peace. There is nothing on heaven's part to

hinder the peace, but all is ready for it on that side, Matth. xxxii. 4. Therefore,

2. Apply yourself to the business of making your peace with God through him, 2 Cor. v. 20. Be no more at peace with yourselves, till ye be at peace with God through Christ.

MOTIVE 1. Ye are naturally in a state of enmity with God. So Adam left us all; and the breach is still made wider by actual sins, while unconverted. Ye have a real enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. If ye are not sensible of it, your works declare it, Col. i. 21. God bears a legal enmity against you, as rector of the world; even as a judge against a malefactor, whom in justice he must pursue and condemn, Psalm vii. 11—13.

MOTIVE 2. While ye are at enmity with God, ye have not one fast friend in all the creation; so you are never safe. The very beasts, fowls, and creeping things, are your enemies, as enemies to their Creator, and are ready to dispatch you on the least signal from him, Hos. ii. 18, Job. v. 22, 23. Frogs, lice, &c. were employed to plague Pharaoh and his people, and worms to devour the bloody Herod. The meat thou eatest, and the drink thou swallowest, may be a means to choke thee, and send thee to the pit. The friendship of the world, being enmity with God, can never continue.

MOTIVE 3. Ye are not able to make your part good against him. When the clay strives with the potter, it is easy to see who shall have the better. An angry God will be a party too strong for the stoutest sinner. And do ye not see how many, flushed with the world's smiles, forget God and themselves, and in a moment are dashed in pieces, and go out like the crackling of thorns under a pot? 1 Cor. x. 22. Infinite wisdom and power are what will be too hard a match for you; Job ix. 4, "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered." It is wisdom, then, to yield, and make peace with one with whom we are not able to war, Luke xiv. 31, 32.

MOTIVE 4. Consider what losers ye are, while not at peace with God.

(1.) Ye lose all the advantages of commerce with heaven. When war breaks out betwixt nations, there is no more trade or commerce between them, all access to that is blocked up. So you have no access to import your prayers, desires, &c. into heaven, nor to export pardons, grace, &c. therefrom.

(2.) You lose the sap and foyson of all you have in the world. There is a blasting, withering curse on it, Prov. iii. 33, Dent. xxviii. 17. Hence it will do you no good, but evil, Prov. i. 32. The very thought, that ye are at enmity with God, is sufficient to blast all your enjoyments.

(3.) You lose true peace within your own breast. Conscience is not your friend, since ye are at enmity with God. Therefore that joy, 2 Cor. i. 12, is a joy ye cannot intermeddle with. A sleep of conscience, which will have a fearful awakening, ye may have; but peace of conscience ye cannot have; Isa. lvii. 21, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

(4.) Ye will lose your souls in the end. That will be the issue of the war with Heaven; and what can countervail that loss? Matth. xvi. 26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" That is to lose thyself; Luke ix. 25, "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" The soul is the man.

MORIVE 5. The slighting of offered peace now, will make an eternal war against you, in the keenest manner. The peace is purchased by the blood of the Son of God; it is offered to you on free cost; if ye reject it, ye pour contempt on the blood of Christ, and the grace of God; and while God is God, he will pursue that quarrel, in a more fiery manner than if ye had never heard of peace; Matth. xi. 23, 24, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." 2 Thess. i. 7—9, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Wherefore consider what ye do, for life and death are here set before you; Isa. xxvii. 4, 5, "Fury is not in me; who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me."

QUESTION. How may we get peace with God? ANSWER. Through the mediation of Christ; as those of Tyre and Sidon, in another case, made the king's chamberlain their friend, so do ye. It is through faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. That blood is held out to you as a covert to flee in under; and you will be wrapt up in that cover, by believing the efficacy of it to bring peace to sinners, and to you in particular, and wholly trusting on it for your peace with God. This implies a desire of peace with God, and a willingness to lay down your weapons of rebellion.

3. Saints, see here how you will get your peace maintained, restored, and perfected. You must be daily making use of Christ, his blood, intercession, and spirit, for maintaining it. What time it is broken, exercise faith anew, for restoring it; Psalm lxxv. 3, "Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." And hang on him for perfecting it.

USE 2. Is he the peaceful Prince, peaceful of disposition? Then,

1. Whosoever desire to employ him for peace, saints or sinners, be not frightened away from him, but come to him with holy boldness, as one who is a peaceful prince, of easy access, and ready to help; Heb. x. 22, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." There is love and good-will to wretched sinners of mankind in his heart and in his face; and it is the work of faith to perceive it, by means of the glass of the word, John i. 14.

Satan and an unbelieving heart hold him out to the trembling sinner to be an austere man, Luke xix. 21. And this is more rife in the world than we are aware of, it being the natural report of a guilty conscience concerning him. And hence men are ready to say, as Jer. ii. 25, "There is no hope." But oppose to that report of him, the report of the word; according to which he is the Prince of Peace; 1 John iv. 8, "God is love." Hang by this in all accusations of conscience, and believe it, Isa. liiii. 1.

2. Then resemble him in that disposition, as ever ye would prove yourselves his subjects; 1 John ii. 6, "He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Is he the peaceful prince; be ye peaceful men? Heb. xii. 14, "Follow peace with all men." He bids you learn it of him; Matth. xi. 29, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Nay, if ye be not men of peace, ye are none of his, Isa. xi. 6. The proud, fiery, mischievous spirit that some are possessed with, evidence them to be none of his, Tit. iii. 3.

USE 3. Is he the peaceful Prince in the prosperous state of his kingdom? Then,

1. Let his enemies, and those of his church and people, know, that their attempts against the same shall be in vain, and shall return on their own heads, according to that promise, Zech. xii. 3, "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." There is a peace of his kingdom that they cannot reach to take away; John xiv. 27, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

2. Let his friends rejoice in his peace and prosperity, by faith,

Rom. xv. 13, particularly knowing that his kingdom shall prosper over the belly of opposition, yea, that it shall prosper by means that threaten to overthrow it, as in the case of Paul's sufferings, Phil. i. 12; that their particular trials shall promote their prosperity, John xv. 2; and that in him they may have peace in the midst of trouble, John xvi. 33.

3. *Lastly*, Join yourselves to this prosperous and peaceful prince and kingdom. Great is the noise of wars and commotions through the nations, strong confederacies on all hands a-forming. Join ye the Prince of Peace in the covenant of Grace; and ye shall have peace, though all should be in red war, Psalm xlvi. 1—4.

Thus Christ has been directly commended to you.

(1.) Do ye believe the report that has been made of Christ to you from the word, or not? that he is indeed the "Wonderful One, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?" that he is presented, yea, given to you of the Father? If ye do, I am sure the vain world, and your lusts, will be sunk in their value with you. If they be not, it is an evidence it is not believed, Isa. liii. 1.

(2.) Will ye take him or not, for and instead of all? If ye do, let these go away, Luke xiv. 26. He will be your "Wonderful One," your "Counsellor," &c. If ye will not, be it known to you, you refuse Heaven's present to you, you cast back its gift made to you, and ye must answer it.

THE UNSUCCESSFULNESS OF THE GOSPEL, THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL-REPORT, THE RARITY OF BELIEVING IT, AND THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE POWER IN ORDER TO FAITH.*

ISAIAH liii. 1,

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

NONE spoke so much of Christ as this evangelical prophet. He had been speaking of him in the former chapter, verse 13, and downward, and he was to speak more of him here. But in the words now read, he makes a melancholy reflection on the cold entertainment the word met with in his own time, and would meet with in after times.

* Several sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1726.