

SERMON XXXIII.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.—
2 Cor. v. 18.

IN this verse the doctrine of the new creature is further prosecuted with respect to the apostle's scope, which is to assert his fidelity in the ministry. For here are three things laid down—

1. The efficient cause of all is God.
2. The meritorious cause is Jesus Christ.
3. The instrumental cause is the word.

[1.] The original author of all gospel grace—'And all things are of God;' τὰ δὲ πάντα, all these things. He doth not speak of universal creation, but of the peculiar grace of regeneration. It is God that maketh all things new in the church, and formeth his people after his own image.

[2.] The meritorious cause; how cometh God to be so kind to us? We were his enemies. The apostle telleth us here, as elsewhere, he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ: Rom. v. 10, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son.' So that we have the new creature by virtue of our reconciliation with God, as pacified in Christ towards the elect, when our cause was desperate; there was no other way to recover us.

[3.] The instrumental cause, or means of application, is the ministry of reconciliation, which was given to the apostles and other preachers of the gospel. God is the author of grace, and Christ is the means to bring us and God together, and the ministers have an office, power, and commission to bring us and Christ together. And so Paul had a double obligation to constancy and fidelity in his office: his personal reconciliation, which was common to him with other christians; and a ministerial delegation and trust to reconcile others to Christ.

Two points will be discoursed in this verse—

1. That God is the original author of the new creature, and all things which belong thereunto.
2. That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us by Christ.

First, Let me insist upon the first point, and prove to you that renovation is the proper work of God, and the sole effect of his Spirit. That will appear—

1. From the state of the person who is to be reconciled and renewed. The object of this renovation is a sinner lying in a state of defection from God, and under a loss of original righteousness, averse from God, yea, an enemy to him, prone to all evil, weak, yea, dead to all spiritual good; and how can such an one renew and convert himself to God? It is true man hath some reason left, and may have some confused notions and general apprehensions of things good and evil, pleasing and displeasing to God, but the very apprehensions are maimed and imperfect, and they often call good evil, and evil good,

and put light for darkness, and darkness for light, Isa. v. 10. However, to choose the one and leave the other, that is not in their power. They may have loose desires of spiritual favours, especially as apprehended under the quality of a natural good, or as separate from the means: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Oh that I may die the death of the righteous!' They may long for the death of the righteous, though loath to live their life. That excellency which they discover in spiritual things is apprehended in a natural way: John vi. 36, 'And they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.' But these desires are neither truly spiritual, nor serious, nor constant, nor laborious. So that to apprehend or seek after spiritual things in a spiritual manner is above their reach and power. Neither if we consider what man is in his natural estate; this work must needs come of God. Man is blind in his mind, perverse in his will, rebellious in his affections; what sound part is there in us left to mend the rest? Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome flesh? No; our Lord telleth you, John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh;' and his apostle, Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Can a man by his own mere strength be brought to abhor what he dearly loveth? and he that 'drinketh in iniquity like water,' Job xv. 16, of his own accord be brought to loathe sin, and expel and drive it from him? On the other side, will he be ever brought to love what he abhorreth? Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, and is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be.' There is enmity in an un-renewed heart, till grace remove it. Can we that are worldly, wholly led by sense, look for all our happiness in an unseen world, till we receive another spirit? The scripture will tell you no: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit;' and 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things (viz., faith and other graces) is blind, and cannot see afar off.' What man of his own accord will deny present things, and lay up his hopes in heaven? Let that rare phoenix be once produced, and then we may think of changing our opinion, and lay aside the doctrine of supernatural grace. Can a stony heart of itself become tender? Ezek. xxxvi. 26; or a dead heart quicken itself? Eph. ii. 5. Then there were no need of putting ourselves to the pains and trouble of seeking all from above, and waiting upon God with such seriousness and care.

2. From the nature of this work. It is called a new creation in the 17th verse, and Eph. ii. 10, and elsewhere. Now, creation is a work of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation. In the beginning God made some things out of nothing, and some things *ex inhabili materia*—out of foregoing matter; but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it; as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of the rib of man. Now take the notion in the former and latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance, and he only that calleth the things that are not as though they were, can only raise the one out of the other, he indeed can speak light out of darkness, 2 Cor. iv. 6; life out of death, something out of nothing, 2 Peter i. 3. By the divine power all things are given to us, which

are necessary to life and godliness. He challengeth this work as his own, as belonging to his infinite power, to give grace to a graceless soul. Or, if you will take the latter notion, creation out of unfit matter; he maketh those that were wholly indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would bring them to it, to be lovers of holiness and godliness, and followers of it. God that made man at first must renew him, and restore him to that image he lost: Col. iii. 10, 'Restored to the image of him that created him,' and Eph. iv. 24, 'Created after God.' His work must be acknowledged in it, and looked upon as a great work, not as a low, natural, or common thing, otherwise you disparage the great benefit of the new creation.

3. From its connection with reconciliation. We can no more convert ourselves than reconcile ourselves to God. Renewing and reconciling grace are often spoken of together, as in the text, and often folded up in the same expression, as going *pari passu*: 1 Peter iii. 18. 'Bring us to God,' as being obtained both together; Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins;' and 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And both are received from the same hand by virtue of the same merit. Well then, there must be a supernatural work upon us, to cure our unholiness, as well as a supernatural work without us, to overcome our guiltiness. The same person that merited the one by the value of his blood and sufferings, must apply the other by the almighty power of his grace. And we needed the Son of God to be a fountain of life, as well as the ransom for our souls; and it is for the honour of our Redeemer that our whole and entire recovery should be ascribed to him, not part only, as the freedom from guilt, but the whole freedom from the power of sin; and that he might be a complete saviour to us. It is not sufficient only that he be a prophet or a lawgiver, to give sufficient precepts, directions, and rules for the sanctification and renovation of our natures, and propound sufficient encouragements and motives in the promise of eternal life; nor that he should be priest only to offer a sacrifice for the expiation of our sin; but also be a fountain of light and grace, to renew God's image upon the soul. As none but Christ is able to satisfy God's justice for us, so none but Christ is able to change the heart of man: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' This work would cease for ever, as well as the other part of the ransom and redemption of our souls. He had this in his eye when he died for us: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;' and Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.' And he purchased this power into his own hands, not into another's, and sendeth forth his conquering and prevailing Spirit to bring back the souls of men to God. And therefore, if this part of our salvation be not ascribed to Christ, you rob him of his choicest glory; for to sanctify is more than to pardon.

4. From the effect of this renovation, which is the implantation of the three graces, faith, hope, and love, which are our light, life, and power. In the new nature faith is our light, because by it we see things otherwise than we did before. We see God: Heb. xi. 26, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' We see Christ: John vi. 40, 'That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' They see such an excellency in him that all other things are but dung and dross in comparison of him. They see heaven and spiritual things, and things to come: Heb. xi. 1, 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;' and Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Faith is the eye of the new creature that giveth us another sight of things than we had before. Without it we cannot see these things, 2 Peter i. 9. We understand what is good for back and belly; we see things at hand, but cannot see things afar off. Then love is as it were the heart of the new creature, the seat of life, or wherein the new bent and inclination to what is good and holy doth most discover itself. We are never converted till God hath our love; for grace is a victorious suavity or complacency. God in conversion acteth so powerfully, that his purpose is accomplished. He acts upon the will of man with so much energy that he mastereth it, and yet with so much sweetness that his power maketh us a willing people, Ps. cx. 3. That is, he gaineth our love, and then nothing he doth or saith is grievous, 1 John v. 3. Healing grace worketh mainly by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and causing us to love him again. The sensitive delectation, which formerly captivated the will, is subdued, and the soul is brought to delight in God as our chief good; so that grace, which is light in the understanding, is pleasure in the will. There is a powerful love which maketh our duty easy and agreeable to us. Then hope that is our strength, for the sense of the other world, where we shall have what we believe and desire at the fullest rate of enjoyment, doth fortify the heart against present temptations, the sorrows of the world, and the delights of sense. The soul is weak when our expectation is cold and languid; strong, when the heart is most in heaven; our moral and spiritual strength lieth in the heavenly mind. It is our anchor and helmet. Now all these graces are of God. The scripture is express both for faith, which giveth us a new sight of things: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;' and love, which giveth us a new bent and inclination, or that victorious suavity which gently mastereth the will by its affectionate allurements, or pleasingly ravisheth the heart: 1 John iv. 7, 'Let us love one another, for love is of God.' This holy fire is only kindled by a sunbeam; and hope is of the same extract and original: Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That heavenly frame that maintaineth comfort in our souls in the midst of the tumults and confusions of the present world, it is wrought in us by the Spirit: these graces, as they are created after God, so created by God. After God;

after his image. Wisdom, power and goodness are the three great attributes to which answer light, life and power, or, which is all one, faith, hope and love; faith as the eye, and love as the heart. This life is received by faith, and acted in love. Hope as the strength; and reason showeth it as well as scripture. Faith we cannot have of ourselves, for by sense we only see things that are before us. By reason things future, as they are contained in their causes, may be seen, if nothing hinder, but things spiritual, invisible, and wholly future, cannot be seen with any certainty, but in God's light, as he revealeth the object and openeth the faculty. Love we cannot have of ourselves, for man being a fleshly creature, his love accommodateth itself to the interests of his flesh. Suppose it to be placed like a needle between two loadstones, between God and the world, surely it will be drawn away by what is strongest and nearest. Self-love, being guided by concupiscence, tendeth towards the creature, till it be mastered by grace. Those pleasures which enter into the soul by the gate of the senses will corrupt our love, till an higher pleasure, let in by the understanding divinely enlightened, and into the will, draw it another way; for before the understanding is dazzled with false light, or obscured by real darkness, that it can hardly discern good from evil. Such is the treachery of the senses, and revolt of the passions; and the will, perverted by concupiscence, hath no inclination but to what is evil. Hope which floweth from love that cannot be; for till God be our chiefest good, how shall we seek and long for the time when we shall fully enjoy him, with any life, seriousness and comfort?

5. All things belonging to the new creature the scripture ascribeth to God. Take that noted place, Phil. ii. 13. 'For God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;' all that we will and all that we do in the spiritual life is of God. Mark here—

[1.] He did not only give us the natural faculties at first. God, as the author of nature, must be distinguished from God as the author of grace; that is another sphere and order of beings; it is one thing to make us men, another thing to make us saints or christians. We have understanding, will, and affections, and senses, as men, but we are sanctified as christians: 1 John v. 20, 'He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.'

[2.] God doth not only concur to the exercise of these faculties, as a general cause, as he doth to all the creatures, Acts xvii. 28. We cannot stir nor move without him; general providential assistance is necessary to all things, or else they could not subsist; as the fire could not burn the three children, though he did not destroy the being or property of it, only suspend his influence. So God is said to give the seeing eye and the hearing ear; not only the rational faculty, but the exercise; but this is not enough; as the act is from God, so the graciousness of the act.

[3.] To come more closely to the thing in hand. God doth not only work merely by helping the will, but giving us the will, not by curing the weakness of it, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sinfulness of it, and sweetly drawing it to himself. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation, outward or inward, would serve the turn; but it is stark dead; they do but flatter

nature that say of it as Christ of the damsel—'She is not dead but sleepeth.' God's grace is not only necessary for facilitation, that we may more easily choose and pursue that which is good; as a horse is requisite, that a man may pass over his journey more easily, which otherwise he might do on foot with difficulty. No, it is impossible, as well as difficult, till God giveth us the will and the deed.

[4.] God doth not only give a power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but he giveth to will and to do, the act of willing and doing. Adam had *posse quod vellet*, but we have *velle quod possumus*—he had a power to avoid sin if he would, but we have the will itself; but he worketh powerfully and efficaciously, that is to say, the effect succeedeth: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 'A new heart will I give to you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.' If this were all the grace given to us for Christ's sake, that we might be converted if we would, divers absurdities would follow.

(1.) That Christ died at uncertainties, and it is in the power and pleasure of man's will to ratify and frustrate the end of his death; for it is a contingent thing whether a man will turn to God, yea or no. No, it is not so left; it doth not depend upon man's mutable will: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.'

(2.) Man would be the principal cause of his own conversion, and so would rob God of the glory of his free grace, and put the honour of it on the liberty of man's will; for grace giveth an indifferency, he may or he may not; but free will hath the casting voice. A power to repent or believe he hath from God, but the determining act is from himself, which is more noble; for he doth more that doth will and work, than he that giveth a power to will and work; as it is a more perfect thing to understand than to be able to understand; the act is more perfect than the power; *actus secundus est nobilior quam primus*. We should then expect from God no other grace but a power to repent and believe; but it is left to our wills to make it effectual or frustrate; is this all? No; God doth not only give a power to believe, but faith; a power to repent, but repentance itself; not such grace as is effectual only as man's will is pleased to use it, or not to use it, but victorious grace, such as conquereth the heart of man, and sweetly subdueth it to God.

(3.) Look to the prayers of the faithful dispersed everywhere in the holy scriptures, and they understand this of effectual grace: 'Create in me a clean heart,' saith David, Ps. li. 10; and Paul prayed, Heb. xiii. 21, 'The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' Grace effectual by itself is prayed for, not a grace that giveth the possibility only, but the effect; not only such as doth invite and solicit us to good, but such as doth incline and determine us to good.

(4.) This grace we give thanks for; not for a power to repent and believe, but for repentance and faith itself to be wrought in us. Put it into the instance of Peter and Judas. For otherwise God would do no more for Peter than for Judas, if God did only give a power to will, if we please to do it, so man would difference himself, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Then Peter no more than Judas, and Judas as much as Peter; Lord, I thank thee that thou hast given me some supernatural help, namely,

a power to return to thee, if I will. And the like help thou hast given to my fellow-disciple Judas, but this I have added of mine own accord, a will to return and be converted. And though I have received no more than he, yet I have done more than he, since I have accepted grace, and he remaineth in sin. I owe no more to thy grace than Judas did; but I have done more for thy glory than Judas did.

(5.) Our first choice and willing the things of God, is not only given us, but our willing and working when we are converted. Grace is no less necessary to finish than to begin; and the new state dependeth absolutely on its influence from first to last—'He worketh all our works for us.'

There is not one individual act of grace but God is interested in it, as the soul is in every member; there is not only a constant union by virtue of their subsistence in the body, but there is a constant animation and influence, and the members of the body have no power to move, but as they are moved and acted by the soul. So grace is twofold: habitual, which giveth the christian his supernatural being: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Who hath made us partakers of the divine nature;' and actual, which raiseth and quickeneth them in their operations. To this sense must these places be interpreted: John xv. 5, 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing;' and 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, but our sufficiency is of God.' You will say then, What difference is there between the regenerate and unregenerate, a natural man and a new creature?

I answer, there is somewhat in them which may be called a new life, and a new nature, somewhat distinct from Christ, or the Spirit of Christ that worketh in them; there is the habits of grace, or the seed of God. 1 John iii. 9; which cannot be Christ, or the Spirit, for it is a created gift: Ps. li. 10, 'Create in me a clean heart.' This is called sometimes the divine nature, sometimes the new creature, sometimes the inward man, sometimes the good treasure, Mat. xii. 35; a stock of grace which may be increased: 2 Peter iii. 18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' All which are not compatible to the Spirit, so that when the Spirit worketh on us, it is in another manner than on the regenerate. At first conversion we are mere objects of grace, but afterwards instruments of grace; first upon us, and then by us. He worketh in the regenerate and unregenerate in a different manner; he works on the unregenerate while they do nothing that is good, yea the contrary; the regenerate he helpeth not unless working, striving, labouring; there is an inclination towards God and holy things which he quickeneth and raiseth up.

(6.) In the same action, unless God continueth his assistance, we fail and wax faint, for God doth not only give us the will, that is, the desire and purpose, but the grace by which we do that good which we will and purpose to do; these two are distinct, to will and to do. And we may have assistance in one kind, and not in another: willing and doing are different; for Paul saith, Rom. vii. 18, 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.' There needeth grace for that also. To will is more than to think, and

to exert our will into action is more than both; in all we need God's help. We cannot think a good thought, nor conceive a holy purpose, much less perform a good action; so that we need renewed strength every moment. The heart of man is very mutable in the same duty, and we can keep up our affections no longer than God is pleased to hold them up. While the influence of grace is strong upon us, the heart is kept in a warm, holy frame; but as that abateth, the heart swerveth, and returneth to sin and vanity; instance in Peter, *se posse putabat quod se velle sentiebat*.

Use 1. Let us apply this.

1. Take heed of an abuse of this doctrine. Let it not lull us asleep in idleness, because God must do all, we must do nothing; this is an abuse; the Spirit of God reasoneth otherwise: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.' Work, for God worketh; it cannot be a ground of looseness or laziness to the regenerate or unregenerate.

[1.] Not to the unregenerate; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation. A drunken servant is a servant, and bound to do his work, though he hath disabled himself; it is no reason the master should lose his right by the servant's default. Again, God's doing all is an engagement to us to wait upon him in the use of means, that we meet with God in his way, and he may meet with us in our way.

(1.) That we may meet with God in his way, God hath appointed certain duties to convey and apply his grace. We are to lie at the pool till the waters be stirred, to continue our attendance till God giveth grace: Mark iv. 24, 'Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.' As you measure to God in duties, so will God measure to you in blessings.

(2.) That God may meet with us in our way, God influenceth all things according to their natural inclination. God enlighteneth with the sun, burneth with the fire, reasoneth with man, acts necessarily with necessary causes, and freely with free causes; he doth not oppress the liberty of the creature, but preserveth the nature and interest of his workmanship, draweth men with the cords of a man, Hos. xi. 4. He propoundeth reasons, which we consider, and so betake ourselves to a godly course. The object of regeneration is a reasonable creature, upon whom he worketh not as upon a stock or a stone, and maketh use of the faculties which they have, showing us our lost estate, and the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of Christ's grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, and lead us in the way of holiness unto eternal life. Now these means we are to attend upon.

[2.] Not to the regenerate. Partly because they have some principles of operation, there is life in them; and where there is life, there is a principle and power to act, or else God's most precious gifts would be in vain; and therefore it is their duty to rouse and quicken themselves: 2 Tim. i. 6, 'That thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee;' and Isa. lxiv. 7, 'No man stirreth up himself to seek after God.' We have understanding and memory sanctified and planted with a stock of divine knowledge, to revive truths upon the conscience.

And partly, because God's children are never so deserted but that there is some help from God. There are *auxilia necessaria*. Some liberal and plentiful aids of grace which may be suspended. But that grace which is simply and absolutely necessary is still vouchsafed. Therefore they are more inexcusable. If the wicked man that had but one talent be taxed for being a lazy and slothful servant, Mat. xxv, much more the regenerate that hath three talents—a reasonable nature, grace habitual, and such actual help as is absolutely necessary. And partly, because to neglect duty is to resist grace, and run away from our strength. God hath promised to be with us whilst we are doing: 1 Chron. xxii. 6, 'Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.' David's silence, and keeping off from God, did him no good. When the eunuch was reading, and knew not what to make of it, God sent him an interpreter, Acts viii.

2. It is an abuse to think the exhortation in vain, to press people to become new creatures. It is not in vain:—

[1.] That man may own his duty, and be sensible of the necessity of the change of his estate, who would otherwise be altogether careless and mindless of such a thing, a duty which must be speedily and earnestly gone about, if they mean to be saved. The exhortation is a demanding of God's right, and maketh the creature sensible of his own obligation, that he may take care of this work as well as he can; at least, that he may acknowledge the debt, and confessing our impotency, beg grace.

[2.] God requireth it of us, that he may work it in us; he worketh by requiring, for evangelical exhortations carry their own blessing with them: John xi. 43, 'Lazarus, come forth;' there went a power and efficacy with the words to raise him from the dead. So Mat. xii. 13, 'Stretch forth thine hand;' there was the difficulty, but the man found help in stretching forth his hand.

[3.] The exhortation is not in vain, because there are some things to be done before this; renovation is in order thereunto, as wood is dried before it is kindled. There are some preparations to conversion, and we are to be active about them, as that we should rouse up ourselves: Ps. xxii. 27, 'The ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord;' and Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Man is very inconsiderate, his soul is asleep till consideration awakens it, he is to try his own estate whether good or bad: Lam. iii. 40, 'Search and try your ways, and turn unto the Lord.' To set himself to seek after God in the best fashion he can, Hos. v. 4. 'They will not frame their doings, nor think of recovering themselves, nor bending their course that way.'

[4.] The exhortation is not in vain, that men may not hinder God's work, and obstruct their own mercies, and render themselves more unapt to be changed. God taketh notice they would not observe his checks: Prov. i. 23, 'They set at nought my counsel, and would not turn at my reproofs.' Sometimes conscience boggleth, either as excited by the word—'Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25; or some notable affliction or strait, Gen. xlii. 21. By one means or other the waters are stirred; great helps are vouchsafed to us; not to observe these seasons is a great loss.

Use 2. What is the true use to be made of this doctrine?

1. To make us sensible that it is a hard task to get the change of the new creature. If you have mean thoughts of this work, you lessen your obligation to God for your cure by the grace of your Redeemer; believing your disease light, you think your remedy easy, and so cannot be thankful for your recovery, if you lessen your sickness. And besides, it will lessen your care, and make you vain and negligent; you will not beg it of God so heartily, if you do not think this work to be what it is. Therefore, in the first place, you must be convinced of the difficulty of it.

2. To check despair. Many when they hear they must be new men in all things, conceit they shall never be able to reach it. Surely Christ can change thy heart, Mat. xix. 26; he can make thee a new creature; he that can turn water into wine can also turn lions into lambs.

3. To keep us humble—'For all things are of God. What have we that we have not received?' 1 Cor. iv. 7. We have all by gift, and if we be proud, it is that we are more in debt than others. Let us not intercept God's honour.

4. To make us thankful. Give God the praise of changing thy nature, if from a bad man thou art become good. He looketh for it, for his great end is to exalt the glory of his grace. Now let us ascribe all to him; it was he at first that gave us those permanent and fixed habits which constitute the new nature, he furnisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in us. It is he that exciteth and perfecteth our actions; therefore put the crown still upon grace's head: Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;' Gal. ii. 20, 'Not I, but Christ that liveth in me;' 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'Not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' When we have done and suffered most, we must say, Of thine own have we given thee.

5. If all things are from God, let us love God in Christ the more, and live to him; it worketh upon our love, when we see how much we are beholden to him, and our love should direct all things to his glory: Rom. xi. 36, 'For all things are of him, and through him, and to him.' What is from him must be used for him. Our new being should be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 12. Glorify him in deed as well as word.

6. Live in a cheerful and continual dependence upon God for that grace which is necessary, for our continual dependence doth engage us to constant communion with God. If we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father; the throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom hear from us. Therefore God would keep grace in his own hands, to oblige us to a continual intercourse with him. A cheerful dependence; for God is able and ready to help the waiting soul, and hath engaged his faithfulness to give us necessary and effectual grace to preserve the new life: 1 Cor. i. 9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye are called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;' 1 Thes. v. 24. I will conclude with the words of Austin—*Job in stercore, &c.*—Job was

more happy in his misery than Adam in his innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne; he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced Adam. He despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation. He preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocence in the midst of paradise. Therefore let us comfort ourselves in the grace we have by Christ in the new covenant.

Secondly, That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us in Christ.

1. He would not give this benefit till justice be satisfied; not set up man with a new stock till there was satisfaction made for the breach of the old. Christ hath pacified God for us, and all grace floweth from this, that God is become a God of peace to us: Heb. xiii. 20, 'The God of peace make you perfect;' so 1 Thes. v. 23, 'The God of peace sanctify you throughout.' While God is angry, there is no hope to receive any gift of grace from him. The Holy Spirit is the gift of his love, the fruit of his peace and reconciliation; God is only the God of peace, as satisfied by Christ's death—'The chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Isa. liii. 5.

2. God is never actually reconciled to us, nor we to him, till he give us the regenerating Spirit; that is receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 11. Nothing but the new creature will evidence his special favour. Therefore it is said, Rom. v. 5, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' Other things may be given us during his anger, yea, they may be given in anger, but the regenerating Spirit is never given in anger.

3. We are so far renewed by this reconciliation, that in some respects we are upon better terms than we were in innocency, before the breach; namely, as God giveth us effectual grace, not only such grace to stand if we will, or obey if we will, but whereby we are effectually enabled to obey and persevere.

Use. 1. Let us seek after this reconciliation with God by Christ; then we may comfortably look to obtain every good thing at his hands. Sense of guilt is our first motive on our parts, and reconciliation beginneth all on God's part. Surely God is willing to be reconciled, because he hath laid such a foundation for it in the death of Christ; why else hath he appointed a ministry of reconciliation, but to call upon us to cast away the weapons of our defiance, and to enter into his peace?

2. It showeth us how much we are obliged to Jesus Christ, who by his death hath satisfied God's justice, and merited all the mercies promised; the promises themselves; for he is given for a covenant, that is, the foundation of it, the terms and conditions, the power to perform them, the ministry by which this peace is conveyed to us; he first preached peace: Eph. ii. 7, 'Having slain enmity by his cross.'

3. Let no breach fall out between God and you, lest it stop grace; the continual sanctification and perfection of man once regenerate, cometh from the God of peace, dependeth upon this reconciliation, as well as the first renovation, God's sanctifying power, and the abode of his Spirit, is still necessary to renew us more and more.