

SERMON UPON HEBREWS XIII. 20, 21.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.—
HEB. xiii. 20, 21.

THE words carry the form of an apostolical blessing or prayer for those christian Hebrews to whom he wrote. Consider in them—(1.) The person to whom he prayeth ; in which the grounds of audience are implied, ver. 20 ; (2.) The matter which he prayeth for, ver. 21.

I. The person to whom the prayer is directed ; who is described—

1. By a proper title, 'The God of peace.'

2. By his great work, 'He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ ;' who is set forth—

[1.] By his office, 'The great shepherd of the sheep.'

[2.] By his merit and satisfaction, 'Through the blood of the everlasting covenant ;' which may relate—

(1.) To God's title ; he is become 'the God of peace through the blood of the everlasting covenant.'

(2.) To God's work, 'Through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' 'he brought him again from the dead.'

(3.) To Christ's office, 'Through his blood shed for sinners' he is become the 'great shepherd of the sheep.'

II. The matter which he prayeth for ; the continued sanctification of man once regenerate ; set forth by both its parts—the will, and the deed, Phil. ii. 13. First, the will or remote power, 'Make you perfect,' or fit you 'for every good work to do his will ;' secondly, the deed, or actual assistance, 'Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.' We have both by Jesus Christ, for it is added with a doxology, 'Through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.'

The text is long ; I must give you but short strictures upon it, and I will begin with the second branch, the matter prayed for ; and therefore let me observe—

Doct. 1. That the beginning, progress, and accomplishment of every good work is from God through Jesus Christ. This appeareth plainly from the 21st verse, which may be reduced to two heads—

1. The expressions which concern man's duty, which is to be 'perfect in every good work,' that we may do God's will, and that which is pleasing in his sight.

2. The expressions which concern God's power to enable us for this duty ; there are two words, *perfecting* and *working*. The first relateth to his habitual grace, the second to his assisting grace.

I. The first expressions which import man's duty are four—(1.) Perfecting; (2.) Every good work; (3.) Doing his will; (4.) So as may be pleasing in his sight.

1. We must be made perfect, or the begun work of grace must be carried on to perfection. We all come short of that perfection which is attainable in this life, therefore those that have attained some good measure of grace should not rest satisfied with it. We need to be more able for duties, more fortified for trials. A man groweth till he be fit for all manly actions; and a christian groweth and must be made more perfect till he be fit for every good work. An artisan must be so long learning his trade till he be fit for all those functions which belong to his trade. A sick or wounded man is under the hand of the physician or chirurgeon till he be perfectly cured. So is a christian under the care of his spiritual physician till he be fitted for all the parts and duties of a christian. Here upon earth, 'Christ by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' or dedicated to God, Heb. x. 14; but now he is in heaven, he perfecteth us by degrees. The sacrifice needeth not to be repeated, but his intercession is continual, because we still need new influences of grace. Absolute perfection is not attainable in this life; but the perfection of sincerity is here required, that we should mortify all our lusts, and serve God in every good work, and please him by an universal and impartial obedience: Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus;' that is, I aim at that which Christ aimed at, that I may be thoroughly and exactly perfect.

2. 'In every good work.' Not in one, but all. Many will do some good, but are defective in other things, and usually in those which are most necessary. They cull out the easiest and cheapest parts of religion, such as do not contradict their lusts and interests. We can never have sound peace till we regard all: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.' Shame is *φόβος δικαίου ψογού*, fear of a just reproof. This reproof is either from the supreme or the deputy judge. The supreme judge of all our actions is God. This should be our principal care, that we may not be ashamed before him at his coming, nor disapproved in the judgment. But there is a deputy judge which every man hath in his own bosom. Our consciences do acquit or condemn us as we are partial or sincere in our duty to God; and much dependeth on that: 1 John iii. 20, 21, 'But if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' Well, then, that our hearts may not reprove or reproach us, we should be complete in all the will of God. Alas! otherwise you will never have evidence of your sincerity.

3. The next expression is, 'That you may do his will.' The rule of man's duty is the will of God. The will of God signifieth two things—either his decree concerning them, or else that law which he hath given concerning our duty. This last is intended. The works of man are

the actions and operations of a reasonable creature subject to the laws of God. If his actions be conformable to his law, they are good; if not, they are evil. Therefore a man cannot be a good christian without doing God's will. If it be the will of God he should forbear such a practice, custom, or evil action, he dareth not go forward: Jer. xxxv. 6, 'We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever.' If it be the will of God he should do such a thing, he will do it; he dareth not omit it, how cross soever to his inclinations and interests: James iv. 17, 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' This is the reason of all reasons: 1 Thes. iv. 3, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification;' 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you;' 1 Peter ii. 15, 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Well, then, it is not enough that we should well and thoroughly understand the will of God, but we should do it. And I will add this one consideration: the more we do it, the more we will understand it: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' It is doing that God looks at and we must most regard; not who can acutely plead or eloquently declaim about it, but readily frame his heart to do the will of God; for the precepts of God are given, not to try our wit or memory, but practice.

4. We must do it so as may be 'well-pleasing in his sight;' where note—

[1.] That all that we do is done in the sight of God. He observeth who break and who keep his law, and nothing can escape his view and knowledge: Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him.' We are ever in his eye, and he is our witness, approver, and judge: 'Will he force the queen,' saith Ahasuerus, 'before my face?' Esther vii. 8. Will ye, God looking on, be vain, foolish, and carnal?

[2.] This must be our great aim and scope, 'to please God.' It is a well-tempered religion that beginneth and endeth in God. Man-pleasing is the hypocrite's religion, but God-pleasing is sincere and true religion: Col. i. 10, 'That ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.' And the apostle often inculcateth this as the right end of all our duties: 'Not as pleasing men, but God.'

[3.] Our work must be so ordered as it may be 'pleasing and acceptable to God;' for every slight thing will not please him, but when it is agreeable to his will. Therefore it is not enough to do what is for the matter good, but what is for the manner pleasing to him; that is to say—(1.) It must come from a right principle, love to God: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' and faith in Christ: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Not as forced, nor as a mere natural act, but as depending on the Redeemer for our acceptance. We are sinners; we are not exact. (2.) Then for the manner, it must be with seriousness: Heb. xii. 28, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and godly fear;' so as will become so great a majesty with that diligence which our aim at

perfection calleth for : 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as you have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.'

II. The words which express the necessary concurrence of the divine power ; they are two—

1. 'The first is, 'Make you perfect.' He prayeth not now for framing the new creature, but for perfecting it. God, that maketh man, new maketh him, and then he perfecteth him. God is wonderful in the first creation, in raising such a beautiful piece out of the dust of the ground as the first man was ; and in ordinary generation David telleth us, Ps. cxxxix. 14, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' So God is wonderful in re-making or regenerating us : Eph. ii. 10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works ;' Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' There is much of the wisdom, goodness, and power of God seen in the new creature, to enable a man to captivate those lusts which the generality of the world are mastered by, and to live a divine life in the flesh. He is also wonderful in perfecting us till we grow up to our full stature in spiritual things. As it is not in man's power to make himself or regenerate himself, so it is not in man's power to perfect himself. No ; but the Spirit of regeneration abiding in us doth renew us more and more. Well, then, it is not meant of regeneration when we are created to good works, but of the increase of his sanctifying grace, which is to regeneration as preservation and providence is to creation. God, that begun the work, must continue it and strengthen it, otherwise we shall be unfit for every good work, or as a member that is out of joint, as the word importeth which is there used.

2. 'Working.' God doth continually co-operate and work in us and with us, without which we cannot fulfil his will, or do anything that will please him. So will and deed are joined together : Phil. ii. 13, 'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.' God worketh in us a power to will, and maketh us actually to will ; and a power and strength, or ability to do it. The new creature dependeth absolutely on his influences from first to last : 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.' He giveth us spiritual life, and he giveth us godliness. He first giveth supernatural faculties, and then the use and exercise of them in our walk or conversation ; the first motions, and then the flowing forth of these motions into acts suitable.

Use 1. To establish our dependence. In doing any good we must depend on God, both for the power given at first and continued unto us. Will and deed come from him, and they come from him through Christ, who purchased and conveyeth this power to us by his constant intercession and the influence of his Spirit. Of unwilling he maketh us willing, and causeth us to do what he would have us to do. He doth not only give us the will, that is, the desire, and purpose, but the grace that we may do that good which we will and purpose. These are distinct ; many may have assistance in one kind, not in another. Paul showeth us that willing and doing are different : Rom. vii. 18,

'For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' 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, both to think a good thought or conceive a good purpose, much more to perform a good action. Man is mutable, and here is much opposition.

Use 2. Exhortation to several duties.

1. Let us shake off carnal security and laziness. Here is not only God's grace represented, but man's duty. God's doing all doth not warrant us to lie upon the bed of ease, but stir us up to diligence: 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 of his good pleasure.'

2. We are not to neglect the motions of the Spirit lest we grieve him: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.'

3. We are to use the means, and God will bless our endeavours: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.' We are to attend upon the word and frequent the sacrament.

4. We must pray earnestly, for a twofold reason—(1.) That we may humbly own our wants: James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.' (2.) That we may express our desires and longing for grace: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

5. We must improve our talents, lest we be accounted evil and slothful servants, that receive grace in vain: 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.'

Doct. 2. That the continued sanctification and perfecting of man once regenerate cometh from God as the God of peace.

This is the blessing prayed for, and when the apostle prayeth for it, he calleth God 'the God of peace.' So elsewhere: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He prayeth there for the whole progress of sanctifying grace, till it hath attained its end and final perfection, and giveth God the same title.

Here I shall open to you these five things—(1.) In what sense God is said to be the God of peace; (2.) The ground and foundation of this peace; (3.) The evidences how it appears that God is pacified; (4.) The conveyance of it to us, or how we come to be interested in this peace; (5.) The reasons why all increase of grace cometh from him as such.

I. What is the meaning of this title? God is called 'the God of peace' in two respects—

1. With respect to union and peace with men, especially our fellow-christians. God is the God of peace as he is the author and approver of this peace: 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 'For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints;' 2 Thes. iii. 16, 'Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means.'

2. With respect to our reconciliation with himself after the breach that was between us. Heaven and earth are at an accord, and the great

quarrel between us and God is compromised and taken up. In one place the angels come to proclaim 'peace on earth,' Luke ii. 14. 'At another time, when Christ solemnly entereth as the Messiah into Jerusalem, they cried out, Luke xix. 38, 'Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.' One of the parties at variance is in the earth, the other in heaven. The angels, the inhabitants of the other world, proclaim peace on earth; and men, that dwell here below, echo to them again peace in heaven, and that when they gave Christ the honour of the Messias, showing that his great business was to make reconciliation. It is not a primitive original peace, but a reconciliation after a breach, a restoring of peace when it was lost. We had all broken with God, and God was angry with men for sin; now while God was angry and offended there was no hope to receive any gift of grace from him; therefore with respect to this is God called 'the God of peace.'

II. The grounds and foundation of this peace; and that is 'by the blood of the everlasting covenant,' which is the only propitiatory sacrifice which could appease God, and give his justice full satisfaction and recompense for our offences. Before this peace could be made and this woful breach repaired, there were two things to be removed which stood in the way—God's wrath, and our rebellious nature. The righteous wrath of God is appeased by the blood of Christ; our rebellion is cured and healed by his Spirit. The latter is but a consequent of the former. The first foundation for this peace was laid in the blood of Christ: Col. i. 20, 'And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;' Isa. liii. 5, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' The enmity had been irreconcilable and impossible to be removed, unless God had taken this way, unless the Son of God had died for a sinful world, that by the merit of his obedience he might give satisfaction to a provoked God for the wrong we had done him.

III. The evidences that God is pacified. Here are three mentioned—

1. The bringing back of Christ from the dead. This showeth that God was propitiated, that he hath accepted the ransom that was given for souls. Christ's resurrection is called by the prophet a being 'taken from prison and from judgment,' Isa. liii. 8. While Christ was in the state of the dead, he was in effect a prisoner, under the arrest of divine vengeance; but when he rose again, then was our surety let out of prison. The expression is notable in the text, 'Brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead.' The force of the word may be explained with allusion to that carriage of the apostles when they were cast into prison: Acts xvi. 35, 37, 39, 'And the magistrates sent to let them go. Nay, verily,' say they, 'but let them come themselves and fetch us out, and they came and brought them out of prison.' So was Christ brought again. Though Christ had power to rise, yet was he rather raised. The Lord sent an angel to remove the stone, not to supply any lack of power in Christ, but as a judge when he is satisfied sendeth an officer to open the prison doors. Though Christ had power to rise, yet not authority, till the angel rolled away the stone. He did not break prison, but was brought again from the dead. Neither did he perish in prison; then we could have no assurance of our discharge; but as 'he died for our offences, so he rose again for our justification,'

Rom. iv. 25, as having perfectly done his work. As the Father delivered him to death, so he brought him back again from the dead. The apostle lays a great weight upon this: Rom. viii. 34, 'Yea, rather, that is risen from the dead.' There is some special thing in Christ's resurrection comparatively above his death, which hath influence on our justification. Was not Christ's death enough to free us from sin? Yes; but the visible evidence was by his resurrection. It is as it were an acquittance from those debts of ours which he undertook to pay; as Simeon was dismissed when the conditions were performed, and Joseph satisfied with the sight of his brother: Gen. xliii. 23, 'He brought Simeon out unto them.'

2. Christ's office is allowed, so that he is 'the great shepherd of the sheep;' that is, the blessed Saviour into whose hands God hath put his flock, to be justified, sanctified, and saved, and from whom we may expect all that comfort which a flock hath from a good and faithful pastor. We are put into his hands as he is Mediator, not by way of alienation, for they are in the Father's hands still: John x. 29, 'My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand;' but an oppignoration laid at pledge in his hands. A shepherd is not lord of the flock, but as a servant to take care of them. They are not his as Mediator by way of original interest and dominion, but in point of trust and charge. He hath an office about them, and giveth an account of them at the last day. He is sometimes called simply, without any addition, 'The shepherd,' 1 Peter ii. 25, 'Ye are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of our souls.' Sometimes ποιμήν ὁ καλός, 'The good shepherd,' as John x. 11; and here, 'The great shepherd;' and 'The chief shepherd,' 1 Peter v. 4, because of the dignity of his person and office. And surely if we put ourselves into the hands of this shepherd we can lack nothing: Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' We may look for all manner of supplies from Christ.

3. God is so far appeased that there is a new covenant procured and constituted, called here 'the everlasting covenant;' partly because it shall never be repealed, and continueth unalterable, and the called obtain by it the title and possession of an eternal inheritance: Heb. ix. 15, 'They which are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' And partly because Christ's blood is the foundation of this covenant, and the virtue of it never ceaseth; therefore this covenant is everlasting also, and made effectual and able to obtain its ends, which is the eternal salvation of sinful man once converted and reconciled to God. This covenant also is called the covenant of God's peace, because it is a public demonstration that God is pacified: Isa. liv. 10, 'But my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed;' Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 'I will make a covenant of peace with them.' Partly because in this covenant this peace and reconciliation is published, and offered to us, that man may not stand aloof from God as a condemning God. So it is said, Eph. ii. 17, 'Christ came to preach peace to those that are near, and to those that are afar off;' Acts x. 36, 'The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Christ; he is Lord of all.' Partly because in this covenant the terms of this peace between us and God are stated.

God bindeth himself to sinful man to give him remission of sins, and eternal life begun by the Spirit, and perfected in heaven upon the conditions of faith. Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;' and repentance: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;' at our entrance and new obedience as to continuance: Heb. v. 9, 'He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.'

IV. How we come to be interested in this peace and reconciliation, or the conveyance of it to us; for this peace may be considered as to the impetration and application of it.

1. As to the impetration and laying down of the price; that was done by Christ on the cross. Therefore it is said, 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' Then was God propitiated, and the merit and ransom interposed, by virtue of which we are pardoned and reconciled.

2. As to application, when God is actually reconciled with us, and we enter into his peace, and are restored unto his favour. This may be considered either as to the first gift. God is never actually reconciled to us, nor we to him, till he give us the regenerating Spirit; that is our 'receiving the atonement,' Rom. v. 11. It was made on the cross, but received at our conversion and regeneration. Or else it may be considered as to the further measure of his sanctifying grace, called here, 'Perfecting us for every good work, and working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.' This is given with respect to our reconciled estate, as we are actually at peace and in covenant with God: 2 Cor. v. 17, 18, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new: and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' The sum is this: at the death of Christ there was such a foundation laid that we need no other ransom nor propitiation. He hath so far satisfied divine justice that he hath obtained the new covenant. The first grace is given us merely with respect to the merit of his sacrifice; for Christ purchased the mercies promised, and power to perform the conditions. Further grace is given us because we are already reconciled unto God, which is a ground of the greater joy and confidence; for our actual reconciliation giveth us a title to all consequent acts of friendship which can be expected or received, for in God's way we shall have further sanctification, and after that salvation.

V. The reasons why all increase of grace comes from God as the God of peace.

1. From the giver. God will not set us up with a new stock of grace till satisfaction be made for the breach of his law. We must not look upon him as *pars offensa*, the offended party, but as *rector mundi*, the governor of the world. Private persons may forgive offences as they please, but the governor and judge of the world would not pass by the offence of man till the ends of government be secured, or that the law fall not to the ground, which it doth not whilst God standeth upon the satisfaction of Christ and the submission of the sinner. The right of passing by a wrong, and the right of releasing a punishment, are different things; because punishment is a common interest, and is referred to the common good, to preserve order, and for an example to

others. Certainly punishment doth not belong to the wronged party as such ; then every one would have a right to punish, and so invade the power of the magistrate. A private person hath a right of seeking restitution or compensation for the wrong done to him, unless higher reasons of charity forbid him, but not a power to compel them to punishment unless satisfaction be given. But the case is different ; here God punisheth *non qua læsus, sed qua rector*, not as the offended party, but as a governor. Now the government of the world requires God's holiness should be demonstrated, and his laws vindicated, and a brand put upon sin.

2. From the gift, which is the sanctifying Spirit, which, being the gift of his love, must needs be the fruit of his peace and reconciliation with us. Rom. v. 5, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.' Other things may be given us during his anger, for God showeth himself placable in the whole course of his providence. Yea, they may be given in anger, but the regenerating Spirit is never given us during his anger or in anger. Sanctifying grace doth evidence his special favour. Look, as the payment of the ransom was testified by the visible pouring out the Spirit, Acts ii., so is our particular reconciliation by the gift of the Spirit to us.

Use 1. Is of instruction.

1. How we are to look upon God in our prayers, as the God of peace, reconciled to us by Jesus Christ. When we pray to him, we look upon him as a God of grace : 1 Peter v. 10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us,' &c. This showeth his propension and inclination to communicate his grace freely to unworthy sinners. We also pray to him as the God of power : Rom. xvi. 15, 'Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel.' But here we are directed to look upon him as the God of peace, as pacified in Christ, which is a greater ground of confidence. If a socinian were to pray to him, he could only use the plea of Benhadad to Ahab, 'We have heard the kings of Israel are merciful kings ;' so we have heard the God of Israel is a merciful God. If the papist would pray with confidence, he thinketh he must appease God by himself, by his penal satisfactions and costly offerings ; as Jacob would appease Esau by sending gifts to him, Gen. xxxii. 20 ; but the penitent believer is reconciled to God by Christ : Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith,' &c. He cometh to God in his name, and no other : John xvi. 23, 24, 'In that day ye shall ask me nothing : verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name ; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.' He runneth to the horns of the altar, accepteth of the peace published in the gospel, devoteth himself to God, and rests upon Christ's mediatorial sacrifice as sufficient. Here is his hope and confidence.

2. How careful we should be that no breach fall out between us and God, lest we stop grace at the fountain-head. Continued sanctification cometh from the God of peace, as well as the first renovation of the heart. The giving the Spirit is a sign of God's love, and the withholding of the Spirit is a sign of his anger and displeasure ; the one is

the greatest mercy, the other the greatest misery. In his internal government, the one is the highest reward, the other the greatest punishment. As a reward it is spoken of Prov. i. 23, 'Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour my Spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you.' As a punishment: Ps. li. 10-12, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me: restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.' The one is to be sought: Luke xi. 13, 'How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' the other to be deprecated: 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;' Ps. li. 11. Therefore take heed the Spirit be not grieved, but obeyed.

3. What ground of thankfulness to Christ—

[1.] That he hath made our peace with God at so dear a rate. All your repentings, if you had wept out your eyes for sin, would not have made your peace with God, nor have satisfied his justice, nor procured pardon and life for you. Now God is appeased, Christ having 'slain the enmity by his cross,' Eph. ii. 16.

[2.] That the new covenant is procured, wherein pardon and salvation is offered to you, as sealed by the blood of Christ, who hath paid our debts: Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.' There had been else no place for your repentance, faith, prayer, or hopes.

[3.] That such free and easy conditions of mercy, with power to perform them, are propounded in the gospel: 'Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us,' Isa. xxvi. 12.

[4.] That he should call us, and have such favourable thoughts to us, who for a long time were dead in sin, and in hostility against him: Rom. v. 10, 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'
