

The second Warrant and special Motive to embrace Christ, and believe in him, is the *earnest request* that God maketh to us to be reconciled to him in Christ; holden forth, 2 Cor. v. 19-21.

Ver. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Ver. 20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Ver. 21. *For he hath made, him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Wherein the apostle teacheth us these nine doctrines:

1. That the elect world, or world of redeemed souls, are by nature in the estate of enmity against God. This is presupposed in the word *reconciliation*; for reconciliation, or renewing of friendship, cannot be, except betwixt those that have been at enmity.
2. That in all the time bypast, since the fall of Adam, Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, as Mediator, and the Father in him, hath been about the making friendship (by his word and Spirit) betwixt himself and the elect world: *God* (saith he) *was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.*
3. That the way of reconciliation was in all ages one and the same in substance, *viz.*, by forgiving the sins of them who do acknowledge their sins and their enmity against God, and do seek reconciliation and remission of sins in Christ: For *God* (saith he) *was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, by way of not imputing their trespasses unto them.*
4. That the end and scope of the gospel, and whole word of God, is threefold: (1.) It serveth to make people sensible of their sins, and of their enmity against God, and of their danger, if they should stand out, and not fear God's displeasure. (2.) The word of God serveth to make men acquainted with the course which God hath prepared for making friendship with them through Christ, *viz.*, That if men shall acknowledge the enmity, and shall be content to enter into a covenant of friendship with God through Christ, then God will be content to be reconciled with them freely. (3.) The word of God serveth to teach men how to carry themselves towards God, as friends, after they are reconciled to him, *viz.*, to be loath to sin against him, and to strive heartily to obey his commandments: and therefore the word of God here is called *the word of reconciliation*, because it teacheth us what need we have of reconciliation, and how to make it, and how to keep the reconciliation of friendship, being made with God through Christ.
5. That albeit the hearing, believing, and obeying of this word, doth belong to all those to whom this gospel doth come; yet the office of preaching of it with authority belongeth to none, but to such only as God doth call to his ministry, and sendeth out with commission for this work. This the apostle holdeth forth, Ver. 19, in these words, *He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*
6. That the ministers of the gospel should behave themselves as Christ's messengers, and should closely follow their commission set down in the word, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; and when they do so, they should be received by the people as ambassadors from God; for here the apostle, in all their names, saith, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.*

7. That ministers, in all earnestness of affections should deal with people, to acknowledge their sins, and their natural enmity against God, more and more seriously; and to consent to the covenant of grace and embassy of Christ more and more heartily; and to evidence more and more clearly their reconciliation, by a holy carriage before God. This he holdeth forth, when he saith, *We pray you, be ye reconciled to God.*

8. That in the ministers' affectionate dealing with the people, the people should consider that they have to do with God and Christ, requesting them, by the ministers, to be reconciled. Now, there cannot be a greater inducement to break a sinner's hard heart, than God's making a request to him for friendship; for when it became us, who have done so many wrongs to God, to seek friendship of God, he preventeth us: and (O wonder of wonders!) he requesteth us to be content to be reconciled to him; and therefore most fearful wrath must abide them who do set light by this request, and do not yield when they hear ministers with commission, saying, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

9. To make it appear how it cometh to pass that the covenant of reconciliation should be so easily made up betwixt God and a humble sinner fleeing to Christ, the apostle leads us unto the cause of it, holden forth in the covenant of redemption, the sum whereof is this: "It is agreed betwixt God and the Mediator Jesus Christ the Son of God, surety for the redeemed, as parties contractors, that the sins of the redeemed should be imputed to innocent Christ, and he both condemned and put to death for them, upon this very condition, that whosoever heartily consents unto the covenant of reconciliation offered through Christ, shall, by the imputation of his obedience unto them, be justified and holden righteous before God; for God hath made Christ, *who knew no sin, to be sin for us, (saith the apostle,) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

Hence may a weak believer strengthen his faith, by reasoning from this ground after this manner:

"He that, upon the loving request of God and Christ, made to him by the mouth of ministers, (having commission to that effect,) hath embraced the offer of perpetual reconciliation through Christ, and doth purpose, by God's grace, as a reconciled person, to strive against sin, and to serve God to his power constantly, may be as sure to have righteousness and eternal life given to him, for the obedience of Christ imputed to him, as it is sure that Christ was condemned and put to death for the sins of the redeemed imputed to him:

"But I, (may the weak believer say,) upon the loving request of God and Christ, made to me by the mouth of his ministers, have embraced the offer of perpetual reconciliation through Christ, and do purpose, by God's grace, as a reconciled person, to strive against sin, and to serve God to my power constantly:

"Therefore I may be as sure to have righteousness and eternal life given to me, for the obedience of Christ imputed to me, as it is sure that Christ was condemned and put to death for the sins of the redeemed imputed to him."