

## SERMON XXV.

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WHAT ADVANTAGE MAY WE EXPECT FROM CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR UNION WITH HIMSELF, AND THE BLESSINGS RELATING TO IT?

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.—John xvii. 20, 21.*

IN this chapter we have the admirable prayer of Christ, offered up to the Father, a little before his last and greatest sufferings. In this prayer we may observe *the design* and *the contents* of it. *The design* of it is to encourage his disciples: "These words spake Jesus," &c. (Verse 1.) He had spoken much in the former chapters for their comfort and encouragement; and in pursuit of the same design "he lifts up his eyes to heaven," and pours forth this heavenly prayer in their hearing. *The contents*, that which he prays for is union with Him and the Father, and the blessings relating thereto, of which more particularly afterwards. The words, considered jointly with *the design* and *contents* of the prayer, offer us this observation:—

*The people of Christ have great encouragement from his prayer in reference to union with God, and the blessings relating to it.*

In the prosecution hereof,

- I. *I shall give some account of the severals he prayed for; and,*
- II. *Show what encouragement we have to expect what he prays for.*

### OBSERVATION I.

For the first: he prays for *union with himself and the Father; for faith, the bond of this union; for holiness, the effect of it; for perseverance, that it may continue, and not be dissolved and interrupted; lastly, for glory, the consummation of this union.*

\* I have ascribed the authorship of this sermon to the Rev. David Clarkson, B. D., on the strength and credit of a List of the Preachers, written in an ancient hand, and prefixed to a well-preserved copy of the volume. But in similar manuscript Lists, inserted in those copies which I have either inspected, or of which I have heard, the only announcement has been, "N. N.," the common indication of an unknown author. Style is usually too fallacious a guide in coming to a correct conclusion in matters of this description; though the simplicity of its construction, with other circumstances, would incline one to award the composition to Mr. Clarkson. In the absence of better information from more accredited sources, this is tendered, as being exceedingly probable, and containing something beyond mere conjecture.—EDIT.

1. For *faith, that those may have faith who did not, or do not yet, believe.*—"That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (Verse 21.) He prays, that those who were chosen to glory as the end, and so to faith as the means, may be brought to believe on Christ, as sent of the Father to be the Mediator, and so accept of him as their Prophet, Priest, and King.

2. He prays for *holiness, the growth and increase of it.*—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (Verse 17.) The word of truth, through the Spirit working with it, and making impressions by it on the heart, is the instrument and mean, both to begin holiness in regeneration, (1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18,) and to promote it where it is begun. (1 Peter ii. 2.) He prays that the Lord would make his word effectual to cleanse and sanctify them more and more. He would have those who are given to him to be sanctified, truly separated from sin, the world, and carnal self, truly consecrated and appropriated to himself, truly offered up and employed for him, as those who are wholly his, and cannot without sacrifice be converted to other ends and uses than those that are his.

3. He prays for *perseverance, that those who are given him may hold out and continue to the end, in faith, and holiness, and union with Him and the Father.*—That they may not fall away to unbelief, or profaneness, nor be ever separated from him with whom they are once united: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," &c. (Verse 11.) *Keep them*—In all dangers, in all assaults, in all trials. Secure them from sin, from Satan, from the world, that they may be neither frightened nor enticed from me. *Through thine own name*—The name of God is that by which he is known, as we are known by our names: all those glorious perfections, whereby he hath made known himself unto us, his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, sovereignty, all-sufficiency, &c. He would have all the infinite excellences and perfections of God, all by which he is called and known, engaged for the security of his people, that none of them may fall away, and be lost. "Keep them" by thy power, by thy wisdom, goodness, sovereignty, all-sufficiency, &c. Or if we take these words for an argument wherewith he urges this petition, it is of no less force: "Keep them" *for thine own name's sake*, for the honour of thine own name: so he engages the honour of God for the security of his people, that none of them may fall away; and that is the greatest, the strongest engagement in the world, and gives the best security that possibly can be. The Lord will do more for his own name's sake, than for all the works of his hands, than for all that is in heaven and earth besides. His honour is his interest; so that the interest of God is thereby engaged to secure the eternal concerns of his people. Those men in the world that we are not secure of, and can have no confidence in otherwise; yet if their interest do engage them for us, we think ourselves so far sure of them. Interest amongst men is the strongest obligation, if they understand it, and have but so much respect to themselves as to be true to it. Christ, by his prayer, engages the interest of his

Father, his name, his honour, for the security of his people, that they may not fall away, and be lost; and if we acknowledge him to be God, we cannot in the least suspect, either that he knows not what his interest is, or that he will not be true to it. When it is for his name's sake, or his honour, to secure his people, it shall certainly be done; and this is that which Christ urges in this petition.

4. He prays for *glory*.—"And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." (Verses 22, 24.) It is the glory of Christ that he is the Son of God, his only Son by eternal generation, and "Heir of all things." (Heb. i. 2, 3; John i. 14.) Now such a glory will Christ have for his people; something like it, though, in a way, below it. He will have them to be sons and heirs of God, co-heirs with himself. A wonderful glory indeed, and such a degree of it as could never have entered into the heart of man to expect or believe, if the Lord himself had not given assurance of it! "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17.) All that are given him, he will have to be adorned with his own title, and be accounted and called "sons of God;" and all that are sons, he will have to be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with himself," not of some meaner part of his Father's possession, but even of his kingdom. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James ii. 5.) Being heirs, they have hopes to inherit. (Titus iii. 7.) They have a title upon this account, and so hope. But Christ, not satisfied with this, prays also that they may have possession: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me;" (verse 24;) that they may behold it so as to partake of it. This sight will be the highest, the happiest enjoyment: it will be an ennobling, a glorifying sight; a sight that will make them who behold it happy, perfectly so, eternally so. The sight of Christ's glory will make them glorious: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 1, 2.) We are "sons;" that is a great glory indeed. But there is a glory to come which is far greater; so great that no expression can fully represent it to us, or make it appear to be so much, so great, as indeed it is. But this is the sum of it: "We shall be like him" in glory; "for we shall see" how glorious he is. The sight of our glorious Redeemer will make us glorious like him. When we are in the sight of that glory wherewith he now shines "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," (Heb. viii. 1.) to which the greatest brightness of the sun is less than a spark, we shall be adorned with his beams, and so made glorious. A hint hereof we have in what is recorded of Moses, who when he was admitted to a nearer converse with God, it is said, "His face shined." (Exod. xxxiv. 29, 35.) His face was *horned*, as the word imports: it appeared in

such a form as the rays of the sun appear to us ; his face sent forth beams like the sun. There was such a radiant lustre, such a glory in his face, as the weak eyes of mortals could not bear, could not look on. When we are where Christ is, and see him in the brightness of his glory, (which is that he prays for,) the sight of it will transform our souls "from glory to glory," as the apostle's expression is in reference to that of Moses. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) A glory will be derived upon our souls from his glory, and upon our bodies too. That glorious vision will be a transforming sight, and "change our vile bodies, so that they shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious body." (Phil. iii. 21.)

5. He prays for *union*.—"That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (Verse 21.) This union is a mystery, a great depth, such as I was loath to venture on, if it could have been avoided. What my shallowness can say of it briefly, I shall comprise in some few particulars.

(1.) It is an union of believers with God, with the Father and the Son ; not an union of believers among themselves, at least not this only. For the union expressed in those first words, "That they may be one," is declared or illustrated in these following, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ;" and so is the same union with that in the last words, which is taken to be an union with the Father and the Son : "That they may be one in " or *with* "us." Or else the words here used to illustrate one thing, would not illustrate that, but another. "That they may be one." "How ?" "As thou, Father, art one in me, and I in thee," so "they may be one in us." Besides, the same words in effect are used in verse 22 : "That they may be one, even as we are one ;" and the same explained immediately in verse 23 : "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (Verse 26.) By which, without question, Christ both here and elsewhere expresses the union of believers with himself ; though I will not deny that the union among believers themselves may be included, being a consequent of the other ; and that which unites them with Christ, unites them among themselves.

(2.) This union hath some resemblance of that between the Father and the Son : "That they may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee : " *Καθως*, "as," denotes not any thing of *equality*, but only something of *likeness*. That we may know what of resemblance there is, we must inquire, (but very modestly, as becomes those who are so much in the dark,) how the Father is said to be in the Son, and he in the Father. For this purpose Christ may be considered, either *as God*, or *as man*.

*As God*, he is in the Father, and the Father in him ; or, which is the same, he is one with the Father ; because they are of one and the same nature and essence. The same infinite excellences and essential perfections that are in the Father, are also in the Son ; upon this account the Son is said to be in the Father, and the Father in him : "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ?

Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (John xiv. 10, 11.) So that "he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father;" (verse 9;) and he that hath known the Son, "hath known the Father;" (verse 7;) because they are one and the same in nature and essence, the very same as to all divine perfections. And thus the Father and Son, with the Spirit, are said to be one: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one;" (1 John v. 7;) one in essence, and all the perfections which are essential to God, though distinct in personality and manner of subsistence. There is an essential union between the Father and the Son, as he is God. No such union must be imagined between them and believers: the distance is no less than infinite; and if there can be any resemblance, it must be very remote.

If we consider Christ *as man*, he may be said to be "one with the Father;" and is so, because the same Spirit, who is called "the Spirit of God," and "the Spirit of the Father," dwells in the human nature of Christ. (Matt. xii. 18; John iii. 34.) And this may help us better to apprehend how we may be said to be one in or with the Father and the Son. Therefore,

(3.) The most intelligible way of expressing this union which I meet with, is this: Believers are said to be "one with the Father," because that Spirit which proceeds from him, and is called his Spirit, is in them. They are said to be "one with the Son," not only because that Spirit which proceeds from the Son, and is called "the Spirit of Christ," resides in believers; but because the same individual Spirit, which dwells in the human nature of Christ, dwells also in them: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) He that is one with the Lord hath one Spirit with him; he is quickened and acted by the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in him. They are *not one essentially*, as the Father and the Son are one, being of one and the same essence; *nor one personally*, as the divine and human nature of Christ, being united in one person; *nor one morally* only, as he whose heart cleaves to another by love is one with him; but *one spiritually*, or "one spirit," because one and the same Spirit is in both. So, elsewhere, our union with God and Christ is said to be by the Spirit in us: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.) We are in Christ, and God is in us as his habitation, as those in whom he dwells. "How?" "Through his Spirit;" by "his Spirit dwelling in us," as it is expressed in Rom. viii. 9—11: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," &c. Ye are spiritual, "if the Spirit of God dwell in you." But "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" none of his members, not united to him. But "if Christ be in you," (as is before signified,) "by the Spirit of God dwelling in you," &c.

So that this union, by the apostle's account, consists in the Spirit's dwelling in us; and it will be farther cleared by showing *how* the Spirit dwells in us.

(4.) The Holy Spirit, by virtue of whose inhabitation believers are said to be united unto the Father and the Son, dwells in them as a principle of spiritual life and motion, quickens them to a new life and all the acts of it. There are some who will not have *the person* of the Holy Ghost to be in the saints; but I know not how this can be denied, without denying either the immensity or personality of the Divine Spirit. For if he be *a person*, and if he be *every where*, his person will be present, and reside in them. It is true, upon this account merely, nothing singular is ascribed to them; for his person is not with them only, but everywhere. The peculiarity of this privilege lies here,—that he is in them as a principle of spiritual life and motion; and thus he is not in any other creature on earth. He quickens and acts them as a vital principle. Like as a human soul, united unto the body, gives it life and motion suitable to its nature; so does the Spirit of God, taking possession of the soul of a believer, enliven and act it with the life and motions of a divine and spiritual nature. Not that the Spirit is united to the soul, as the soul is with the body; for these united make one person, whereas the personality of the Spirit is incommunicable; But that the Holy Spirit performs such offices in a believing soul as have some resemblance, and are some way correspondent, to what the soul does in and for the body, and which the scripture expresses in like terms; and this we find frequently. The Spirit is said to quicken and act those in whom he dwells; they have new life and motion by his inhabitation: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) The apostle having signified in the former verses, that our union with God and Christ is by the Spirit's dwelling in us, he expresses what may be expected from this inhabitation: Christ's Spirit, dwelling in us, will "quicken our mortal bodies;" will be a principle of life in them, quickening them to a new life, a life of holiness. The same Spirit, as he quickens, so he acts, those in whom he dwells, who are therefore said to be "led" by him: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" (verse 14;) they are excited, directed, enabled to act like the children of God, by his Spirit dwelling in them. So, Ezek. xxxvi. 27: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them;" the Spirit which I will put within you, shall make you active in my ways.

So much for the first proposal.

#### OBSERVATION II.

*What encouragement have we from Christ's prayer, that this union, and the blessings relating thereto, shall be vouchsafed?*

ANSWER. Our encouragement in general is the full assurance given

us, that his prayer is prevalent for what he desired. The particular grounds of this assurance are more particular encouragements. There are several things requisite to a prayer; which when they concur, the word of God assures us that it will prevail.

1. *When the things desired are according to the will of God.*—“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1 John v. 14, 15.)

2. *When the person praying hath a special interest in God, and duly improves it.*—There are some whom, the scripture declares, God will not hear. “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.” (John ix. 31.) “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” (Psalm lxi. 18.) “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” (Prov. xxviii. 9.)

3. *When the persons prayed for are such as the Lord hath some particular favour or respect for.*—There are some for whom the Lord will not hear the best of his servants interceding on their behalf. “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.” “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.” “Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.” (Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11.)

Now in the prayer of Christ there is a concurrence, and that in a transcendent manner, of all those things that render a prayer undoubtedly prevalent.

1. *The things that he prayed for were consonant to the will of God in every instance.*—He knew what was the Father's will in its full extent, and discerned it with the greatest clearness and certainty. For as he is God, he is “one with the Father,” of one and the same essence and will; and as he is man, he had “in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” a fulness of the Spirit of revelation, so that he did perfectly apprehend what was “the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.” (Rom. xii. 2.) He did not only know this in particular instances, by general rules of scripture, as we do; but had the conduct of an infallible Spirit, and that always: not sometimes only and in some things, as holy men of God, the prophets and apostles had it; but in every act and word. And as he perfectly and infallibly understood what was agreeable to the will of God in all points, so he gave himself up entirely to the most exact observance of it, without varying, without the least shadow of mistake or deviation. This was the end why he came into the world. (John vi. 38.) This was his constant practice, in his sufferings and actings, and in his prayers: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John v. 30.) This was his

delight: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John iv. 34.) Now, since he presented nothing in his petitions but what was his Father's own will, desired nothing but it was his Father's will to grant, we may be as certain that his prayer was granted, as we are sure that the Lord will comply with his own will.

2. For the second:—*When the person praying hath a special interest in God, and duly improves it:*—It will be apparent by showing who it was that prayed, and how he prayed: of which take an account in some particulars.

(1.) *This was the prayer of the Man Christ Jesus, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."* (Heb. vii. 26.)—He was "a lamb without spot and blemish;" (1 Peter i. 19;) and so was this offering: the pure eye of God could see no blemish in him or it. His requests were not prejudiced by any antecedent guilt; nor tainted with any impure mixture, either apparent or secret; nor chargeable with the least defect in fervour, faith, affectionateness, &c. It was a sinless prayer in all respects; and so, such a prayer as was never offered to God on earth, since the foundation of the world and sin's entering into it. It was not liable to the least exception, no, not at the tribunal of strict justice; and so could not but be acceptable and prevalent.

Nay, it was not only clear from every the least speck of sin, but was the product of admirable holiness, such as is not to be found in the holiest soul or spirit, saint or angel. He had it in larger measures, in a higher degree, and in a more excellent way. Some tell us, that if all the holiness that is in all the angels and saints were united in one subject, it would fall short of that which is in Christ's human nature. However, it is taken for granted, that the capacity of his soul was wonderfully enlarged by its personal union with the Godhead, far beyond the capacity of any other finite being; and all this capacity was wholly filled with holiness: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" (1 Col. i. 19;) and "God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John iii. 34.) Saints and angels receive it as vessels of small measure; but in Christ it is unmeasurable. Now, all this holiness was exerted in this prayer, and diffused through it. Grace in him was not acted sometimes intensely, sometimes more remissly; (for remissness seems to import some culpable defect;) but was put forth on proper occasions, and particularly in this prayer, in its full power and vigour. Upon this account this prayer was the holiest offering that ever was presented to the most holy God, either on earth, or in heaven; and therefore could not but be most acceptable to him, and accordingly prevalent and successful.

(2.) *It is the prayer of him who is God, of him who is God and man in one person.*—As the blood of Christ is said to be "the blood of God," (Acts xx. 28,) by the same reason, the prayer of Christ may be said to be "the prayer of God." And though it be properly the act of Christ's human nature, yet this nature being



personally united with the Godhead, it is upon that ground duly ascribed to the Divine Nature and Person of Christ; which being infinite, an answerable value and excellency is derived upon this prayer: so that, though it be but finite in itself, as it is the proper act of a finite being, yet it is of infinite excellency and value relatively, and so far of infinite efficacy. Let us suppose, that all the angels and saints in heaven and earth should agree to prostrate themselves before God, and join together in one prayer for us, and *that* influenced with all the holiness, enforced with all the fervour and importunity, that those heavenly spirits and holy souls are capable of; we would conclude such a prayer would be undoubtedly prevalent: and yet we may believe upon unquestionable grounds, that this one prayer of our blessed Redeemer is incomparably, yea, infinitely, more prevalent and effectual. In short: this prayer is nothing else but the will and desires of him who is God, offered in manner of a supplication; and there can be no question but that will and those desires shall be fulfilled to the utmost.

(3.) *This prayer was founded on merit.*—He prayed for nothing but what he was worthy to obtain; sought nothing on our behalf but what he did purchase for us, and deserve of his Father. He might present this supplication “for his own righteousness,” as the best of his people could not, durst not, do. (Dan. ix. 18.) He might expect to obtain what he asked from the hand of justice; not as we, only from mere bounty and free mercy. Christ’s obedience unto death,—it was meritorious, and did deserve for his people all that he prayed for. All the ingredients of strict and proper merit concur in the obedience and sufferings of Christ, as I might show particularly, but that I hasten: they were of equal worth with the recompence which he prays for in the behalf of his people. He thereby fully satisfied the demands both of law and justice; and though it was the life and pardon and happiness of a world of condemned persons that he prays for, yet his obedience and blood are of more worth than all these; for they are of infinite value, being the obedience and blood of him who was God. So that Christ’s obedience, active and passive, is meritorious, not only *ratione pacti*, “by reason of the agreement” betwixt the Father and him, he having performed all the conditions required in order to our redemption; but *ratione pretii*, “by virtue of the intrinsic value of what he paid and performed.” “Now” (to use the apostle’s expression) “to him that *thus* worketh the reward is reckoned, not of grace, but of debt:” (Rom. iv. 4.) It is grace to us, but it is debt to Christ; and so the plea on our behalf being for a just debt, it cannot but be most effectual with the righteous God.

(4.) *It is the prayer of him for whose sake all other prayers were heard.*—We have direction, if we would have our prayers not fail of success, to present them in the name of Christ; that is, to beg what we desire for his sake; and he gives assurance that what we so pray for, (in his name or for his sake,) shall be granted. (John xvi. 23; xv. 16; xiv. 13, 14.) Now if the prayers of his people will prevail for his sake, there can be no question but his own prayer will be

prevalent. All our prayers are accepted through him, upon his account, nor can they be acceptable otherwise. (1 Peter ii. 5.) There is that corruption in our natures, which depraves and vitiates our spiritual sacrifices, our prayers particularly; there is more or less of a sinful tincture in them. They cannot be well-pleasing to that Holy of God who is "of purer eyes than to behold sin, or to look on iniquity," (Habak. i. 13.) till they be purged, and the guilt expiated. Nothing is sufficient for expiation but the great Propitiatory Sacrifice, by virtue whereof this guilt is expiated, and we are said to be sanctified in a sacrificial sense, that is, purged from guilt. (Heb. x. 10.) Thus "he by himself purged our sins;" (Heb. i. 3;) and thereby that which was occasion of offence to God being removed, our prayers became acceptable through Jesus Christ. In this sense he saith, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 19.) *I sanctify*—That is, I offer myself an expiatory sacrifice. *That they may be truly sanctified*—That is, freed from guilt, and so rendered well-pleasing and acceptable. Now the prayers of others being acceptable through the mediation of Christ, the prayers of the great Mediator himself will undoubtedly be most acceptable, most prevalent.

3. *As to the persons prayed for: they are such as on whom the Father is no less willing to bestow what is here desired than Christ was to seek them on their behalf.*—This appears by several expressions in this chapter:—

First. *They belonged to the Father in a special manner.*—"Thine they were;" (John xvii. 6;) and, "Thine they are." (Verse 9.) They were *his in design and purpose*, before the foundation of the world; chosen vessels, set apart for him, as his own peculiarly: (2 Tim. ii. 19;) and *his actually*, by effectual calling; they resigning up themselves to him, and he taking possession of them as his own: "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." (John xvii. 8.) "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." (Rom. ix. 24, 25.) Now to whom is the Lord willing to grant these favours, if not to those who are so much his own?

Secondly. *Those whom he prays for are "given to him."*—As is many times expressed; (John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24;) and given to him that he might redeem and save them, or, as it is expressed, verse 2, "that he should give eternal life unto them." This comprises all that he prays for on their behalf, and that is the end why they are given him. Now the Father is as willing to promote his own end and design as the Son; and so no less willing to grant what is desired in order thereto, than the great Intercessor was to pray for them.

Thirdly. *Those for whom he prays are such as the Father loves with a transcendent, a wonderful love.*—"And hast loved them as thou

hast loved me:" (verse 23:) not with the same love which the Father hath for the Son, nor with a love equal to it, but a love so great as comes nearest to it of all others; a greater love than any creatures, men or angels, have for them, or for one another; a far greater love than he hath for any other creatures in this world. A demonstrative instance hereof we have, in that he gave his Son for them; which was the greatest expression of love that ever the world saw or heard of, and greater than could ever have been believed, if truth itself had not declared it. That he should send his Son to reside on earth, not gloriously like himself, but to take "the form of a servant," and live as a man of sorrows and sufferings, and die as a sacrifice under the sin and curse of those for whom he was offered,—O what manner of love was this! Now, as the apostle argues: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) How can he not be freely willing to give us any thing at his Son's request, when he loved us so as to give the Son himself for us?

## USE.

Since it is thus, what greater encouragement can we have for our faith and prayers, than this prayer of Christ? What can be a firmer ground of hope, or more effectually raise our expectations, of what is here prayed for? that is, of all wherein our happiness is concerned: for the prayer doth comprise all that is requisite to make us happy here and for ever.

1. *What support is there that FAITH doth need or can have, which it may not here meet with?*—Is it the infinite mercies and compassions of God? Why, this prayer not only engages the mercy and compassions, but the justice and righteousness, of God: it is a righteous thing with God to grant the requests of Christ.

Is it the covenant of grace, or the great and precious promises? Why, he that here prays is the Mediator of the Covenant, in whom "all the promises are Yea and Amen." (2 Cor. i. 20.)

Is it the humiliation of the Son of God? Why, this is a signal instance of his humiliation, where He who hath heaven and earth and all creatures at his command, offers himself in the form of a servant, and presents these particulars in the posture, with the voice, and in the words of a supplicant.

Is it the obedience and righteousness of Christ? Why, this was in him a meritorious act of obedience; he prayed as one "made under the law;" (Gal. iv. 4;) and this was one way whereby he fulfilled the righteousness of it.

Is it the death and sufferings of Christ? Why, this is the ground upon which his prayer proceeds: "'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified:' (John xvii. 19:) those for whom I offer these requests, are no other than those for whom I offer myself a sacrifice."

Is it the intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father? Why, his *prayer on earth* and *intercession* differ but circumstantially;

and the circumstances which make the difference make no less for the support of faith. He prayed for the same persons and for the same things too, for which he intercedes; and it is the same person that both prayed and intercedes. He is, in both, the Son of God and the Son of man too. The difference is, that in his intercession, his sacrifice is presented *as already offered*; in his prayer, it was presented *as ready to be offered*: but it was no less effectual before it was actually offered, than after. Besides, he *prayed* in the state of humiliation; he *intercedes* in the height of his glorious advancement; but his exaltation in heaven is the effect of his prayer on earth. "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (Verse 5.) In short, his prayer was *his intercession begun*, and his intercession is *the continuing of his prayer*; for it hath the essence of a prayer, being the presenting of his will and desires to the Father on the behalf of his people.

Lastly: Is the word of Him who is Truth itself, a support of faith? Why, this we have also in reference to Christ's prayer: "Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always." (John. xi. 41, 42.) You see what supports faith hath from this prayer,—even all that is requisite to raise it to a full assurance, if not all that is possible.

2. *What QUALIFICATIONS would you desire in one that pleads for you, to make you confident that his plea will be successful and prevalent?*—You may find a concurrence of all these, and that far more transcendently than in any in whom you would have the most confidence. For,

First. He hath *power*, no less than *all*: "All power is given him in heaven and earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) He hath power to prevail with the Father, and power to order all creatures in heaven and earth into a subserviency to what he desires.

He is *willing*; and earnestly desires the happiness of his people, and all that tends to it; and these desires flow from the wonderful love of an infinite God, and the greatest compassions of a perfect man, united in one person; and so from an affection altogether unparalleled, such as cannot be found in heaven or earth, save only in the Lord our Redeemer and Advocate.

Farther: he hath *authority*. He was called to be a High Priest, (Heb. iii. 1, 2,) and obliged by that office to pray for his people; and, being *faithful* in the discharge of it,—could not but be successful therein. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." (Heb. v. 1, 4, 5, 7.)

His honour is engaged, and depends both upon the execution of his office and the success of it. The Father called him to be a High Priest, and so to pray for his people. He would not have called him to it but with a design to comply with him in it, and to be prevailed with by it.

Besides, he hath *right*; and pleads for nothing but what he hath right to obtain; pleads for nothing with the righteous God on our behalf but what he hath purchased with that which is of infinite value.

Also he hath *interest*, the greatest imaginable; as much interest as is possible. He makes not this address to a stranger, or a friend, or a common relative; but to his Father, one who loves him as himself. (John v. 19—23.) He hath as much interest in him as in himself, and can prevail as much with him as with himself; and can no more be denied by him in what he desires, than he can deny himself: for they are both one: "I and my Father are one." (John x. 30.)

They have not only one interest and design, but one *essence and will*. What Christ wills, the Father wills. Christ directs us to say to the Father when we pray, "Thy will be done:" and the Father saith to Christ praying for us, "Thy will be done;" for it is no other than his own will; and heaven and earth shall pass away, rather than one jot or tittle of it shall not be fulfilled.

Lastly: he had a *personal, a particular respect for every [one] of his servants* in his prayer. It is as comfortable, and will be as effectual, and gives as much assurance of success, as if now in heaven he did pray for every [one] of us by name. The high priest under the law carried the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, when he went into the holiest, to intercede for the people. He was herein a type of Christ, the great High Priest; and his people were so in his mind and heart while he made these requests, that his prayer reached every individual, no less effectually than if he had petitioned for each of them by name.

These severals, duly considered, are enough (if any thing in the world be so) to advance faith unto the height of confidence, that those for whom Christ prayed shall obtain all the rich and glorious things which he desired.

3. Finally. *Here is the greatest encouragement for our prayers that can be desired.*—For hereby it is manifest, that whatever we can beg of God, which is needful for our happiness here or hereafter, it hath been already prayed for on our behalf by Christ himself, who was not, who could not be, denied. When we pray for our relatives or others, who are given to Christ, but do not yet believe, that they may have faith; when we pray for union with the Father and the Son, for the comfort, improvement, and continuance of this union; when we pray for pardon of sin, and the purging of guilt, by the Grand Sacrifice of expiation; when we pray for holiness, the increase and exercise of it; when we pray to be kept from the evil of the world, (which is all in the world we need to fear,) from the evil of suffering, or whatever may be destructive to our souls; in a word, when we pray for eternal

glory ;—it is evident, by the premisses, that all these, and what else is necessary for these purposes, were, on the behalf of those that do or shall believe, the requests of the Great Mediator,—who was God and man in one person, and could no more be repulsed than God can deny himself,—in a prayer that was not liable to the least exception from Justice or Holiness itself, that was in all points exactly agreeable unto the will of God, and infinitely acceptable to the Divine Majesty. Therefore, praying for any or all [of] these things expressed or included in this divine prayer, as we are required, we may be as fully persuaded that they will not be denied us, as we may be confident that the requests of our great Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, will be granted.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.