

*Use 2.* Direction in the Lord's supper. Here we come to remember Christ's sacrifice, and to interest ourselves in the fruits of it.

1. To remember Christ's sacrifice. As the elements are set apart for a holy use, so was Christ sanctified. All sacraments represent Christ dead. Baptism: 'We are baptized into his death,' Rom. vi. 3. In the Lord's supper 'We show forth his death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 26; his body was broken, his blood shed. Christ would institute a representation of his humiliation rather than of his glory, to represent his love to us; it was for our sakes rather than his own honour; to represent what concerned us.

2. To interest ourselves in the fruits of it. Look after the fruits of it.

[1.] Bewailing your unholiness, both in heart and life, that you were so long trained up in the knowledge of Christ's truth, and did so little love God, and live to him; that God hath opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, and you are no more cleansed to this very day; and have gotten so little of the sanctifying Spirit, as if you were strangers in Israel.

[2.] Hunger and thirst for this grace, his renewing, as well as reconciling grace: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Desire it earnestly.

[3.] Lift up your hearts with confidence and hope, when the sacrifice of Christ is represented to you, because God hath accepted this sacrifice, and is well pleased with it: Isa. liii. 4, 5, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. For he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes are we healed.' We have no reason to despair of the cure, that Holy Spirit who sanctified our head, who had no sin, by preventing sin in his conception, and anointed him to his office, is able to enlighten, convert, sanctify us also.

[4.] Praise him for so much grace as you have received, that he hath inclined your hearts to his blessed self: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;' at least that he made you serious.

[5.] Dedicate yourselves to God, to walk before him in all new obedience: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

### SERMON XXXIV.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.—JOHN XVII. 20.*

HERE Christ enlargeth the object of his prayers, which is propounded—(1.) Negatively; (2.) Positively.

First, Negatively ; by which the restraint is taken off. Which showeth—

1. Christ's love. He had a care of us before we were yet in being, and able to apply these comforts to ourselves. We were provided for before we were born, there is a stock of prayers laid up in heaven. Christ, as God, foresaw that the gospel would prevail, notwithstanding the world's hatred, and that many would yield up themselves to the obedience of the faith ; therefore to show that they have a room in his heart, they have a name in his testament. As parents provide for their children's children yet unborn, so doth Christ remember future believers, as well as those of the present age, and pleadeth their cause with God, as if they were standing by, and actually hearing his prayers for them. It was Esau's complaint, 'Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' when he came too late, and Jacob had already carried away the blessing. We were not born too late, and out of due time, to receive the blessing of Christ's prayers. Hath he no regard to us? are his thoughts wholly taken up with the believers of the first and golden age of the church? Certainly not. 'I pray not for these only, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' We, that now live hundreds of years after they are dead and gone, have an interest in them. 'Increase and multiply,' was spoken to the first of the kind of all the beasts ; and to the end of the world all creatures do produce and bring forth after their kind by virtue of this blessing. Christ doth not only speak of the first of the kind ; but, that we might be sure to be comprised, he telleth us so in express words. Certainly much of our comfort would be lost if we were not comprehended in Christ's prayers, for his prayers show the extent of his purchase.

2. The honour that is put upon private believers ; their names are in Christ's testament ; they are bound up in the same bundle of life with the apostles. Here is a question, whether this passage relateth to the foregoing requests, or else to these that follow? What part of the prayer hath this passage respect to? Answer—I suppose to the whole ; it looketh upward and downward. The middle part of the chapter doth chiefly concern the apostles and disciples of that age ; some things are proper to them, yet there are many things in common that concern us and them too. He had lately said, 'I sanctify myself for their sakes ;' he would not have that restrained. In the latter part of the chapter all believers are more especially concerned ; yet some passages are intermingled that do also concern the apostles : ver. 22, 'The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them ;' ver. 25, 'They have known that thou hast sent me ;' ver. 26, 'I have declared my name to them, and will declare it.' Thus you see we are partly concerned in all the prayer. It is a great favour that he would make mention of us to God. As David, when about to die, did not only pray for Solomon his successor, but for all the people, so doth Christ not only pray for the college of the apostles, to whom the government of the church was committed upon his departure, but for all believers to the end of the world. He prayeth for the apostles, as intrusted with a great work, and liable to great danger and hatred ; but yet he doth not neglect the church.

Secondly, Positively; the persons for whom he prays. They are described by their faith, and their faith is described by the object of it, 'That believe in me;' and by the ground and warrant of it, 'Through their word.'

And so the points will be two:—

1. That believers, and they only, are interested in Christ's prayers.
2. That, in the sense and reckoning of the gospel, they are believers that are wrought upon to believe in Christ through the word.

*Doct.* 1. That believers, and they only, are interested in Christ's prayers.

Though Christ doth enlarge the object of his prayers, yet he still keepeth within the pale of the elect. He saith, ver. 9, 'I pray not for the world;' and now, *περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων*, 'for them that shall believe in me.' He doth not pray for all, whether they believe or no, but only for those that shall believe. Now this Christ doth, partly because his prayers and his merit are of equal extent: 'I sanctify myself for their sakes;' and then, 'I pray not for these only, but for them that shall believe in me through their word;' Rom. viii. 33, 34, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;' 1 John ii. 1, 2, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' His prayers on earth do but explain the virtue and extent of his sacrifice: he sueth out what he purchased, and his intercession in heaven is but a representation of his merit; both are acts of the same office. Partly because it is not for the honour of Christ that his prayers should fall to the ground: John xi. 42, 'I know that thou hearest me always.' Shall the Son of God's love plead in vain, and urge his merit, and not succeed? Then farewell the sureness and firmness of our comfort. Now Christ's prayers would fall to the ground if he should pray for them that shall never believe.

*Use 1.* It is much for the comfort of them who do already believe. You may be sure you are one of those for whom Christ prayeth, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free. Particulars are under their general. How do we prove John or Thomas to be children of wrath by nature? All were so. So Christ prayeth for all those that shall believe, as much as if he had brought them forth, and set them before God by head and poll. And if Christ prayed for thee, why is not thy joy full? Why did he speak these things in the world? It is a copy of his intercession. Christ would show, a little before his departure, what he doth for us in heaven; he sueth out his purchase, and pleadeth our right in court. It is a sign we have a room in his heart, because we have a name in his prayers. And what blessings doth he seek for? Union with himself, communion with him, in grace here, in glory hereafter. It is a comfort against all temptations, doubts, dangers; you are commended to the Father's care.

*Use 2.* It is an engagement to others to believe. If he had commanded some great thing, ought we not to have done it? This comfort cannot be made out to you till you have actual faith; however it is with you in the purpose of God, yet you cannot apply this comfort till

you believe. If a man should make his will, wherein rich legacies should be left to all that can prove a claim, by being thus and thus qualified, would not every one put in for a share? Believe, believe; this is the condition.

*Use 3.* It showeth the excellency of faith. Those that have an interest in Christ's prayers are not described by their love, their obedience, or any other grace (though these are necessary in their place), but by their faith; and the godly are elsewhere called 'of the household of faith.' Wherever our implantation into Christ, or participation of the privileges of his death, or our spiritual communion in the church is spoken of, the condition is faith. It is a grace that sendeth us out of ourselves, to look for all in another. It is the mother of obedience. As all disobedience is by unbelief, so all obedience is by faith. First he said, 'Ye shall not die;' and then, 'Ye shall be as gods.' First he seeketh to weaken their faith in the word; they could not be proud and ambitious till they did disbelieve. Therefore, above all things let us labour after faith. Our hearts are taken up with the world, the honours and pleasures of it; these cannot make us happy, but Christian privileges will; all which are conveyed to us by faith.

But let us come to the second point.

*Doct. 2.* That, in the reckoning and sense of the gospel, they are believers that are wrought upon to believe in Christ through the word.

Here is the object, Christ; the ground, warrant, and instrumental cause, and that is the word. The warrant must be distinguished from the object; the warrant is the word, and the proper object of faith is Christ, as considered in his mediatory office. Sometimes the act of faith is terminated on the person of Christ, and sometimes on the promise, to show there is no closing with Christ without the promise, and no closing with the promise without Christ; as in a contract there is not only a receiving of the lease or conveyance, but a receiving of lands by virtue of such a deed and conveyance. So there is a receiving of the word, and a receiving of Christ through the word; the one maketh way for the other, the promise for our affiance in Christ. Faith that assents to the promise doth also accept of Christ; there is an act terminated on his person. Faith is not *assensus axiomati*, a naked assent to the propositions of the word, but a consent to take Christ, that we may rely upon him, and obey him as an all-sufficient Saviour.

But now let us speak of these distinctly.

First, Of the object, that is, to believe in Christ. There is believing of Christ, and believing in Christ. He doth not say, Those that believe me, but, Those that believe in me through their word. Believing Christ implieth a credulity and assent to the word; and believing in Christ, confidence and reliance. Once more, believing in Christ is a notion distinct from believing in God: John xiv. 1, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Since the incarnation, and since Christ came to exercise the office of a mediator, there is a distinct faith required in him, because there are distinct grounds of confidence; because in him we see God in our nature, we have a claim by justice as well as mercy, we have a mediator who partaketh of God's nature and ours, and so is fit to go between God and us.

Briefly to open this believing in Christ, it may be opened by the implicit or explicit acts of it.

1. There is something implicit in this confidence and reliance upon Christ, and that is a lively sense of our own misery, and the wrath of God due for sin. All God's acts take date from the nothingness and necessity of the creature, and from thence also do begin our own addresses to God. God's acts begin thence, that he may be all in all; from the creation to the resurrection God keepeth this course, and then the dispensation ceaseth, for then there is no more want, but fulness. Creation is out of nothing; providence interposeth when we are as good as nothing; at the resurrection we are nothing but dust; God worketh on the few relics of death and time. So in all moral matters, as well as natural, it is one of his names, 'He comforteth those that are cast down.' When he came to convert Adam, he first terrified him: 'They heard the voice of God in the garden, and were afraid,' Gen. iii. 10. He delivered Israel out of Egypt when their souls were full of anguish. We are first exercised with the 'ministry of the condemnation,' before 'light and immortality are brought to life in the gospel.' And still God keeps his old course; men are first burdened and sensible of their load before he giveth them ease and refreshment in Christ. At the first gospel sermon preached after the pouring forth of the Spirit, Acts ii. 37, 'They were pricked in their hearts.' Christ's commission was to preach the gospel to the poor and broken-hearted and bruised: Luke iv. 18, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' This is the roadway to Christ. And all our addresses to God begin too thence. Man is careless: Mat. xxii. 5, *ἀμελήσαντες*, 'They made light of it;' and proud: Rom. x. 3, *οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν*, 'They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' The Israelites were not weary of Egypt till they were filled with anguish. Adonijah, when he found himself guilty of death, 'he laid hold on the horns of the altar.' The prodigal never thought of returning till he began to be in want, and to be soundly pinched. Therefore, till there be a due sense and conviction of conscience, it is not faith, but carnal security. In short, we can never be truly desirous of grace, we cannot prize it, 'we do not run for refuge,' Heb. vi. 18. We are not earnest for a deliverance till there be some such work.

There are two things keep the conscience quiet without Christ—peace and self, carnal security and self-sufficiency.

[1.] It is hard to wean men from the pleasures of sense, and to make them serious in the matters of their peace; before Christ and they be brought together, they and themselves must be brought together. This God seeketh to do by outward afflictions, that he may 'take them in their month,' as the ram was caught in the briars. In afflictions men bethink themselves: 1 Kings viii. 47, 'If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives,' &c. It makes them to return upon themselves, how it is between God and them. If affliction worketh not, he joineth the word; it is 'a glass wherein we see our natural face,' James i. 21. God showeth them what loathsome

creatures they are, how liable to wrath. Or if not, by the power of his Spirit upon their consciences; their reins may chasten them; they cannot wake in the night, or be solitary in the day, but their hearts are upon them; so great a matter is it to bring men to be serious.

[2.] Self. When the prodigal began to be in want, 'he joined himself to a man of that country,' Luke xv. 15. We have slight promises and resolutions, and all to elude the present conviction; long it is ere the proud heart of man is gained to take Christ upon God's terms. Convinced men are brought in, saying, 'What shall I do?' Acts ix. 6. Then let God write down what articles he pleaseth, they are willing to subscribe and yield to any terms; as softened pewter, let it be never so bowed and battered, is receptive of any shape and form. This is the implicit act, or that which is required in believing, that a man should be a lost undone creature in himself, ready to do what God will have him.

2. The explicit acts, when a soul thus humbled casts itself upon Christ for grace, mercy, and salvation. This may be explained with respect to the two great ordinances, *i.e.*, the word and prayer, which are, as it were, a spiritual dialogue between God and the soul. In the word, God speaketh to us; in prayer, we speak to God. God offereth Christ to us in the word, and we present him to God in prayer. So that the acts of faith are to accept of Christ as offered, and then to make use of him in our communion with God; and by this shall you know whether you do believe in him.

[1.] Accepting Christ in the word. Faith is expressed by receiving him: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' Receiving is a relative word, and presupposeth God's offer. Art thou willing to take Christ upon these terms? Yes, saith the soul, with all my heart; I accept him as a sanctifier, as a saviour, and I can venture all in his hands. Then you answer God's question. How often doth God lay forth the excellences of Christ, and none regard him? But a poor hunger-bitten conscience prizeth him, receiveth him with all his heart, and entertaineth him in the soul with all respect and reverence. This is to take Christ, to accept him as Lord and Saviour upon God's offer. As when Isaac was offered to Rebekah, 'Laban and Bethuel answered, saying, The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee good or bad,' Gen xxiv. 50; they consented to take him, because they saw God in it. So they see God tendering Christ in the word, and they are willing to take him upon his own conditions.

[2.] By making use of him in prayer. The great use of Christ is that we may come to God by him: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him.' We must make our approaches to God for supplies of grace, in the confidence of his merit. It is a great fault in christians that they do so little think of this act of faith. We are busy about applying Christ to ourselves. The great use of Christ is in dealing with God: Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore boldness, brethren, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' Every prayer that you make with any confidence and liberty of spirit, it cost Christ his heart's blood. He knew

that guilt is shy of God's presence, as the malefactor trembleth to come before the judge : Eph. iii. 12, ' In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, through the faith of him.' Surely the apostle speaketh *de jure*, not what is *de facto*. We have low and dark thoughts, as if we had no such liberty purchased for us ; *παρρησίαν ἔχομεν*, we may be free with God. It is the fruit of Christ's purchase. Christ's name signifieth much in heaven.

*Use.* Can you thus believe in Christ, take him out of God's hand ? No ; I cannot apply Christ. I answer—Yet disclaim, when you cannot apply : Phil. iii. 9, ' And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is after the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith.' And apply yourselves to Christ when you cannot apply Christ to you ; that is, cast yourselves upon Christ. You have warrant enough from the word. There is an adventure of faith when there is no persuasion of interest : 2 Tim. i. 12, ' I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' The venture is grounded on God's free offer of him to all sorts. When we rest on him, because we know he is ours, that is another thing ; there is trust, that is a fruit of propriety : 1 John v. 13, ' These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.' But the adventure is grounded on the offer, as a child holds fast his father in the dark ; mariners cast anchor at midnight. And ripen faith more ; all faith draweth to particular application. The lowest degree is a desire to lay hold on Christ as our Saviour ; this is the tendency and aim of the least faith, though we do not leap into full assurance at first ; as a man that climbeth up to the top of the tree, first he catcheth hold of the lowest boughs, and so by little and little he windeth himself into the tree till he cometh to the top.

Secondly, The next thing is the warrant or instrument, ' Through their word.' It is not meant only of those that heard the apostles in person. By ' their word ' is meant the scripture, which was not only preached by them at first, but written by them ; as Paul saith, Rom. ii. 16, ' In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel ;' that is, which I have published and delivered to the church in writing : John xv. 16, ' Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.' By their ' fruit ' is meant the public treasure of the church, the scriptures, and that remaineth in all ages until Christ come ; as the Jews were children of the prophets, that never heard them, Acts iii. 25. So were we converted by their word.

Now I shall handle the necessity, use, and power of the word to work faith.

1. The necessity of the word preached ; it is the ordinary means. It is a nice dispute whether God can work without it. God can enlighten the world without the sun. It is clear ordinarily he doth not work without the word ; we are bound, though the Spirit is free : ' How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?' Rom. x. 14. It is the means to

convey faith into the hearts of the elect ; it is as necessary to faith, as faith to prayer, and prayer to salvation. It is a means under a promise. You see how necessary it is ; they that voluntarily neglect the means, put a scorn upon God's institution. Men will say, I can read at home. Are you wiser than he ? Men think that, of all other things, preaching might best be spared ; and of all offices, hearing is least necessary. The ear received the first temptation ; sin and misery broke in that way ; so doth life and peace. The happiness of heaven is expressed by seeing, the happiness in the church by hearing. This is our great employment, to wait upon the word preached ; next to Christ's word, it is a great benefit to have the word written ; next to the word written, the word preached. Christ sent 'first apostles, then pastors and teachers.' God could have converted Paul without Ananias, taught the eunuch without Philip, instructed Cornelius without Peter. Do not hearken to those that cry up an inward teaching, to exclude the outward teaching ; as if the external word were but an empty sound and noise, as the Libertines in Calvin's time. Faith, confirmed by reading, is usually begotten by hearing.

2. The use of the word : it is our warrant. What have we to show for our great hopes by Christ but the word ? It is our excitement, a means and instrument to show us God's heart and our own, our natural face, and the worth of Christ, the key which God useth and openeth our hearts by. Ministers are Christ's spokesmen ; if we will not open the ear, why should God open the heart ?

3. The power of the word is exceeding great. It is 'the power of God to salvation.' The first gospel sermon that ever was preached, after the pouring forth of the Spirit, had great success : Acts ii. 41, 'The same day there were added to the church about three thousand souls.' It was a mighty thing that an angel should slay 185,000 in one night in Sennacherib's host ; but it is easier to kill so many than to convert one soul. One angel, by his mere natural strength, could kill so many armed men ; but all the angels in heaven, if they should join all their forces together, could not convert one soul. There were single miracles of curing one blind or one lame ; ay ! but the apostle's word could work three thousand miracles : 1 Cor. iii. 5, 'Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?'

Why doth God use the word ? I answer—Because it pleased him : 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.'

[1.] It is most suitable to man's nature. Man is made of body and soul, and God will deal with him both ways, by internal grace and external exhortations. Man is a reasonable creature ; his will is not brutish ; God will not offer violence to the principles of human nature. Man is not only weak, but wicked ; there is hatred as well as impotency. God will overcome both together, by sweet counsels, mixed with a mighty force ; he useth such a remedy as our disease requireth ; the gospel is not only called 'the power of God,' but 'the wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24. There are excellent arguments which the heart of man could not have found out.

[2.] It is agreeable to his own counsels to try the reprobate by an



outward rule and offer, wherein they have as much favour as the elect ; they shall one day know ' that a prophet hath been among them,' and so be ' left without excuse,' Rom. i. 20. The rain falleth on rocks as well as fields ; the sun shineth to blind men as well as those that can see.

[3.] It commendeth his grace to the elect. Their faith must be ascribed to grace. When others have the same means, the same voice and exhortations, it is the peculiar grace of God that they come to understand and believe. Whence is it that the difference ariseth ? that whereas wicked men are by the word restrained and made civil (there being a use of wicked men in the world, as of a hedge of thorns about a garden), they are by the same word converted and brought home to God ? It is from the grace of God.

*Use.* Examination. Is our faith thus wrought ? Every one should look how he cometh by his faith, by what means. True faith is begotten and grounded upon the word ; it is the ordinary means to work faith. The word will be continued, and a ministry to preach it, as long as there are any to be converted. The gospel alone revealeth that which may satisfy our necessities ; it giveth a bottom for faith and particular application, as being the declaration of God's will. It is the only means sanctified by Christ for that end : John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth ; ' James i. 18. ' Of his own will begat he us, through the word of truth.' The condition of those is woful that want the gospel, or put it from them : Acts xiii. 46, ' Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.' If faith be of the right make, the word will show thee once thou hadst none, and that thou wert not able of thyself to believe. Beseech the Lord to work it in thee.

### SERMON XXXV.

*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. 21.*

WE have seen for whom Christ prayeth. Now let us see what he prayeth for ; their comfortable estate in the world, and the happiness of their everlasting estate in heaven. With respect to their estate in the world, Christ mentioneth no other blessing but the mystical union, which is amplified throughout, ver. 21–23. Here he beginneth, ' That they may be all one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.' He had before prayed for the apostles, ' That they may be one, as we are one,' ver. 11 ; and now, ' Let them *all* be one.' The welfare of the church is concerned, not only in the unity of the apostles, but of private believers ; you had need be one as well as your pastors. Many times divisions arise from the people, and those that have least knowledge are most carried aside with blind zeal and principles of separation ; therefore Christ prayeth for private believers, ' That they may be all one,' &c.