

SERMON XII.

I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine.—JOHN XVII. 9.

CHRIST, having urged several arguments on the behalf of the disciples, cometh now to limit his prayers to them, which is a new argument : 'I pray for none but those which thou hast given me ;' not for obstinate persecutors and perverse rebels, but for thine own, thy charge put into my hands. If I had prayed for any which belong not to the purpose of thy grace, thou mightest deny me ; but 'I pray not for the world, but for thine,' therefore hear me.

In the words you have:—

1. The object of Christ's prayer.

2. The object limited, *I pray for them* ; which is amplified negatively by a refusal to pray for others, *I pray not for the world*.

3. The reasons, *thou hast given them me, and they are thine* ; mine by oppignoration, not alienation, thy charge put into mine hands. I have a charge over them, and thou hast a right in them. Christ was tender of his charge, and the Father still loved and owned them. Thy right and propriety is not lost by thy donation, but confirmed, *for they are thine*. It is not only a reason of the donation, but an argument that Christ useth in prayer.

First, The great matter, that needeth not so much to be cleared as to be vindicated, is Christ's refusal to pray for the world. It needeth not to be cleared, because Christ doth expressly limit the persons, 'I pray for them ;' he doth not only explain it, whom he meaneth by *them*, 'those which thou hast given me ;' which explication, if nothing else had been added, would have been exclusive, and would have amounted to them, and only them ; but he doth himself exclude the world from having any share in his prayers. By the *world*, he meaneth the reprobate world, not only the unregenerate elect, who are sometimes called the world, but *reprobos amatores seculi*, as the Carthusian, the reprobate perverse world.

But some object, and it is fit they should be heard:—

1. That the apostles only are here intended, and that there is not a distinction between the elect and reprobate, but between the apostles and others ; for afterwards Christ prayeth for others 'that shall believe through their word,' ver. 20. I answer—

[1.] The apostles are chiefly intended, but not only ; elsewhere doth he pray for the disciples and believers of that age ; there were more than the eleven apostles, and if they be excluded, they have no name in Christ's prayer.

[2.] All others besides the apostles could not be reckoned to be in the world ; now here is a perfect distribution of men into two ranks—those that were given him, and the world.

2. Others say that the words are not to be taken as utterly exclusive, but only that he prayed not for the world in this place ; the requests of fatherly protection, the gift of the Spirit, love and concord, being only proper to them that did actually believe : elsewhere, they

say, they find Christ praying for the world. They bring that place for one, Luke xxiii. 24, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;' where he prayed for his persecutors, some of which never were converted. I answer—

[1.] We must distinguish the prayers of Christ as a holy man, and the prayers of Christ as mediator. So *Camero. Owen*, p. 44, &c.; *Gomarus in locum*, and *Rainoldus de Intercessione*, &c. As he was a holy man, he was to lay aside all show of revenge. This was not a prayer by virtue of his office as mediator, but in answer to his duty, as he was subject to the law, and a private person. Those things which he did in obedience to the law as a private person were not acts of mediation; they were acts of the mediator, but not as mediator. He taught us to pray for enemies: Mat. v. 44, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.' Revenge is forbidden, and pardon and prayer enjoined.

[2.] Christ did not pray for all his persecutors, and every one of them, but only for those that sinned out of ignorance, as the words imply; chiefly for the standers-by, rather than the priests and pharisees, many of which came rather out of curiosity than despite. Yea, this supplication was effectual and successful to all the elect intended. This prayer brought in three thousand, Acts ii. 41, who are charged with Christ's death, ver. 23 and 36, and again five thousand, Acts iv. 4, who are charged with ignorance in this matter: Acts iii. 15, 'And killed the prince of life;' ver. 17, 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.'

3. Again, they urge, ver. 21, 'That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' Some say that by the *world* is meant the unregenerate elect. This, though it blunteth the force of the objection, yet I think it not so full an answer.

[1.] Because it is not directly made for them. Mark, it is not a prayer, but a reason of prayer; Christ would have prayed more directly for the unregenerate elect.

[2.] He would have prayed for a more effectual means of conversion than the beholding the unity and concord of his church: 'That they 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 know that thou hast sent me.'

[3.] The word *world*, in this whole chapter, is taken for the reprobate world, or those which are opposed to them which are committed to him by his Father.

[4.] The substance of that prayer is for the elect not yet converted, for Christ prayeth for 'all that shall believe through their word,' ver. 20. And then, 'that they may be all one,' &c., 'that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;' so that the unregenerate elect are not intended. Well, but then doth Christ pray for the reprobate world, that they may believe? I answer—No; faith or believing is there taken for a more full conviction, that they may be convinced and rendered more inexcusable. It is not taken in a strict sense, for a saving comprehension and receiving of Christ, but for a conviction and acknowledgment. Divisions in the church usually breed atheism in the world; all is false when so many ways and differences. So think

they Christ is an impostor, the word a fable. Now this kind of conviction is not only termed believing in scripture, but explained, ver. 23, 'That the world may know that thou hast sent me.' Nay, let us grant that faith is taken in the highest and strictest sense; yet there is a difference between praying for such a thing as may be a likely means of working faith, and praying that they may believe. Christ only prayeth 'that his people may be one,' that the world may not plead prejudice; at most, he doth but obliquely reflect upon the world in that prayer, that they may have means of conviction, but not grace. Christ denieth that the world either hath, or ever shall have, the grace of faith: ver. 25, 'O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.' And the special reason why the elect have known, though the world have not known, is rendered, ver. 26, 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it;' by which is meant the special manifestation of his grace given to believers of all ages, which was given to the disciples of that present age, and will be given to all future believers. A serious consideration of the context will refute all these sophisms. Thus I have taken off the objections.

Let me handle one doubt more. But if they were absolutely predestinated, why doth Christ pray for them?

I answer—Predestination includeth all things that are necessary to the salvation of the predestinated; and so the prayers of Christ must be taken in as well as other means.

Take an argument or two why Christ did not, could not, doth not pray for the reprobate world. This prayer must either argue:—

1. A nescience of his Father's decrees, which cannot stand with the unity of his person, especially as now in glory. While upon earth he knew it, and approved it, that God by an immutable decree had left some to be justly hardened to their own ruin: Mat. xi. 25, 26, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' Or—

2. A contradiction to his will and express decree. It is true we do not sin by asking a thing contrary to God's decree; as when I ask a parent's life, whom God hath determined to cut off by such a sickness, which I know not; but if I did, it is no rule to me. But now God's decree was a rule to Christ in his mediatory actions, as the moral law was a rule to his moral actions; and therefore when the decree of God called for one thing, and the moral law for another, Christ was both to show his moral affections and mediatory obedience: 'Father, let this cup pass; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt,' Mat. xxvi. 39. There was an innocent desire of nature, but an express submission to his Father's will.

3. Because all Christ's prayers were to be grounded on a promise. There was an indenture drawn up between him and his Father; he had the assurance to be heard in whatsoever he asked: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' John xi. 42, 'I knew that thou hearest me always.' Therefore he must needs exclude the reprobate world out of his prayers.

Observations.

First, Let us look upon it as a mediatory action.

1. Observe, here was the first solemn offer of Christ's mediation between God and man, and therefore upon this place we may ground the doctrine of his intercession, 'I pray for them.'

Here I shall speak of—(1.) The person who is the intercessor; (2.) The nature of the intercession; (3.) The privileges and fruits of it.

1. The intercessor, 'I pray.' The Syriac twice repeateth the pronoun; I, even I, pray for them; it is not an ordinary high priest, but I; I that am thy beloved and only-begotten Son, co-eternal, and consubstantial with thyself; I that have glorified thee upon earth, and done thy work; I that am holy and harmless; I whose prayers thou hast promised to hear; I who am an authorised mediator, sent into the world for this purpose. There are all these advantages in the intercession of Christ, let us go over them a little briefly. I shall refer them to these heads—the dignity and dearness of his person, the sublimity of his office, the value of his satisfaction, the articles of the covenant, or the promise of being heard.

[1.] The person of Christ; and there you have—

(1.) His dignity, he is God-man, and so fit for this office: Job ix. 33, 'Neither is there any daysman between us, that might lay his hand upon us both.' He communicates with God in the same nature, and we with him; he is our brother, and God's fellow. Our kinsman is in the court of heaven, pleading for us; he appeareth there in our nature, to set on our salvation. We need not be ashamed to go to him, nor he to go to God. He is of near alliance to us, and to God himself, God's own natural Son; which doth not only give him a power to prevail with God, but a sufficiency to do us good. None but Christ could serve our turn in this matter. Who can know all our needs, all our sins, all our thoughts, all our desires, all our prayers, all our purposes, and wait upon our business with God night and day, that no wrath break out upon us, but Jesus Christ, who hath his constant residence in heaven at his Father's right hand? There is an all-sufficiency required to intercession, as well as oblation.

(2.) The dearness of his person, called, 'his dear Son,' Col. i. 13, the Son of his love, one with him. God bids him ask what he will: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' When Christ came first into heaven, he was to make his demand. He proclaimed it on earth when Christ was baptized, consecrated to God for the priesthood: Mat. iii. 17, 'Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.' There was such perfect love and consent of mind between God and Christ, that if he had never died, God could not have denied him anything.

[2.] The value of his satisfaction. Christ is an intercessor not by entreaty, but by merit: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thy name on earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.' The greatest work that ever could be done, if you respect the importance of it. The creating of a thousand worlds would not bring in such a revenue to heaven as this one work of redemption; or the difficulty of

it, the Son of God to be made flesh, sin, a curse, states most abhorrent from the felicity of the divine nature; or his willingness to undertake it, 'Lo, I come to do thy will.' He longed to be at it; though he had infinite complacency in the bosom of the Father, yet as soon as God had made a habitable world, Prov. viii. 30, 31, 'There I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' He longed for that time when he might leave the company of angels and dwell among us, and feasted himself with the thoughts of his own grace. And with so much faithfulness: I not only finished the work, but glorified thee; all he did was for his Father's glory. This could Christ plead as the ground of his requests; he hath paid for all that he asketh, not only made satisfaction for sin, but given a price for glory. He cannot out-ask his own merit; his blood speaketh if Christ should hold his peace: Heb. xii. 24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel's.' As clamorous as Abel's blood for vengeance. It doth not speak against us, though we have made him to serve with our iniquities, but speaks the more for us, to pacify his wrath, to pardon us, and to do us good.

[3.] The sublimity of his office. It is an authoritative act. God hath always refused such mediation as is not authorised by himself. When Moses interposed for the children of Israel, said God, Exod. xxxii. 10, 'Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them;' because he would reserve this honour for him who alone hath this office under the broad seal of heaven. So it is very notable that Christ refused all mediation to him in the days of his flesh. As of his apostles: Mat. xv. 23, 'His disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us,' &c. But Christ would show that he was solicitous enough for the welfare of sinners, he needed no intercessors. So his own mother, when she interposed for the honour of the wedding: John ii. 4, 'Woman,' saith he, 'what have I to do with thee?' As if he had said, Cannot I do it without your intermeddling? In these answers, Christ would show that he would have sinners come of themselves, without any mediation of their fellow-creatures, they being no authorised mediators. God alloweth no other mediator of redemption but Christ, and Christ no other mediator of intercession but himself. It is sacrilege in the Papists to set up others; none is worthy to appear before God but Christ; and how unworthy soever we are, Christ will have us to come to himself. God hath set him up for this purpose, and no copartners are allowed. As it was said to Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18, 'It pertaineth not to thee to burn incense, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.' Incense could be offered by no other but a priest, and our prayers by none but by Christ: Heb. vii. 28, 'The law maketh men priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.' Christ is consecrated by an oath to abide overmore in the office, which oath is renewed and confirmed upon his return to heaven: Ps. cx. 4, 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck;' compared with ver. 1. God will

never repent of dispensing grace in and through him to sinners; as long as Christ's consecration lasteth, none must meddle with his office.

[4.] The articles of the covenant, or the promise of being heard. Therefore Christ speaketh with such confidence: John xi. 42, 'I know that thou hearest me always;' and Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,' &c. There was a covenant drawn up between God and Christ; the Lord promised him, as the fruit of his labours and sufferings, that he should obtain all manner of grace for his people. All these things show us the advantages of having such a mediator and intercessor.

2. The nature of Christ's intercession. It is a part of his priestly office, of which there were two acts—oblation and intercession. Oblation was made once on the altar of the cross, and intercession is the continuation of his sacrifice, or the presenting it in heaven. It must be explained by analogy to the priests of the law. The sacrifice was slain without the camp, and then the priests were to enter with the blood within the veil, into the holy of holies, with sweet incense, and so to cause a cloud to arise over the mercy-seat. 'But Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands; that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. ix. 11, 12. Jesus Christ having offered up himself upon the cross, where he was both priest and sacrifice, he is gone within the veil, 'Not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24. It is not a vocal, but a real intercession. Christ is gone into heaven, and there presents his person, both in our nature and his own, together with his merits, lifting up desires which are as a cloud of incense before the mercy-seat, for our comfort and salvation: Rev. viii. 3, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.' The high priest entered not for himself, but for the people, having the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast and shoulders; so Christ is entered on the behalf of us all, bearing the particular memorial of every saint graven upon his heart. The high priest staid within the sanctuary for a short time, and so came out to bless the people; Christ entered within the veil at his ascension, and we must wait till his coming out to bless us, which will be at the day of judgment. All this while he hath his residence in heaven, and then he will open to us and give us entrance. So that Christ's intercession is 'A constant representation of his merit for the pardon of our sins, and for our acceptance; together with strong desires conceived in the human nature for the good of the creature, for all their exigencies and employments, that so his whole purchase may be applied to us, and we may receive grace to help in time of need.' It is a representing of his own merit, the worthiness of his person. As God-man, he is the Son of God, yet the creature's advocate; and the merit of his obedience and passion: 'I have glorified thee upon the earth;' as one that was to plead for his life showed *cubitus sine manu*,

his hand lost in the service of the state. All this is to the Father, who being appeased, all the rest of the persons are appeased; for they are one, and agree in one. He pleads with God for the application of good things procured by his oblation, especially in deep exigencies and conflicts. Christ hath knowledge at other times, but then he hath a fellow-feeling: Heb. iv. 15, 'We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' His heart is entended by his own experience.

3. The fruits and benefits of this intercession. They are many; I shall name the chiefest.

[1.] This secures our justification and the pardon of our sins. Christ watcheth against what objections justice makes, and against Satan's wiles, and that we ourselves, by our daily breaches, may not cast ourselves out of the favour of God. He justifieth us against the accusations of enemies, covereth our sins from the sight of God: Rom. viii. 34, '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.' So Zech. iii. 1, 2, there is our advocate and accuser: 'He showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.' When we are summoned by the justice of God to defend ourselves against the exceptions and complaints which are preferred against us, our attorney appeareth in our name and behalf; so when Satan accuseth us day and night, he makes up all the breaches that fall out between God and us: 1 John ii. 1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.' When we have mudded the stream, Christ maketh all clear again.

[2.] The acceptance of all our persons, works, and services: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'We are made an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' We communicate with Christ in all his offices; we are spiritual priests, consecrated to him by baptism. The ordinary priests were first consecrated in the great laver before they were to offer sacrifices; so we are purified and cleansed in the laver of regeneration, and then offer to God these sacrifices. As Christ was temple, priest, and sacrifice, so are we. God dwelleth in us as in a temple: 2 Cor. vi. 16, 'Ye are the temple of the living God;' 'As the godhead dwelt in Christ bodily,' Col. ii. 9. We are consecrated to be priests to God, being sanctified by him, cleansed in the laver of his blood, our persons received into favour. And then we offer ourselves, bodies, services to God; and so we perform duties acceptable to him; because when we act the priest, Christ acteth it over again, presents our services to God in his censer: Rev. viii. 3, 'Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' He puts no filth nor dross into his golden censer. As the priests under the law were to examine the sacrifice before it was offered to the Lord, so doth Christ examine our services, not to reject them, but to better them in

his own oblation; and so by his intercession our duties and all the good works of our lives are recommended to God.

[3.] It encourageth us to come to the throne of grace with boldness. God would have prayer in heaven to encourage us to prayer on earth; Christ is always with God to set on every request. This is the copy of Christ's intercession. Besides, you have the groans of the Spirit in your hearts: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession in us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' Christ is our advocate, the Spirit our notary, we the solicitors: Isa. lxiii. 6, 7, 'Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest,' &c. We may know what Christ is doing for us in heaven by the work upon our hearts. Oh! then, let us never rest till we have an interest in his intercession. This is the great prop of our faith and confidence, to know that we are comprehended in Christ's prayers. You have a friend in court, he hath liberty of immediate access, he is a favourite, the Father loveth him, and you for his sake. Our friend prayeth to our dear Father for his own children. When Joab saw the thing was pleasing to David, he interceded for Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 1. God can deny him nothing; if you have ten thousand accusers it is no matter, your advocate will answer all their accusations. Never leave till you get it evidenced that it is your privilege; choose him, go to God by him, ratify God's appointment by your own choice. Faith is a consent; wait for the Spirit's intercession; those groans will end in joys. It is the great comfort of the church that we have such a mediator, who will effectually plead our cause with the Father.

We may look upon it as a moral, as well as a mediatory act, an act of Christ's love to his own disciples, chiefly the apostles, who were, as it were, his family and special charge.

Out of this example of Christ let us learn to pray one for another; it is a spiritual act of love. You may discern the hypocrisy and sincerity of your love to others by your carelessness or seriousness in prayer for them; for if we desire a thing, we will pray for it with importunity. By this the saints have communion with one another at a distance.

Chiefly this concerneth ministers for their charge; they should be of Samuel's temper; though he had received affronts from Israel, 'God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you,' 1 Sam. xii. 23. Their sin doth not exempt you from the duty you owe to them for God's sake; they look to a higher obligation than civil respects and an interchange of kindness. But especially are we bound to pray for them if, as the apostles here, they are gained to any degree of faith, knowledge, and obedience: 2 Thes. i. 11, 'We pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.' What encouragement hath a minister to go to God for such, not only when you send for him in times of sickness, but always, as the apostle saith, 'in every address to God.' It is sweet to give an account of the thriving lambs, and to desire the Lord to perfect his work. And it argueth in the minister sincerity to take pleasure in their gracious estate, and to account it, as it were, his own benefit that God hath any way blessed them with grace, which moveth him again to commend

their case to God. Certainly if we have but any portion of the unity of the Spirit, or any share in the communion of saints, or any respect to God's glory, thus it would be.

Again, it concerneth masters of families. Your family is your charge, given you of God; pray for them in the bowels of love. You are to make an errand to the throne of grace, not only for yourselves, but your children and servants; as the centurion came to Christ for his servant, Mat. viii. 6. If we did not want hearts, we could never want an occasion of recourse to God. By virtue of our relation we are to espouse the interests of our family, and to plead with God on their behalf, as we would on our own. Job is an excellent pattern: Job i. 5, he 'rose early, day by day, and offered burnt-offerings for his children,' in the time of their feasting. His great care was to keep his children in the favour of God; he knew no hurt in their feasting, had heard none by information; yet because miscarriages are usual in the heat and license of feasts, the family should not be without a daily sacrifice: 'For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Up then betimes, as Job did, and milk out a blessing for your families; not only in general, as men will put up cursory prayers, out of custom and use, for their families; they pray God to bless their families; but bring them forth by head and poll, and set them before the Lord, as 'Job offered sacrifices according to the number of his children;' or as Christ here, 'I pray for these,' pointing to the apostles; Lord! for these, and every one of them. The occasion of Job's prayer is not manifest. If you do but suspect that a child hath such a disease, you will go to a physician. Should we have less care of their souls? Christ says they live in an evil world, ver. 11, therefore he prays for them.

Again, look on this prayer of Christ not only as an act of love to his charge and familiars, but as an act of prudence as to the apostles, who were to bring others to believe by their word: 'I pray for them; I pray not for the world,' &c. These that are designed for the great work of the gospel, chiefly for them: they had to do with obstinate Jews and idolatrous Gentiles, and they had need take the blessing of Christ's prayers along with them. Ministers and dispensers of the mysteries of salvation above all men need the help of your prayers. How affectionately doth Paul call for this everywhere! 1 Thes. v. 25, 'Brethren, pray for us.' It is a duty you owe, and it may be not only of great comfort to us, but of great profit to yourselves. God would have all orders and estates in the church to be obliged to one another; you for our instructions, we for your prayers: 'The head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee,' 1 Cor. xii. 21. Our calling is encumbered with the more difficulties, and that we may be acquainted with all sorts of Satan's enterprises, our persons may be exposed to more temptations than yours. The many things requisite to make our ministry useful call for your prayers; abilities, the right use of them; fruit and success, that we may be able pastors, faithful, successful; that we may have abilities, which are a common gain; whatever gifts are bestowed on ministers, are for the people's profit; that out of love of ease, or love of the world, or error, we may not mislead you, nor be disheartened for lack of success. Instead of praying for ministers,

many now pray against them ; the calling is repined at, as if it were some heavy plague and judgment sent upon the world. But therefore you have need to pray the more : 2 Thes. iii. 2, 'That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men ; for all men have not faith.' Pray that the lights of the church be not eclipsed ; pray for our standing amidst the assaults of Satan. It is not enough to give us love and maintenance, but we must have your prayers.

So much for the object of Christ's prayer.

Secondly, Now for the limitation of that object: 'I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me.' Many things may be inferred out of this limitation.

1. Universal redemption is disproved ; for those for whom Christ prayed not, for them he died not. These two offices of the priesthood must not be severed. Christ doth not only profess to pray for these, but denieth to pray for the world. His intercession is of the same latitude with his redemption ; they are acts of the same office, and of the same extent and latitude. All men were not intended in his passion and intercession. See sermon on 2 Cor. v. 16.

2. The weakness of the world, notwithstanding all their outward props and supports ; although they be strong, and have many on their side, yet they have not Christ on their side. He hath left the world out of his prayers ; he will not so much as take their names into his lips. Therefore, Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be for us, who shall be against us?' What will that party do that have God against them? Against how many will you set me? said Antigonus. You may shake your spear, and bid defiance against all the powers of darkness ; they have not Christ among them, he will not speak one good word for them ; they may have riches, honours, friends, countenance in the world, but God will never take their part.

3. The dangerous and sad condition of worldly men. Oh ! it is a sad thing not have a name in Christ's prayer. There is a great number left out ; and if you will know who they are, they are called 'the world.' It presseth us to come out of that state where we are in this danger. Men that are now worldly may be in the roll of God's election, but it is no comfort to them. 'I pray not for the world ;' so it is expressed ; and as long as thou art worldly, thou canst take no comfort in Christ's intercession. Certainly this should be an effectual consideration with the people of God, to cause them 'to keep themselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 24. These have the benefit of Christ's prayers. A christian should never be quiet till he be clearly out of that number which is excepted. Christ hath a constant enmity and antipathy against mammon ; there must be a separation from the world, and a contempt of earthly things, before we can have an interest in him. The world maketh a sport of these things ; but what can be more terrible than to be shut out of Christ's prayers? He curseth those for whom he doth not pray ; and that is the reason why men that are besotted with the world do always wax worse and worse.

4. The excellency of Christ's love to the saints: 'I pray for these, I pray not for the world.' Christ's separate love to us heightens his kindness and our duty. It is not every one's mercy to be remembered in Christ's prayers ; millions are passed by, as many as may be called

a world: John xiv. 22, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' So we may say, How is it that thou wilt pray for us, and not for the world? Others that are better accomplished are left out, and we taken in. Man is taken with nothing so much as with privileges; common favours seem to be a right of nature. It was certainly a sweet consideration to Noah, though he seemed to be buried alive in the ark, that he and his family were saved when all the world perished in the waters. At the day of judgment, how many millions of thanks shall we owe to Christ, when all the reprobates are gathered together, to consider, God hath chosen me, and not all these; nay, of those reprobates, some are more excellently accomplished, and yet God hath chosen me, and not Cato, me and not Socrates, me and not Plato, not the most excellent among the heathens! When Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore, Exod. xiv. 30, it heightened their deliverance. If God had saved all, it had been an infinite mercy; but now many are damned. it is the more cause of thanksgiving to those that are saved. The sun is glorious and beautiful, but if every star had so much brightness, it would not be so admired. Chrysostom saith, It is a great means of thankfulness now and then to go into the spittals, and to look on the poor creatures that are rough-cast with sores. So it commends Christ's love, and should raise in us thankful acknowledgments, to consider Christ prayed for us, not for the world.

5. By the example of Christ we should embrace them, and show special love to them, that are chosen out of the world. Christ saith, 'I pray for these; I pray not for the world;' we should specially remember them in our prayers. The apostle saith concerning alms, Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith.' Christ saith, Ps. xvi. 3, 4, 'My goodness extendeth to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another God; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer; nor take up their names into my lips.' Christ will not mention them. Some think it is to be applied to the idols; rather to the persons; the whole psalm is applied to Christ.

But here ariseth a doubt: Are we not to pray for wicked men, yea, the impenitent, the persecutors of the church, contemners of the word? I answer—

1. Yea; partly because we know not the secret purposes of God's grace. Christ, in the light of his divinity, knew the elect and the reprobate; but we know not, therefore we are to 'pray for them that persecute,' Mat. v. 44. Paul once breathed out threatenings against the church; Christ received gifts for the rebellious. Partly because many wicked men are considerable in their station, therefore, at least, we pray for temporal blessings for them, though we have little hopes that ever they shall be gained to the knowledge of the truth. Thus we are to pray for wicked rulers, for the conversion of human society; they may serve as a thorn hedge about a garden of roses. Thus it is said, Ezra vi. 10, 'That in the temple they should pray for the life of the king, and of his sons;' meaning the king of Babylon, Darius, at least for temporal favours.

2. We have not such encouragement to pray for them as for the saints. For the saints we pray out of the unity of the spirit; for wicked men, out of common charity; for the saints, we pray out of a delight in their graces; for wicked men, out of a loose possible hope: Heb. xiii. 18, 'Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' These should have the greatest share of our prayers; we have the more encouragements and hopes of them, which should be an engagement to us to pray for them.

3. Conditionally we may pray against the obstinate, and them that sin of malicious wickedness. There are many imprecations in Psalm cix., which are not to serve our private revenge, but by us to be conceived conditionally. Those curses are uttered against Judas in a prophetic spirit, and therefore not to be drawn into example, to justify any heats of revenge and private passion: 1 John v. 16, 'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.' It is a tempting of God to intercede for that sin, seeing he hath declared his will; the irremissible sin is that sin, though it be hard to be found out. Therefore it is good to keep to the conditional form. When a man, after the profession of religion, falleth to an utter revolt and deadly hatred of it, it is a shrewd presumption they have committed that sin.

4. We feel sometimes a restraint upon our prayers. God by oracle forbade the prophet to pray for the people: Jer. vii. 16, '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.' When he was resolved to put his wrath in execution, he would not have his people's prayers lost; and still the same spirit that stirreth up to prayer searcheth out the deep counsels of God. So that there is a kind of prophetic light in prayers; God suspendeth the fervency and actual assistance, by which we are carried on at other times. I would not justify every private passionate conceit; but yet we must look upon the Spirit of God as the interpreter of God's counsel, and that he will not stir up prayers to no purpose. Yea, sometimes we feel that, after much striving, we have no heart to pray for them, which is a very great mark of God's displeasure upon any person, when God's people, yea, even after much struggling with themselves, have no heart to pray for him.

Thirdly, The reasons why he prayed for them.

1. Because they were given him by the Father.

2. Because he could say to the Father, 'They are thine.'

How they are given unto him of the Father we showed before. I shall only now consider the last reason, which is more formally expressed, 'For they are thine.'

1. Observe, the elect are so given to Christ that they are still the Father's. Though they are mine by grant, yet thou hast lost no part of thy right and propriety in them. They are given to me by way of oppignoration, not by way of alienation; as the father that giveth his daughter in marriage to another doth not lose his fatherly propriety; she is her husband's, and she is her father's. God hath given every elect soul as a spouse to Christ, and yet they remain his; yea, they were given to Christ that God's right might be preserved. All men,

by right of creation, are his; but they are especially his who are redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the Spirit, because the destination and tendency of their lives is still to the Father's glory. Others are his in right, but in the use and course of their lives they are the devil's; God hath lost them, as it were. But those that are given to Christ are not lost, but his still; partly because of Christ's aim, who still worketh in them to preserve the Father's right: John xiv. 13, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' The persons glorify one another: John xvi. 14, 'He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.' They are Christ's members, that the Father may be glorified in the purposes of his grace. Partly in regard of the course and tendency of their conversations: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' The Father is glorified by our fruitfulness.

Use 1. It is an engagement to believers to walk so that God may not be ashamed to own them for his, the Spirit not ashamed to dwell in them as temples; that they be not as stables of filth, but as temples of the Holy Ghost; nor Christ ashamed to own them as members;—he will not be the head of an ulcerous body;—nor God the Father ashamed of his choice. If ye bring forth much fruit, he is glorified, he hath not made an unworthy choice. But otherwise, 'you grieve the Spirit,' Eph. iv. 30; 'you crucify Christ,' Heb. vi. 6; you shame the Father. But if you are sanctified and holy, the Spirit will own you, and work in you with joy: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' By the innocency and holiness of your lives you make it appear what manner of spirit is in you; he can own you with glory. Then Christ will not be ashamed of you: Heb. ii. 11, 'He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Christ will count it no disgrace to himself to reckon you of his kindred and family; he is not ashamed to say, 'They are mine;' my brethren, my kindred, my family, my spouse; he is not ashamed of his purchase. And God the Father will not be ashamed of you: Heb. xi. 16, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God.' The Father will avow himself to be their portion, and they to be his, that for his sake do renounce the world. God will think it no dishonour to himself.

Use 2. To disprove their claim—

1. That only can make their claim by creation: 'The Lord knoweth who are his.' God's special interest is founded in grace. People say, He that made them, shall he not save them? God will not own his creature that is disguised by sin: I know you not, you are none of mine: 'He that made them will show them no mercy, and he that formed them will show them no favour,' Isa. xxvii. 11. No; you are none of mine; all his are given to Christ; the interest comes not by nature, but by grace.

2. Those that build their hopes on Christ, but do not walk as the Father's. Christ never chose a member that would not honour his Father: 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 ; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.' Christ will not allow their claim who do not walk worthy of his Father's love, that they may have free and confident access to him in prayer.

Use 3. See the felicity and dignity of those that believe in Christ. Christ saith to the Father, 'They are thine,' his peculiar and special portion : Exod. xix. 5, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' The world is God's possession, but you are his treasure. A man may have lands that he visiteth now and then, but he taketh a particular care of his treasure. God loveth them as much as a covetous man can love his treasure. We value men by their riches, but God valueth them by grace : 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people,' *λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν*. God hath bought them at a dear rate. We were his before we were our own ; God had a thought of us before we had any being, and in time he made this distinction : Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people,' *λαὸς περιούσιος*, his people of treasure, his most precious substance, picked and chosen by election, beautified with the righteousness of Christ, distinguished from others by grace. God looketh on them as the objects of his own choice, the fruits of his Son's purchase, and the workmanship of his own Spirit, set apart from all others for his own glory.

2. Observe again, that nothing moveth God to mercy so much as the consideration that we are his. This is Christ's own argument, 'For they are thine.' And interest is elsewhere pleaded by the church : Isa. lxiv. 8, 9, 'But now, O Lord, thou art our Father ; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever : behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.' When we come to God, though we cannot plead merit, yet we may plead interest. As bad as we are, yet we 'are thine ;' our enemies have used us at pleasure, yet thou hast been pleased to enter into covenant with us ; Lord, wilt thou not cast one glance and eye of favour upon thine own children ? Oh ! it is sweet when we can come into the presence of God with this confidence : Eph. ii. 19, 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ;' as some of his own household, and so sue out our allowance. A stranger is one that cometh, and his occasions being served, returneth to his own home ; a foreigner is one that dwelleth in a place, but is not privileged with the immunities and franchises which the natives enjoy. But now we are denizens, free of God's house ; have the liberty not only of servants, but of children ; therefore we may urge it in prayer. All the difficulty will be to get the interest evidenced. It is not confidence, but impudence, when some men say to God, We are thine ; a wicked man slandereth him when he saith, Our Father. The great evidence is consecration. Did you ever give up your whole selves to God ? Do you walk as his, as having nothing of your own, at your own disposal ? Didst thou ever make this surrender ? When there are factions, to which hand do you cleave ? Do you say, I am God's, I am Christ's ? God doth, as it were, say, Who is on my side ? Who ?