

Monergism

**AN EXPOSITION
OF OUR LORD'S
INTERCESSORY
PRAYER**

With A Discourse On The Relation Of Our Lord's
Intercession To The Conversion Of The World

JOHN BROWN OF HADDINGTON

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By Pastor John Brown of Haddington

"But I give myself to prayer." — PSALM 109:4

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PREFACE

It is a quaint remark of an old Scottish divine, that "the best sermon that was ever preached in our world, was followed by the best prayer that was ever offered up in it." It is scarcely necessary to say, the sermon is contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel, and the prayer in the seventeenth chapter of that Gospel.

It is not wonderful that this chapter should have been an object of reverent affectionate regard to true Christians in all ages. Few chapters of the Bible have been, I am persuaded, more frequently read in the attitude and with the feelings of adoration.

It is, however, remarkable that the expositions of this wonderful passage of Scripture have by no means been so numerous or so satisfactory as might perhaps have been expected. How few are the illustrations of this prayer—to which, as offered by our Lord himself, most properly belongs the appellation, the Lord's Prayer—in comparison with those of the prayer our Lord taught his disciples, which usually receives that name!

It cannot be that this prayer was not thought difficult enough to require, still less that it was not thought important enough to deserve, exposition. In the latter aspect, it stands second to no portion of Scripture; and as to the former, though the language is generally perspicuous, there is a good deal in the phraseology, and a great deal more in its reference, that requires the aid of the

expositor; while the sentiments it contains are the strangest and vastest that the human mind can in any degree grasp. All that is most peculiar and wonderful in Christianity is here.

We are disposed to trace the comparative fewness and meagreness of the expositions of this prayer, to a sense of its peculiar sacredness. A mild but bright halo of heavenly radiance surrounds it; and, as in Moses and the Israelitish priests, when the Shechinah filled the tabernacle and the temple, the disposition to inquire is lost in a resistless impulse to adore. Yet assuredly this is one of the things into which, like the angels surveying the mysteries of the propitiatory, we should "desire to look."

I cannot recollect a period when this chapter had not a solemn charm for me; but it is comparatively of late that I have made it a subject of thorough critical examination. Providential circumstances seemed to say to me, "Now turn aside and see this great sight." In complying with the call, I trust I did not forget that the place whereon I stood was "holy ground;" and as I drew near, if I do not strangely mistake, the objects of contemplation became more distinct, though not less glorious. I think I understand this passage somewhat better than I did; and I am willing that, if it be so, my Christian brethren should be sharers of my satisfaction. I know few enjoyments to be compared with that of obtaining satisfying views of divine truth; and none in which a wish for the sympathy of the like-minded more naturally rises in the heart. "Rejoice with me." "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good."

In studying this singular composition, I felt myself bound to use all helps within my reach. They were fewer than I had anticipated. Many excellent remarks are to be found in the three large folio expositions of this chapter by BURGESSE, NEWTON, and MANTON, as well as in the briefer interpretations of JEFFERSON and of DRUMMOND. WILLETT'S *Thesaurus Ecclesiæ*, a commentary on this chapter, is, like his other exegetical works, elaborate and acute; and THOMAS HOOKER'S exposition, though, like most of similar works of that

time, deficient in accurate exegesis, is judicious, evangelical, and practical. I have found GERHARD'S exposition, in the learned, accurate, and most spiritual Chemnitio-Lysero-Gerhardine Harmony, LAMPE'S Commentary, GLASSIUS' Exegetical Dissertation, and the Scholia of STARK, THOLUCK, OLSHAUSEN, and NEANDER, very useful. There are two other continental works on this chapter, by BODE and AARLAND, which I have reason to think valuable, but I have sought after them in vain.

Incomparably the best short illustration of this prayer I have met with, is that among the posthumous works of my lamented friend the Rev. Dr HEUGH, which did not come into my hands till the following Exposition was ready to be committed to the printer. In language similar to what I have elsewhere used, in reference to another portion of these precious volumes, I must say that, had I seen these illustrations before I composed this Exposition, I might likely have thought such a work superfluous. But I cannot regret that things are as they are. The perusal of Dr HEUGH'S admirable Discourses has but deepened my convictions and impressions of the transcendent excellence, the unfathomable depth, of our common theme; and I have "the fellowship of the spirit" with my departed friend, in going forth along with him, declaring "the unsearchable riches" of the wisdom and love of our common Master. In a considerably long Note appended to the Exposition, I have given my readers an opportunity of judging for themselves of the value of Dr HEUGH'S work; and should this volume find its way where that work is yet unknown, I count on receiving thanks for putting my readers in the way of obtaining so rich a mental and spiritual feast.

The Discourse following the Exposition is added as illustrating one of the practical bearings of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer, to which it is of peculiar importance that the minds of Christians should be turned, in the present state of the church and of the world.

ARTHUR'S LODGE, NEWINGTON,

September 1850.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This work has been now for several years out of print; but, so far from passing also out of sight, its rarity has tended rather to enhance its value,—the prices obtained for such copies as happened to be exposed for sale showing that the work continued to be highly prized. The Publishers are therefore satisfied that, in issuing a New Edition, they are meeting a want which has been felt by many.

The present volume is set up from a corrected copy of the former Edition left by the Author; for the use of which, kindly granted by his family, the Publishers desire to express their obligations.

To the Rev. Dr EADIE of Glasgow, also, their acknowledgments are due, for his having kindly undertaken the correction of the press.

INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John is, without doubt, the most remarkable portion of the most remarkable book in the world—"The Scriptures of truth, given by inspiration of God." These contain many wonderful passages; but none more wonderful than this—none so wonderful. It is the utterance of the mind and heart of the God-man, in the very crisis of his great undertaking, in the immediate prospect of completing, by the sacrifice of himself, the work which had been given him to do, and for the accomplishment of which he had become incarnate. It is the utterance of these to the Father, who had sent him.

What a concentration of thought and affection is there in these few sentences! How "full of grace," how "full of truth!" How condensed, yet how clear, the thoughts; how deep, yet how calm, the feelings which are here, so far as the capabilities of human language permit, worthily expressed! All is natural and simple in thought and language—nothing intricate or elaborate; yet there is a width in the conceptions which the human understanding cannot measure—a depth in the emotions which it cannot fathom. There is no bringing out of these plain words all that is seen and felt to be in them.

The greatest and the best men have been most deeply impressed with the peculiar character of this wonderful prayer. Luther says of it, "This is truly, beyond measure, a warm and hearty prayer. HE opens the depths of his heart, both in reference to us and to his Father, and he pours them all out. It sounds so honest, so simple—it is so rich, so wide, so deep, no one can fathom it." "A nobler, holier, more useful, or more pathetic utterance," says Melancthon, "was never made on earth or in heaven." It was the last portion of Scripture read to John Knox, by his own special request. The holy Spener, the honoured reviver of spiritual religion in the Lutheran church, when it had been all but lost in controversy and formalism, never dared to expound this chapter; for he confessed that "he did not understand it," and said that to understand it, in his apprehension transcended "the measure of faith" usually communicated to Christians during their pilgrimage: yet did he love it with a peculiar affection, and sought to soothe his departing spirit during his dying hours, by having it read to him again, and again, and again.²

We should never read or meditate on any of the declarations of the word of God without feeling that we are "on holy ground." But here assuredly we are not only in the holy land, in the holy city, in the precincts of the temple: we are in the temple itself; nay, we are in its inmost adytum, not only in the holy place, but in the holy of holies. We are called on to listen to the incarnate Son, telling his Father in heaven what he thought and what he desired in reference to the work in which the glory of God and the salvation of men were equally

involved; to see him unveiling the hidden mysteries of wisdom and kindness in the economy of grace, disclosing the immeasurable vastness of its plans, and the infinity of the love which formed and executed them.

The composition before us is a prayer. And what is prayer? Prayer is uttered desire; desire is its soul, utterance its body. Prayer to God, then, is very appropriately described in our Catechism as "the offering up of our desires" to him.

So far as the soul of prayer is concerned, our Lord "prayed without ceasing." His whole life was an unbroken prayer. He constantly realized the presence of his Father—He was ever with HIM—and his desires were constantly going forth towards the accomplishment of what he knew to be according to HIS will. He not unfrequently, however, yielded to that law of the human constitution, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," both because it was natural and agreeable to do so, and for the purpose, as Tholuck says, of "leading his followers into the sanctuary of his heart, and of raising them along with himself to God."

Vocal prayer seems indeed to have been habitual with our Saviour. Immediately on the commencement of his public ministry, we find that, after a short repose following a day of unremitting beneficent labour, "he rose up a great while before day, and went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." We hear afterwards of his spending a whole night on a mountain in prayer to God. We read frequently of his "prayers and supplications," sometimes "with strong crying and tears," during "the days of his flesh,"³—his life of toil and suffering; and it was in praying that he ceased to speak and to breathe. "When he had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost."

The prayer before us is by far the longest of our Lord's recorded prayers. It is not, like what is ordinarily termed the Lord's Prayer,

primarily intended as a form to be used, or even as a pattern to be copied, by his followers. That was a prayer, all of which he could not present. This is one, much of which we cannot present, much of which none could present but he who uttered it. Its substance and its manner equally betoken that it is fit for the mouth only of "the great High Priest of our profession."

Yet the same spirit animates both these wonderful compositions. In both the display of God's glory is represented as the supreme object of desire, that which is to be sought first: in both, too, the blessings chiefly solicited for man are heavenly and spiritual blessings; and thus, within certain limits, not difficult to define, this prayer is fitted to serve as an example.

In the course of our illustration of it, we shall indeed find that it teaches us much important truth as to the subjects, the manner, and the ground of prayer; what we should pray for, how we should pray, and through what channel and on what foundation we are warranted to expect the answer of our prayers; and that had he not prayed, did he not continue to pray, as he prays here, it would be to little purpose that we should pray.

Apart from the light which it casts on the Saviour's character, perhaps the justest view, the most interesting aspect in which we can contemplate this prayer, is as the model of that intercession which he, as our ever-living great High Priest, continually makes for us on the ground of his completed and accepted sacrifice, in the true holy of holies, in the immediate presence of God. Let us, with sacred awe and holy delight, proceed to consider it somewhat more closely, that we may, so far as is practicable, apprehend its meaning, and feel its elevating, transforming, soothing power.²

This prayer is introduced to our notice by a few words remarkable for their appropriateness, simplicity, and beauty,—"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said." The reference of "these words" is fixed by the expression "these things," in the close of

the last chapter: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." They obviously refer to the whole consolatory discourse recorded in the three preceding chapters; and the declaration before us is just equivalent to, 'When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and audibly uttered the following prayer.'² He had said all that a wise kindness could dictate, to sustain and guide his disciples in the singularly trying circumstances in which they were about to be placed, by his being removed from them, in a way so remote from their expectations, so abhorrent to their feelings; and as the hour was just at hand for that separation,—so necessary, yet so painful,—he employs the few moments which remained in commending them to the care of his Father and their Father, his God and their God. In this he sets us an example and teaches us that, when we have done all we can in the way of promoting the holiness and comfort of those with whom we are connected, we should, in prayer and supplication, beseech him, who is the author of all good, to bless the objects of our care, and the means we have been employing for their welfare.

Our Lord "lifted up his eyes to heaven." They had probably been hitherto fixed with benignant regard on the disconsolate disciples. Now, as a token that he was about to engage in prayer, he lifts his eyes upwards—not as if he thought that the "heaven," or "the heaven of heavens," could contain Jehovah, or that the Father was far from him, but because heaven is conceived of as the region where the divine glories are most fully displayed, and therefore termed the dwelling-place and throne of Jehovah. The gesture naturally expresses abstraction from worldly thoughts, deep veneration, and holy confidence. It is well remarked by Calvin, "He looked up to heaven, not because God is enclosed there,—for he fills the earth also,—but because the aspect of the heavens admonishes us that the Divinity is exalted far above all creatures. By this act, indeed, Christ testified that, in the affection of his mind, he was rather in heaven than on earth; and thus, having left all men behind, he held a familiar colloquy with God." It has been remarked, too, and the observation is ingenious, "He did not turn his eyes towards the holy

of holies in the temple, as the Levitical high priest did, but towards heaven itself, the true holy place, into which he was soon to enter, to appear in the presence of God for his people."

Assuming the attitude, our Lord immediately engages in the exercise of prayer. This he might have done silently; but he chose, and for obvious reasons, to present his petitions in an audible voice. Prayer is not necessarily vocal. When Hannah "prayed before the Lord," she "spoke in her heart;" and though her lips moved, they gave forth no sound. Nehemiah silently prayed to the God of heaven in the presence of the Persian king;² and we know that some of the most acceptable prayers are expressed "in groanings which cannot be uttered." But in many cases, the employment not only of language, but of vocal, uttered language, is not merely useful for controlling wandering thoughts, fixing the mind, and increasing the impression, but is requisite to gain the object in view.

There was no danger of our Lord's thoughts wandering, or his devotional feelings becoming languid; but one leading object of the offering of this prayer was, that not only the interests of his disciples should be secured, but that they should be made aware of this, that they might see how strong a hold they had of his affections, and might be assured that, wherever he might be, all his influence with his Father would be employed for their advantage. He intimates this in very plain terms at the 13th verse: "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves;" as if he had said, "These are intercessions which in heaven I will never cease to make before the throne of God; but I make them now in this world, in their hearing, that they may the more distinctly understand how I am there to be employed in promoting their welfare, that they may be made, even here, in a large measure partakers of my happiness.'

These remarks seem all that are necessary for illustrating the few striking words with which the prayer is introduced. Let us now turn our attention to the prayer itself.

It divides itself into the address; the prayer, strictly so called, or the petitions; and the conclusion. THE ADDRESS, "Father" (ver. 1), "Holy Father" (ver. 11), "Righteous Father" (ver. 25);—THE PETITIONS—including under that head not only the requests, but the reasons for the requests, the pleading as well as the asking—arrange themselves under three heads: petitions in reference to himself (vers. 1–5), petitions in reference to the apostles (vers. 6–19); petitions in reference to his true followers in all countries and in all ages (vers. 20–24);—THE CONCLUSION (vers. 25, 26). Such is the general division of the prayer, so simple and natural.

I. THE ADDRESS

Let us first attend for a little to the address of the prayer. It is offered up to God under the appellations of "Father," "Holy Father," "Righteous Father." Let us consider the import of the appellation "Father," as used by our Lord, and then the force of the epithets "holy" and "righteous."

§ 1. JOHN 17:1.—Father

With regard to the first of these points, two questions require our attention. Who is it that is here called Father? and what is implied in his being called Father by our Lord? or in other words, Whom does the term designate? what does the term indicate?

1. Whom does the term designate?

To the first of these questions the answer is obviously, God,—the only proper object of religious worship. The command to all intelligent creatures is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve;" and to bring men back from their "gods many, and lords many," to this "one God the Father," was one great object of our Lord's mission. But the only living and true God may be considered in the unity of his nature, or in the distinctions of what theologians call his personality. The Divinity, without any reference to that mysterious quality of his nature just noticed, may be, and often is, represented as the Father—the Father of all beings—the Father of all men. The heathens spoke of their supreme divinity as "the father of gods and men;" and the application of this name to the Deity in Scripture is common. "We are all his offspring," and "He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who hath made of one blood all the nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." He is "the Father of" our "spirits," "the former of our bodies." "Have we not one Father? hath not one God created us?"² When the one Supreme Being is thus represented, the ideas intended to be brought before the mind are his creating power and his providential care.

A moment's reflection as to who the person is who presents the prayer which is the subject of consideration, is enough to convince us that it is not in this way the appellation is here to be understood. He who speaks is indeed a man—"the man Christ Jesus;" but the man Christ Jesus is "the Word who was in the beginning, who was with

God, who was God;" this Word "made flesh," was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," but at the same time was "God over all, blessed for ever." He is "God manifest in the flesh." Keeping these indubitable facts in view, it is plain that the address is not made to the one Divinity, essentially considered, but to the first person of the Trinity, who in the economy of redemption—indeed, probably in all economies—sustains the majesty of the Godhead, acting through the Son or Word, and by the Spirit. Our Lord—not only the innocent, the perfect man Jesus, but an incarnation of Divinity in the second person of the Godhead, the appointed Mediator and Saviour of men—addresses this prayer, in his economical relation and created nature, to the first person of the Godhead, and calls him Father. This is obviously the true answer to the first question, Who is it that is here called Father?

2. What does the term indicate?

With regard to the second question, What is implied in the first person of the Godhead being called Father by our Lord? the answer may be given in two words. It intimates relation and affection. But these words require a little illustration.

(1.) Relation

The use of the appellation "Father" by our Lord, in reference to the first person of the Godhead, implies relation. It is a claim of the relation of sonship. But what does sonship mean in reference to our Lord? There are no relations of which we have more distinct ideas than the human relations expressed by the words—father, mother, child, son, daughter. It is plain, however, that when these words are used in reference to relations existing among divine persons, or between the Divinity and creatures, they are used in an analogical sense, to signify relations to which the mutual relations between a parent and child bear the strongest resemblance of any relation known among men, and are thus best fitted for communicating to our minds some idea of such divine relations.

It appears to me that the relation of father and son is ascribed in Scripture to the first person of the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ, to denote three distinct relations,—all of them peculiar relations,—that is, relations existing only between God the Father and Jesus Christ: the relation rising out of the miraculous formation of his human nature; the relation rising out of his being constituted the Kinsman-Redeemer and Lord of mankind; and finally and principally,—as lying at the foundation of the relations just named,—the relation which eternally and necessarily existed between them as divine persons.²

God is called the Father of Jesus, to indicate the miraculous formation of his human nature. The incarnation forms one of the principal events of the economy of grace, at the head of which is the divine Father, as the sustainer of the majesty of Deity. In that economy all things are of the Father. He prepared for the Son a body in which to execute his benignant will, by the offering of that body, as the only and all-availing atoning sacrifice, once for all. It was to the Father he said, "Lo, I come: a body"—i.e. a human nature,—"hast thou prepared me." This body was indeed formed by the operation of the Spirit; but in the new economy, the Spirit as well as the Son is ever to be viewed as the agent of the Father. That the relation thus constituted between the first person of the Trinity and the Son by the origin of his human nature—miracle, in the case of its formation, taking the place of the ordinary law of nature—is in Scripture indicated by the terms father and son, seems about as plain as words can make it, from the declaration of the angel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."³ The man Christ Jesus is thus, in a peculiar sense, "the Son of God." He derives from him that holy human nature, which was formed, so far as human nature can be formed, "in the image of him who created it." In this respect our Lord resembles Adam, who is said to be the son of God.

But, in the second place, God stands in the relation of Father to our Lord as "the first-born among many brethren;" the head and representative and ruler of the holy family of the redeemed from among men—"the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty."² Adam was "the son of God," not only as created by him, but as the eldest of his human family—His first-born, and as such "the inheritor of the world." Christ is "the second Adam;" the representative of all his spiritual kinsmen; the head of the family redeemed from among men. To this the apostle seems to refer, when he applies that ancient oracle to our Lord, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."⁴ As the Son of God in this sense, he is the "Kinsman-Redeemer," and is Lord over the family; and all who are sons and daughters of God, become so by union to him, the first-born. While these are truths, and important ones, we should certainly fall into a serious error, were we to hold that these are the only relations between Jesus Christ and the first person of the Trinity, that are indicated in Scripture by his being represented as his Father. These relations are all constituted relations, rising out of economical arrangements, the results of the divine will and operation.

It is of importance, therefore, to remark, in the third place, that the appellation "Father," given to the first person of the Trinity, in reference to our Saviour, primarily and usually indicates an essential relation—the relation which necessarily existed between the first and second persons of the Trinity from all eternity. He was the Son of God before he became the son of the Virgin—before he became "the first-born among many brethren." Identity of nature, yet distinction of some kind,—both of them essential, and therefore eternal,—are the two leading ideas suggested by the term when employed in this way, in which, if we do not greatly mistake, it is usually employed in Scripture,—the two ideas expressed by a parallel phrase in the first verse of the Gospel by John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Identity of nature is the very first idea suggested by the terms father and son; and we are never to depart from that idea when the

appellations are even analogically used, except in cases where it is quite plain, as in that of creatures being termed the sons of God, that it is utterly inadmissible, and that not the primary but some of the secondary ideas suggested by these terms are intended to be brought before the mind. And in the case of our Lord, the reason for thus understanding the term is greatly strengthened by the consideration that he is termed God's "own Son"—"his only-begotten Son,"—obviously indicating that he is his son in a sense absolutely peculiar, which belongs—which can belong—neither to men nor angels; and by the additional consideration, that this identity of nature, indicated by the very terms, is asserted in very plain words and in very various ways in the Holy Scriptures: for if there be a doctrine revealed with perfect explicitness in the New Testament, it is that of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

It is only when we take this view of the sonship of Christ that we can perceive the force of the apostle's reasoning, when he says, "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." In calling God "Father," our Lord in one word expresses the thoughts more fully brought out by himself in such declarations as these: "I and the Father are one." "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "What things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."³

If we have in any good measure succeeded in bringing out the truths respecting the New Testament use of the terms Father and Son, in reference to the first person of the Godhead and our Saviour, it is easy to see what is the import of the appellation "Father" as here employed, when viewed as a claim of relation. It is: 'O Thou with whom I have existed in unity of essence, perfection, and enjoyment from the unbeginning eternity, and by whose will and operation I have been clothed miraculously with human nature, and constituted

the Head—Representative—Redeemer—Lord of the many children of the human race, my brethren, whom, as the appointed heirs of salvation, it is thy benignant purpose by me to bring to glory.'

(2.) Affection

Having thus shortly illustrated the appellation "Father," viewed as indicating a claim of relation, let us now, in the second place, inquire into its force as an indication of affection. It is at once an expression of our Lord's conviction and feelings in reference to the affection with which he was regarded by Him whom he addressed, and of the affection which he cherished towards Him whom he addressed. Both these views are interesting and important.

In saying "Father," our Lord as it were says, 'I know and am sure that thou art my Father. I know that thou lovest me, that thou hast loved me from before the foundation of the world, and wilt love me for ever. I know thy love to me to be like thyself—infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. I know that thou regardest me with the deepest interest, with the most tender affection. I know that "the Father loveth the Son," because he giveth his life for the sheep to take it again, and that, as a proof of this love, he "hath given all things into his hand." '

It is, however, chiefly as an expression of our Lord's own affection that we are to consider the appellation "Father." It is indicative of veneration, of love, of submission, of confidence. A word or two of illustration on each of these particulars is all that is needed.

"Father,"—that is, 'I adore thine infinite greatness and excellence.' "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints"—his holy ones—"and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." He was never so venerated as by him who, by way of eminence, was his "Holy One,"—him "who engaged his heart to approach to him"² as none else durst approach to him. He had on his mind an awful sense of the power of God's anger against sin as the righteous Judge,

and a deep conviction that he must, as the representative of sinners, experimentally know that power; but this in no degree disturbed his entire admiration of the divine character. None ever knew that character as he did; none ever venerated it as he did. It was under the influence of that "spirit of the fear of the Lord" that he honoured his Father, when he pronounced his all-venerable name.

"Father,"—that is, 'I love thee with all the tenderness, all the ardour, of filial affection.' The word brought before his mind all the manifestations of fatherly love, not only from the time of his birth as man, but from his being "set up from everlasting," when he was "daily his delight." His heart overflowed with love when he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Abba, Father."

"Father,"—that is, 'I submit to thee. Thou art my father—I am thy son. It is for thee to command—for me to obey. It is for thee to appoint—it is for me to submit. Here am I ready to do, ready to suffer, whatever is according to thy holy sovereign pleasure. "Not my will, but thine be done." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" '

"Father,"—that is, 'I confide in thee. Whom should a son trust, if not his father? I trust thy power; I trust thy wisdom; I trust thy benignity; I trust thy faithfulness. Into thy hands I commend myself. I come to thee: to whom should I go but to my Father? And I know that thou wilt hear my prayer, for art thou not my Father?' So much for a brief illustration of the appellation "Father" here used by our Lord, viewed as a claim of relation and an expression of affection.

§ 2. JOHN 17:11.—Holy Father

But our Lord calls the object of his worship not only "Father," but "Holy Father." What is the import of this epithet?

The proper notion of holiness, in the Scripture sense of the word, as expressive of a divine attribute, is more extensive than is ordinarily supposed. "It embraces in it the idea meant to be conveyed by theologians when they use the term, the highest moral purity. But the radical idea is separation. God is holy, inasmuch as he is separated from every created and finite being, and lifted above them, particularly above sin, which can establish itself only in the domain of finite beings." "The high and lofty One in-habiting eternity" is the "Holy, holy, holy One." "There is none holy as the Lord." "He only is holy."² "Holy Father" is equivalent to 'Ininitely excellent, absolutely perfect, Father.' The force of the expression comes strongly out in the question in the celestial song, "Who shall not fear thee; who shall not glorify thy name? for thou only art holy." The import as well as the appropriateness of the epithet will appear more distinctly when we come to that part of the prayer where the compellation is employed by our Lord.

§ 3. JOHN 17:25.—Righteous Father

Our Lord also calls the object of his worship "Righteous Father." Many interpreters would consider 'righteous' in this clause as equivalent to benignant, kind, gracious. But in no case, I apprehend, is the word rendered "righteous" synonymous with benignant. It was in the cause of righteousness that our Lord laboured and suffered, and was about to die. It was in the cause, too, of grace; but of "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life." He was asking what he was entitled to according to the stipulation of the eternal covenant: "If he shall give his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Justice required that his request should be granted. Justice required his glorification, though the communication to us of the blessings for which this glorification was intended is, and ever must be, a manifestation of rich grace—sovereign mercy. He might appeal to justice—we must cast ourselves on grace.

What has been said has no indirect bearing on the important service which we are just about to perform. We have seen our Lord engage in an act of most solemn devotion: we have seen him draw near to God. We are about to engage in an act of very solemn devotion: we are about to draw near to God. He hath set us an example; let us follow his steps.

He went to God as his Father. Let us now go to God as our Father. He is not our Father in the same sense in which he is his. Here, as in everything else, HE has the pre-eminence. You must observe that even when he says of God, "He is my Father and your Father," he does not say that he is our Father. As Augustine remarks, "He so joins the two claims as to distinguish them, and he so distinguishes them as not to separate them." He is not our Father as he is his Father, but "doubtless he is our Father;" and he is our Father because he is his, and we are God's children because we are united to his Son. He is our Father, having given us the adoption to which in love he predestinated us: he is our Father, for he has "begotten us again," made us new creatures—his children through faith in his Son. And as our Father he loves us, and "blesses us with all heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus."

Let us go to him, then, as our Lord did, claiming relation, expressing affection. Let us say to him, each for himself, "My Father;" let us together say, "Our Father." We do so in significant action when we gather round his table and participate of "the meat indeed," "the drink indeed," which he has provided for all his children. Let us take heed that the inward exercise correspond with the external action, and that we worship him, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, "for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

And as, like our Lord, we go to our Father, let us go to our Father, like him, in the exercise of the holy dispositions in which he went. Let us go in the exercise of veneration, "sanctifying him in our heart;" making him our fear and dread; "worshipping him acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Let

us go in the exercise of love kindled into a flame by the manifestation which this emblematical ordinance makes both of his loveliness and of his love, knowing and being sure that even the Father himself hath loved us; and having given his Son for us—to us, is now giving us through him abundant consolation and good hope. Let us go in the exercise of entire submission, saying, while children, ' "Truly, O Lord, we are thy servants, we are thy servants: thou hast loosed our bonds;"⁴ and we are thine to do and to suffer whatever thou art pleased to appoint. We would have no will but thine. Good is the will of our Father. The cup, be it sweet or bitter, which our Father giveth us, shall we not drink it?' Let us go in the exercise of humble yet confident trust, expecting that he will be a good Father to us, fulfilling all the expectations he has raised by taking to himself so endearing an appellation; and that, in our experience, he will make all his exceeding great and precious promises "yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to his glory by us."

Let us remember that he is our "Holy Father," and that "holiness becomes his house for ever." Let us "worship him in the beauty of holiness;" and as "he who hath called us" to the fellowship of his Son, and is now calling us to his table, "is holy, let us be holy in all manner of conversation."

Nor let us forget that "he whom we call Father" is "the righteous Father"—"He who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man according to his works;" and that "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and regardeth with a pleasant countenance" only "the upright." Let us rejoice that the claims of righteousness and the impulses of mercy have been gloriously harmonized, and that a solid foundation for the triumph of holiness and righteousness in human hearts has been laid by that work which the Saviour was just about to finish when he uttered the words which have afforded such abundant materials for sweet and suitable meditation, and the completion of which we are now about to commemorate in the Holy Supper.

"We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength." "Bless Zion's provision; satisfy her poor with bread." "We will take the cup of salvation, we will call on the name of the Lord. O Lord, truly we are thy children, thy servants; the children of thine handmaid. We will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, we will call upon the name of the Lord, we will pay our vows to the Lord, in the presence of all his people; in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." Hallelujah!

"Seeing we have a great high priest, who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,"—a "high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and "who ever lives to make intercession for us," such intercession as he made for us, even for us, in that wonderful prayer, on the illustration of which we have just entered,—why should we yield to the influence of doubt and fear? Why should we not "go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need?" The Father hears him, and he will hear us for his sake. The Father has accepted his offering, and on its account he will accept ours. Let us hasten, then, to lay it on the altar—ourselves—"a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" in him. This is "reasonable service," this is rational worship. "We will go in the strength of our Lord; we will make mention of his righteousness, of his only."⁴

II. THE PRAYER

Our Lord's prayer naturally resolves itself into three divisions: A prayer for himself (vers. 1–5); a prayer for his apostles (vers. 6–19); and a prayer for his church, or peculiar people, in all countries and in all ages (vers. 20–24). Each of these prayers has its appropriate petitions and corresponding pleas. To the first of these prayers, his prayer for himself, let us now turn our thoughts.

§ 1. His prayer for himself

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—
JOHN 17:1–5.

Our Lord's petition and our Lord's pleas, in the verses we have read, are the two topics to which, in succession, our attention must be directed.

Our Lord's PETITION may be considered either as simple or as complex. In the first case, it is contained in the words, "Glorify thy Son, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" and all the other words are to be considered as expressive of plea in support of this simple petition. In the second case, the petition is contained in these words: "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee;" "Glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" and the words in the second and third verses are to be viewed as describing the particular mode of glorifying the Father on which his heart was bent, the kind of glorification of himself which he prays for—that connected with the giving of eternal life to all given him by the Father, in giving them the knowledge of him as the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent. In this way of viewing the subject the petition is twofold. There is a double object of desire, a double subject of prayer. The glorification of God in the bestowal of that eternal life which consists in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent, on all given by the Father to the Son: this

is the ultimate object of desire, the primary subject of prayer. The glorification of the Son is desired and requested as subsidiary to this, as at once the necessary and the effectual means of its accomplishment.

We are, upon the whole, disposed to consider this last mode of viewing the petition as that which is best fitted to place before our minds a just view of the state of the Saviour's mind when presenting it. The connection of the glorification of the Son with the glorification of the Father seems plainly set forth here, not only as a plea that the Father should grant the Son's petition, but as the principal reason why the Son presents such a petition to the Father. Even in seeking his own glory, his ultimate object was the glory of Him who sent him. This, then, is the PETITION, 'That the Father should be glorified in the bestowal, on all whom he has given to the Son, of that eternal life which consists in the knowledge of himself as the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent; and that in order to this—as at once the necessary and effectual means of attaining this—the Son should be glorified, glorified with the Father, with the glory he had with him before the world was.'

Our Lord's PLEA is contained in these words: "The hour is come; thou hast given thy Son power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him; I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The substance of that plea seems to be, 'Now is come the period for glorifying me, that I may glorify thee; for I have finished all that is to be done on earth by me in a state of humiliation; and my being glorified is absolutely necessary to my glorifying thee in conformity to the high commission with which thou hast entrusted me.'

This is a general outline which, in the sequel, I will attempt to fill up, —a very condensed statement of the infinitely important truths which I will endeavour to exhibit somewhat more in detail.

(1.) His petitions

Let us first, then, attend to our Lord's petitions. What does our Lord desire? What does he ask of his Father, his holy, righteous Father? He desires and prays that the Father would glorify him, that so he might glorify the Father. He regards the Father's glory as the end, and his own glory as the means. In discussing such a subject as that before us, it will, I believe, be generally found the most satisfactory course, to consider the END before attending to the MEANS.

1. The glorification of the Father, as his ultimate object

We observe, then, in the first place, that the ultimate object of the Saviour's desire—the principal subject of his prayer—is, 'The glorification of the Father, in the bestowal, by the Son, on all whom He has given to him, of that eternal life which consists in the knowledge of "the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent;" and in order to the bestowal of which, He has "given him power over all flesh." '

God is glorified, when the excellences of his character are manifested to and acknowledged by intelligent beings. In proportion to the extent and clearness of the display, and to the extent and cordiality of the acknowledgment, is the glory of God promoted. To display his own excellence, to manifest his own glory, is, and must be, the ultimate end of the Divine Being himself, in all his dispensations—in the creation, sustentation, and government of the universe. This is the only conceivable end worthy of Him; and it necessarily involves in it every other desirable end. The more the power, wisdom, righteousness, and benignity of God are displayed, the better must it be for the universe he has formed; and, from the very constitution of intelligent moral beings, their holiness and their happiness must be proportioned to their knowledge and acknowledgment of God; to the degree in which he manifests to them his holiness and benignity, and the degree in which they are suitably affected by this manifestation. To glorify God ourselves, and to be influential in making others glorify Him, is plainly the highest duty, honour, and felicity of created beings. Every rightly thinking being must consider that

situation as the most desirable, that gives him in the highest degree the power and the opportunity of glorifying God; of knowing God, and making Him known.

This sentiment never existed in so high a degree as in the mind and heart of the God-man. He did not his own will; he did the will of Him who sent him. He sought not his own glory; he sought the glory of Him who sent him. "His meat was to do his Father's will," and "to finish his work;"² thus honouring his authority, and holiness, and righteousness, and wisdom, and goodness. Whatever he did,—"whether he ate or drank," whether he acted or suffered,—it was "all to the glory of God." His constant supreme desire was, that in all things God might be glorified. "The principle of his inward life was a simple, great, fundamental purpose born out of free-hearted love, to do the will of God. Without uniting himself to God unreservedly—feeling himself to be perfectly one with God, to have no objects different from his—he could not have lived."

The sum and substance of all our Lord's prayers was, "Father, glorify thy name." It is obvious, however, that in the text there is a reference to a particular manner of glorifying God. His desire and prayer is, that he may glorify the Father, in a conformity to the great commission he had been entrusted with as the Saviour of men: "ACCORDING AS He had given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as He had given him."³ The Father, in his eternal counsels, had appointed him to save a portion, a large portion, of the human race; to conduct to glory "many sons," who, like their brethren, were going down to destruction. He had given these to him, that he should "give to them eternal life;" i.e. He had appointed him to save them. They were dead—"dead in trespasses and sins;" guilty, depraved, miserable, destitute of, incapable of, true spiritual activity and enjoyment—of thinking, feeling, choosing, willing, acting, and enjoying in unison with the all-wise, the all-holy, the ever-living, ever-blessed One. This eternal life was to be bestowed on them, in giving them the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent;² for this is the eternal

life which he was to give to them whom the Father had given to him, "to know the only true God, and him whom He has sent, Jesus Christ." That is not only to know Jehovah to be the only true God, in opposition to all that are called gods, and to know Jesus to be the Christ, the promised Saviour, in opposition to all who may claim that honour; but to know really, to know and be sure of the truth respecting the character and will of God as "light," and "love," and "a Spirit,"⁴ the irreconcilable enemy of sin, who yet has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but "who will have all men be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" and respecting the character and work of Jesus Christ, as the divinely appointed, qualified, accredited Saviour,—the divine Saviour, the only, the all-sufficient Saviour, "able to save to the uttermost those coming to the Father by him." Now, in order to this knowledge, the Father must be revealed by the Son's glorifying him; and the Son must be revealed by the Father's glorifying him: thus only can men obtain the knowledge of the Father and of the Son.

It has been common to say, that when this knowledge is said to be eternal life, the meaning is, that this knowledge is the means of eternal life; that by this knowledge we attain to eternal life—true, never-ending happiness. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Christ's words believed are "spirit and life." This is the truth; but it seems only a part of the truth. The true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ is eternal life. That conformity of mind and heart to God and his Son, which is implied in this knowledge, is that holiness, is that happiness, which is called eternal life. A man cannot have the one without having the other; a man has the one in the proportion in which he has the other.

Now, to qualify the Son as God-man, mediator, for giving this knowledge of God, which is eternal life, God has given him—i.e. has appointed to be given to him, has determined, has promised to give to him—all power over all flesh. He is to place under him the whole race of man, and give him rightful authority over them, and entire control of all events in reference to them. When we think of the

condition and circumstances of those to whom he is to give eternal life, and what is necessarily implied in giving them eternal life, we shall not think the grant of authority and power unnecessarily extensive.

We begin to see now somewhat more distinctly what is the ultimate object of the Saviour's prayer. It is that he may save those whom the Father has commissioned him to save; so that, both in "the salvation, with eternal glory," to which they are to be brought, and in the way in which he is to bring them to it, God may be glorified to the highest,—his power, his wisdom, his righteousness, his faithfulness, his benignity, may be displayed,—and so displayed as to call forth corresponding sentiments of reverential and affectionate admiration, esteem, confidence, and love—all the saved being made to "know the name" of their God and Saviour, and to find in that name purity and peace, holiness and salvation.

And how can God be more illustriously glorified, how can his perfections be more illustriously displayed, than in this saving economy? How can He be more highly honoured than in the thorough acknowledgment of these excellences on the part of an innumerable multitude of intelligent beings, made holy as He is holy, happy as He is happy, through the knowledge of himself and of his Son? For the Son to pray that he might glorify God according to this arrangement, is to pray that he might, by his obedience to the death, as the appointed Saviour of sinners, obtain for himself all the merit, all the authority, and all the power, both in reference to external event and inward influence, that are necessary and sufficient to confer this eternal life on the countless millions whom the Father had committed to him to be saved. So much respecting the prayer for the end.

2. His own glorification, as the means of glorifying his Father

Let us now attend to the prayer for the means. "That thy Son may glorify thee," says our Lord, "glorify thy Son;" that 'I may thus glorify

thee, "glorify thou² me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." ' To glorify the Son is to manifest his excellence, and to secure that this manifestation of his excellence shall produce its proper effect, in exciting corresponding sentiments in the minds and hearts of intelligent beings.

Our Lord himself speaks of a threefold glorification of himself: (1.) A glorification in, amid, by, his sufferings. It is of this he speaks in John 13:31: "Now is the Son of man glorified." (2.) A glorification, after his sufferings, in heaven. It is of this he speaks in the 32^d verse of that chapter: "God will glorify the Son of man in himself, and will straightway glorify him." And (3.) A glorification on earth, after his ascension, by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13, 14): "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

The most satisfactory way, I apprehend, of showing what is implied in our Lord's prayer, "Glorify thy Son," "Glorify him with thyself, with the glory which he had with thee before the world was," will be to show how God has "glorified his Son Jesus." According to the ancient oracle, he "called on God, and he answered him."² The import of the prayer appears in the answer of the prayer. Let us see what God has done, and then we shall know what his Son asked for. In no other way can we find out the meaning of these most pregnant words, "Glorify thy Son." Our Lord is to be considered here as standing just on the brink of that unfathomable gulf of suffering, by plunging into which the expiation of the sins of men was to be completed. From this point let us commence our survey of the manner in which God has glorified his Son.

Strange as it may sound, it is most true that God glorified his Son by exposing him to, by inflicting on him, these sufferings. He thus showed that he had entire confidence in him. He was not afraid, if I may use the expression, to entrust him with an enterprise, on the

success of which hung the glory of his name, and the salvation of the millions of the apostate family who were the objects of his sovereign love. He trusted him as one who could bear and bear away the sins of men. He let law and justice have their free course in reference to him as the substitute of men, knowing well that they would be satisfied, glorified, by him—"magnified, made honourable." In trying him so severely, he gave him the opportunity of manifesting his excellences, his entire devotion to the will of his Father and the salvation of his people, his implicit submission to God, his self-sacrificing love for men,—those displays of the Saviour's character most fitted to excite the highest esteem and admiration and love of men and angels; and these were made during his final passion with peculiar distinctness and brightness.

God glorified his Son by continuing with him while under these sufferings the influence of the Holy Spirit without measure,—thus qualifying him for meeting in the most perfect manner, as to thought, feeling, action, and endurance, the exigencies of the awful crisis; and by sending his angel to strengthen him in his agony.

God glorified his Son during and in these sufferings, by giving evidence to the justness of his claims to the high character of the appointed Saviour of men. When his chosen disciple betrayed him, "lifting up his heel against him,"—when he sold him "for thirty pieces of silver,"—when he was "numbered among the transgressors," by being fixed to the middle cross,—when "his hands and his feet were pierced,"—when they reproached him for his trust in God,—when they gave him vinegar mixed with gall for his drink,—when the Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear,—when they parted his garments among them, and cast lots for his vesture,—when he was buried in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea,—all these events, brought about by God in his providence, glorified his Son, and proclaimed that "this is he to whom all the prophets gave witness." And what were the darkened sky, and the shaking earth, and the rent veil, and the opened sepulchres, but an emphatic utterance of the

voice of the Eternal: "This is a righteous man: this is the Son of God?"

If God glorified his Son amid and by his sufferings, still more obviously did he glorify him when he raised him from the dead, sending his angel to roll away the stone from the entrance into the sepulchre; while the Son himself, in obedience to the command he had received of the Father, and in the exercise of the authority he possessed, and the life which it was given him to have in himself, took again the life he had laid down. Surely he was glorified when the Father thus so satisfactorily confirmed all his claims,—showed that he was that Holy One of God, whose spirit was not to remain in the separate state, and who was not to be suffered to see corruption,—declared his entire satisfaction with the great work of expiation,—and proclaimed him, "according to the spirit of holiness, the Son of God with power."

God glorified his Son when he took him up from earth to heaven. Was he not glorified when, on that never-to-be-forgotten day, he led out his apostles from Jerusalem to Bethany, "and lifted up his hands to heaven and blessed them; and while he blessed them, was parted from them, and taken up into heaven," a cloud receiving him out of their sight? That which they beheld was glorious; but oh, how much more glorious was that which human eye could not behold! "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."

And now that he is in heaven, how has the Father glorified him? "He has glorified him with himself, with the glory which he had with him before the world was."⁴ These are mysterious words, "dark with excess of brightness." It would be worse than to no purpose to perplex your minds with what theologians have conjectured on the subject, and with the fruitless controversies in which these conjectures have engaged them. All we can know of them is this, that the God-man, the Son in human nature, who hitherto had been in a

state of humiliation and suffering, was exalted either to that state of glory to which, in the purpose of God from all eternity, he was destined, or rather, which seems to be the natural meaning of the words, was re-admitted to the enjoyment of the same glory and majesty which he had enjoyed as the Only-begotten of God from all eternity, taking on him "that form of God"² of which he had voluntarily emptied himself while he wore "the likeness of sinful flesh," and was indeed "made sin for us."

The details of the Son's glorification in heaven are given, with considerable minuteness, in the writings both of the prophets and the apostles. "The king," says the Psalmist, "shall joy in thy strength; in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden from him the desire of his lips. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."²

"I saw one," says the prophet Daniel, "like the Son of man come with the clouds of heaven, and he came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which will not be destroyed." "When," says the apostle, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, had by the working of his mighty power raised Christ from the dead, he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."⁴ "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a

name above every name; that at," or in, "the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"When he, the Son, the appointed heir of all things, by whom God hath made the world"—the glorious effulgence, the substantial image of his Father—"who upholds all things by the word of his power, had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." "He is gone into heaven," says the Apostle Peter, "and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him."³

A still more graphic representation of the manner in which the Son is glorified in heaven is to be found in John's apocalyptic vision: "And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals,"—the book of the divine counsels as to the administration of his moral government, which is to be unsealed and unfolded in the actual government of the world, in effecting the events there decreed. "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne"—in the circuit of the throne—"and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth unto all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne;" i.e. 'he accepted the high office of revealing the purposes of God by their

execution.' "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." Thus is the Son glorified to the glory of God the Father.

But earth as well as heaven is and shall be the theatre of his glory. No sooner had he sat down on his glorious throne, than, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, God glorified him on the earth,—attesting the divinity of his mission, the truth of his doctrines, the perfection of his sacrifice; his boundless power, his absolute dominion, his unsearchable wisdom, his exhaustless grace. The Spirit glorified the Son by the miracles he enabled the apostles and other inspired teachers of his religion to perform; by the infallible, well-attested record of his life and death, his actions and sufferings, his doctrines and laws, which he enabled them to compose; and by the enlightening, persuasive, transforming influence, through means of which innumerable men have by that revelation been made the willing subjects of the Son of God, and the active instruments of showing forth his glory, by promoting his cause among their fellow-

men. God has made the gospel "the rod of his strength," to proceed "forth from Zion," and he has ruled "in the midst of his enemies" over "a willing people."

The following predictions as to the glorification of the Son on earth have some of them been accomplished—are many of them accomplishing—shall all of them be accomplished: "To him shall the gathering of the people be." "In him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."⁴ "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."² "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." "I shall," says Messiah, "be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he," i.e. the Lord, "said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be

very high. As many were astonished at thee: (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;) so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which hath not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."² "There were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but himself: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."⁴

What vast multitudes of men have, in the ages which have followed his being "received up," been induced to believe the testimony of the Father, and to give to the Son the throne of their hearts! What miracles of wisdom and power, grace and vengeance, has our world witnessed from his hand! How have the angels worshipped him, as they have witnessed the Father "bringing in the First-begotten into the world," and giving him his blood-bought possessions! What an amount of intelligent admiration, of heartfelt love, is even now laid at his feet by the redeemed on earth; and how shall that amount be increased, when "the idols shall be utterly abolished," the darkness of error and superstition completely dissipated, and "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" shine with unveiled radiance over all the earth!

Nor is this all. The glories of the Son in the celestial world must come down to earth. The scene of his deepest humiliation must be that of his crowning triumph. The heavens are not for ever to retain him.

The day is appointed by God "in the which he is to judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." The hour is coming, and at its appointed season will assuredly arrive, when the heavens shall burst asunder and make way for the descending glories of the Son of God. "Behold, he cometh in clouds" and "in flaming fire," for the complete salvation of his friends—for the final destruction of his enemies. "A great white throne" appears in the heavens, and He sits on it who a feeble infant wept in the manger, who a condemned criminal expired on the cross. The living and the dead stand before him, and their eternal destinies depend on his sentence. "The earth and the heavens flee away; and no place is found for them."²

His own striking prediction must yet become history: "The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him: then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Where the word of this King is, there is omnipotence; it "leaps forth into effect:" "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Then shall the Son be glorified in the destruction of his enemies and the salvation of his people; "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

Nor will this be the end of his glory. The glory of the Son shall continue for ever. His "glorious kingdom" is an "everlasting kingdom." There shall be for ever new manifestations of his excellence; and in the ever-growing capacities for admiration, and esteem, and love, of his redeemed people, they shall have the means of rendering to him a corresponding, though for ever an inadequate, tribute of acknowledgment and praise.

This is the glory which the Father has bestowed, or will bestow, upon the Son; and all this is the answer to the prayer which forms the subject of our meditation: "Father, glorify thy Son." How this glorification of the Son, the immediate object of the Saviour's prayer, was fitted to subserve his glorification of the Father, the ultimate object of that prayer, will come to be unfolded when we consider the pleas by which the petitions in this prayer are enforced.

Ever since this prayer was presented, it has been in constant progress towards being completely answered. The Father has been glorifying the Son, and the Son glorified has been glorifying the Father; and it will continue to be so to all eternity. Let us join our prayers with those of our great High Priest: 'Our Father in heaven, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee in manifesting thy character before men, in men, thus giving them eternal life, and converting them from dishonouring thee to glorifying thee. Thou hast glorified thy Son; thou art glorifying thy Son; thou wilt glorify thy Son. Glorify thy Son in us, that thy Son may glorify thee by us. Glorify us in him, that we may in him glorify thee.'

His prayer—our prayer—is, we trust, answered even now and here. Is not God glorifying his Son in the solemn emblematical ordinance in which we are just about to engage, by causing "His name," as the name above every name, "to be remembered to all generations?" Is not the Father now, by his Spirit working in many a heart, drawing forth sentiments of supreme admiration, esteem, and love towards his Son? And is not the Son by his Spirit urging onward the tide of holy affection towards him, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things"—"His Father, our Father; his God, our God?" Let us yield ourselves up to the sacred impulse, and we shall have a holy, happy, fruitful communion. "God will be glorified while the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in us, and we in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" Amen and amen. "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever."

(2.) His pleas

In our Lord's prayer for himself, there is pleading as well as petition. Prayer is the expression of desire for benefit, by one who needs it, to one who, in his estimation, is able and disposed to confer it. Request or petition is therefore its leading element; but, in the expression of desire by one intelligent being to another, it is natural that the reasons why the desire is cherished and the request presented should be stated, and the grounds unfolded on which the hope is founded that the desire shall be gratified by the request being granted. Petition and pleading are thus connected in prayer from man to man; and they are so, likewise, in prayer from man to God. Whoever reads carefully the prayers uttered by holy men, guided and influenced by the Spirit of God, recorded in Scripture, will be struck with the union of petition and pleading by which they are distinguished. When the saints are brought "near God,"—when they, as Job says, "find him, and come even to his seat,"—how do "they order their cause before him, and fill their mouths with arguments!" They "plead" with Him, as Jeremiah expresses it.³ Every consideration arising from the character, promise, law, and administration of God, and from the relations in which the petitioner stands to God, and the circumstances in which he is placed, which can be made to bear on the subject, which is calculated to show that it is becoming the divine greatness and goodness, righteousness and faithfulness, condescension and grace, to grant the petition, is brought forward, and earnestly though humbly urged.

The wise men of this world profess to wonder at this. They seem to find it difficult to see the fitness or usefulness of even presenting requests to such a being as the Divinity; but as to pleading with Him to grant these requests, it appears to them the very consummation of fanatical folly. 'Does he stand in need of information, either as to our desires or the reasons of them, or as to the effects which are likely to result from his granting or refusing our requests? Does he need any additional impulse towards what is right; or can we in the slightest degree influence him towards what is wrong? Does he want either

information or motive? Can anything that man can say or do, make him change his mind or alter his plans?' He who thinks that man's petitions and pleadings are needed to gain some of these ends, or capable of gaining any of them, must have very unworthy ideas of the divine character and administration—very different from those presented in Scripture, or entertained by the persons who are most in the habit of petitioning and pleading with God. None ever placed the truth that God is previously acquainted with our wants, and disposed to supply them, in a clearer light than Jesus Christ in his Sermon on the Mount; but he urges this truth as a preventive of anxiety, not as a dissuasive from prayer. On the contrary, the thought that our Father in heaven knows what we need, is in Scripture represented as equally the reason why we should be "anxious about nothing," and why "in everything, with prayer and supplication, we should make our requests known unto God."

It is supposable that an economy might have been established, in conformity with the ideas of our philosophical objectors against the reasonableness of prayer; and that the communication of the blessings which men need, and God is able and disposed to give, should have been suspended on man's never expressing any desire, but silently waiting for, and acquiescing in, whatever God is pleased to give; making prayer—what these men's principles seem to make it—foolish and sinful, instead of wise and dutiful. But not only is it certain that such an economy is not that which, according to the Scriptures,—a well-accredited divine revelation,—has in fact been established; it is equally clear that such an economy would require, as its foundation, that God should have given to man a totally different, in some points a directly opposite, kind of mental constitution from that which he has bestowed on him.

It is of the very nature of the constitution God has given man; that when he has a desire, he uses means to have it gratified; that when he wishes for something which he knows another is able and disposed to supply him with, he expresses his wants, and requests their supply. It is of man's nature to "ask, that he may receive; to

seek, that he may find; to knock, that it may be opened to him." Unless you proceed on the atheistical principle, that there is no such thing as, what in any adequate sense of the word can be called, intercourse between God and man, it seems strange that man should be called on to do constant violence to his nature, in reference to those desires which God only can gratify—those wants which he only can supply. He must not express desire, however fervent—he must not solicit supply, however needed—because God knows this desire, and is disposed to furnish this supply.

I am really so little of a modern philosopher, as, with my Master in heaven, to find in the reasons against prayer arguments for it. I will tell God my desire, for he knows it already, and will not be offended at my following the impulse of the nature he has given me, which bids me express it to him who alone can gratify it; and I will ask him to give me what I want, because I know he is disposed to "supply all my need, according to his glorious riches." It would be a painful restraint to me, to desire without being allowed to express my desires, and the reasons on which they are grounded; to feel my want, and know that he is able and willing to supply all my necessities, without giving utterance to this feeling and conviction, and to all that seems to me to warrant this utterance; and the form which this utterance of desire, this request of blessing, with the reasons of my desire and of my hope, naturally takes, is address to him who alone can gratify my desire and supply my want,—that is, prayer, consisting both of petition and of pleading.

I find in this exercise the best preparation for obtaining what, from my confidence in God, I hope for. As to spiritual blessings, in asking them, pleading for them, I find I have obtained them. I am sure that, without those exercises which prayer implies, I should be less holy and less happy than I am; and while I will not puzzle myself to find out how God has so arranged his infinitely wise, unalterable plan of procedure, as that blessings are secured by believing prayer which could not otherwise have been obtained,—as that restraint of prayer is punished by the withholding of blessings, and believing,

persevering prayer rewarded by the bestowal of blessings as its answer,—I find no difficulty in believing that it is so—I cannot believe that it is otherwise; and I bless his wisdom and kindness, in so arranging matters, as that I can innocently and safely follow the impulses of that nature he has given me, in the utterance to him from whom I expect every blessing, of my desires of good, and of the reasons why I entertain them, and of the hopes which I cherish of having them gratified; that I can pour out all my mind and heart before him, and expect that he will show he is pleased with this, by giving me what I need, though it may not be exactly what I anticipate, while believing that his plans are unaltered, unalterable, and

"His eternal thought moves on

His undisturbed affairs."

I have been led into this train of thought, which has occupied me longer than I anticipated, by noticing that our Lord, who is our great exemplar in prayer as in every other duty, pleads as well as petitions when he "makes his requests known to God." His pleadings in support of his petition, in reference to himself, are derived (1) from the intimate and endearing relation in which he stands to HIM to whom he presents it,—*"Father, glorify thy Son;"* (2) from the appointed time for granting the petition being come,—*"The hour is come;"* (3) from the accordance of the granting of the petition, with the power and authority which had been appointed for him, and with the purpose for which that authority was to be bestowed on him, —*"Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh,"* in accordance with thy having appointed him to supreme authority and dominion, *"that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,"* even that eternal life which consists in the knowledge of thee, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent; and (4) finally, from all necessary preparations having been made for the granting of the petition,—*"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou*

gavest me to do." These are our Lord's four pleas why the petition in reference to himself, presented by him to the Father, should be granted. Let us briefly attend to them in their order.

1. The intimate and endearing relation in which he stood to the object of worship

Our Lord's first plea is derived from the intimate and endearing relation which subsists between him and the object of his prayer, indicated in the terms "Father," "Son:" "Father, glorify thy Son." There is a powerful plea in each of these words.

When our Lord uttered the compellation "Father," he expressed in the highest degree all the sentiments which such a relation as that in which he, as the incarnate Son, stood to the first person of the Godhead, is naturally connected with—supreme veneration, esteem, love, and confidence. "A son honoureth his father;" and HIS first desire—the object for which he had lived, the object for which he longed to die, the object for which he asks restored life and increased glory—was the advancement of his Father's honour. He sought not his own glory, as a separate object. If he prayed to be glorified, it was because he knew he must be glorified in order that God might be glorified. It was necessary that the Father should glorify the Son, that the Son might be placed in circumstances in which he could glorify the Father, in the manner and degree in which he desired to do it. It is as if our Lord had said, 'It is meet that the Son should honour the Father; and surely it is meet that the Father should honour the Son, that the Son may honour the Father.'

As there is a strong plea in the sentiments with which the Son regarded the Father, expressed in the appellation "Father," for granting the petition, there is an equally strong one in the sentiments with which the Father regards the Son. "The Father loveth the Son." Surely, then, he will grant him his requests. What will such a father refuse to such a son? Will he not indeed put all things under his feet? Besides, the Father hath made promises to the Son; surely he will

fulfil them. He hath said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." He has said of him, "I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion." He has said to him, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thine enemies to be thy footstool." He has said, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." It is as if our Lord in these words were saying, 'Remember to thy servant whom thou upholdest, to thy Son in whom thou art well pleased, the word on which thou hast caused him to hope.' "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

2. The appointed time was come

The second plea is derived from the consideration that the appointed period for granting this petition was arrived: "Father, the hour is come,"—"Now glorify me." It has been strikingly said, "What hour? An hour the most critical and pregnant with great events, since hours had begun to be numbered—since time had begun to run. It was the hour in which the Son of God was to terminate the labours of his important life, by a death still more important and illustrious; the hour of atoning by his sufferings for the guilt of mankind; the hour of accomplishing prophecies, types, and symbols, which had been carried on through a series of ages; the hour of concluding the old and introducing the new dispensation; the hour of his triumphing over the world, and death, and hell; the hour of his erecting that spiritual kingdom which is to last for ever."³ And with still greater beauty and force of expression it has been remarked: "The greatest events of which our earth has been the theatre, which the historian has laboured to paint, and the poet to embellish; the greatest events that will occur till the mystery of God be finished—the creation, the deluge, the judgment, the last conflagration,—all combined, must

yield to the events of this short, this amazing hour. The Son of the Highest, in the form of God, and not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, now in the form of a servant, deserted by his few friends, despised and rejected by men around him; 'God manifest in flesh' in corporeal and mental anguish, laden with the sins of men, made a sin-offering, made accursed, stripped, crowned with thorns, carrying a cross, crucified as a malefactor, dying on his cross, lying lifeless in the grave: these events were crowded into this brief hour,—events not to be paralleled by any which the moral universe can supply; events which shook our earth, which saved the whole election, which appalled all hell, which gladdened all heaven, and which brought, and shall to all eternity bring, 'glory to God in the highest!' Could words describe what that hour included? And what must Christ, what must his Father, have discerned in this one expression, 'The hour is come!' "

All this is true of that hour; but the idea here brought before the mind is, 'This is the appointed period for the Father remarkably glorifying the Son, in his sufferings, by his sufferings, for his sufferings, under them, after them.' "The time, yea, the set time is come;" and if the time be come, shall not the event take place? It is matter of divine purpose, and when was a divine purpose frustrated? It is matter of divine promise, and when was a divine promise falsified? "His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." "He is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Hath he promised it, and shall he not bring it to pass?" "Man," says the wisest of men, "knoweth not his time;" but the Son of man knew his. And well he might: it had been fixed in the eternal counsel to which he was a party. This surely was such a time that the Father would be found of the Son when he prayed to him. "It was an acceptable time in which he would hear him, a day of salvation in which he would succour him."³ God "hastens everything in its time." If the time, the proper time, the fixed time, for glorifying the Son is come, assuredly the Son will be glorified, "straightway glorified."

3. Its connection with his appointed station and work

The third plea is derived from the consideration that the granting of the petition, "Glorify thy Son," was in accordance with the place which the Father had destined his Son to fill, and the work which he had destined him to perform; and was necessary to his filling that place, and executing that work. "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The Father had appointed the incarnate Son to have power over all flesh. This, as I have endeavoured to show, is the force here of the expression, "hath given him power over all flesh;" as when Jehovah says of the Messiah, "I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people," i.e. 'I have appointed him to be teacher and ruler of men;' and when our Lord says, "The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself," i.e. 'He has appointed him to hold life in himself, that he may be the source of life to men.' The meaning is, 'It is the revealed determination of the Father, that the Son is to have power over all flesh. He hath "given all things into his hand." ' The character of the New Testament order of things is, that "the Father judgeth no man; he hath committed all judgment to the Son." The ancient oracles declared that he should "sit on the right hand of God till all his enemies were made his footstool."⁵ "All kings were to fall down before him, all nations were to serve him."

But in order to the accomplishment of this purpose, the fulfilment of these predictions, the Son of man must be glorified in and by—after and for—his sufferings. He must be glorified in having the opportunity of consummating the expiation of guilt in his death on the cross, to open up through his own meritorious righteousness a way for himself, as the representative and Saviour of men, to this unlimited authority and dominion over men; and he must be glorified by being raised from the dead, and set at God's right hand, that he may be put into the actual possession and exercise of this

power and authority. You see, then, the force of the plea for granting the prayer in reference to the place which the Father had destined his Son to fill. He had appointed him to have power over all flesh; and would he not then glorify him by giving him the opportunity of purchasing to himself this promised kingdom by the price of his blood; and having done so, will he not glorify him by putting him in possession of his blood-bought inheritance, and "glorifying him with the glory he had with him before the foundation of the world?"

The plea is equally cogent, if viewed in reference to the work which, when raised to this place of dignity and authority, he was destined by the Father to perform. Now, what was that work? It was that he might bestow eternal life on as many as the Father had given him, by giving to them the knowledge of the Father as the only true God, and of himself as the Sent of the Father. The Father had "many sons" to bring to glory,— "a multitude that no man can number, out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation." He was determined to save a vast number of our race who had plunged themselves in what, but for his grace, must have been hopeless perdition. This work he had entrusted to the Son. HE, as "the Captain of salvation," the leader of the deliverance, was to conduct the many sons to glory. The Father was to bring them to him, and put them under his care; and he was to give eternal life to every one of them. "For this is the Father's will who hath sent him, that of all which he hath given him he should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent him, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and be raised up by him at the last day." It is the will of God, that all his chosen people — "chosen by him before the foundation of the world," — "predestinated to the adoption of children" — should obtain "the redemption in Christ through his blood;" be washed, and sanctified, and justified in his name by his Spirit; be blessed in him with all heavenly and spiritual blessings; have their bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body; and be for ever with him in the full enjoyment of "the salvation that is in him, with eternal glory." And still further, it is the destined work of the Son to give this eternal life

to those given him by the Father, by manifesting the Father's name to them; by making them know him as the only true God, and himself as sent by him,—the Mediator between God and man, the Saviour of the world. The experimental knowledge of the Father, the only true God, as our God and Father, and of the Son, the sent and sealed messenger of the Father to save and bless men as our Saviour, is not only the means, but it is the sum and substance, of eternal life. Man's happiness is in God; and it is only as known, that God can be the source of happiness to man; and the Son is the great revealer of God. All spiritual blessings are but realized manifestations of the excellences of the Father and of the Son. The more we really know of them, the more do we enjoy of eternal life,—of holiness and happiness,—of conformity to them, of fellowship with them, who are "the eternal life."

To meet a difficulty which may present itself to some in the words, "the only true God," as applied to the Father, it may be proper to remark, that the Father is not here called the true God in contrast with the Son, as if he were not also, being one with the Father, a possessor of true Deity; for, in another passage, according to the plainest interpretation of the words, the Son is expressly called "the true God, and eternal life;" but as, in the economy of grace, the Father sustains the majesty of Divinity, He is, in contrast with "the gods many, and lords many," represented as "the only true God."³ It is the same true God who, in the Father, is the invisible God, that is in the Son "God manifest in the flesh."

This passage neither asserts nor denies the proper Deity of our Lord; but it has been acutely and justly remarked, that the passage, in the way of inference, involves in it a clear intimation that the being of Christ, while on the one side it is "human, is also on the other superhuman. For every one feels that on no condition could it, durst it, be said, 'This is life eternal,' to know Jehovah and Abraham, or Moses, or any other of the mere men whom he honoured to make his messengers."

But to return to our subject. To do the work to which the Son was destined, glorification by the Father, in the full extent of meaning which we have showed belongs to the phrase, is necessary. No eternal life can be communicated to any of those whom the Father has given him, if he be not glorified in and by his sufferings, for and after his sufferings. "Eternal life," though "the gift of God," can find its way to man only "through Christ Jesus," glorified as a perfect atoning sacrifice lifted up on the cross—glorified as having power over all flesh, all power in heaven and in earth—seated on the throne of God. The knowledge of the Father and of the Son, which is eternal life, is "the knowledge of the glory of God" as it shines forth "in the face"—in the person and work—of his Son suffering and reigning.³ To give any guilty, depraved, lost man eternal life, would require infinite merit, unbounded authority, omnipotent power, on the part of the giver. Just think on what is necessary to give eternal life to one sinner "dead in trespasses and in sins," and think on the innumerable multitudes of such sinners whom it is the will of God to bring to the enjoyment of eternal life through Christ Jesus, and then you will see how strong a plea for the petition, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee,"—"glorify him with the glory he had with thee before the foundation of the world,"—there is in the words which we are very conscious of having but very imperfectly illustrated: "As thou hast given to him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

4. All necessary preparations have been made

The fourth plea for granting the petition is drawn from the consideration, that all necessary preparations have been made for this purpose: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work² which thou gavest me to do." These words, like a number which follow in the prayer (e.g. ver. 11, "Now I am no more in the world;" ver. 12, "While I was with them in the world;" ver. 24, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am"), though spoken before our Lord's sufferings, seem by anticipation to refer to the state of things immediately following, when he had

completely accomplished his work on earth. He is within one short, though rough, stage of his journey's end. It is but one great effort more, and he is at rest. Within a few hours the cry will be heard, "It is finished."²

Our Lord was sent into the world as the substitute of men, to yield obedience to the precept of the law which they had violated, and to give satisfaction to the penal sanction of the law which they had incurred; and by the perfection of both of these, heightened in their value infinitely by the dignity of his person, giving more glory to the character of Jehovah as manifested in his law, than would have been done by the unsinning obedience of innocent man, or the everlasting destruction of sinning man, to lay a deep and broad foundation for the display of the divine glory in man's salvation. Now this work was all but finished; and when finished, then he had done and suffered all his Father's will: he had delivered his message; he had taught the truth; he had exemplified it; he had confirmed it by his miracles; he had sealed it by his blood; he had "restored that which he took not away;" he had "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness;"⁴ he had "given himself a ransom for many;" he had "done the will of God in the offering of his body once for all." Thus had he glorified the Father on the earth; thus had he finished the work which he gave him to do. There is no reason now why he should not be glorified by the Father in heaven, that he might glorify Him in another way than he could do on earth, in the salvation of all that He had given him.² The work on earth is done; let the reward, the extended power of glorifying God and blessing mankind, be conferred. That was "the joy set before him," which made him "endure the cross, despising the shame." Besides, thus runs the record of the everlasting covenant, "the covenant of peace which was between them both:" "When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall

divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."⁴

There is emphasis both in the expressed personal pronoun I, and in the phrase on the earth. "On the earth" is contrasted with "with thee before the world was." The force of the emphasis may perhaps be thus brought out: 'I alone, of all the sons of men, have glorified thee on the earth, which by man's sin has been the scene only of dishonouring thee. I have glorified THEE, therefore glorify THOU ME. I have glorified thee here, on the earth, such as sin and pollution and distress have made it; glorify me yonder—in heaven—with thine own self, where all is holy happiness.'

It is not improbable that our Lord, of whom it is written in the Psalms, and who was well aware of this, had before his mind two passages in these sublime odes, the forty-sixth and forty-seventh Psalms: "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen," i.e. the Gentiles; "I will be exalted in the earth," not in Judea only. In the Psalm following, this "exaltation" or glorification of Jehovah in the conversion of the Gentiles is represented as accomplished through the exaltation of "God," in our nature, "going up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." When he is "made both Lord and Christ,"² then "God reigneth over the heathen," and "the princes of the people are gathered together—the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God"—Essential Deity. "He," in being acknowledged to be so, "is greatly exalted." Viewed in this light, this plea is a phase of the many-sided, many-coloured promise made in the covenant "confirmed before of God in Christ," and is equivalent to, "Remember the word to thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope."⁴

Such was our Lord's prayer for himself; such its petitions; such its pleas.

These pleas have been effectual; these petitions have been heard. "The Lord heard him in the day of his trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defended him. He sent him help from the sanctuary, and strengthened him out of Zion. He remembered all his offerings, and accepted his sacrifice. He granted him according to his heart, and fulfilled all his counsel." "The Lord saved his Anointed: he heard him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand." God glorified him in and by, God glorified him after and for, his sufferings. He made him more than a conqueror over death and hell, and glorified him with the "glory he had with him before the world was." "By his mighty power he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand."⁶ He made him who had been made lower than the angels, as much better than the angels, as he had obtained by inheritance "a more excellent name than they."

And glorified by God, he glorifies God. He employs the power over all flesh, in giving eternal life to all whom the Father has given him: pouring forth into the hearts of spiritually dead millions his quickening Spirit, and covering the earth and filling heaven with eternal monuments of the power and wisdom, the righteousness and grace, of his Father. Oh, who does not exult in his glory! Who does not rejoice that "the days of his flesh, in which he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," are over for ever; and that now, for more than eighteen centuries, the glory of the incarnate Son has, in the heaven of heavens, been great in his Father's salvation! "Honour and majesty has He laid upon him. He has made him most blessed for ever: he has made him exceeding glad with his countenance." We will glory in his glory; we will rejoice in his salvation.

I conclude my remarks on this part of the subject by observing that we may imitate, and that with certain obvious limitations we ought to imitate, our Saviour in his prayers and pleadings. We may, we ought to, pray God to glorify us, to make us truly glorious, by making us truly holy, that we may be placed in circumstances in which we may effectually glorify him. And we are to seek to glorify him, by

endeavouring in our own place—a very subordinate one, doubtless—to put men in possession of eternal life, by leading them to the knowledge of him as the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Our constant prayer should be, 'Our Father, honour us by making us fit and successful instruments for honouring thee, in promoting the salvation of men.'

And as we may present substantially our Lord's prayer, we may also employ his pleas. God is our Father—we are his children; and surely we may, we ought to, use the pleas in our prayers which the relations and characters indicated by these terms naturally suggest. We may say, 'Art thou not our Father? Are we not thy children? We earnestly ask, we humbly yet confidently expect, that thou wilt be a father to us, that thou wilt treat us as children, so that we may in our blessed experience understand the meaning of these words, "If sons, then heirs; heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ." ' As Matthew Henry says, "If God be our Father, we have liberty of access to him, ground of confidence in him, and great expectations from him. They that have received the adoption of sons, may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons, fellowship with the first-born in glory."

It is not indeed given to us to know the times and the seasons. We cannot say with regard to particular events, as our Lord said of the season of his sufferings and highest glory, "The hour is come." But still we may often find a strong plea in prayer from the consideration of time. When wickedness abounds, we may say, "It is time for thee to work, O Lord; for they have made void thy law:" when we are tried almost above what we are able to bear, "This is the hour of temptation: oh, support; oh, deliver:" and when it is the "time to die," surely, if the mind remains conscious, the fact that the hour is come for passing into the world of spirits is a fit plea for promised guidance "through the valley of the shadow of death,"—safe passage through the deep dark river—quiet dismissal from earth—joyful reception into paradise.

When we pray for the aids of the good Spirit to enable us to do our duty, it is a good and available plea, 'This is thy will, thy command, O Lord, that I should glorify thee. Place me in the circumstances, grant me the aids, which are necessary to my being and doing what thou wouldest have me to be and to do.'

And finally, when we have, in seeking some obviously right and important object, exhausted all our resources, done all we can do, we may warrantably use this as a plea that God would do what he only can do; and most assuredly we need not wonder that God does not interpose to gain an end entirely by his supernatural agency, which he informs us he means to be gained, not without, but by, human instrumentality, while we are conscious to ourselves that we have not done, that we are not doing, the work he has given us to do.

When the Christian church has done all she ought to do—that is, all she can do—for the conversion of the world, then may she with great propriety use the plea, 'Lord, do what thou only canst do. "Take to thee thy great power, and reign." We have finished the work thou hast given us to do.' The plea would be an effectual one. The prayer would soon be answered, in the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of our God and his Christ.

Honest exertion, to the extent of our ability, in the work of God, will be found greatly conducive to liberty and earnestness in prayer, that God would do what man cannot do; and it is vile hypocrisy or strange self-delusion to seem to be anxious that, in a work where our agency as well as his is required, He should do everything, while we are doing nothing. We are not to expect God to do for us, what he tells us plainly he means to do by us; but in the degree in which we are enabled by him to do what he requires of us, in the great work of glorifying him by promoting the salvation of men, to be "stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in this good work," may we confidently hope, that "his work will be made to appear to us, his servants, and his glory to our children; that the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us; that he will establish the work of our hands

on us;" that "HE will work, whom none can let"—hinder; and that "our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

§ 2. His prayer for his apostles

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: 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. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."—JOHN 17:6–19.

In studying the history of our Lord, as recorded by the evangelists—and there is no historical record which equally both deserves and requires study—it is impossible not to be struck by the perfect harmony of his character, and the uniform consistency of his

conduct. This inward harmony and outward consistency are to be traced to the oneness of the principle which habitually influenced and guided all his thoughts, and feelings, and actions. That principle was a supreme regard to the will of God, perfectly known, fully acquiesced in, and entirely approved, by him. "Thy law," said he, "is within my heart." "Lo, I come to do thy will." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

This entire consecration to God was the very element of his inward life, the condition of his moral being. This was as connatural to his moral, as breathing to his physical life. He could not think, he could not feel, he could not act, but under its influence. He came into the world to glorify God in saving men; and his motto was, "This one thing I do." All he did, all he said, all he suffered, seemed to say, 'I must work the works of Him that sent me. I must "glorify the Father on the earth; I must finish the work given me to do." I must do his will in "offering my body once for all," and thus for ever perfecting all his "sanctified ones." '

It was thus that, amid all the variety of circumstances in which he was placed, the endless diversity of powerfully disturbing forces to which he was exposed, he was found unvaryingly to pursue one aim, unweariedly to prosecute one work: the glory of God in the salvation of men, or the salvation of men to the glory of God: the manifestation of the divine character in delivering men from error, and guilt, and depravity, and misery; and making them wise, and good, and happy in the favour and fellowship of God—in likeness to and enjoyment of God, known, feared, loved, trusted, delighted in. This was the one great object of his coming from heaven to earth, and of his return from earth to heaven. For this he became man, and obeyed, and suffered, and died, "the just in the room of the unjust;" for this "he revived and rose again," and "ascended up where he was before," and "reigns in life," "able to save to the uttermost all coming to the Father by him"—all "to the glory of God the Father."

The wonderful prayer, in the illustration of which we are engaged, when carefully considered, is found to be thoroughly instinct with this one great principle of entire devotedness to the will of God, for the salvation of man, which gave such harmony to the Saviour's character, such consistency to his conduct. It contains a number of petitions and pleadings, but they are all varied developments of this one desire: 'Let God be glorified in man's salvation; let man be saved to the glory of God. Father, glorify thy name: let none whom thou hast given me be lost; let them all, through the knowledge of thee and of me, have eternal life.'

The prayer, properly so called, as we have seen, resolves itself into three divisions: a prayer for the Saviour himself; a prayer for his apostles; a prayer for his universal church—those who, in all countries and in all ages, should believe in his word. The substance of his prayer for himself is, 'Place me in circumstances in which I may glorify thee in the salvation of men.' The substance of his prayer for the apostles is, 'Fit them for glorifying thee, in promoting the salvation of men, in the prosecution of the work in which I have appointed them my great instrumental agents.' And the substance of his prayer for the universal church is, 'Bring them to entire conformity to thyself, in mind, and will, and enjoyment, that thou mayest be glorified to the uttermost by their being saved to the uttermost.' The sum of the whole prayer is, 'Glorify thyself in the salvation of men; glorify thyself in me, by me, in saving men; glorify thyself in and by my apostles, in saving them, and making them the fit and successful instruments of saving others; glorify thyself in and by the whole of the sanctified ones,—the "many sons" to be brought to glory—the innumerable company of those who shall be heirs of salvation,—in making them one with thee and me in mind, in will, in aim, in enjoyment for ever.'

It also deserves notice, as illustrative of the beautiful unity and order of the prayer, that while all is viewed in subordination to the divine glory, the blessings asked for the apostles and the church universal are viewed not only in reference to the glory of the Father directly,

but to the glory of the Son, in which, by which, the Father was to be glorified. The plea for blessing them is, that thus HE is glorified in them; and one object in view, by bringing them to be with him, is, "that they might behold his glory."²

That this prayer, included in the verses from the 6th to the 19th, is a prayer for the apostles, is so obvious, that it is wonderful that it should ever have been interpreted as directly referring to any other class of persons. The persons prayed for are persons to whom our Lord had manifested his Father's name,—persons who had known that Jesus had come out from the Father, and had believed that He had sent him,—persons who had been with our Lord, and whom he had kept in his Father's name. Had there been no more than this in the description, we might have supposed that it referred to all his disciples, all who had believed on him; but when we find that the persons prayed for are a body with which "the son of perdition" had been connected,—the whole of that body, him only excepted,—and that they had been "sent" by our Lord "into the world, even as he had been sent by the Father into the world,"—he, the Father's apostle— they, his apostles,—we can have no doubt that the prayer is for those illustrious men whom he chose from among his disciples, and "ordained to be with him" all the time that he went out and in among men; who "continued with him in his temptations," and to whom he has assigned in the kingdom of heaven thrones, on which they yet sit, and shall continue to sit, till the end come, "judging the twelve tribes of" the spiritual "Israel." There is no doubt that much of what is said of them is true of all right Christian ministers, and indeed of all genuine Christians, and that blessings of the same kind are given to both these classes, in answer to the Saviour's prayers; but still the prayer before us is a prayer, not directly either for Christians generally or for Christian ministers, but for "the holy apostles of our Lord Jesus," in whose presence and hearing, and for whose special establishment and comfort, it was offered.

The prayer of our Lord for his apostles, like the prayer for himself, comprehends both petition and pleading. He asks blessings for them,

and he states the grounds on which he asks these blessings for them. The transition at the beginning of the 6th verse is similar to that at the beginning of the 20th verse, though not so distinctly defined. There he says, "I pray not for them alone," i.e. the apostles, "but for them also which shall believe in me through their word." Here he in effect says, 'I pray not for myself alone, but for the men to whom I have manifested thy name.'

The great blessing which our Lord asks for the apostles is, that they may be one, as the Father and the Son are; that is, that they may be united with them as to mind, and will, and aim, and operation, in the great work of glorifying God in the salvation of men. That is the ultimate object of his desire in reference to them; the other petitions are for what is necessary in order to this. The blessings necessary as means to the obtaining this blessing are two. First, Conservation: "Keep them through," or in, or in reference to, "thine own name;" "keep them from the evil" one or the evil thing "that is in the world," "that they may be one, as we are." Then, secondly, Consecration: "Sanctify them through," or in reference to, "thy truth: thy word is truth." Such are the petitions; all the rest of the text is occupied with pleadings—most powerful appropriate pleadings.

The pleas are various, but we apprehend they may all be reduced under the following heads:—(1.) The persons prayed for are a peculiar class,—not the world (ver. 9). (2.) They stand in peculiar relations both to the Father and the Son: they were the Father's; they were given to the Son, yet not so given to the Son as to cease to be the Father's (vers. 9, 10). (3.) They possess a peculiar character: they had believed, and they persevered in believing, the revelation of the name of the Father made to them by the Son, and are formed to a character of unlikeness to the world, and likeness to their Master (vers. 14, 16). (4.) They are called to peculiar work: the Son is to be glorified in or by them. He had given them his Father's word; he has sent them into the world, as the Father hath sent him into the world (vers. 10, 18). (5.) They are placed in peculiar circumstances: he who, while he was with them in the world, kept them, is now about to leave them in the

midst of a world that hates them (vers. 12, 13, 14). And finally, (6.) Our Lord's self-consecration was in order to their being consecrated to the great work in which they were to be engaged (ver. 19). Such are the petitions and such the pleas in this second division of our Lord's most condensed and comprehensive prayer.

(1.) His petitions for the apostles

Let us first, then, consider the petitions which our Lord here presents in behalf of his apostles.

1. The ultimate blessing: union

The ultimate blessing which he asks for his apostles is, "that they may be one, as the Father and he were one." That means, that they may be perfectly united in judgment, and affection, and aim, and operation, as the Father and Son are. It means this, but it means more than this: it means that they may be thus perfectly united, by having the same mind, and will, and aim, and course of operation, as the Father and Son. The words are plainly to be understood with a reference to the great subject that entirely occupied the Saviour's mind—the accomplishment of his work—the glorifying God in the salvation of men. The prayer is, that the apostles, who were to be employed as the principal human agents in the accomplishment of this work, may be brought to think along with the Father and the Son on this subject; to will along with them, and in the whole of their aims and endeavours to throw all their energies of thought and action into the glorious object for which the Father had sent the Son, and the Son had come, into the world. It is equivalent to, 'May they have the same estimate of the glory of God, and of the salvation of men, and of the connection which subsists between the one and the other, which the Father and the Son have. May they, above all things, seek that God may be glorified,—that His holy benignity may be manifested and acknowledged; and seek this in the salvation of lost men, through the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. May they be united in desires and labours

for these objects, striving together for the indissolubly united objects—God's glory, man's salvation. May they be united to God and his Son in the principle that made the Father not spare his Son, and the Son sacrifice himself, for the attainment of human salvation, in consistency with, in glorious illustration of, all the perfections of the divine character, all the principles of the divine government. May they be made "very willing to spend and be spent" for this object; ready to "endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." ' This is, I apprehend, the oneness with the Father and the Son, and with one another, which our Lord supplicates for his apostles.

Now, this was necessary to their succeeding in the great work to which they were appointed; and as this was requisite to their success, it was sufficient for it. This would prevent all quarrels, and would secure combined, hearty, energetic, persevering operation in the great cause of God's glory and man's salvation. No man whose views and feelings on these subjects are not accordant with the mind and will of the Father and the Son, can be a proper agent in promoting this work. Every one who is thus characterized is a qualified agent; and all such, just in the degree in which they are so, are fitted to be the fellow-workers of God and his Son, in accomplishing "the good pleasure of the divine will, the good pleasure of his goodness, which he purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

2. The immediate blessings: conservation and consecration

As necessary in order to his disciples being thus one, as the Father and the Son are one, the Saviour prays for two blessings from the Father to them—conservation and consecration. That they may be thus one, "keep them;" that they may be thus one, "sanctify them." Let us shortly consider these two petitions, as bearing on the ultimate object of the Saviour's desire, that his apostles may be one, even as the Father and he were one.

a. Conservation

And, first, of the prayer for conservation: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

To understand the precise import of this petition, "Keep them," it is necessary that we know the meaning of the phrase rendered "in thy name." "The name of the Father" is the revealed character of the Father. To glorify God's name, is to glorify himself. "The name" of the Father here, "the word" or words of the Father, and "the truth" of the Father, are all substantially the same thing—the revealed character of God, "the total of Jehovah's awful and lovely attributes, so far as they are known or can be known by finite intelligences."² The name refers to the subject of the revelation,—the word to the form of the revelation,—the truth to the character of the revelation. The three terms together convey the idea, 'the true revelation of the divine character.'

It deserves to be remarked, that, according to the most authentic manuscripts, the true reading is, "Thy name which thou hast given me." Our Lord was entrusted with the revelation of the divine character: "No man had seen God, neither could see him;" "the Only-begotten," who was in his bosom, he was commissioned to "declare," reveal "him," to "manifest his name."⁴ The Father gave him words to speak; his "name was in him" as the "angel of the covenant;"⁶ and he had manifested this name to the apostles, by giving them the words which the Father had given him; and they had received them.

Now, our Lord prays that they may be kept in that name which he had manifested to them, as he prays further on that they may be sanctified in (the same particle) the word of the Father, which is the truth of the Father. The particle is rendered through in this last instance, and in the phrase before us is generally interpreted in that sense: "Keep them"—preserve them—"through thy name;" i.e. 'either

in the exercise of that power and grace and faithfulness which form a part of thy name, thy revealed character; or by means of the revelation of thy character, understood and believed by them, preserve them.' It seems to me that in both cases the particle is equivalent to 'in reference to:' 'Keep them in reference to thy name;' 'sanctify or consecrate them in reference to thy name.'

To keep the apostles, in reference to the name of the Father, which had been manifested to them by the Son, that by them it might be manifested to the world, was to preserve them in the faith and love of that name, that they might be rendered permanently fit for the great work to which they were destined—to bear that name throughout the world, and proclaim it to all nations. It is a prayer that they might be preserved from falling into error or unbelief, and also from whatever external evil might prevent them from performing the duty assigned them in reference to the Father's name.

And as the hazards to which they were exposed came from the world, and from him who is its prince and god, he prays particularly that they may be "kept from the evil" in that world. He does not pray that they should be taken out of the world. It was in the world that they had to do their duty in reference to the name of the Father, by manifesting it in their doctrine and life. They were not yet ready for heaven, and the world could not yet want them. The cause of God's glory and man's salvation required for some time their continuance.

But he prays that they might be "kept from the evil," either from the evil one or from the evil thing, "that is in the world." In the first case, to be 'kept from the evil one' is the same thing as, in the language of John in his first epistle, to be enabled "to overcome the wicked one," "not to be touched by the wicked one;"² to be preserved from or enabled to rise above his temptations, whether their object be to terrify or to allure into a denying or a being ashamed of the name of the Father. In the second case the meaning is materially the same. To be 'kept from the evil thing in the world,' is to be preserved from the evil of sin—the contagion of the sinful tempers and habits of the

present evil world; and from its persecutions too, so far as these might interfere with the performance of their duty with regard to the name of the Father. I think it very probable that in these words there is a direct reference to the season of peculiarly severe temptation on which the apostles were just entering. Jesus knew that the evil one was about to "seek" to "sift them as wheat," and he prays for them, "that their faith might not fail." It is not necessary, however, to limit the reference to that period.

It was by being thus kept—in reference to the name of the Father—kept from the evil—that the apostles were to obtain that oneness with the Father and the Son, in reference to the great work of displaying the glory of God in the salvation of men, which was necessary to their rightly and successfully doing their part in that work. The Son had given them the true revelation of the divine character, and they had believed it; but the Father must keep them in reference to this revelation, that, continuing to believe it, their "fellowship might truly be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" and that, thinking and willing along with Him, they might throw their whole energies into the work assigned them, of proclaiming to a world sunk in ignorance, perishing in sin, that name, "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to men their trespasses; seeing he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

b. Consecration

The other blessing asked by our Lord of his Father for his apostles is consecration. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."² These words are usually understood as a prayer for sanctification, in the common systematic meaning of that word: a prayer that those for whom the Saviour pleads might be more and more delivered from the power of sin in all its forms, and more and more conformed to the will and image of God, and that this might be effected by means of God's truth—God's word, which is truth—being more fully understood, more firmly and cordially believed: that, in one word,

their hearts might be more and more "purified by faith." It is plain, however, if we have not altogether misconceived the plan and subject of our Lord's prayer, that these words refer to something necessary to the apostles for their answering the purpose of their appointment, to glorify God by bringing men to know him and his Son.

Consecration—devotement to, and qualification for, holy offices and functions—is the proper meaning of the word rendered "sanctify." Like the Hebrew word of which it is a translation, it is generally used in the sense of "set apart," or "consecrate." Thus the priests were said to be sanctified, when appointed and solemnly set apart, by unction and other ceremonies emblematic of authority and qualification, to the service of God in the temple. And the prophets and apostles are termed "sanctified"² or "holy men of God." In the tenth chapter of this Gospel the Father is said to have "sanctified" the Son,⁴ to have consecrated him, anointed him with the Holy Ghost—designated him to, and qualified him for, his sacred work.

The petition, then, seems to be, 'Consecrate them in reference to thy truth,—in reference to thy word which is the truth.' It would have been wonderful, if, in a prayer having for its object the glorifying of God in the salvation of men by the instrumentality of the apostles, there should have been no reference to that consecration by the Holy Ghost, by which they were at once designated to and fitted for their high duties; that Holy Spirit so plainly promised as to be given by the Father in the preceding valedictory discourse. To that consecration, I apprehend, the words before us directly relate.⁷

The truth and the word of God are just the revelation of the Father's name, given by him to the Son, given by the Son to the apostles, to be declared to men as the instrumental means of their obtaining eternal life. He came to declare the Father's name, to speak the words which he had given him, and to bear witness to the truth. What he did when on earth, they were, in their own place, to do when he had left earth for heaven. The prayer is that the Father would solemnly designate them to, fully fit them for, their work, by giving them a clear, full

view of the truth; by inspiring them, through that truth, with unquenchable zeal, holy wisdom, enlightened philanthropy, unwearying perseverance; and by enabling them to attest their divine appointment, and confirm their divine message, "by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

Thus should they be one with each other, being one with the Father and the Son, in their minds and hearts, aims and operations; and thus should God and his Son be glorified in them, by them,—in their own salvation, and in the salvation of multitudes of their fellow-men. "The anointing" would make them know all things; and being one spirit with the Father and with the Son, they would "mind the same thing"—the establishment of the kingdom, the glory of God in the salvation of men.

It is delightful to think how gloriously the prayer was answered. "In an acceptable time, the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, heard his righteous Servant." How wonderfully were the apostles "kept," in reference to the name of God, during the season of severe trial that immediately ensued! Because the great Intercessor had prayed for them, their faith did not fail. With one exception, they were preserved from denying their Lord, and entirely abandoning their hope in him; and even he who fell was soon so converted as that he strengthened his brethren. How were they kept from the evil one—from the evil thing in the world—by the mighty power of God through faith, amid all the temptations and afflictions of the strangely trying course in which, through much tribulation, they established God's kingdom on earth, and entered into God's kingdom in heaven!

What a solemn, what an effectual, consecration to their high and holy work, in reference to the word, the truth of God, did they receive! "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues," rather

tongues distributing themselves, "like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."² Then were given them not only "divers tongues," but also "the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, and faith; and the gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits;" and thus they became "sanctified," as they were before "chosen vessels," "meet for the Master's use," to bear his name and his Father's "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Then they "knew what the will of the Lord was." They "had the mind of Christ;" and "knowing the things freely given to them of God, they spake them not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit taught."⁵ Thus "the name" of the Lord was magnified; "the word" of the Lord had free course; "the truth" was mighty, and prevailed; and men obtained eternal life through the knowledge of God and his Son. God was glorified, and men were saved.

And thus kept, thus sanctified, the apostles were one, as the Father and the Son are one. They were "of one heart and one soul," "perfectly joined in the same mind and the same judgment." They "had fellowship one with another;" and "truly their common fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."² With one mind and one heart they had one aim and one work, and cordially strove together, fellow-workmen under the Father and the Son, in building of living stones into that spiritual temple, "the church of the living God," an everlasting monument to the glory of divine wisdom, power, and love,—to "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life;" the plan of which was formed in the counsels of eternity, the foundation of which was laid in the blood of the cross, and the top-stone of which shall in due time be brought "forth with shoutings, Grace, grace to it!"

Verily the Father has heard the prayer of the Son. The promise was fulfilled, "He shall call on me, and I will answer him." "Now know we that the Lord hath heard his Anointed from his holy heaven with the strength of his right hand." "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye

seed of Jacob, glorify him: and fear him, all ye seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted: neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard."

May he who kept the apostles of our Lord Jesus in his name and word and truth, keep the minds and hearts, and tongues and feet of all his saints, that, preserved from deadly error and sin, they may all at last be presented "spotless before the presence of his glory with great joy." May he who consecrated the apostles baptize all his ministers with "the Holy Ghost and with fire;" shed forth abundantly on them his quickening, enlightening, sanctifying, strengthening, guiding, comforting influence; fit them for manifesting his name, speaking his word, witnessing to his truth; and render their labours the effectual means of giving eternal life to the spiritually dead. And may all his ministers and all his people, by the influence of the one Spirit, be of one heart and soul, "like-minded one towards another, according to"—after the example of—"Christ Jesus, that they may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," so that the world may know that the Father hath sent the Son; and the appointed period be hastened onwards, when the Son shall have his desire fulfilled and his petitions granted to the uttermost, and, seeing of "the travail of his soul, shall be satisfied" in the complete salvation of his ransomed myriads, and "the glory of the Lord" shall fill the universe, and "endure for ever," while Jehovah rejoices in all his works. Amen, and amen.

(2.) His pleadings for his apostles

We proceed now to consider the pleadings by which the Saviour enforces these petitions. These pleadings may all be arranged under the following heads:—First, The persons he prays for are a peculiar class, "not the world." Secondly, They stand in a peculiar relation both to the Father and to him. Thirdly, They have a peculiar history. Fourthly, They have a peculiar character. Fifthly, They are placed in peculiar circumstances. Sixthly, They are appointed to a peculiar and

most important and difficult work. And finally, Their consecration for this work is one great end for which he consecrates himself to the great work assigned him by the Father. Let us turn our attention to these topics in their order, endeavouring to apprehend the meaning of our Lord's statements with respect to each of them, and their bearing and force as pleas, on the petitions which he presents for his apostles.

1. They were a peculiar class

The first plea which I would bring under your consideration is, 'that the objects of his prayer were a peculiar class—not the world.' "I pray not for the world" (ver. 9). And I call your attention to this plea first, because it lays the foundation for all the rest. Indeed, all the rest may be considered as only the expansion or development of this.

The words, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world," have by many able theologians been considered as an assertion that our Lord's intercession does not in any sense extend to mankind at large, but is strictly limited to the elect. It is one of the passages which have been much used in support of the doctrine, that in no sense did Christ die for all men, and that therefore the atonement has exclusively a reference to 'the elect;' the two parts of our Lord's mediatorial work being justly considered as indissoluble. Like many other passages of Scripture, more eagerness has been discovered by polemical divines to wrest it as a weapon out of the hand of an antagonist, or to employ it as a weapon against him, than to discover what is the precise meaning of the words as used by our Lord, and how they serve the purpose for which he employed them. I think it will not be difficult to show that the assertion that our Lord prays for no blessings for any but the elect, is not warranted by Scripture; and that, even if it were, it would not be easy to show how such a statement should have a place in a plea for the bestowment of certain blessings on his apostles.

"The world," here, is not an expression coincident in meaning with the reprobate—the non-elect. It is equivalent to men who have not been converted—men in their fallen, unchanged state—men under the power of unbelief, impenitence, and depravity. Now undoubtedly our Lord does not mean to make an unqualified declaration that he does not pray for any of these. All his elect originally belonged to this class. They were not only "in the world," but "of the world;" and they ceased to be of the world just in consequence of his praying for them on the ground of his atoning death, that they should be brought out of the world, by his Spirit being given them, to the sending of which it was necessary that he should go away in his death. In the context immediately following we find him praying that the world might be brought to know and acknowledge that the Father had sent him. Surely this was praying for the world.

Nor is this all. We have reason to believe that Christ's intercession as well as his death has a reference to mankind universally, and that in an important sense he prays for all, as well as has died for all. But for the mediation of Christ, it is difficult to see how fallen men could have enjoyed any blessings. The unmitigated execution of the curse was their desert; and but for the intervention of the mediatorial economy, how could they have escaped it? All that is not wrathful in the divine dispensations to fallen man, is directly or indirectly the result of Christ's mediation; and the parts of that mediation, while they must be distinguished, cannot be separated. Had Christ not died, could men, even those who are ultimately to perish, have had in this world the blessings of various kinds they possess? could the door of mercy have been opened to them? could a free and a full salvation have been presented to them for their acceptance? and do they possess any of these blessings without his willing it to be so, and without his expressing that will in his intercession? In the parable of the barren fig-tree, who is the vine-dresser who petitions the husbandman to spare the fruitless tree for three years more,—contemplating as a possible event, that, after all, it will continue hopelessly barren, and be cut down as cumbering the ground? The

prophetic oracle is fulfilled, "He makes intercession for the transgressors."

It is most true he does not pray for these as he does for those whom, in accordance with his covenant engagement, he is determined to save. In making intercession, just as in making atonement, he bears special relations to them, regards them with a special love, and by his intercession secures for them the enjoyment of saving blessings. "It is equally true," as Luther says, according to the sense in which you use the words, "that Christ prays for the world," for unbelieving men, "and that he does not pray for them." There are blessings conferred on men who, in consequence of their sin and unbelief, shall finally perish, and who were not "chosen in Christ" to eternal life; there are blessings conferred on elect men in their state of irreflexivity, especially the great blessing of bringing them out of that state; and there are blessings conferred on elect men in their regenerate state, of which in their irreflexive state they were incapable; and the communication of all these blessings is connected, though by no means in the same way, with that mediation of our Lord which consists in his making atonement and making intercession.

But even although the assertion, that in no sense does our Lord make intercession for any but the elect, were better founded than as we have seen it is, it would be difficult to perceive what bearing it could have on a prayer for particular blessings to the apostles. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world." There is here an emphatic word. 'I am now praying for my apostles, not for mankind at large—not for unconverted men. I am asking peculiar blessings for a peculiar class; blessings which it would not be fitting for me to ask, nor for thee to bestow, on the world.' They have peculiar claims and peculiar necessities. What these are, will come out as we proceed with the illustration of the other particulars.

2. They had peculiar relations

I go forward, then, to remark in the second place, that our Lord derives a plea for his petition in behalf of his apostles, from the peculiar relations in which they stood to the Father and to himself. "They were thine," they are now mine, for "thou gavest them me;" yet they are still thine, for "all mine are thine, and all thine are mine" (vers. 6, 9, 10).

These words are often interpreted as if they here referred to the whole of the peculiar people of God, whether viewed as chosen by him or called by him. The words are applicable to them, but our Lord is here speaking of his apostles. It is of them that he says, "they were thine."

The apostles were God's, as all men are God's. They were his creatures: he was the former of their bodies, the Father of their spirits—their entire rightful proprietor. They and theirs were all his, and to be disposed of as he pleases.

The apostles were God's, as all sinners are God's—his sentenced criminals. They had lost all claim on his justice. They were entirely at his mercy to save or to destroy, as seemed good in his sight.

The apostles were God's, as all Israelites were God's. They belonged to that chosen race who had "much advantage every way," and of whom it is said, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance?"

The apostles were God's, as all the elect are God's. They were among the antitypes of ancient Israel. The Lord "had chosen them to himself." They were "chosen before the foundation of the world," "predestinated unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of God's will, and to the praise of the glory of his grace."

The apostles were God's, as all the called and regenerate are God's. They were "his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus to good works,"—"formed" by as well as "for himself, to show forth his praise,"—belonging to that body of which Israel was a type; "the

Lord's portion,"—"his peculiar treasure,"—"his purchased possession,"—"the lot of his inheritance."

But the apostles were God's in a sense not common to all men, not common to all sinners, not common to all Israelites, not common to all the elect, not common to all the called and regenerate. They were from eternity the objects of God's choice to the official situation to which they were appointed. They were his servants as well as his sons.

There is still another sense in which they were God's, and in which they were God's before they became Christ's in the sense in which they now were his, to which we think it is, to say the least, highly probable that our Lord refers in the passage before us. The apostles—some of them certainly, all of them probably, with the single exception of Judas the traitor, "the son of perdition"—were, previously to their being called to be apostles or even disciples of our Lord, "among the godly ones whom the Lord sets apart for himself." Nathanael was not the only "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile,"² among them. They appear to have been all among those who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Some of them had enjoyed and valued the ministry of John, and were among his disciples. They seem, all of them, very readily to have complied with the call, "Follow me:" not that any comply with that call but under divine influence, or that divine influence could not have triumphed over any amount of indisposition; but there is no token of any struggle. They were pious men, spiritually changed by the faith of the Old Testament revelation, under the influence of the Spirit; "the escaped of Israel,"⁴ "the holy seed." They were willing to do the will of God, and therefore they knew the doctrine of Jesus Christ, that it was of God. They "did truth, and therefore they came to the light, that their deeds might be made manifest that they were wrought in God."² They had, "in good honest hearts,"—not naturally so, but made so by God's Spirit, by means of the Old Testament revelation, as Samuel, and David, and Isaiah, and the other holy men under the former economy,—a prepared soil, when the great Sower, the Son of

man, appeared, scattering abroad the good seed of the word. They were God's people, not only as belonging to "Israel after the flesh," but to "Israel after the spirit."⁴ The Father would surely take care of his own property: 'They were thine; remember the relation in which they stand to thee—a relation of thine own constituting.'

It deserves notice, that the author of the 119th Psalm, who belonged to the same class as the apostles previous to their call, uses the same plea for himself that our Lord here uses for them: "I am thine, save me."

But the apostles stood in a peculiar relation to the Son as well as to the Father; and on this our Lord founds, in pleading for the blessings he asks for them: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." These words are often interpreted of the eternal election of all the saved. But we have shown that they refer here entirely to the apostles. It is scarcely necessary to say that I hold it as a clearly revealed and an important doctrine, that, in the counsels of eternity, everything in reference to the salvation of men was settled—the persons to be saved—the blessings to be conferred—the great Deliverer—the channel through which he was to pour out these blessings on the chosen ones; and that there is nothing unscriptural in the idea that, in the covenant of peace, the heirs of salvation, contemplated as created and lost, by the eye which sees the end from the beginning, were put by the Father as it were into the hands of the Son, who undertook to be answerable for them, and to present them all at last before the face of the Father, with great joy, to the glory equally of the divine righteousness and mercy; and there can be no doubt that the apostles were among these chosen "heirs of salvation."

At the same time, I have elsewhere, at some length, explained the reasons which have led me, along with many excellent divines and interpreters, to consider the expression "given by the Father to the Son," so often used in this Gospel, as descriptive rather of the selection than of the election of the saved,—the manifestation of this eternal choice, by actually taking its objects to himself, as a peculiar

people, out of the world in which they are found. In conformity with this view of the general meaning of the phrase, I am disposed to consider the Father's giving the apostles into the hand of Christ as descriptive of his bringing them to him by the inward working of his Spirit, the intimations of his word, and the dispensations of his providence; and, to use Calvin's words, "as it were handing them over to the Son"—placing them under his peculiar care. "Having heard and learned of the Father," they came to the Son. The Father drew them to the Son. They were his, and he showed them his covenant: "Flesh and blood did not reveal to them the truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, but his Father who was in heaven;" and as a divine influence brought them to him, it was in fulfilment of a divine purpose, in obedience to the divine will, that our Lord received them as disciples, and afterwards appointed them as apostles. God gave them to him to be employed as under-agents in the great work of establishing the kingdom of God.

Now did not these facts form an appropriate and a strong plea, on the part of our Lord, in behalf of the apostles? Was it not natural, was it not right, in him to feel a peculiar interest in these persons? Would he have been "faithful to Him who appointed him," and gave them to him, had he not taken the greatest possible care of them? And where could he go, in their behalf, for blessings they greatly needed, but to Him whose gift they were, and who could—and who alone could—bestow the requisite benefits?

For in giving them to the Son, the Father had not relinquished his property in them, nor his interest in their happiness: "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." These words are very general. 'All things which are mine are thine, and all things which are thine are mine.' They are true of the Father and the Son essentially. How could it be otherwise? "I," says our Lord, "I and my Father are one," not merely in mind, and will, and aim, and operation, but in attribute and essence. Whatever perfection, prerogative, possession, belongs to the one, necessarily belongs to the other; for they are one. These words are, however, used here of the Father and the Son economically: "All

mine is thine." As Mediator, the Son receives everything from the Father, who sustains the majesty of the Divinity. All things are of Him: "Christ is God's;" and, of course, all that is Christ's is God's. "And all thine is mine." The Father has given all things to the Son; he has committed everything into his hands. Whatever the Father has, has been given by him to the Son. In the passage before us, the reference is plainly to the apostles as the property, first of the Father, then of the Son; yet by this transfer not ceasing to be the property of the Father.

What a powerful plea is this for the blessings asked for: 'I pray to thee for them, for they were thine: they are mine, for thou gavest them me; but yet they still are thine, for I am thine, and all I have is thine; and thou art mine, and all that thou hast is mine. I am thy Shepherd, and my sheep are thy sheep. I ask thee to give thine own to thine own—to give my own to my own: the blessings that are thine to the persons who are thine—the blessings which are mine to the persons who are mine.' It is the same glorious truth which the Apostle Paul states to the Corinthian believers: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; for ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

3. They had a peculiar history

The third plea employed by our Lord in support of his petitions for his apostles is, that they have a peculiar history. "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (ver. 6). "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" (ver. 8). "They have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee" (ver. 7). "And they have kept thy word" (ver. 6). Such is their past history,—a history showing very plainly that they are "not of the world." Let us look at these details, and see how far they furnish a

plea on which to ask the Father to keep them, to consecrate them,—that they might be one, as the Father and the Son are one.

"The name of the Father," as I have endeavoured to show you, is the character of the redeeming Divinity,—the Father of the Saviour, the Father of the saved. To manifest or reveal this character in his person, in his doctrine, in his work,—both his miraculous work, and his fulfilling all righteousness in his "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, for the salvation of men,"—was the office of the Son incarnate. To the incarnate Son, who had been in the Father's bosom, this character of God—as holy love, hating sin, loving sinners—was given to be manifested. He came as "the Word of life,"—the revealer of the living One,—the revealed living One,—the visible "image of the invisible God,"—"the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily." He exhibited this name to all among whom he dwelt; but to most of them there was no manifestation made. They shut their eyes, and would not see. "The light shone in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." But in these men the light shone inward—shone in their hearts; so that they had there "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it was in the face of Christ Jesus."³ To them there was a manifestation. He not only showed them the Father; but they, though but dimly, saw his glory in "the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." To a certain extent he opened their understandings; and though, properly speaking, in his teaching there existed not the distinction of exoteric and esoteric doctrines,—doctrines for the crowd and doctrines for the initiated,—yet, as the Evangelist Mark expresses it, "when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." As the great Teacher,

"Whom he teaches, he makes apt to learn."

"The words" which the Father gave the Son were just the verbal revelation of the Father's name; the doctrines which he was sent to teach. These words he 'gave' to the apostles. He put them in possession of them, so as that they believed them themselves, and were qualified to communicate them to others. He put them both

into their hearts and into their hands. And 'they received them,'— they took them into their minds and hearts. They, to a certain extent, apprehended their meaning. They saw, they felt their evidence; they partially understood, they firmly believed them; even what they did not understand they were persuaded must be true, because HE had said it, for "they knew surely that he came forth from the Father, and believed that the Father did send him." They received him as "the sent and sealed of the Father," and cordially believed whatever he said to them, as indeed the revelation of the mind and will of the Father.

Thus "they knew," and they acknowledged, "that all things which the Father had given the Son were indeed of the Father." The Father gave him the supernatural wisdom which appeared in his doctrines; but though the great body of the Jews wondered at this, yet they preferred any way of accounting for it to admitting that God spake by him. The Father gave him supernatural power, which was exerted in his miracles; but the great body of the Jews traced that to an infernal, not to a celestial origin. "They said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

The apostles, on the other hand, knew and acknowledged the doctrine that it was of God. Whence could such pure light come but from the Father of lights? They knew and acknowledged that "no man could do the miracles which he did except God were with him." And they proved the sincerity of their faith and profession, for they forsook all and followed him.

Still further: not only had they credited his message and acknowledged his authority, while the great mass of their countrymen disbelieved his statements, and regarded him as an impostor, but they "kept" the Father's word which the Son had given them. They were not like the wayside, nor like the rocky soil, nor like the ground overrun with thorns: the seed took root, and sprang up, and held on towards a healthy ripening and an abundant produce. When multitudes, who had professed faith in him, stumbling at

something in what he taught or in what befell him, turned back and walked no more with him, their unhesitating reply to him, when he said to them, "Will ye also go away?" was, "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."⁴ Such was the past history of those for whom our Lord prays. Was it wonderful that his heart was knit to the hearts of those simple-minded, simple-hearted men, often "slow of understanding," but always honest in purpose, full of confidence in his love, wisdom, and faithfulness? Was there not in these facts a host of reasons why the Father should "keep" these men, "consecrate" these men, that they might, in mind and will, aim and operation, be one, as the Father and the Son are, in seeking the glory of Divinity in the eternal life of men, through the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent?

These characteristic sketches of the apostles show what sort of men Christian ministers should be. They should not claim to be successors of the apostles, for the apostles have no successors: they need no successors; they still live, and teach, and legislate, in their divinely inspired writings. Their thrones never become vacant. But all Christian ministers should possess a kind of apostolical succession,—very different, indeed, from that to which some men lay claim, in consequence of having had their heads touched by the hand of those whose heads have been touched by the hands of those who say, that in an uninterrupted succession they can trace this hand-laying on heads from him who laid his hands on the apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" ay, up to Jehovah laying his hands on Moses, and the elders of Israel. This is a delirious and mischievous dream; and were it a reality, what would they be the better? But the ministers of the gospel, to answer the end of their appointment, must in every age be men like the apostles. They must be, like them, "one, as the Father and the Son are one." They must be "kept" and "consecrated" by the Father. They must be "not of the world;" they must be the Father's, and by the Father be brought to the Son. They must be men to whom the Son has manifested the Father's name; they must have received his words; they must have been taught of him; they must have seen and felt his glory; they must

themselves believe what they are to teach others; and they must keep the words of the Father and Son which they have received, persevering in the faith, and continuing to manifest the influence of the truth of God as it is in Jesus. It is a fearful curse to the church and to the world, when men without these qualifications, or even greatly deficient in them, form the body of the ministry. The healthful state of a Christian church, and the progress of Christianity through the world, depend, under God, on the character of the ministry. Every appropriate means should be diligently employed to bar out of the church an unqualified, unconverted ministry, and to secure apostolical men to preach the apostolical doctrine, and administer the apostolical law in the churches, and carry in their hands and in their hearts that gospel which the Lord commissioned his apostles to go into all the world and preach to every creature under heaven.

We may do something towards gaining this great end; but it is God only who can form such ministers as he will bless. Let us imitate our Lord, and go to the Father, and ask him to qualify and call, keep and consecrate, such men "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," and for instrumentally communicating eternal life, under the blessing of their Master and the working of his Spirit, to their fellow-men, already spiritually dead, and in imminent danger of the second death, by giving them the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Such prayers are, we are sure, agreeable to his will, and, if offered in faith and with perseverance, are sure to be granted. A numerous Christian ministry, animated with the apostolic spirit, "baptized" like them "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," would soon revive the church and convert the world. Let every one of us form the resolution, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Let us put God in remembrance of his promise to "set watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night;" and let us mutually encourage ourselves by saying to each other, "Ye that

make mention of the Lord's name, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

4. They were possessed of a peculiar character

The fourth plea which our Lord presents to his Father for granting the blessings he was soliciting for them is, that they were possessed of a peculiar character. "They were not of the world, even as he was not of the world."

"The world" here, and usually in the New Testament, is a general name for mankind in their fallen state, unchanged by divine influence. There is a common character which belongs to our race as fallen, though there is an endless diversity in the character of individuals, owing to the different degrees in which the various elements which constitute the common character are mixed up in them, and the various circumstances in which they are placed. There is "a fashion of this world," a common mould, according to which all men born merely of the flesh are formed. There is "a course of this world," "the broad way, leading to destruction," in which all walk, except those who, having entered through "the strait gate," walk in the narrow way of holiness which leads to life. All men who have not been "transformed by the renewing of the mind," are, as a matter of course, "conformed to this world."

This common character is just the natural result of the influence of things "seen and temporal" on the sentient, intellectual, emotional, active nature of man, unmodified by the influence of things unseen and eternal, and rendered more powerfully depraving by the operations of that wicked one, "in whom," under whom, "the whole world lieth" prostrate, in willing, helpless subjection,—"the prince," "the god of this world"—"the spirit which worketh" in the minds of the disobedient.

Viewed in relation to God, indisposition, opposition towards Him, the holy and benignant One, is the leading feature of this character. To be "in the world," in the sense of belonging to the class known by that name, and to be "without God," away from God, are necessarily conjoined: "without God, in the world." The world "knows not God"²—is ignorant of him—is in error about him. The world does not "like to retain God in its knowledge." "The natural," the animal, the worldly "man, receiveth not the things of God."⁴ "The world loves its own," and the love of God cannot share the dominion of the heart with the love of the world. Nay, "the carnal," which is just the worldly, "mind, is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."⁶

Viewed in reference to mankind, inordinate self-love, taking the form of pride, or ambition, or avarice, or voluptuousness, or a combination of all of these,—seeking its gratification in present sensible things, without regard to the happiness of others when this comes in competition,—is its grand characteristic. The world are "lovers of their own selves;" and just because they are so, are "hateful, and hating each other." Each is, as it were, his own god and world; and the rights of Divinity and of humanity are ignored or disregarded, and, if occasion seem to require, opposed and trampled under foot. This is the character which belongs to every man as "born of the flesh," every man who has not been "born again." This was the original character of the apostles.

The only way in which a human being can be brought "out of this evil world," so as no longer to be "of it," is by the power of the Divine Spirit accompanying and rendering effectual a revelation of the truth with respect to the character of God and our relation to him, by making it understood and believed. It is this "faith that overcometh the world." It is thus that men are made new creatures, and brought into a new creation. The power of the unseen and the future, triumphs over the power of the sensible and present.

We have reason to believe that the apostles were not "of the world," but "of God," not only before they were constituted apostles, but even before they became disciples of Jesus. They were the Father's before He gave them to the Son. They were "of God," and therefore "they heard the words of God" spoken by his Son. The world is in darkness, and loves it; but they, when the light of the world appeared, came to it. The truth respecting the character of God and his relations to men, revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, accompanied by divine influence, in the measure in which it was understood and believed, had formed them to a spiritual, an unworldly character; and that character was greatly improved in consequence of our Lord manifesting his Father's name to them—giving them his word. They were by no means completely freed from their original worldly character. But a set of views and feelings, and aims and desires, had been produced in them by the Spirit through the truth, which were quite antagonistic to their natural worldly views and feelings, and aims and desires. These had already got the mastery, and would in the issue entirely subdue all that was worldly in them.

One of the leading forms of the worldly character among the Jews in the age of our Lord, was an earnest desire for, a fond hope of, the coming of the Messiah as a great temporal prince and victorious warrior. The apostles were not quite awakened from this dream. But they had a sense of other and worse evils in themselves and others, than national degradation or Gentile slavery. They felt the burden of guilt and depravity; they sighed for pardon and holiness. They expected these from their Master; though how they were to be obtained, how given, they but dimly, if at all, understood. They knew, they loved, God as his Father and theirs; and they had renounced themselves, sacrificing the world's idol, self, cast in their lot with him who emphatically was "not of the world," and devoted themselves to the great work in which he was engaged. "They were not of the world, as he was not of the world;" not that they were as unworldly as he was,—alas, that was very far from being the case,—but their views, and desires, and aims, had the some leading character as his. They were the servants of God, not of mammon. They were "laying up

treasures for themselves," not on earth, but in heaven; "and where their treasure was, there was their heart also." They were "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

The possession of this character, which was the gift of God, was a good reason why the Son should ask such blessings for them—a good reason why the Father should confer such blessings on them. In exact proportion as they were "not of the world," as their master was "not of the world," they were of God; their character was the natural object of his complacency, for it was in conformity with his own. 'Thou hast given them this character; keep them, that it may be perfected in them; consecrate them, that it may be propagated by them.'

5. They were placed in peculiar circumstances

The fifth plea urged by our Lord for bestowing on his apostles the blessings he asked for them, is the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name;" "I have kept" every one of them; "none of them is lost." The son of perdition, indeed, who seemed to be of them, is lost; but he was none of them (ver. 12). "But now I am no more in the world, I come to thee (ver. 13);" "but they are not now to come to thee with me: they are to remain in the world without my being bodily present with them; and the world in which they remain is a hostile world. It hates them, and it hates them just on account of that character which they have in common with me, and which has been formed and strengthened in them by thy word. Father, keep them; Father, consecrate them. I deeply commiserate them, and utter this prayer in their hearing, that they may partake in that inward joy which I have, in the confidence that it will be heard and answered.' Let us briefly consider the different parts of this affecting pleading.

Our Lord had, from the time of their complying with his call to leave all and follow him, been constantly with them. He had been to them far more than all he had called on them to leave for him. He had been

their guide, their teacher, their guardian, their ever-present, their all-sufficient friend. He had manifested the Father's name to them, and kept them in reference to that name; kept them in faith and love, and obedience and submission to the Father; kept them from the evil in the world—the evil one, the evil thing. He had given them the Father's words, and enabled them to keep these words—to remain steadfast in the midst of temptation. Oh, how did he bear with their infirmities; how did he uphold them in weakness; how did he protect them from their own ignorance, unbelief, and perverseness, and from the allurements and terrors of the world! How did he warn them against danger; how did he prevent them from stumbling, from falling! How did he realize the emblem of the security and happiness of the chicken-brood under the warm covert of the wings of the mother-bird!²

He had kept them all; not one of them was lost. There was one lost, but he was none of them. He had been among them,—he seemed to be of them,—but he was not. That was "the son of perdition"—Judas, who had betrayed him. The son of perdition is, according to a Hebraistic mode of expression, equivalent to 'the utterly lost one.' How applicable!—lost to all just views, to all right feeling, to all sense of the true and the noble,—lost wholly, lost for ever. "Good had it been for that man that he had never been born."²

From our translation, we are apt to think that Judas is spoken of as one of those given by the Father to the Son. There is a sense in which Judas, as an apostle, was given to our Lord, but that plainly is not the sense in which the other apostles are here said to have been given him. The disjunctive particle rendered "except" seems here, as in some other places of the New Testament, expressive not of exception, but of opposition.⁴ It is an expression similar to that of Milton:

"God and his Son except, created thing

Nought valued he or shunned."

This miserable man is mentioned, yet without one word of bitterness, as if our Lord could not think with satisfaction of the safety of the eleven without a pang of generous regret at the self-perdition of the twelfth of those he had called to be his apostles, and as if to afford an opportunity of suggesting what was fitted to prevent the eleven from being stumbled by his treason.

Judas is lost; but in his perdition a new evidence of the Saviour's mission is afforded. "The son of perdition is lost, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (ver. 12). The reference is undoubtedly to Psalm 41, referred to by our Lord, ch. 13:18; and to Psalm 109, referred to by Peter in his address previously to the election of Matthias (Acts 1:20). "It would be," says Calvin, "a most unfounded argument to infer from this, that the revolt of Judas ought to be ascribed to God rather than to himself, as if the prediction had laid him under a necessity. For the course of events is not to be ascribed to prophecies, as if the events took place because they were predicted in them. The prophets threaten nothing but what would have happened though they had not spoken of it." It is not in the prophecies we are to seek the cause of Judas' sin. Nothing happens but according to God's appointment; but the cause of Judas' overt treason was his own inward disloyalty. The fact, however, that it was predicted long before, was a corroboration of the fact that Jesus was he of whom the prophets spoke. Had there been no traitor among Jesus disciples, that would have been a proof that, whoever he might be, he could not be the Messiah.

But he who, notwithstanding their weakness and waywardness, had kept the apostles, was now about, as to his bodily presence—and that was the only kind of presence they at present thought of—to leave them. "Now I am no more in the world, I come to thee;" that is, in harmony with the use of inspired men, the present for the future, as intimating at once the nearness and the certainty of the event, and his sense of it, 'I am just about to leave the world, and to come to thee; to be taken in my glorified humanity up to the heaven of heavens, there in human nature to enjoy "the glory I had with thee

before the foundation of the world." ' But though he was immediately to go, they were not. "Whither I go, ye cannot come:" "thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." His prayer is not to take them out of the world. The great design of the Father was to be gained by their remaining for some time in the world.

But, left in the world without their Lord, their situation was peculiarly trying. The world, in the midst of which they were left, was a hostile world: "The world hated them" (ver. 14). Mankind, with few exceptions, regarded them with scorn and dislike. They were to be put out of the synagogues; they who killed them were to be considered as offering an acceptable sacrifice to God. The world was not to receive their sayings, but to persecute them. They were to be hated of all nations for his name's sake; and this consideration greatly strengthens the plea: 'They are hated just because they belong to me,—because they belong to thee,—just because they proclaim the truth thou gavest me, and I gave them.' They needed to be kept; and it would be a thing worthy of God to protect the weak with the just cause, against the strong unjust oppressor, and especially when the hatred and opposition all grew out of the cause they upheld, which was his cause.

The deep interest which our Lord felt in his disciples, in their present defenceless circumstances, is very touchingly expressed in these words: "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Our Lord might have presented his petitions to his Father alone, as he was to do soon in the garden, unheard by any of them; or he might have done so without the use of language altogether. "Sighs can convey anything to him," as Herbert says. Thought and desire, the soul of prayer, are distinctly perceived by Him who is the Father of spirits as well as the hearer of prayer. But Jesus spoke these things audibly, that his apostles might participate in the holy joy with which, even in the prospect of his sufferings, he contemplated the complete success of his undertaking, and the full answer of all his supplications. There can be no doubt that at this moment Jesus rejoiced in spirit, as when he said, "The

hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified; now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him."2 His disciples were sorrowful, deeply sorrowful; but how well fitted to compose their spirits, and turn their sorrow into joy, to hear him, who they knew could not deceive them, expressing his ardent unchanging affection for them, and with such cheerful confidence commending them and their cause to the care of his Father and their Father, his God and their God! It could scarcely fail to produce some alleviation to their deep grief, even at the moment; and afterwards, how must the recollection often have filled their souls to an overflow with a holy joy, in which they had a deep consciousness that their fellowship was with him!

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that we are not to think of Christ as relinquishing the care of his apostles, and handing them, as it were, over to the Father. He would be with them still, he would keep them still, but not in the same way; and as, in the new creation, all things were of God, even the Father, it was meet to go to HIM and ask Him to keep them by him, in his unseen communication of his Spirit when in heaven, as He had kept them by him in his bodily personal intercourse with them when on earth.

6. They were appointed to a peculiar, important, and difficult work

The sixth plea which our Lord urges for granting the blessings to his apostles he had requested is, that they were appointed to a peculiar, important, and difficult work. "I am glorified in them" (ver. 10); "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (ver. 18). The words, "I am glorified in them," may be understood of the honour which was done to the Saviour by the honest attachment of these men to his cause, when he was despised and rejected by the great body of his countrymen. 'They glorify me, while others dishonour me.' But we think it a preferable mode of interpretation to consider these words—like "Now I am no more in the world;" "I come to thee;" "I have finished the work which thou

gavest me to do"—as instances of what has been called 'the prophetic present:' 'I am about to be glorified in them; they are to be the principal human instrumentality by which my glory among men is to be advanced.' They stood in some measure to the Son, in a relation similar to that in which he stood to the Father. The Father sent his Son to show forth his glory; the Son sends his apostles to show forth his glory, which is the glory of the Father. The glory of God shines in his face; and they all, acting as mirrors set opposite to this "brightness of the divine glory," were to reflect this radiance, being made glorious by that which was so glorious,² the very "brightness of the Father's glory." They were to preach among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" the glory of his person, his office, his work, his sacrifice, his salvation; his wisdom, and power, and grace, and faithfulness. They were to bear through the world "the name above every name," proclaiming him who wears it "Lord and Christ"—the Lord of all—"King of kings, Lord of lords."⁴

It is in reference to the same subject that he says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world" (ver. 18). Here, too, we have the prophetic present; for though our Lord had commissioned his apostles, he had not yet, in the proper sense of the words, "sent them into the world." He had sent them only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and had expressly prohibited them to go to the Samaritans, or "in the way of the Gentiles." But he was just about to send them into the world. In a very few days the commission was to go forth in these sublime words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you."² He was to send them, as the Father had sent him. Accordingly, we find him saying, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." They were sent by him, as he had been sent by the Father: sent for the same purpose—to

glorify God and save mankind,—“to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might obtain the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ;”⁴ sent, clothed with the same authority,—“He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me;” sent, endued with the same kind of qualifications,—he was anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, and on them he “shed forth abundantly” the same Holy Spirit; sent, furnished with the same credentials—“signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.” Thus, as the Father sent him, did our Lord send his apostles.

And surely in this fact is to be found a plea of great power, that they should receive all the protection and guidance, all the spiritual gifts and providential guardianship, which they needed for the execution of a work so important and so difficult as that to which they had been called. Surely it was meet that the Father should keep these men in his name—keep them from the evil; surely it was meet that he should consecrate them for a work so honourable, and at the same time so arduous.

7. His self-consecration was in order to their consecration

The last plea urged by our Lord for the bestowal of the blessings which he had requested for the apostles, is contained in these words: “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth” (ver. 19). This plea has a peculiar bearing on the petition for consecration, which immediately precedes it: “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth” (ver. 17). I have already endeavoured to show that the prayer here is for the consecration of the apostles for the work to which they were appointed, by giving them the Holy Ghost, and in that gift all necessary qualifications and credentials. It only remains here that we inquire what is meant by our Lord's sanctifying or consecrating himself; what bearing his consecration had on theirs; and what is the force of the statement, viewed as a plea for the consecration of the apostles.

The words, "I consecrate myself for their sakes," have by many interpreters been considered as having a past reference, and as signifying, 'For their benefit I have devoted myself to the great work of saving men.' The Father "sanctified and sealed him,"³ devoted and appointed him; and he devoted himself to this service, with this among other objects, that the apostles should, as agents under him, be consecrated to the same service. It seems, however, more natural to give a future reference to the declaration, and to consider "I sanctify myself," like "I am no more in the world, I come to thee, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do, I am glorified in them," as in the prophetic present. "I sanctify" is, in this case, 'I am just about to sanctify myself for their sakes, in their behalf, for their benefit.' The sense given by the best Greek interpreters, "I offer myself to thee as a sacrifice," seems the preferable one. Sacrifices, when offered, were said to be "hallowed," or sanctified "to the Lord." Our Lord was just about to complete his sacrifice, to devote himself as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people,—including, of course, his apostles; and he does this "that the apostles might be sanctified in the truth."

Some translate the concluding words, "in truth," truly, really. Others, with our translators, "through the truth;" understanding by the whole phrase, "made holy through the truth, understood and believed." These renderings bring out, either of them, a good sense; but still, viewed in their connection, we cannot doubt that the words signify 'that they may be consecrated in reference to the truth,' which is the same thing as "the name," and "word of the Father," the revelation of the divine character in the economy of redemption. To be consecrated in reference to this, is to be by the Holy Ghost qualified and accredited for the work to which they were called, which is sometimes figuratively represented as a priestly ministry; the apostles as spiritual priests presenting their converts as spiritual sacrifices; or, viewing the apostles not as figurative priests but figurative sacrifices, that they may be laid on the divine altar, presented as living sacrifices, ready to spend and be spent, devoted

even to death for the name of the Lord, and for the word of the truth of the gospel.

The connection between the self-consecration of our Lord and the consecration of the apostles, in either of these ways, which are just two different figurative representations of the same thing, must be obvious to every one who understands the gospel economy. Our Lord states the same truth, when he says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him to you." The Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, represents the removal of the curse, by its being borne by Christ in our room, as necessary to our obtaining the promised Spirit;³ and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he represents Christ as giving himself a sacrifice for the church, "that he might sanctify it." Our Lord's atonement was necessary to furnish the apostles with the testimony they were to give, the fundamental part of which was, 'that Christ had taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' to secure for them the Holy Spirit to enable them to give and to authenticate that testimony; and to make it effectual to the salvation of men through their believing it.

The appropriateness and force of this plea, viewed especially in reference to the petition with which it stands immediately connected, are very obvious. The consecration of the apostles was necessary to the success of their ministry; and it was through the success of their ministry that the great object for which Christ gave himself a sacrifice was to be gained. The sacrifice of Christ, the giving of the Spirit, the apostolic ministry, the salvation of men, are all indissolubly linked together. Had the Son not consecrated Himself as a sacrifice, the Spirit could not have been given; if the Spirit had not been given, the apostles could not have been consecrated—qualified and accredited—for the work of the full manifestation of the gospel of the grace of God; and if this gospel be not preached to all nations, mankind cannot be saved.

On the ground of the sacrifice then just about to be offered, our Lord pleads for what are its native results. It is as if he had said, 'Have respect unto the covenant. Remember the word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope: "When he shall have made his soul an offering for sin"—when he shall have sanctified himself—"he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge—the knowledge of himself—shall my righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear, has borne, their iniquities." He shall give to men eternal life, in the knowledge of the only true God, and of himself, whom he has sent. "Therefore will I assign to him the great as his portion, and he shall have the strong ones as his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Refuse not that unction of the Spirit which the atonement was intended to secure, and which is necessary to the gaining of the great ultimate objects of the atonement.'

How remarkably was the prayer answered! When Jesus, "delivered by the determinate counsel of God," and devoted by himself, had died on the cross as a sacrifice, God soon loosed the bands of death, it not being possible that he should be holden of it; and having set him at his own right hand, he gave to him the promised Holy Spirit, which he shed forth on the apostles, thus consecrating them for their ministry, and securing its success. Having "first descended into the lower parts of the earth," and then "ascended far above all heavens," he "received gifts," and bestowed them; consecrated "apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" in other words, 'that the apostles, and all who, in all ages and in all nations, shall believe through their word, may be one, as the Father and Son are one—Christ in them, the Father in Christ, and they in the Father and in

Christ; that they thus may be perfect in one, that the world may know that the Father has sent the Son, and hath loved the saved as he loves the Saviour.' So much for an illustration of our Lord's prayer for his apostles.

§ 3. His prayer for the church universal

"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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. 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: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."—JOHN 17:20–24.

I proceed now to consider the prayer which our Lord offered up in behalf of the church universal, as included in the 20th, 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th verses. This prayer resolves itself into two parts: First, a prayer for the church universal, as distinguished from the apostles, contained in the 20th verse: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe through their word;" that is, 'I pray for the same blessings, and I urge the same pleas in behalf of all who, through the word of the apostles, shall believe in me, as I have done for the apostles themselves.' And second, a prayer for the church universal, including the apostles, contained in the 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th verses, consisting of two petitions, with corresponding pleas, the one referring to the present state, the other to the future state: "I pray both for these," i.e. 'the apostles, and for those who 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; and," or rather 'for,' "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that," in order that, "they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." That is the first petition, with its pleas. The second, with its pleas, follows in the 24th verse: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." This analysis, general and imperfect as it is, will be found of some use in guiding our inquiries into the import of the petitions which the Saviour presents, and the pleas which he uses, in behalf of the church universal, and in which we, if we belong to that church, have so deep an interest,—to the more close consideration of which we now proceed.

(1.) His prayer for the church universal, as distinguished from the apostles

Let us first, then, attend to the prayer for the church universal, as contradistinguished from the apostles. That is contained in the 20th verse: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (ver. 20). There is more in this prayer than at first sight we might be apt to suppose. It has generally been thought that the prayer here presented for believers is merely that contained in the 21st verse; but a careful examination of the original text will convince the scholar that the union there referred to is not the direct, but the ultimate, object of the prayer,—something which would result from the petition being granted,—and that it is here prayed for in behalf both of the apostles and of those who should believe through their word. Indeed, a leading character of the prayer throughout, is the supplicating certain blessings as means towards the attainment of other blessings. Thus our Lord prays that the Father would glorify him, in order that he might glorify the Father. He prays for his apostles that the Father would "keep them," and "consecrate them," in order that they might be one, as he and the

Father are one. He does not ask these blessings in order to their being "taken out of the world," but to their being "kept from the evil." And here he prays for certain blessings, for "those who should believe through the apostles' word," in order that they and the apostles might so be one, as that the world should believe that the Father had sent the Son.

The word "pray," or ask, includes both petition and pleading; and it is not difficult to perceive what are the blessings for which our Lord petitions and pleads in behalf of those who believe through the apostles' word. They are substantially the blessings he had asked for the apostles; and the reasons why these blessings should be conferred, are substantially the same in the latter case as in the former. It is just as if our Lord had said, 'I present these petitions and pleas not for my apostles only, but for all who shall believe through their word.'

The persons here prayed for, as in the former case, are "not the world;" they are a peculiar people, made so by their believing on the Son through the apostles' word. Whether you render the word "who believe," or "who shall believe," it refers not merely to those who had embraced or should embrace the faith of Christ in consequence of the personal preaching of the apostles, but to all who, in all countries and in all ages, till the end of the world, should believe on the Son; that is, credit the truth respecting the Son as the Saviour of the world, in consequence of apprehending under the influence of the Holy Ghost the meaning and evidence of the apostolic testimony. None but believers in Christ belong to that peculiar people for whom he here intercedes. Now, "faith comes by hearing,"² or rather by a report, by testimony; and that "hearing," or report, or testimony, cometh "by the word of God," by a revelation. The report, though given by men, is HIS testimony. He gives it, and they report it.

Men cannot believe in the Son if they have not heard of him. They cannot hear of him without a preacher,—one to announce the truth about him; for it never can be discovered by mere research. And the

preachers or announcers of the testimony cannot declare truth on this subject, so as to lay a foundation for faith, unless they have been sent: they have no self-acquired knowledge, no original authority, and must be commissioned and qualified by God to give and to accredit the testimony. Such preachers were the apostles. While they lived, they "went everywhere preaching the word, the Lord confirming it by signs following;" and by the inward operation of the Holy Ghost, God "gave testimony to the word of his grace;"² and multitudes of men, "of every nation under heaven," received their testimony and believed on the Son,—counting "the good news" "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,"—embracing the Son as their Saviour, and submitting to him as their Lord.

Before the apostles fell asleep, they, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, embodied in the books of the New Testament their doctrine and its evidence; gave an account of what they had taught, and of the miraculous works which had proved that what they taught was the truth of God. In these writings they still continue to testify of the Son. The apostles alone are "God's ambassadors," in the strict sense of that word. They alone stand "in Christ's stead." They had "the mind of Christ," in a sense peculiar to themselves; and that mind is in their writings. "Their sound is gone to all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."⁴

No man is included in the term here employed by our Lord, who is not a disciple—a follower—of the apostles; who has not, "through their word" understood and credited, believed on the Son. He whose faith in or about Christ—a faith unworthy of the name—rests on any other foundation,—who believes merely because the religion of Christ is the religion of his country and age, because his parents or religious instructors have told him so,—has no lot or part in this prayer of our Lord.

It is striking to notice the circumstances in which our Lord speaks of these persons as a class, so deeply interesting his affections, as to lead him to make their happiness the subject of special intercession

with God. He had now concluded his personal ministry; and, so far as the production of visible effect was concerned, he might have taken up the complaint, "Who hath believed my report?" "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people." Those who had believed on him through his own word, and the word of his apostles, were comparatively very few. We cannot think that many, if any, of those who believed on him would be absent from the meeting he had solemnly summoned in Galilee before he left the world; and the Apostle Paul, plainly intending not to diminish their number, states them only as "more than five hundred brethren." The faith of these was already sorely shaken, and was ere long to be shaken all but to dissolution. Our Lord was about, by the highest ecclesiastical court of his country, to be condemned for blasphemy; by the Roman government to be sentenced to a cruel, ignominious death; by the Roman soldiers to be nailed to the cross; and by the hands of his disconsolate, all but despairing friends, to be laid in the grave. And he knew all this. But he does not fail, nor is he discouraged. "The corn of wheat," cast dead into the earth, bursting the glebe, and "bringing forth much fruit,"—"the Son of man lifted up from the earth, drawing all men to him,"—are before his mind.² He "staggers not through unbelief at the promise,"—"he shall see his seed," "a seed shall serve him,"—but is "strong in faith, giving glory to God." The "great multitude that no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who were seen by his favoured disciple, in ecstatic vision, standing before him and his Father with "white robes, and palms in their hands," were by the faith which gives a present existence to future events, a palpable form to invisible things, seen by him "afar off," as in successive ages they rise from earth to heaven; and in their behalf he supplicates and pleads. This was "his joy"—"the joy set before him;" and "these things he spake in the world," in the presence of his apostles, "that they might have his joy fulfilled in themselves." How well fitted was his cheerful confidence to re-assure their failing spirits—to revive their all but expiring hopes! And how must the recollection of this prayer have delighted them amid their painful yet most joyous labours,

when out of their mouths, as of "the mouths of babes and sucklings, he perfected strength, stilling the enemy and avenger,"²—when he successfully employed them to "gather to him his saints, those with whom he had made covenant by sacrifice!"

1. Petitions

The blessings he supplicates for those who should, in all countries and ages, believe through the apostles' word, are the same substantially as those which he had supplicated for the apostles themselves. He prays that they may be "kept"—"kept with a reference to the truth"—"kept from the evil" which is in the world; and that they may be "consecrated"—"consecrated in reference to the truth"—the word of the Father, the declaration of his name.

Believers have a double duty to perform in reference to the truth which they have believed,—the word of the apostles, which is the word Christ gave them, the word the Father gave Christ, and which is the true revelation of the Father's name. They must "hold it fast," and they must "hold it forth;" and to do either, they themselves must be kept.

They will not keep the word that has been spoken to them, and which they have received,—on the contrary, they will "let it slip," or cast it away from them,—if they themselves are not "kept by the power of God through faith."² They cannot "hold it forth," if they do not thus "hold it fast." Therefore our Lord's prayer is, "Father, keep them."

'Keep them from forgetting thy word—from "holding it in unrighteousness"—from misapprehending it—from perverting it—from resisting its influence—from denying it—from disgracing it. Keep them from error; keep them from sin; keep them from apostasy: "Hold up their goings, that their footsteps slide not."⁵ "Keep them from the evil" which is in the world.

'Keep them from the evil one that is in the world. "Lead them not into temptation, but deliver them from the evil one." Let him not,

when he assumes the form of an angel of light, delude them; let him not, when he appears in a shape more suitable to his true character, as the "roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour," destroy them, or, as the cunning venomous serpent, "beguile them by his subtlety, or corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ." Let him not even cloud their minds or disturb their peace.

'Keep them from the evil ones of this world; save them from the men of this world. "Keep them, preserve them for ever from that generation." "The wicked walk on every side;" keep them from these wicked. Keep them, "deliver them from the wicked, which are thy sword: from men which are thy hand, O Lord; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure."² Keep them from the effects of the malice, and from the contagion of the manners, of such men.

'Keep them from the evil things that are in the world: from suffering, so far as it is an evil thing; from sin, which is by way of eminence the evil thing—the only thing in God's world in which there is no good. "Keep them back from presumptuous sin; cleanse thou them from secret faults; let no iniquity have dominion over them;" and should they fall into this evil thing, keep them from continuing in it, and bring good to them out of this greatest of all evils. "Give thine angels charge concerning them, to keep them in all their ways."⁴ Let thy grace keep their hearts and minds. "Establish and keep them from all evil." Thou, thou alone, art able to keep them from falling. "Let their spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto my coming." ' By thus keeping believers, God enables them both to "hold fast" and to "hold forth" his word.

Such is the import of the prayer, 'Keep them who shall believe on me through the words of the apostles.'

He prays, however, not only that they may be kept, but that they may be sanctified. "Sanctify," that is, consecrate them. All believers are not—indeed, no believer is—called to the specific work of the apostles

in reference to "the word of God, which is truth." But every Christian has a duty to perform in reference to that truth, as we have just seen; and he cannot perform that duty aright, unless the Father "sanctify" or consecrate him. Believers do not need the inspiring Spirit. He has already done his work in the apostles, by the apostles. But believers do need the baptism of the Holy Ghost in his enlightening, and enlivening, and guiding, and consoling influence. They need to be "sanctified" in the whole man—soul, body, and spirit—"in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," that they may "come out from among the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing,"² "cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" and that they may "glorify him in their body and in their spirit, which are God's," in consequence of their being "bought with a price," and having become "the temple of the Holy Ghost." Our Lord's prayer for his disciples to his Father is, that he would not deny to them, as the sanctified, and preserved, and called ones, equally near and dear to the Father and the Son, his free Spirit, but "shed it forth on them abundantly," that, receiving this "anointing," they may "know all things;" and having the Spirit, living in the Spirit, may "walk in the Spirit,"⁴ that is, in light, and love, and consolation—in holiness, and peace, and joy.

Such are the petitions which our Lord presents for all believers, in all countries and all ages.

2. Pleas

As our Lord's petitions for his apostles are substantially the same as his petitions for their followers, so also are his pleas.

They are a peculiar class; they are not of the world. They stand in a peculiar relation both to the Father and the Son. The apostles, as I showed in a former part of this exposition, stood, in some respects, in a relation altogether peculiar both to the Father and to the Son. But in many respects the followers of the apostles, those who believe on the Son through their word, have similar—ay, have the same—

relations to the Father and Son as they had. Comparatively few of those who believed on the Son through the apostles' word, were, like them, "the Father's," in the sense of their being truly pious persons, previously to their embracing Jesus as the Messiah. That was no doubt the case with some in the apostolic age; as, for example, Lydia the Thyatiran seller of purple in Philippi, "one who worshipped God;" but in the great majority of instances, in that age and ever since, they who believed in Christ through the apostles' word have been, till they believed it, "without God" and "without Christ" "in the world"—far from God, unconnected with Christ. Yet were they all the Father's, the creatures of his hand and the subjects of his government, produced and upheld by his power, distinguished by his benefits, dependent on his will; his, too, as criminals, who, having violated his law, were under his condemning sentence, and entirely at his mercy; his by acts of special love, elected by his grace, redeemed by the blood of his Son, selected by his Spirit, and saved and called by a holy calling.

As they were all the Father's, so were they also all the Son's, for the Father had given them to him. He had brought them to him—united them to him—that, washed in his blood and sanctified by his Spirit, they might obtain possession of holy happiness, that Christ might live in them, and they live by Christ; and their having become the Son's by the Father's gift, in no degree lessened the Father's interest in them, but, if possible, rather increased it. It was because he loved them that he made them Christ's; and now, because they are Christ's, he loves them, and is disposed to bless them in him with all heavenly and spiritual blessings. They are, if I may use the expression, more than ever his property, his portion, his delight. They are the vineyard of which he says, "I the Lord do keep it, I will keep it night and day."

They, as well as the apostles, have a peculiar history. It is true of them as well as of the apostles, though in a modified sense, that the Son has "manifested the Father's name to them; that he has given them the words which He gave him; that they have received these words; that they have known that all things which the Father has

given the Son, are indeed of—from—the Father; that they have known surely that he came forth from the Father, and that the Father hath sent him; and they keep the word which they have received." All believers in the Son through the word of the apostles become such by Christ, through his Spirit enabling them to discern the meaning and evidence of that revelation of the divine character in his person and work, of which the testimony of God by the apostles contains the inspired account. "Flesh and blood" do not produce the change; but their Father in heaven, by the Son, through the Spirit. They all know, and are sure, that the Son is the sent and sealed of the Father. They all recognise the stamp of divinity on his person, qualifications, doctrine, law, and administration; and they all continue "rooted and built up in Christ," "holding fast the faithful saying."

Like the apostles, they are placed in peculiar circumstances. They never had what the apostles for a season enjoyed, the bodily presence of their Lord with them on earth. But they have this in common with them, after he went to heaven, that he is not in this respect with them. They "see him not." They are, because of their connection with him, their attachment to him, exposed to peculiar trials and dangers. They are in the midst of a hostile world,—a world that dislikes them, and is ever disposed to do them injury, because, led by the word which Christ has given, they have come out of the world, and devoted themselves to other—to opposite—purposes from those which the world prosecutes.

Thus, like the apostles, they have also a peculiar character. They are "not of the world," and they are not of the world just as their Lord was not of the world; they are "laying up treasures, not on earth, but in heaven;" they are "labouring, not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat that endureth unto eternal life;" they are "setting their affections on things above, and not on things which are on the earth;" they are "not minding earthly things;" they are "strangers and pilgrims here;" "their citizenship is in heaven;" they are "seeking the things which are above, where Christ sits at God's right hand."

Like the apostles, they are appointed to a peculiar work—to glorify Christ; and in glorifying Christ, to glorify God, by promoting the great interests of the kingdom of God in the salvation of men. This is their great business. They "are in the world as he was in the world," not to do their own will, but to do "the will of their Father in heaven."

Finally: Like the apostles, their sanctification was one great design why our Lord sanctified himself. He died in their room, that he might open a channel for the influence of the Holy Spirit, to find its way into their hearts, and that he might secure for himself the high prerogative of sending forth and guiding, in all its meanderings, the river of life issuing from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb. "Christ redeemed them"—all his people—"from the curse of the law, having become a curse in their room," not only that the blessing of Abraham—a free and full justification through believing—should come to them, but also that they should receive the Holy Spirit in believing. Christ "gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." For the church—its members in all ages, as well as its original constituent members and great founders—Jesus "Christ gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."²

These are the pleas which the Saviour presents in support of the petitions which he offers for all who shall believe through the apostles' words, equally with the apostles themselves. And it is too plain to require detailed illustration, that they are powerful and appropriate pleadings. They are just the circumstances which make it obviously right and reasonable that he should present such petitions to his Father, and which make it obviously right and reasonable that the Father should "hear his anointed from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand," and satisfy him by letting him see the fruit of "the travail of his soul," in the holiness, and happiness, and usefulness of his redeemed people.

Brethren, it is on the assured knowledge that this prayer has been—is being—offered up by the Son to the Father, and that it has not been, that it cannot be, offered up in vain, that all our hopes, for ourselves as individuals, and for the church as a body, are founded. What would become of us if we were not "kept," constantly kept,—if we were not "sanctified," progressively sanctified? We should wander into error and sin; we should stumble and fall into perdition; we should become worse and worse,—such is the bias of our fallen natures. But the Saviour prays for us if we are among his people; and "him the Father heareth always." Every Christian, with his faith firmly fixed on the two facts, equally certain, that this intercessory prayer is presented for him, and that it will be answered (for "the Lord will keep the feet of his saints He "forsakes not his saints; they are preserved for ever "He preserves all who love him"), however sensible of his own weakness and waywardness, and the power of his enemies, may raise this song in the house of his pilgrimage: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer my foot to be moved; he that keepeth me will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is my keeper; the Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The sun shall not smite me by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve me from all evil he shall preserve my soul. The Lord shall preserve my going out, and my coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."

And what would become of the church as a body, formed of such members, entrusted with such important interests, charged with such heavy responsibilities, surrounded by enemies so numerous, so powerful, so crafty, so active, and so malignant, were it not for the intercessory prayers of her Lord and King? Where would she now have been but for these prayers? Let those who are mourning her sinful defects, and trembling at her immense responsibilities, and longing for the glorious results that are connected with her continued existence, her growth in purity and power, and her ultimate triumph, lift up their eyes to heaven and see the Angel of the Covenant standing by the altar, "having a golden censer with much incense to

offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." The smoke of that incense ascends for ever before God with "a sweet-smelling savour." While he stands there, his church and his cause are safe. He is continually saying, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."² Well may we say, "The Lord fulfil all thy petitions." Well may we in triumph exclaim, "Now know we that the Lord saveth his anointed: he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand." Then will come the glorious result: "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."⁴

Before concluding at present, let me turn your minds to a question, for answering which we are at present placed in peculiarly favourable circumstances. On what rests that all-prevalent intercession on which rest all our hopes, both for ourselves as individuals, and for the church as a body? The reply is in the hearts of you all, ready to be uttered by joyful, grateful lips: 'On that all-perfect atonement, of which the memorials are now about to be set before us.' Yes, my brethren, in the case of sinners, expiation must precede forgiveness, and forgiveness must open the way for holiness and happiness. Had there not been an all-sufficient sacrifice, there never could have been effectual intercession. But there has been an all-sufficient sacrifice; and in the ordinance to the observance of which we are just about to proceed, we have the proof at once of its reality and efficacy. The awful rites of expiation are over for ever. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." This is but the grateful commemoration of it. "It is finished," said the expiring victim, and the righteous Judge re-echoed the declaration, "It is finished." The bands of death were broken; and he who "died once, the just for the unjust," lives again never to die—"lives by the power of God." Having "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," his blood having cleansed us from all sin,

and ever living "to make intercession for us," He is "able also to save us to the uttermost coming to God by him."

In the ordinance we are about to observe, we see the great High Priest laying himself as a victim on the altar of divine justice. In the prayer we have been considering, we see him passing through the veil with his golden censer sending up its perfumed clouds to heaven. The heavens have received him, but the fragrance of his incense still fills the outer sanctuary where we now worship, waiting for the appointed time when, in reference to each member of his true church, the petition shall be presented, 'Father, I will that this person, gifted by thee, redeemed by me, be also with me where I am, to behold my glory; and "looking for," hasting also to, "that day," when "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty," he shall "shine gloriously;" and a voice shall come at which this earth and these heavens shall flee away: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself." '

With this retrospect, with this anticipation, do we observe this ordinance. This is the memorial of his all-perfect sacrifice, and we observe it according to his appointment "till he come," "looking for," longing for, "that blessed hope, the glorious appearance" of the Saviour from heaven, "who shall change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." Blessed be God, we know and are sure that "to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin," not as a sin-offering, but for their complete salvation. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

(2.) The prayer for the church universal, inclusive of the apostles

In our illustrations we are arrived at the prayer of our Lord for the church universal, inclusive of the apostles. "I pray that they all"—"those whom thou hast given me," the apostles, "and them who shall believe on me through their word"—"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. And"—or rather 'for'—"the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me,² and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (vers. 21–24).

We have here a prayer for his people while in this world, that they may be one, and that in consequence of being one they may lead to the world's believing and knowing that the Father had sent the Son; and a prayer, that when they have served their purpose here, when they have become and when they have done what he would have them to become and do, they may be taken out of this world to a better one; that they may be with him where he is and behold his glory: and each of these prayers has its appropriate plea. Let us attend to them in their order.

1. A prayer in reference to earth and time

a. The prayer

This prayer of our Lord for his church universal, including the apostles and all their believing followers, is, "That being kept and consecrated by the Father, they all may be one: "as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, that they also may be one in them." ' This is what our Lord had prayed for on behalf of the apostles.² When illustrating that petition, we endeavoured to show that it has no reference to that union to, or absorption into, the divine essence, of which mystics have dreamed; nor even to that general participation of "a divine nature," which the Apostle Peter represents as the end for which so "exceeding great and precious promises" are given to those who have "obtained like precious faith with the apostles." The union supplicated corresponds with the one

great subject of the prayer, the one great object of the petitioner, the salvation of men to the glory of God. Our Lord prays that his people, in all countries and in all ages might be united in mind, and will, and aim, and operation, as to God's being glorified in man's obtaining eternal life in the knowledge of God the Father, and the Son; so united by being kept in reference to the name of the Father, manifested in his word spoken by the Son, which is truth, and being consecrated by the influence of the Holy Spirit; so united as the Father and the Son are in reference to this object, thus having fellowship one with another, while "truly their fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."⁴

b. The Pleas

In support of this petition our Lord urges two pleas: the first, that it is by this unity of mind, will, aim, and operation, that the world is to be brought to believe and know that the Father had sent the Son; and the second, that this unity, with the effects to which it was sure to lead, was the great object why He had given his people the glory which the Father had given him.

With regard to the first of these pleas, let us inquire, first, What is the object our Lord contemplates as to be served by this unity? and then, How this unity is fitted to gain this object. The object is, "that the world may be made to believe and know that the Father had sent the Son." "The world," here, as generally in the New Testament, means mankind; as when it is said, "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "sent him not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Though it is, and cannot but be, the will, the object of complacential regard to him whose nature as well as name is love,² that all men should be "saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," it is nowhere stated in the Scriptures that it is the purpose of God that all men shall be saved, by being made to know and believe that he hath sent his Son, and thus brought to receive his message, to embrace him as their Saviour, and

to become partakers of his salvation. On the contrary, we have abundant evidence that some men—many men—shall perish in, and for, their sin and unbelief.

But it is stated—very plainly stated—in Scripture, that it is the will of God that the gospel of the kingdom should be "preached to every creature under heaven;" and not only so, but also that it is his determination that vast multitudes of men, of all kindreds, and people, and tongues, and nations, shall be brought, through the faith of that gospel, into the possession of the blessings which it at once reveals and conveys; and that a period may be looked for when the great body of mankind living on the earth at the same time shall be brought to the knowledge and profession of the Christian faith, and to the enjoyment of the Christian salvation. It was distinctly promised that "in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed;" that "to Shiloh was to be the gathering of the people,"² and that "the nations"—the Gentiles—were to "rejoice with God's people;" that "all the ends of the earth were to remember, and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him;"⁴ that "He should have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" that "all kings should fall down before him, and all nations should serve him;" that "men should be blessed in him, and all nations should call him blessed;" that "Jehovah's name should be one over all the earth,"² and that "the God of the whole earth should he be called;" that the Messiah should be a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth;"⁴ that "the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and that all flesh should see it together." "The world's knowing and believing that the Father had sent the Son" is just equivalent to 'mankind enjoying eternal life in the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent'—men experimentally "knowing God as the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, blessing them with all heavenly and spiritual blessings in him." This, then, is the object which our Lord contemplates as to be gained by the union of his church for which he prays, and which he employs as a plea with the Father, that

this union may be effected and maintained by his keeping and consecrating them.

It is not difficult to perceive how closely connected are the unity which Christ prays for, and the conversion of unbelieving men—ultimately the conversion of the great body of mankind—to the faith of Christ. The precise nature of the connection, however, does not seem to us to have been distinctly apprehended by the great body of interpreters. They have thought of the unity of Christians here spoken of as that union of mind and heart which is produced in all true Christians by the one Spirit, through the faith of the same truth, becoming visible, as it ought to do, in their mutual recognition of each other as brethren, walking together in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, and seeking to promote each other's holy happiness. They look forward to a period when this shall be realized in a higher degree than it has been since the primitive age; and they expect that this state of things will have a powerful influence on the world, softening its prejudices, leading it first to wonder what it can be that, in so numerous a society, formed of materials so apparently ill fitted for union, as the Christian church viewed as one body, neutralizes the causes of disunion, and makes such numbers of men, of the most different natural talents, dispositions, stations, acquirements, habits, and whose worldly interests would seem likely often to come into collision, live together as a band of brothers. This would naturally lead to inquiry, ending in the conviction that nothing but what is divine could produce such an effect. This is what they apprehend to be the state of things among Christians for which the Saviour prays; and this the way in which, when it takes place, it shall operate, in bringing the world to believe that the Father has sent the Son,—in other words, in leading unbelieving mankind to embrace Christianity.

Now, no doubt the union of the church in the primitive age did make an impression even on heathens, and led them to say, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" and very possibly might be the means in many cases of leading to a train of thought and inquiry

which terminated in conversion. Most assuredly the unseemly divisions and strifes among professed, and even real Christians, have been a great hindrance to the progress of Christianity. "Woe" has been "to the world because of these offences," these stumbling-blocks; and "the work of God" has often been all but "destroyed" by contentions about "meats,"² and other matters not of higher importance. But the influence of this union on the conversion of the world seems but indirect. Hitherto, since the primitive age, it has been very feebly exerted amid most powerful counteracting forces; and supposing the reference to be to this, it would appear that, to an incredible extent, the prayer of our Lord remains unanswered.

I therefore am confirmed in my conviction, that the union here referred to is union with regard to one object,—the great object of our Lord's prayer,—union in mind, heart, will, aim, and operation, with regard to the great work of glorifying God in the salvation of men, through the knowledge of the truth. This union has a direct and obvious bearing on the conversion of the world. In proportion as an individual is of one mind and heart with the Father and the Son on this subject, must he seek the salvation of men through the knowledge of the truth. Can a man have his mind in accordance with that of the Father, "who spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up" to degradation and death, to accomplish the salvation of men; or with that of the Son, who loved not his own life to the death, who gave himself as a victim to accomplish this salvation;—can he have the same mind which the Father and the Son have manifested, in the mission of the Spirit, to regenerate, and sanctify, and comfort men; and yet not seek to bring men to salvation "through the acknowledgment of the truth?" And when all Christians are as much of one mind and heart with one another, and with the Father and the Son, as they ought to be, think you that the general conversion of the world to Christianity can be far off? And till this is the case, how, without a miracle—which we are not warranted to expect—shall the world ever be brought to believe and know that the Father hath sent the Son? Even without the visible union referred to above, this oneness of mind, and will, and aim, and operation, in reference to

the glorifying God in the salvation of men, just in the degree in which it prevails, will lead to the conversion of the world. Indeed, the visible union so desirable is likely to be the consequence of the general and powerful influence of the union we now speak of, while, at the same time, it will give a new impulse to that in which itself originates.

It is the answer to this prayer, in reference to individual Christians and Christian societies, that has led, in the ages that are past, to the conversion of the world, so far as the world has been converted; and it only requires this prayer to be universally answered, and the labourers will be as many as the harvest is great. The command will come forth, "Thrust in the sickle, and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe;" and the reapers shall return from the field rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. To change the figure, when the armies of heaven, with one mind and heart, follow the Captain of their salvation riding forth "conquering and to conquer," the voice will soon be heard in heaven, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."²

What a plea is this for the union of his people for which the Saviour is pleading! q.d., 'What I pray for is the direct, the natural, the effectual means of accomplishing thy good pleasure, thy benignant determination, which thou hast purposed in thyself; and of fulfilling the great promise made to the fathers, which is to be "yea and amen to thy glory." '

The second plea is derived from the consideration that what he was praying for was the great design he had in view when he gave his people the glory which the Father had given him: "And"—or rather for—"the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," that "they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." 'Let them

be one, because I have given them the glory which thou hast given me, for the express purpose of securing this unity and its glorious results.' Here it will be necessary to inquire, first, What is meant by our Lord giving to the apostles, and to all who believe on him through their word, the glory which the Father had given him? and then, How this was intended and calculated to secure the union for which he prays, and its blessed fruits.

There has been considerable variety of opinion among interpreters as to what is that glory here spoken of given by the Father to the Son, and by the Son given to the apostles and to his believing people. "Glory" here is dignity—honourable place, office, or employment. There is a glory belonging to the Son of God, as of the same nature with his Father, which is underived and eternal. That glory is not given to him, and cannot be given by him. It is not received, and cannot be imparted. It must be possessed by him who possesses Deity; it can be possessed only by him who possesses Deity. Some have supposed that the glory here spoken of, and that spoken of in the 24th verse, is the same glory. But that does not seem to be the case. The glory mentioned here is plainly glory given to believers while in the present state, to produce certain effects which can take place only on earth. The glory spoken of in the 24th verse is glory enjoyed by the Son in heaven, which his people, in strict propriety of language, are rather to contemplate than to share.

Some have supposed that the glory referred to here is the glory of being sons of God. The glory of essential divine sonship is not given, and cannot be imparted; but our Lord, who is economically as well as essentially the Son, as "the first-born among many brethren," says to the apostles, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father;" and, no doubt, "to as many as received him he gives the power"—the privilege, which is a glorious one—"to become the sons of God."² Others have supposed that our Lord refers to the glory of miraculous power. To him as Mediator this glory was given, and by him given to the apostles. Others have supposed that it is the glory of celestial dignity and happiness. The Father appointed to the Son a kingdom,

and he appoints to his people a kingdom. Others have supposed that it refers to the glory of being like God. The Father gave to the Son the glory of having the glory of the Father shining in his face, of being the visible image of the invisible God; and by him his people are transformed into the same image.⁴ Had the words stood by themselves, they might have meant any of these things; or, indeed, they might, as the expression of a general truth, have included them all, for in all these ways the Father has given the Son glory, and the Son in all these ways gives the same kind of glory to his people.

But, looking to the connection, I think there can be no doubt that the glory referred to is the glory of manifesting the Father's name, declaring the Father's word. So far as the apostles were concerned, "as the Father sent the Son into the world," so he sent them into the world; they were "in Christ's stead," and being so, were "God's ambassadors." He spake God's words, he did God's works; and so did they. "He that received them, received him; and he that received him, received him that sent him." And though the apostles, strictly speaking, had, could have, no successors, yet still to all his people Christ gives the glory of being, like him, manifesters of the Father's name. In this respect they "are in the world as he was in the world." To him it was given of the Father that he should be "the light of life," "the light of men," "the light of the world;" and not only to the apostles, but to all his people, does he say, "Ye are the light of the world."² He gives them the highest glory a creature can have, that of manifesting the glory of the all-glorious One, in his truth which he puts into their hands and hearts, and in the influence of that truth on their character and behaviour. The Father glorified him, by appointing and qualifying him to glorify Him; and he glorifies his people, by appointing and qualifying them to glorify him, and the Father through him.

Now, he gives them this glory for the very purpose "that they may be one, as we are"—"I in them, and thou in me;" that is, that I being in them, and thou being in me, "they may be made perfect in one," or become perfectly one. God gave his Son the glory of manifesting his

name, he gave him his name to manifest; and the Son gives his people the glory of manifesting the Father's name, and he gives them this name. The mind of the Father is in the Son; the mind of the Son, which is the Father's mind, is in his people, put there by his word and Spirit, especially that mind as it refers to the glorification of God in the salvation of men. So that by this arrangement provision is made for entire union in mind, will, aim, and operation, in seeking this great object.

And in giving his people the glory which the Father gave him, the Son looked not merely at their obtaining this union, but at the results of that union when obtained. These are stated in the closing words of the 23d verse: "And that the world might believe that thou hast sent me." 'I give my people the honour of being manifesters of the Father's name, that they might manifest that name to all the world, and that through that manifestation the unbelieving world should become believing; that mankind generally should be brought to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and thus obtain eternal life.' It is surely meet that the object for which the Son gave to his people the glory which the Father gave to him, should be gained, completely gained.

The concluding words of this plea—"And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"—admit of two different modes of interpretation. They may be considered, as they generally have been, as referring to those who, by being one, should become successful instruments in the conversion of the world. 'I have given them the glory of manifesting thy character, that, being united in mind, will, aim, and effort, they may succeed in converting the world: and that it may be thus made evident, by the success of the great work in which they as well as I am employed, that they are the objects of a like complacent regard as that with which thou regardest me.' In this case we may suppose a tacit reference to such passages: "Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

The conversion of the world will be a wonderful proof of God's love to his church, as well as to his Son. The "Holy One of Israel" will glorify his church, which has glorified him, when "the sons of strangers shall build up her walls, and their kings shall minister unto her; when the glory of Lebanon shall come unto her, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of Jehovah's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious. Then shall they call her the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." When the world is brought to believe that the Father has sent the Son, it will be made to appear that God loved the church, as well as him who purchased her with his own blood: "The sun shall be no more her light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto her: but the Lord shall be unto her an everlasting light, and her God her glory. Her sun shall no more go down; neither shall her moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning shall be ended."

Viewed in this light, the words were not only a strong plea with the Father, but they were also well fitted to answer the purpose referred to by our Lord at the 13th verse—"the having his joy fulfilled" in the hearts of his disciples. They could very imperfectly understand them; but what a comfort was it to hear him confidently speaking of his giving them the glory the Father had given him, that the world might be converted, and that they might be shown to be partakers with him of his Father's complacency!

The words, however, admit of another reference. They may refer to the converted world: "That the world may believe and know that thou hast sent me—sent me to lay down my life for men—to "give my flesh for the life of the world;" and that, believing and knowing this, they may know also "that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." ' This is perfectly good sense, and conveys an important truth, and is in keeping with the declaration, that "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" that He "sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

At the same time, the grammatical construction, though not absolutely forbidding this interpretation, is more favourable to the former, which is also confirmed by the concluding words of the chapter,—“that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them,”—which, without doubt, refer to the apostles, and to “those who should believe on Christ through their word.” I conclude this section with cursorily remarking on the high dignity of the people of Christ, the responsibilities connected with that dignity, and the encouragement they have to act out these responsibilities.

How great is the dignity of a genuine Christian, however humble may be his circumstances in this world! The glory which the Father gave the Son, the Son has given him. How different the estimate of glory formed by our Lord, from that generally entertained among men! He who occupied the highest place in the universe, counted it glory to be placed in circumstances in which he could “manifest the Father's name,” promote the glory of God, and secure the salvation of men; though, to fill such a situation with advantage, it was necessary to submit to what the world reckons degradation and shame. To remove the dark shadow which the sin of man and its consequences had cast on the wisdom, righteousness, and benignity of God, and to deliver man from the effects of his own folly and wickedness, was the high and honourable work assigned to our Lord; and he associates his people with him in such parts of the work as their agency is at all competent to: “This honour have all his saints.” They, too, are manifesters of the name of God. They, too, are employed in converting the world from the error of its way, and thus “saving souls from death.” What are earthly dignities compared with this? Military chiefs, ambassadors, judges, legislators, ministers of state—what are their glories, compared with the glory the Father gave the Son, and the Son gives his people?

But proportioned to the honour is the responsibility. If our Lord was placed in a dignified situation, it was to perform an important work. If his people are made sharers of his glory, it is that they together may co-operate, in their measure, in the same work. Their calling is a

high and holy one, but it is a calling to combined energetic labour for the glory of God and for the salvation of men. To bring the world to know and believe that the Father hath sent the Son—this is the great work. The Christian, in so far as he lives not for this, lives in vain. The work might have been accomplished without human instrumentality. Angels might have been employed; and the highest of these holy beings would have counted himself honoured in being employed in its most subordinate parts. But it has been otherwise ordered. Let Christians show their sense of the honour done them, by gladly, actively, perseveringly performing the work assigned them.

And let not the thought of difficulties that lie in the way of the salvation even of a single sinner, nor of the magnitude of the work—the conversion of the world—paralyse our exertions. The all-sufficient atonement has been made; the all-prevailing intercession is offered up; the all-powerful Spirit has been shed forth, to fit us for our work, and to prosper our endeavours. Oh that Christians were more alive to this; more studious of that unity of mind and heart, will and desire, aim and operation, with the Father and the Son; more "stedfast, unmoveable, and abounding" in the good work of seeking God's glory in the salvation of men! For this the Saviour prays; for this will we pray also. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Amen.

2. A prayer in reference to heaven and eternity

The second of the prayers of our Lord for the church universal, having a reference to heaven and to eternity, is now to form the subject of consideration. Like the other prayers in this remarkable

devotional exercise, it consists of petition and of pleading: a blessing is implored, and a reason stated why it is asked, and why it should be bestowed. The petition is in these words: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me." The pleading is in these words: "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (ver. 24). Let us attend to these in their order.

Our Lord, in the preceding part of his prayer, calls his apostles "those whom the Father had given him." He here includes, under the same designation, them, and all those who, in all countries and ages, should believe on him through their word. Equally with the apostles, every one of them has been led by the Father to the Son, and put into his hand to be saved by him: no man is his but he whom the Father has given him; "no man can come to him but he whom the Father draws to Him."

For all those to whom, on the Father giving them to him, he has manifested the Father's name, given them the Father's word which is truth, he has prayed that the Father would keep them and consecrate them in reference to that name and word, in order that they might be one in mind and heart, in will and aim, in endeavour and action, with respect to the glorification of God in the salvation of men, as he and his Father are; and as the intended result of this is a state of things to take place on earth, he has prayed, "not that they should be taken out of the world," till this result is produced, or at any rate till they have done their part towards the production of this result, "but that they should be kept from the evil"—the evil one, the evil thing—that is in the world. Yet it was not his intention that they should continue always in this world; he loved them too well for that. He was leaving this world, leaving it never to make it again a permanent abode; and he has too much of the heart of a friend towards those whom "he calls not servants, but friends," nay, whom "he is not ashamed to call brethren," with all power in heaven and earth at his command, to leave them, to remain always or even long in a state which, though it were more desirable in itself than it is, could not be a happy one to

them, as being a state of separation from him "whom their souls love." Divine conservation and consecration, and the holy unity which they give and secure, are the best things his people can have in this world. But the love of Christ looks beyond this world, and nothing can satisfy him in reference to them but a blessed eternity for them in heaven, dwelling with him there, and beholding the glory which the Father hath given him. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they behold my glory."

Before proceeding to explain the prayer, there are three remarks which must be made explicatory of the terms in which it is couched. The first refers to the position of the word "also" in our version, which is apt to puzzle English readers. They are ready to ask, And who besides them are to be with him? and to think that it would have been easier understood had it run, "Father, I will also that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory;" q.d. 'In addition to conservation and consecration, I ask for my chosen ones glorification.' These difficulties might have been prevented had the order of the original words been more strictly followed. "Father," as to "those whom thou hast given me, I will that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory;" i.e. 'that they may not be separated from me, nor I from them, that where I am there they also may be;' according to his promise, "Where I am, there shall my servant be."

The second remark refers to the expression "I will." Some interpreters would infer from the use of this word that there is something authoritative in our Lord's petition. There can be no doubt that the expression "I will" sometimes expresses authority, as "I will; be thou clean;" that all that our Lord asks of the Father he has merited from the Father; and that he has but to will anything, and by the divine power that thing is done. But there is no reason to think that the word here expresses anything more than what it often does—will and desire; as when the sons of Zebedee said, "Master, we will that thou shouldest do to us whatever we desire of thee;"³ and when

the Jews said, "Master, we would see a sign from thee." It seems just equivalent to, 'Father, I would—it is my desire—that they whom thou hast given me should be with me.' To use the language of an old divine, "It does not express his authority, so much as the bent of his heart; yet the manner of expression carrieth the force of a promise, which, backed by his prayer, cannot fall to the ground."²

The third remark is, that from the peculiar mode of expression, it is plain that the communication of the blessing here solicited, is considered by the Saviour as the natural result of the communication of the blessings already prayed for. The word "I will," strictly speaking, refers to what goes before. 'I will, I desire, these things—that they may be kept—that they may be consecrated—that they may be one in mind, and will, and aim, and operation, with thee and me, in order that they may be with me where I am, in order that they may behold my glory.' That is the order in which the blessings are to be obtained. None but the kept, consecrated, united ones can be, all of them shall be, admitted into heaven.

a. The prayer

We are now prepared to inquire into the meaning of the prayer. What our Lord prays for is, that all his people may be where he is—that they may be with him there—and that, being with him, they may behold his glory, the glory which the Father had given him.

By some interpreters these words have been considered as embodying, like the rest of the prayer, a petition for blessings to be conferred on his people in the present state. They of course understand the words "where I am" as referring to heaven; but some of them explain the words "where I am," here, on the same principle as they interpret the expression in the third chapter of this gospel, "The Son of man, who is in heaven." Heaven was our Lord's home. Even when on earth he was there, not only in his omnipresent essence, but in spirit and disposition. Heaven was, as it were, the standpoint whence he looked at all things. He lived in a heavenly

atmosphere. His thoughts, his affections, were all heavenly. He saw everything in its relations to heaven. In this case the words, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," are a prayer that his disciples, instead of cleaving to the earth in their views and feelings, might be brought, by clear wide views of the truth, firmly believed, to the spiritual ground he occupied; that so, where they at present could see nothing but degradation and suffering, they might behold what was really true glory; that they might see that "now the Son of man was glorified" with glory given him by the Father.

Others, holding the same general view of the passage, interpret the phrase "where I am" on the principle of its being the prophetic present, and equivalent to 'where I shall soon and certainly be;' and they consider the words as a prayer that all Christ's people, by clear apprehension and firm faith of the things that are unseen and eternal, may see what is invisible, and even now enjoy what is future, —enter in spirit within the veil, anticipate coming events, and "see him for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour," and "sit down with him in the heavenly places." This is no doubt very ingenious; but it is, like many such interpretations, too ingenious. These are good, pleasing thoughts; but they are not thoughts which, to a plain mind understanding words in their obvious sense, the text would ever have suggested.

I prefer greatly what may be called the catholic interpretation, that which refers the prayer directly and entirely to what is to take place in heaven throughout eternity. Taking this, then, as a settled point, let us now inquire, first, What our Lord means by his people's being where he is? what, by their being with him there? what, by their beholding there his glory, the glory which the Father has given him? and then, when and how this prayer is answered in reference to those in whose behalf it is offered up?

"Father, I will that where I am they also whom thou hast given me may be." And where was our Lord when he uttered these words? He

was on our earth, the scene of his degradation, and toils, and sorrows. He was probably on the banks of the brook Cedron, where he was soon to feel the pangs of an unutterable agony, and by a faithless disciple to be delivered into the hands of his murderers. But by the anticipative power of that faith which gives a present existence to future events, a palpable form to invisible things, his mind overleaped the fearful gulf of expiatory suffering, and he speaks as already in possession of that boundless endless glory and blessedness with which the Father had promised to reward the work given him, the completed redemption of man. "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do; I am no more in the world." By the expression "where I am," we are then to understand that place into which the glorified God-man Christ Jesus entered when he ascended from earth, and where ever since he has made his abode.

On that day, never to be forgotten on earth or in heaven, when he led his disciples out as far as to Bethany, and with uplifted hands was blessing them, "he was parted from them, taken up into heaven," and sat down on the throne of his Father, at his right hand, where he still sits, "expecting till all his enemies are made his footstool." Much of this is figurative language, but it does not the less on that account describe realities. That there is a local heaven, no man who reads the Scriptures with simplicity of mind can doubt, nor that Jesus Christ is there. Where that local heaven is, it is needless to inquire, for it is impossible to know; but we are warranted in asserting that it is a place where all the perfections of the Divinity, which can be manifested by means of material grandeur and beauty, are displayed in a degree of which we can form but an inadequate conception, and that whatever can make a place desirable as a residence to a perfectly holy embodied human mind, with intellectual faculties and moral sensibilities, the most exalted and exquisite, is to be found there in absolute perfection. What must that place be, which the Eternal Father, the God of infinite power, and wisdom, and righteousness, and love, has prepared as a meet residence for his incarnate only-begotten Son, in whom he was well pleased, after his having finished the work given him to do? Where Christ is, must be the most

desirable place within the bounds of the created universe. It is the prayer of our Lord that all his people should ultimately be there. That is his home—the house of his Father; and he desires it should be their home, for his Father is their Father.

But our Lord not only prays that his people may be "where he is," but that they may be "with him" there. "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." To be with Christ is more than to be where he is. "Absalom dwelt two full years at Jerusalem," where the king was; but he "saw not the king's face."³ It is conceivable, though not possible, that a person might be in heaven and yet not with Christ in heaven. The general idea suggested by the simple but significant phrase, being "with Christ," is intimate and endearing communion.

Communion with Christ, both in the sense of common participation and mutual intercourse, is not a blessing peculiar to heaven and eternity. He who does not enjoy it on earth will not enjoy it in heaven. He who does not enjoy it in time will never enjoy it in eternity. Even here the Christian is one with his Saviour in mind, and heart, and enjoyment. He has common relations and common pursuits with him; and by communications of saving blessings on the part of the Saviour, and on the part of the Christian by sanctified affections expressing themselves in acts of spiritual worship, there is real intercourse; so that to believers the words of the Apostle John are expressive of an undoubted fact, they are the words of truth and soberness: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Still further, the communion that Christians are to have with Christ in heaven, and which is the subject of this prayer, is not in nature different from that enjoyed here below. It is common participation; it is mutual intercourse.

But though the same in nature, how different—how superior—in circumstances! He is with them here on earth: the participation and the intercourse are such as he can have with them here in a state of

imperfection. There, in heaven, they are with him: the participation and the intercourse are such as they, made perfect, can have with him in his state of perfect glory and felicity. They are brought much nearer him there than they ever could be here. Their minds and hearts are in perfect accord with his; there is not the least shade of difference. They are in entire agreement, perfect sympathy; nothing wanting, nothing wrong, in their views and feelings: they are his; felt to be completely their own, and yet completely his. The intercourse, instead of occasional, will be uninterrupted, endless, and direct, no longer carried on through the medium of ordinances. They will look, not on his picture in his word, but on himself. They "shall see him as he is." He will communicate with them, not as by letters and messengers, but by immediate intercourse. They shall converse with him as a man with his friend.

To be with Christ in heaven is to be brought into intimate communion and fellowship not only with him, but with his Father. He "abideth before God for ever;" and they who are with him are therefore with God, brought in the apprehension of truth, the possession of holiness, and the enjoyment of happiness, into the closest union with God that their endowments as rational creatures make them capable of. What an amount of blessedness is implied in what our Lord asks for all his people, the being "where he is"—"with him" there!

But even this is not all. Our Lord prays that when his people are with him "where he is," they may behold his glory, "the glory which the Father had given him." Glory is excellence, and excellence displayed in the performance of works and the enjoyment of dignities which naturally indicate its possession. Our Lord, as a divine person, is an equal possessor with the Divine Father and Spirit of the divine nature, with all its independent, immutable, and eternal excellences and prerogatives. That is a glory which was not given to him. It belongs to him by necessity of nature. The glory here spoken of is the excellence, and the display of excellence in corresponding works and dignities, which belong to our Lord in the official character which he

sustains in the economy of human redemption as the successful Mediator between God and man, the all-accomplished Saviour of mankind. That glory is said to be given him, as his enjoyment of it is the result of the divine will, which the Father, as the sustainer of the majesty of the Godhead, is viewed as executing. This glory consists in the absolute perfection, in a moral point of view, of that human nature which he assumed into union with the divine in his incarnation; the spotless holiness of his whole character, manifested in the most cheerful obedience and submission to the divine will in the most trying circumstances, his offering up of himself a sacrifice for the sins of men,—a sacrifice which, from its absolute spotlessness and perfection, infinitely dignified by connection with the divine nature in his person, completely served its purpose; his all-prevailing intercession, by which he secures to his people the glorious results of this sacrifice; his exaltation, in his human nature, to the throne of the universe; his actual communication of the blessings of his salvation to unnumbered myriads of otherwise hopelessly lost immortals, in the exercise of a power which gives him the entire disposal of saving influence, and the entire control of providential dispensation; dominion, and ultimately complete triumph over all opposing powers in the universe; and the manifestation, in the whole management of every part of the wonderful work which has been committed to him, of the most consummate wisdom, holiness, and love. This is the glory of our Lord which the Father has given him, and to behold which it is his prayer that his people may be brought where he is, and be with him there.

Every believer in Christ sees this glory even here. "No man," as Dr Owen observes, "shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight hereafter, who doth not in some measure behold it by faith here in this world. Grace is a necessary preparation for glory, and faith for vision: where the subject, the soul, is not previously seasoned with grace and faith, it is not capable of glory or of vision." "No man ought to look for anything in heaven but what one way or other he hath some experience of in this life." What John says of himself and his fellow-believers who saw the Word made flesh dwelling among them,

may be truly said of all genuine Christians. They "behold his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." It is this glory reflected by him on them that makes them glorious. In proportion to their experimental knowledge of this glory, is their true excellence, dignity, and happiness.

That glory, however, is but imperfectly manifested in the present state, and even these manifestations are but imperfectly apprehended by the most enlightened and holy of the sons of men. In the world where he is, his glory shines unclouded; and the happy inhabitants of that world can, with unveiled face and undazzled eye, contemplate its splendour. The faculties of the soul shall then be made perfect, and this body, ultimately a spiritual body, entirely fitted to the operations of the spirit made perfect. "In the vision which we shall have above, the whole glory of Christ will be at once and always represented unto us, and we shall be enabled in one act of the light of glory to comprehend it. Here, indeed, we are at a loss; our minds and understandings fail us in their contemplations. It will not yet enter into our hearts to conceive what is the beauty, what is the glory, of this complete representation of Christ unto us. To have at once all the glory of what he is, what he was in his outward state and condition, what he did and suffered, what he is exalted unto, his love and condescension, his mystical union with the church, and the communication of himself to it, with it, with the recapitulation of all things to him; and the glory of God even the Father in his wisdom, righteousness, grace, love, goodness, power, shining forth eternally in him, in what he is, hath done and doth, all presented to us in one view, all comprehended by us at once, is that which at present we cannot conceive. We can long for it, pant after it, have some foretastes of it, namely, of that state and season wherein our whole souls, in all their powers and faculties, shall constantly, inseparably, eternally cleave by love unto whole Christ in the sight of the glory of his person and grace, until they are watered, dissolved, and inebriated in the waters of life and the rivers of pleasure which are above for evermore. So must we speak of the things which we admire, which we adore, which we love, which we long for, which we

have some foretastes in sweetness ineffable, which yet we cannot comprehend." It is our Lord's desire that all his people should see him as he is, should understand who he is who is their Saviour, and what he has done for their salvation, and how great are the honours and felicities which he has secured for himself and for them throughout eternity. From the circumstances of the case, Christians cannot contemplate such glories without, so far as they are communicable glories, becoming partakers of them; and when, from their nature, they are the peculiar property of their Lord and King, the beholding of them must still be a source to them of the most pure and exalted enjoyment. Such is the blessing which our Lord in the passage before us prays for in behalf of all his people.

It is now fit that we should inquire, When this prayer is answered in reference to Christ's people? It is answered in reference to them individually at their death; it will be answered in reference to them as a body at his second coming. Let us briefly illustrate these remarks in their order.

This prayer of our Lord is answered in reference to his people individually at their death. Our Lord is the abolisher of death; but he will not completely abolish it till the great body of his chosen ones, like himself, shall have passed through death into life. The days of every one of his chosen ones are "determined, the number of their months are with him,"—the Prince of life, the Lord of death—"he has appointed them bounds that they cannot pass." When any one of them has served his purpose on the earth, when he has "finished his course,"—and the great majority of those "of whom is the kingdom of heaven" do so almost as soon as they enter on it,—the Saviour presents to his Father the prayer, 'Father, I will that this one whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that he may behold the glory which thou hast given me.' And him the Father heareth always. The appointed providential agency, whether it be decay or disease, accident or violence, moves immediately at the expression of his will, "for all are his servants:" the connection between the body and the soul is dissolved; the mortal frame, bereft of life, returns to

its kindred dust; and the soul, now more than ever alive, goes to where the Saviour is, to be with him there, and to behold his glory.

"It does not yet appear what we shall be;" and the darkest part of our future history is that which follows death and precedes the resurrection. On this subject we do feel that "we cannot order our thoughts by reason of darkness." But it seems plain that the redeemed spirit immediately goes to paradise; and that it is no sooner "absent from the body" than it is "present with the Lord."² "The spirits of just men made perfect" are in close intercourse with "God the judge of all," and with "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." The most particular account which we have of the people of Christ during the interval between death and the resurrection, is that contained in the book of Revelation:⁴ "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.... And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Thus do the Saviour's prayers people heaven. Thus do the departed saints, one by one, called home in spirit, form a glorious assembly, all where Christ is, all with him there, and all there beholding his glory.

But the period at length arrives when the number of the elect is all but completed. None of the children of God, scattered abroad

through all the nations and generations of men, remain to be brought in but those who are then alive on the earth. The yearnings of the Saviour's heart for the gathering together of all his own, of everything which forms a part of his own, both in heaven and in earth, are no longer to be repressed. For ages on ages there have been slumbering in the dust, under the power of death, myriads of those bodies which are constituent parts of his "purchased possession," and which, as well as their spirits, he had by his great atoning sacrifice ransomed from the effects of sin. He has not forgotten that "this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."²

And now the great Intercessor presents, in behalf of the whole body of his redeemed, that prayer which, offered up for individuals, has brought all their spirits to heaven, and which is yet to bring all their bodies from the grave. Once more does he say, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." In answer to that prayer, a voice comes forth from the throne, "It is done;" "the mystery of God is finished." Heaven and earth are moved. There are "voices, and thunders, and lightnings." The powers of heaven are shaken. Everything bespeaks the approach of some mighty event. A great, a glorious manifestation of the power of the Saviour's atonement and grace is at hand. In the visible heavens appears "the sign of the Son of man." The "voice of the archangel" is heard; the "trump of God" thunders through the abyss; "the great white throne" appears on high, and on it, "in the glory of his Father, in his own glory, and in the glory of his holy angels," sits "the Son of man."

The influence of his prayer has penetrated the deepest recesses of earth and ocean, and from out of their long lonely habitations come forth the bodies of the saved; vile when laid there, viler still after being laid there; but now glorious, "fashioned like unto his glorious

body." Gladly do the glorified spirits, who have come with the Lord, reenter their former dwellings, now worthy to be their everlasting abodes; and hasting upwards and onwards to meet their Lord in the air, in company with those of their brethren who have not "slept," but have been "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," they stand now on the right hand of the tribunal, and humbly, joyfully contemplate the glory of their Lord and King. "This is our God, we have waited for him." "He has come, and he will save us." 'For ages we have been looking for him, and now, faithful to his promise, he has come for our salvation.' "Then shall the King," casting towards them a look of boundless complacency and most tender love, say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And now, the awful solemnities of the execution of righteous judgment on the irreclaimably wicked being finished, the immense assembly of the redeemed—"the nations of the saved"—with their Lord at their head, surrounded by "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" of the angelic host, rejoicing to minister to those "heirs of salvation," ascend into the heaven of heavens, and take possession of the "many mansions" so dearly purchased by him, yet so freely bestowed on them.

There shall they be for ever where their Lord and Saviour is: they shall be with him there, "for ever with the Lord;" and with him where he is, they shall spend their blissful eternity in studying and adoring his glories. New wonders of power, and wisdom, and righteousness, and faithfulness, and grace, will be constantly meeting their ever-inquiring minds, like "the angels, desiring to look into these things;"² and "with voices jubilant" they shall sing the new song, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." To "Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;

to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Then shall the Saviour "see of the travail of his soul," and the fruits of his intercession, and "be satisfied." Then shall all whom the Father has given him, completely saved by him, be with him where he is, and behold the glory which the Father has given him. So much for the illustration of the petition.

b. The Plea

A few words will suffice to illustrate the plea by which this petition is supported. That plea is contained in the clause, "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Some would connect these words with those which immediately precede them, "the glory which thou hast given me,—given me because thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." It seems, however, much more natural to connect them with "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me; that they may behold my glory." No doubt the glory which the Father has given the Son may be traced ultimately to the Father's eternal love of the Son;² but the immediate and procuring cause of that glory was the Son's doing the Father's will, and finishing the work committed to him. Besides, all the other petitions in this prayer have their corresponding plea, and it would have been strange if this petition had been without one.

The words contain in them a most appropriate and a most powerful plea, which it will not require many words to make evident. The Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world. He loved him because he was his own Son—the Son of himself, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." How could He who sees all things and persons as they really are, and who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, but love Him who was infinitely excellent and lovely? But besides this love rising out of the Son's equal possession of all excellence with himself, the Father loved the Son from before the foundation of the world, as his appointed agent in the greatest and most glorious of his works, the salvation of men. He regarded him as his appointed "servant whom he was to uphold,"

and "in whom his soul delighted." "The Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. He was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, ere ever the earth was. Then was he by him as one brought up with him: he was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; and his delights were with the sons of men."²

It was love to the Son, as the Son, which led to his appointment to the high office of the Saviour of men, the filling of which was to cover him with such honours. It is to love to the Son, as the qualified vindicator of Divinity and Saviour of men, that all the promises made to him as Mediator, and to his people in him, are to be traced. That love had induced the Father to promise him an eternal priesthood, an everlasting kingdom, an innumerable offspring; to promise that men shall be blessed in him, and that all nations shall call him blessed.

Our Saviour had done nothing to forfeit his Father's love. He had done everything to confirm it. He was just about to lay down his life for the sheep, according to the commandment he had received of the Father. He had kept his commandment, and continued in his love. The Father loved him, because he laid down his life that he might take it again.⁵

The eternal love of God to his Son lies at the foundation of the whole plan of man's salvation, and must secure the fulfilment of all the promises made to him, and to those who shall be "heirs of salvation" in him. Its native effect is to lead God to do what the Son of his love has set his heart on; and to satisfy him by making his people eternally happy in the enjoyment of his presence, and the contemplation of his glories.

"The love of one creature to another," to borrow the thoughts of the pious Traill, "is sometimes very great, the love of the believer to Christ is still greater, the love of God to his chosen greatly exceeds both, and so does the love which Christ bears the church; but above

all, and beyond all these, is the love which the Father has to the Son. In the first case, it is a creature loving a creature; in the second, it is a creature loving God; in the third, it is God loving a creature; in the fourth, it is Christ loving his own body. In all, either the subject or the object of the love is a creature. But here it is paternal Deity that loves, and filial Deity that is beloved. Surely there must be a 'height and depth, a length and breadth' here 'that pass knowledge.' The infinite love of the Father to the Son secures all good to those whom the Son loves."

What more appropriate, what more powerful, than our Lord's plea: 'Let thine unbeginning love accomplish its own work. Thou hast sustained me, according to thy promise. Thou hast given me those whom thou lovest, whom I love, to save. Manifest thine unchanging love to me, in making me blessed for ever in seeing them blessed for ever. I know it must be so; it shall be so. Thou retest in thy love to me, and to them in me.' What a characteristic close of such a prayer—a firm anticipation of having all his people with him safe and happy for ever in heaven, and an entire confidence in his Father's eternal, unchanged, unchangeable love! "The prayer," as Neander remarks, "embraces the whole work of Christ, up to its final consummation; his work, upon the basis laid down by himself, continually carried on until all that submit to him shall be brought to share in his glory, to a complete communion of divine life with him."

What a wonderful prayer is this! Oh, how does it let us see into the very centre of the Saviour's heart! How full of love, holy love, love with all the purity of Godhead, love with all the tenderness of humanity! "He," the Kinsman-Redeemer, "will not rest till he have finished the thing on that day." "Grace on grace," heavenly blessings in rich abundance, has he heaped on them; but he will not be satisfied till he has fully ransomed them from death, and through a glorious resurrection brought them all to "be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory." He must have them all to "his own home."

What a peaceful glory does this prayer diffuse over the death-beds and graves of all the people of Christ! How should it temper our prayers for the recovery of Christian friends, lest we should be found deprecating what our Saviour is praying for! Surely we cannot doubt whose prayers in such a case will be, whose prayers ought to be, heard. How delightful to think, neither they nor we, if his, shall depart till he says, "Father, I will that they also be with me!" Should we grudge our best friends to Him—should we grudge to leave our best earthly friends to go to Him, our heavenly Friend?

There are many delightful descriptions of heaven in the book of God. What a wonderful exuberance of grand and beautiful imagery is made use of to enable us to form some idea of a state so infinitely superior to anything of which we have had experience, of felicities and honours which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor imagination conceived! But it may, I think, be fairly questioned, if, amid all the figurative descriptions of the final happiness of the people of God, there be one so delightful to the Christian heart, so well fitted to excite to duty, to sweeten suffering, to reconcile to the thought of death, and to invigorate the desire and expectation of the celestial blessedness, to wean from earth, and to fit for heaven, as the view given in the plain, unadorned language of our Saviour, in the verse we have been considering: "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." What could we wish more than this? Is not this well worth dying for? Exalted Lord! "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will still be praising thee."

May this blessedness be the portion of us all. It may be, it will be, if we do not put it away from us by refusing Him, in connection with whom alone it can be enjoyed. If we do, what awaits us but eternal separation from Him in whom alone is life and happiness! When we close our eyes in death, we must in hell, far from Him, lift them up, "being in torment;" and on the judgment-day, when compelled to approach Him, instead of "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom," it

must be, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

III. CONCLUSION

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."—JOHN 17:25, 26.

These words form the conclusion of our Lord's intercessory prayer. In explaining a passage of Scripture, there are two questions which require attention: What is its meaning? and, What is its reference? The questions are intimately connected; and a satisfactory answer to both is generally necessary to a satisfactory answer to either. Whatever difficulty has been found in apprehending the full force of the passage now read, has arisen less from the obscurity or ambiguousness of particular words and phrases, than from a want of a distinct perception of the object which our Lord had in view in making the statements it contains.

The whole preceding part of the devotional exercise, of which this forms the conclusion, is occupied, as we have seen, with a series of petitions, supported by corresponding pleas. Every part of it naturally ranges itself under one or other of these heads. Every clause is either the expression of a desire, or the statement of a reason why that desire should be complied with. The words before us are obviously no petition. No desire is expressed, no benefit requested. Are they, then, a plea? and if a plea, a plea for what?—a plea in support of the petition last presented, or a plea in support of all the petitions contained in the prayer?

It is difficult to perceive in the statements—"The world hath not known thee—I have known thee—these have known that thou hast sent me—I have declared to them thy name—I will declare it, that the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them, and I in them" (vers. 25, 26)—anything like a special plea for his people being "with him where he is, that they may behold his glory." Had the 25th verse not existed, or could it with any propriety be included in a parenthesis, then the 26th verse might be considered as a further development of the plea in the words, "Thou lovedst me from the foundation of the world;" thus—'Bring my people to the state of glory and happiness to which thou art about to raise me. Do this, for "thou lovedst me from the foundation of the world;" and my declaration of thy name to my chosen people was intended that they might, being one with me, be made partakers of the love with which thou regardest me.' But there is no ground for either omitting the 25th verse, or including it in a parenthesis.

While it is thus obvious that these words cannot, without doing violence to them, be considered as a special plea for the immediately preceding petition, may they not be considered as a general plea for all the preceding petitions? Placed at the end of the prayer, may they not be viewed as a pleading in reference to the whole of it? q.d. 'Righteous Father, on the ground of thy righteousness I plead for what I ask on behalf both of myself and of my people. It is not the world that prays; it is not the world that is prayed for. Neither I nor my people are of the world. The world knows thee not; it cannot pray; and if it could, its prayers could have no claim on thy righteousness. But I have known thee; I know thy character and will; I have done thy will; I ask what I know to be agreeable to thy will—what is necessary to my fully doing thy will—in the glorifying thee in the salvation of men. The world has not known that thou hast sent me; but those I pray for have known that thou hast sent me. They have recognised my credentials; they have received my message; and in so far they know thee also, for I have revealed thy name to them, I have made them acquainted with thy character and will, and I will yet give them further information on this subject: and my object in

doing so is, that they, knowing and doing thy will, may be partakers of that love with which thou regardest me, knowing and doing thy will; and that, in this community of mind and heart in reference to thy character and will, I may be in them, that they may be in my stead, that they may live a new life: they in me, I in them; it being not so much they who live, as I living in them—they having my mind—I speaking in them, working in them, working by them.'

There is much more verisimilitude here. This is ingenious and plausible; but it seems to me an objection that it is too ingenious, too artificial, for the circumstances, very unlike the beautifully natural flow of thought and feeling by which the previous part of the prayer is so strikingly characterized.

It has been sought to illustrate the words before us by placing alongside of them the sublime words of our Lord, recorded in the close of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel by Matthew: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 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. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." There is a striking similarity, especially if the first clause of the verse before us be rendered, as some excellent interpreters do translate it, "Although the world hath not known thee." Yet there is a decided difference in the states of mind expressed in the two passages. The first is an adoration of the divine sovereignty; the second is an appeal to the divine equity.

After looking at the subject in all lights, I am disposed to consider it, not as a part of the prayer properly so called, but as a statement by our Lord of the present position of the great interest committed to his care by his Father,—the salvation of men through the knowledge of God, to the praise of the divine glory; and a solemn leaving of himself and his people and his cause in the divine hand, confident that the Righteous One and the righteous cause were safe there, in

the hands of the Father, the righteous Father. In this view let us proceed to consider the words somewhat more particularly.

The prayer is, with little exception, spoken as if "the Angel of the Covenant" were already standing at "the golden altar of incense before the throne." "Thou hast given thy Son power over all flesh." "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."² "I am no more in the world;" "I come to thee." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." By faith he realized future events, and spoke of them as present. In the words before us he changes his standpoint, and, looking at things as they then were, exclaims, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

It is proper to state distinctly, what I have already alluded to, that in the first clause of the 25th verse there is a particle in the original which has no rendering in our translation. The particle is ordinarily rendered and, also, or even. It cannot be so rendered here, and our translators have treated it as superfluous. Few particles in the New Testament, however, are without a meaning; and many of the best interpreters would render the clause, "Although the world has not known thee." Such is the force of the particle in such a passage as the following: They "proved"—"tempted"—"me, and," i.e. although, they "saw my works." "Righteous Father, although the world hath not known thee, I have known thee." This gives a good sense; but we prefer rendering it 'yet,' 'notwithstanding,' as it is rendered in St Matthew's Gospel:6 "The fowls of the air sow not," and "yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and" yet "one of them shall not fall to the ground without your heavenly Father." "Righteous Father, yet the world knoweth thee not." There is a reference to what is said before: "Thou hast given me power over all flesh, to give eternal life by giving the knowledge of thee, and of myself, whom thou hast sent. It is thy will

that all men should know thee, and for this purpose should acknowledge that thou hast sent me; "yet the world hath not known thee." ' "

In the anticipations of faith, our Lord had seen the whole chosen family, a company which no man can number, safe and happy with him in heaven; and his mind rested in the assured faith of the eternal and immutable love of the Father to him and his. His own glorification, the conservation and consecration of his apostles and their followers, the conversion of the world, and the final gathering together of all the saved in heaven, to the everlasting glory of God the Father, have all been prayed for, and these petitions have been supported by most appropriate and powerful pleadings. The mind of the Saviour now reverts to the actual state of things, so different from that he had been praying for, and in believing prayer anticipating as no less certain than if already existing: himself deeply debased, severely suffering—soon to be more deeply debased, more severely to suffer; his apostles about to be "sifted like wheat" by their great enemy; the world unbelieving and disobedient, "lying under the wicked one." Yet "he does not fail, nor is he discouraged." In his character of the great manifester of God, who, in the knowledge of the only true God and of himself, was appointed to give eternal life to men, he states the arrangements made for, and the progress made towards, the attainment of this great object; commits himself and his people and his cause to his "righteous Father;" and proceeds onward, in his bloody passion and expiatory death, to "finish the work given him to do" on earth, and to open a way for the answer of all his prayers and the gaining of all his objects.

Jehovah had remarkably qualified him for his work: he had "made his mouth as a sharp sword," himself as "a polished shaft;" and he had said to him, "Thou art my Servant, in thee I will be glorified." But he had hitherto apparently "laboured in vain, and spent his strength for nought and in vain." Yet does he not distrust Jehovah, nor think of abandoning his work. He says, "Righteous Father" (which is just a variation of the prophetic language, "My judgment is

with the Lord, and my work with my God"), "Israel is not gathered"—"the world has not known thee;" "yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." He was strong in faith, and doubted not that the world should yet believe that the Father had sent him; that, according to the promise, "in an acceptable time Jehovah would hear him, and in a day of salvation would help him; and would preserve him, and give him for a covenant to the people to establish the earth."

Taking this general view of the passage, let us examine somewhat more minutely its various parts. "The world hath not known thee." This expression refers not only to the past, but to the present condition of the world when our Lord used these words. It is in what is called the aorist or indefinite time, which we generally express in the present rather than the past. "The world knows thee not." That is its character. 'It has not known thee; it does not know thee.' The great body of mankind were then, as they always have been, ignorant of the character and will of the Supreme Being. "Without God"—"in the world," are two characters of the same class.

The great part of the world was Gentile, and the apostle describes "the Gentiles" as those "who knew not God." The original revelation was soon lost. To the intimations of the divine character and will in the works of creation and dispensations of providence, they were systematically inattentive, wilfully blind. They sought after wisdom, and were wise in their own conceit; but "the world through wisdom knew not God."² They "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." They knew him neither as the righteous Judge nor as the benignant Father. They had no just idea either of his holiness or of his love, far less of their harmonious union in his character and administration: "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people."⁴ Such had been the state of the world for ages; such was its state when our Lord uttered these words.

Nor was it true of the Gentiles only that they knew not the righteous Father. It was true also of the great body of the Jews.

Notwithstanding the revelation they enjoyed, it is plain that, with few exceptions, they had most mistaken and unworthy conceptions of Jehovah; and that as he existed in their minds, he was not "the righteous Father" of men, but the capricious indulgent patron of the Jews, and the determined enemy of all other nations. They said indeed that he was their God; but, as our Lord said to them, "Yet ye have not known him."

Such was the condition of the Gentile and the Jewish world at the close of our Lord's ministry. Notwithstanding the primitive revelation, the declaration of the invisible things of God by the things which are seen, the revelations by Moses and the prophets, and the ministry of John the Baptist and our Lord, still "the world knew not God." The great body of mankind, Jews and Gentiles, were ignorant and misinformed respecting the divine character and will. The world was in darkness, under the power of the prince of darkness. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God," even when shining around them, did not shine into their hearts. With regard even to those among whom the incarnate Son, "the image of the invisible God," had dwelt, it might be said, "The light hath shined in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." So much for the illustration of the expression, "The world hath not known thee."

"But I have known thee; and these," referring to the apostles, "have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared thy name to them, and will declare it." The force of the adversative particle "but," here, seems to be, 'Such is the state of the world, but that state is not hopeless. It is full of darkness, but it may be, it shall be, full of light;' and the ground of this expectation is stated in what follows.

"I know thee," 'and therefore can make thee known. I have made thee known in some measure to my apostles, and will make thee known to them in still larger measure; and I have done, and will do this, that, in successfully bringing mankind to the knowledge of thee, they may be the objects of thy complacency, as I am, in the prosecution of this work; and that I in them, by them, may accomplish it.'

"I have known thee," that is equivalent to, 'I have known thee, and do know thee.' Knowledge of God, and capacity and disposition to communicate this knowledge, are as much the Son's habitual attributes, as ignorance of God, and indisposition to know him, are those of the world. He is therefore just the teacher whom the world needs. "I know thee" is an assertion that our Lord was conscious, in his inmost mind, of a thorough knowledge of God, such as no created being could possess. It is parallel with such declarations as, "All things are delivered to me of the Father;" i.e., as is obvious from what follows, 'Whatever, in reference to the character and will of the Father, is to be communicated to men, I have been entrusted with.' "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; and no man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have all we received. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."² "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." "He who sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me."² "Ye have not known my Father, of whom ye say, that he is your God. But I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying." "As the Father knoweth me, so I know the Father."⁴ As a divine person, he knew all things; and as the appointed revealer of God, "in him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Dark as the world was, he was conscious that he, "as the light of the world,"—"the Sun of righteousness"—the true Sun,—could enlighten it.

But not only was our Lord inwardly conscious of power and disposition to bring the world that knew not God, and had no desire to know him, to the enjoyment of that eternal life which is in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent; but his divine mission, as the great revealer of God, had been acknowledged by some men, and to those men he had made a revelation of the divine character and will, and was about to make to

them a still further revelation. "These," obviously referring to the apostles, "have believed that thou hast sent me; and I have declared thy name to them, and will declare it." While the great body of those to whom our Lord's claims were presented disregarded or rejected them, these men "knew surely that he came out from God, and believed that God did send him; and knew that all things that God had given him," whether words to speak or miracles to perform, "were" indeed "of God." To these men—led to him, 'given to him by,' in consequence of having been taught of, the Father—the Son, who knew the Father, declared his name, revealed his character and will. He manifested to them his name; he gave them that name of his Father to declare, which the Father had given him to declare; he gave them the word to speak, which the Father had given him to speak.

And he was still further to declare the Father to them. This he did, to a certain extent, in the interval which elapsed between his resurrection and ascension, during which he had many interviews with them, in which he "opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures, and spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" and much more completely when he fulfilled to them the promises he had made with respect to "the Spirit which they were to receive of the Father." He had said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Paraclete," an instructor as well as comforter, "that he may abide with you for ever. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness." "He shall guide you into all truth."² And he should not only by the Spirit make a further revelation to them, but he should also, by the same Spirit, render that revelation, when declared by them, effectual for bringing the world to the faith of their Master, and the knowledge of his Father. "When the Comforter is come, he will reprove"—convince—"the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Our Lord did thus further declare his Father's name to the apostles, so that they "had," possessed, "the mind of Christ," and became "able," fit, "ministers of the New Testament," speaking "the wisdom of God in a mystery" revealed to them by his Spirit; speaking the things thus "freely given them of God," "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Their minds, like mirrors, became luminous with the light of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus; and "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," thus shone in their hearts by his Spirit, that they might give to others this heavenly light, and bring the world to the knowledge of God.³ By their personal ministry they turned, in their own age, many from darkness to light; by their recorded testimony, in subsequent ages, innumerable multitudes more; and that testimony, accompanied by the influence of the Spirit who inspired them, is a fit, and will be found an effectual, instrumentality for making the world believe that the Father hath sent the Son, and inducing them to receive the knowledge of the Father and of himself which he came to communicate; and thus bringing them into the enjoyment of that eternal life which is to be found, which can be found only, in that knowledge.

The design of our Lord in the declaration of his Father's name, which he had made, and was yet to make, to the apostles, is stated in the concluding words of the chapter: "I have declared to them thy name, and will declare it; that," in order that, "the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

The words, "that the love wherewith the Father loved the Son may be in the apostles," viewed by themselves, admit of three interpretations: they may mean, 'That the apostles might be brought to love the Son as the Father did;' or, 'That the apostles might be made firmly to believe the love which the Father had to the Son,' it "being shed abroad" abundantly "in their hearts;"³ or, 'That the Father might love the apostles as he loved the Son, their Lord and Master.' The last is obviously the only sense which suits the connection. These words, whatever they may mean, express the

direct purpose which our Lord intended to serve by having revealed, and by being about still further to reveal, the Father to his apostles, in connection with the gaining by them the ultimate object of his mission—the bringing men to eternal life by the knowledge of God and of himself. Now, that revelation was not principally meant to make the apostles love the Son with a love like that with which the Father regards Him, nor to convince them of the Father's love to Him; but its object was, that, united in mind and will, and aim and operation, with him and his Father, they might in the great work of the conversion of the world so conduct themselves, as that the complacency with which the Father regarded the Son doing his will, might rest on them in their subordinate place doing the same will.²

He declared to them the name of the Father, that they might hold it fast and hold it forth in the right spirit, thus doing his will and continuing in his love, even as the Son did his will and continued in his love. The conversion of the world was the object of the Father's benignant counsel, and he regarded with infinite complacency his Son in all that he did and all he suffered to gain this object; and it was our Lord's purpose that his apostles, labouring in the same cause, might be partakers with him of the same benignant regard, and of its appropriate expressions,—that the truth about God should be so taught by them, in consequence of their having been taught it by him, as to draw down tokens of the divine approbation of them and of their labours in the conversion and salvation of men.

Another object of our Lord in the revelations he had made and was yet to make to the apostles, closely connected with that which we have just illustrated, is stated in the last words of the chapter,—“and I in them;” that is, ‘I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that I may be in them.’ The object of our Lord in the revelation he had made and would make, was that they might be so identified with him in mind and will, as that he might speak in them, he might work in them and by them; that he might be in them as the Father was in him as his ambassador, so that they who received them should receive him, as they who received him received Him who sent

him. He lived in them; their thoughts were his thoughts, their words his words. His Spirit was in them; they were "in his stead." Christ spoke in them; and, to use the apostle's remarkable expression, they were "in the person of Christ"² when they performed their official duties. Christ wrought in them mightily; Christ wrought by them "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." Had the apostles been left to themselves, to be guided by their own minds, little could have been hoped for from their exertions in the way of bringing the world to the faith of Christ; but when it is secured that it is Christ's truth that shall be spoken in Christ's spirit, accompanied by Christ's power, though the world did not yet know God, there was no room for fear that at the appointed season, mankind, "dead in trespasses and sins," taught by him who knew God, and by those in whom he was, should not be turned from its ignorance, and impenitence, and disobedience, and made to find eternal life in the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent.

And so it was: The apostles, under the influence of the revelations made to them by the Lord, and by the Spirit through whom he made many of these revelations, devoted themselves to this great work, and received tokens of being the objects of the Father's complacency in the comfort they had in their work, and the success with which it was crowned. "The grace of God" was on them and their labours as it was on him and his; and his "great grace was on them all." Their Lord, though with respect to his bodily presence removed from them, was yet in them by his Spirit and his truth, and made them "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." And their teaching abides in the church and in the world, and Christ is still in them; and by their instrumentality and the agency of his Spirit "the earth shall" yet "be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the seas,"² and through that knowledge full of holy happiness.

What is said here primarily of the apostles, is in a modified sense true of all Christ's true ministers and people in all countries and in all ages. They have believed that the Father sent the Son, and have acknowledged him as him who knows, who alone knows, the Father, and can alone reveal him. And he has in his word and by his Spirit made an effectual declaration of the Father's name, his character and will, to them; and he will continue to declare to them this name more and more, leading them to wider and juster and more influential apprehensions of the revelation made by him through his apostles; and his design in doing all this is, that they, living under the influence of this revelation, "seeking first the kingdom," in themselves and others, may obtain ever-growing manifestations of the Father's complacency, and that he himself may be in them, dwelling in their hearts by faith, and working all their works in them. The more the illumination of the disciples increases, the more they inwardly know the entire compass and depth of the divine truth communicated by him to them; the more are they transformed by it, and become the proper objects of the complacency of God; the more is the "love of God shed abroad in their hearts" by the Holy Ghost given to them; and the more does Christ, dwelling in them by the faith of his own truth understood by them, think in them, feel in them, act in them, it being not so much they who live, as Christ who lives in them.

Such, so far as I have been able to apprehend it, is the meaning of this concluding statement addressed by our Lord to his Father under the appellation "Righteous Father." In these words there seems to be a reference to the engagements in the eternal covenant, and to the exceeding great and precious promises in the prophetic writings. It is as if he had said, "Have respect unto the covenant." "Remember the words to thy servant on which thou hast caused him to hope." "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched

them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee."

Thus, full of faith in these declarations, giving glory to God as his righteous Father, he proceeds onward to the garden of Gethsemane, to the hall of the Sanhedrim, to the tribunal of Pilate, to the cross, to the grave, to the throne; "for the joy that was set before him, the glory of God in the salvation of men," ready to "endure the cross, despising the shame." Scarcely had the sound of the last words of this prayer died away, a prayer concentrating in it more thought and feeling—the most profound thought, the most pious benignant feeling—than were ever embodied in human language, when the fearful final struggle commenced. Soon is the seed of the new world to be cast dead into the grave, soon again to spring up in exhaustless energy, covering the earth with the verdure and beauty of the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, filling the world with their fruit; till at last the prayer on the margin of the Cedron finds its full answer in the conversion of the world to God, and in the putting in possession of the kingdom the multitude that no man can number, of those for whom it was prepared before the foundation of the world.

In reviewing this prayer, it is impossible not to be struck by its coincidence with the first part of the prayer which our Lord taught his disciples,—a prayer we should often use as a form, always as an example, in obedience to the command, "When ye pray, say;" "After this manner pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." "What is expressed in the Lord's prayer as the object of the

prayer of believers, is here presented as the object of his own prayer for believers."2

How rich in practical instruction is this prayer! how fitted to teach and encourage us to pray! Here we are taught how to "order our cause before God," how to "fill our mouths with arguments." Here we are taught what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought. What to pray for: We are to pray for God's glory primarily, and for everything else in subservience to this. How to pray as we ought: How full of fervour, yet how free from excitement!4 What deep veneration,—what ardent love,—what intense desire,—what joyful hope,—what humble submission,—what filial confidence,—what divine simplicity,—what entire conformity of mind and will to the mind and will of God!

What an influential prayer has this been! What has God been doing ever since in the government of the world, and in the administration of grace, but answering this prayer? Whence came the glories of Pentecost,—the moral miracles of the primitive age,—the spread of the gospel,—the conversion of men in all countries and ages, but from this prayer rising up with acceptance before God? How many human beings has it brought to heaven, how many is it bringing, how many will it yet bring! It absolutely secures that the world shall yet know that the Father sent the Son, and that all who believe the apostolic testimony shall be for ever where Christ is,—with him there, beholding his glory. Yes, the power of this prayer is not exhausted. It shall yet convert the earth which sin has desolated into a paradise more glorious than that of Eden; transform or destroy every human institution, literary, civil, or ecclesiastical; bring back the kingdom to the Father, and put down all opposing rule, and authority, and power. It shall abolish death; unbolt the bars and open the gates of the grave; and, setting free all the prisoners of many generations, shut these gates, never more to open inward for ever. It shall create new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell, and which He who sitteth on the throne shall pronounce very good. There, "there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor cryings, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." There, "there shall be no more curse," for there shall be no more sin; and all this the result of the Saviour's prayer, grounded on the Saviour's atonement. Then will our Lord's words be fully verified, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;" and God glorified in him, glorifies him in Himself, and shall for ever glorify him with the glory which he had with him before the foundation of the world, that he for ever may continue to give eternal life to all whom the Father has given him,—they in him, he in them, he in his Father, the Father in him and in them,—"God all in all." "All his petitions," as Matthew Henry says, "centre in this; and with this the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended."

Surely, if anything can effectually sound a retreat from the unnatural wars which even the genuine followers of Christ Jesus have so long waged, and, alas, do still wage, with each other, it must be the sweet sounds of this intercession made by the High Priest of our profession as he entered within the veil—ever made by him there—coming to the heaven-opened ear of faith! Oh, can we hear him pleading that we "all may be one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father, that the world may know and believe that the Father hath sent him," and continue "for meat to destroy the work of God," by our differing and disputing "about many things," instead of, with united mind and heart, aim and endeavour, seeking "the one thing which is needful"—the one thing on which his heart was set, is set—the salvation of men to the glory of God!

For his heart is unalterably set on this object. From the inmost recesses of the heavenly sanctuary we hear his voice: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." And he not only prays himself, but he calls on us to pray: "Ye that make mention

of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."2

Surely we are highly honoured in being thus called to pray with him—pray for his cause! We need not fear as to the success of such prayers: "Him the Father heareth always." Let us, then, who are in the outer sanctuary, say, in reference to that wonderful prayer we have been considering, which is ever rising before the throne of the Father from the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus, the Son of God, who is within the veil, "Jehovah hear thee. Grant thee according to thy heart's wish, and fulfil all thy counsels. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed:" he hath heard him—"he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand."

His own wonderful address to the Father is, "Thou hast heard me." "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." And his command to us is, "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard." And what shall be the ultimate result of the presenting and the answering of these prayers? "The meek shall eat, and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him; and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this,"—that he thus prayed to God, and that God thus answered him; that he thus wrestled, and

that he thus prevailed; that he thus agonized, and that he thus triumphed.

"And thus," to borrow the singularly appropriate words of an old Puritan, "at length we have despatched this heavenly prayer of our great High Priest and Intercessor, Jesus Christ. Christ was in heaven in his thoughts and his affections when he uttered it, and we have seemed sometimes too to be in heaven while we have handled it and heard it. It has been a sweet and precious subject as ever we have dwelt upon. Here you have seen the heart of Jesus Christ opened, and his affections plentifully flowing out to his people. Oh let us search into the heart of Jesus Christ laid open to us in this abridgment of his intercession for us; that we may know it and the workings of it continually more and more, until at last this precious prayer come to have its full effect, and we be taken up to be for ever with the Lord, that where he is, there may we be also. Amen."

NOTE A.

John 6:37

The first point to be inquired into is the meaning of the phrase, "All that the Father giveth me;" literally, "Everything which the Father giveth me." Now, what does the Father give the Son? He is in Scripture represented as giving him many things. He "gave him the Spirit without measure." He gave him "words to speak," "a commandment to obey," and "a work to finish." He gives him "to have life in himself, even as he has life in himself." He gave him "authority to execute judgment." He gave him "glory." He has given him "all judgment," or rule, and government. He has given him "power over all flesh." He has given him "all power in heaven and

earth." He has given him "a name above every name." But it is quite plain, that in the passage before us our Lord is speaking not of things, but of persons.

Who these persons are, it is not difficult to discover. They are all those who come to Christ by believing in him, and are saved by him,—those who come to Christ, who are not cast out by him, the accomplishment of whose salvation is that benignant will of the Father which the Son came from heaven to earth to perform,—none of whom are to be lost, all of whom are to be raised up at the last day, and to enjoy everlasting life. These are they whom the Father gives the Son. We have thus ascertained who the persons are who are here spoken of,—they are all who shall be saved by Christ Jesus; but the question still remains to be answered, What is meant by their being given by the Father to Christ?

In the language here, as in so many other parts of the New Testament, there seems to be an allusion to modes of expression in the Old; and we must ascertain the origin of the phrase, in order to our satisfactorily discovering of its meaning. In the preceding context our Lord had spoken of himself as the true celestial bread, which, coming down from heaven, giveth life to "the world," that is, to mankind, without reference to the distinction of Jew and Gentile. The manna was intended for the bodily support of the Jews; this heavenly bread, for the spiritual nourishment of mankind, of every kindred, and people, and tongue. The liberal, unexclusive character of the salvation which the Messiah came to procure and bestow is again, we apprehend, referred to in the words before us. The Father had promised to give certain persons to the Son; and all these, without exception, our Lord says, shall come to him. Now, who are the persons whom the Father has promised to give to the Son? The answer is in the passage to which I can scarcely doubt our Lord mentally referred when he used the words: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Nor is this promise at all a singular one. "He shall have dominion," says David, speaking in the spirit of his Son and Lord—the King, and the King's Son,— "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "I will give him," says Jehovah by Isaiah, in reference to his righteous servant,— "I will give him the many as his portion, and he shall have the strong ones as his spoil." "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The "root of Jesse shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles." "Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." Viewed in reference to these promises, the words express this idea: 'Vast multitudes of men of all nations, according to the purpose and promise of God, and by the agency of his Spirit, and the instrumentality of his word and providence, shall be given to me, delivered into my hand, so as to acknowledge my claims, believe my doctrines, and enjoy my salvation.'

Still, however, we have not obtained an answer to the question, What is the precise import of the Father's giving those multitudes of men of every nation to Christ? By the greater part of evangelical interpreters the Father's giving of men to Christ has been considered as equivalent to his eternal purpose of mercy in reference to these individuals,—his committing them, as it were, in charge to his Son, in the covenant of peace, to be delivered by him from all the evils in which sin was to involve them. I have no doubt of the truth of this doctrine. It is based on the first principles of religion—those which refer to the divine character, as the infinitely wise and powerful

Author and Governor of the universe; it is most explicitly taught in Scripture, especially in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is necessarily implied in the words now under consideration. Yet I cannot help thinking that the direct reference is not to the divine purpose, but to its execution. The ancient oracles, to which there seems a reference, are promises. They refer not to what was past, but what was future. The words, if I mistake not, are intended to be descriptive of that divine influence of which the Father, by the Spirit, is the Author, which is put forth according to the purpose which God has "purposed in himself," by which men are induced to believe the gospel, and, in the belief of the gospel, to come to the Saviour. The being given to Christ by the Father seems to be the same thing as what, in the 44th verse, is called the being "drawn" or conducted to him by the Father; and that is represented, in the 45th verse, as equivalent to the being "so taught of God," "hearing and learning of the Father," as that they come to him. Men are given by God to Christ when they are brought to him, united to him, by that faith which is the gift of God; when, under the influence of his Spirit, they are made to come to him—that is, are led, in the belief of the truth, to exercise towards the Saviour all those sentiments of mind and heart which correspond to the different views given in the gospel of his person and work.

Though, in this view of the phrase, which appears to me better to suit not only this place, but the other places where it occurs in this Gospel, it does not directly express the doctrine of personal election, it necessarily implies it. It ascribes faith to a divine benignant influence, which indicates distinguishing love towards him over whose mind it is exercised, in contradistinction to him over whose mind it is not exercised; and which love, just because it is the love of Him who is eternal and unchangeable, must be itself eternal and unchangeable. To the question, What induces God to exercise on the mind of one man rather than on the mind of another this influence, which is at once necessary and sufficient to bring the sinner to the Saviour? there is only one satisfactory reply: sovereign love. "He has mercy, because he wills to have mercy: he has compassion, because

he wills to have compassion." "All whom the Father giveth me" is, then, just equivalent to 'all who through divine influence are led to understand and believe the truth with regard to me, and are in this way put under my care as the Saviour;' and these are, according to the ancient promises, "a number which no man can number, out of every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue." All these shall, at the appointed season, "come" to the Saviour, that is, shall exercise towards him all those sentiments of mind and heart to which he is entitled, and which the belief of the truth is calculated to produce, and which nothing else can produce.—Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ illustrated, vol. i. pp. 497–501

A DISCOURSE
ON THE
RELATION OF OUR LORD'S
INTERCESSION
TO THE
CONVERSION OF THE WORLD

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."—Ps. 2:8.

PART I. THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD'S
INTERCESSION GENERALLY

The great subject of divine revelation is the salvation of a lost world—the deliverance of mankind from that state of spiritual death, of ignorance, and error, and guilt, and depravity, and misery, in which they have involved themselves by their violation of the divine law; a deliverance which includes in it, the rendering their ultimate happiness compatible with the glory of God and the order of his moral administration, the transformation of their moral nature, and the making them happy in the possession of the highest degree of every variety of enjoyment of which their nature is capable, during the entire duration of their being.

This restorative economy is uniformly in Scripture represented as originating in the sovereign benignity of God—"the good pleasure of his goodness," "the good pleasure of his will," "his purpose according to election;" and as accomplished through the mediation of his incarnate only-begotten Son.

This mediation consists of two parts, clearly distinct, yet most closely connected: the first having for its object the reconciling of the salvation of justly condemned men with the honour of God, with his rights as a moral governor, and with the interests of his intelligent creation generally; the second having for its object the actually saving of men from the evils into which sin has plunged them, and putting them in possession of the corresponding blessings.

The first of these is commonly termed our Lord's atonement or sacrifice, and embraces in it the whole series of labours and sufferings commencing in his incarnation, and terminating in his death, to which he as the voluntarily appointed surety of sinners submitted, and by which, as a display of the divine displeasure against sin, and of the holiness and justice of God, and the reasonableness and excellence of his law both in its precepts and in its sanction, it became righteous, and safe, and wise, and proper, for him to dispense the blessings of salvation to those who deserved destruction, who never could deserve anything else; and by which a solid foundation was thus laid for the harmonious manifestation of the apparently incompatible characters of the just God and the Saviour, in justifying the ungodly believing in Jesus, "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life."

The second part of our Lord's mediation refers to the actual bestowment on individuals of the benefits for the communication of which to men he has opened a channel by his sacrifice,—a channel through which it is absolutely secured, that these benefits shall find their way to all those who were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world;" and it embraces in it the whole magnificent varied order of means by which the blessings of salvation are freely offered

to all mankind without exception, and actually bestowed on all the many sons whom he, as the Captain of salvation, was appointed to bring to glory. As the reward of his labours and sufferings in the great cause of holiness and benignity, the cause of God's glory and man's salvation, he has been raised to an immortal life; "for the suffering of death," he has been seated by his Father at his right hand on his own throne; and he has received from him, as the supreme moral governor, power over all flesh, all power in heaven and in earth; that he may so administer the government of the world, as that the gospel of the kingdom may be preached to every creature under heaven, and eternal life be bestowed on all whom the Father has given him. All created beings in heaven, earth, and hell—all external events—all inward influences—are equally placed under his control, to serve the purposes of his mediation.

In the exercise of this power and authority, and in the dispensation of these blessings, to which it is subservient, the incarnate Son is to be viewed, equally as in that series of labours and sufferings by which, on the earth, he finished the work which the Father gave him there to do, as the appointed accredited agent of the Father, who in the economy of grace sustains the majesty of Divinity, "of whom are all things." When all things were put under the exalted Redeemer, HE was necessarily excepted who did put all things under him. The entire restorative system is so constituted, as that to the whole intelligent universe, "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places," it may be made evident "that all things are of God," that "God is all in all." It is as really in obedience to the will, in execution of the purpose, of Divinity, that the Mediator is governing the world in heaven; as it was in obedience to this will, in execution of this purpose, that he on the earth expiated sin by the offering of his body once for all. Accordingly we find, that in conducting this part of his saving work, the exalted Redeemer, while in essence he and the Father are one, acknowledges that, in the economy of grace, "the Father is greater than he; and in the character of the supreme ruler in relation to creatures, yet still a delegated ruler in reference to essential Divinity," he calls on his Father, and He answers him: "He

asks of him life for himself and his redeemed ones," and he obtains for himself and them "length of days, for ever and ever." Hence it is that the second department of our Lord's saving work receives the name of his intercession, as well as of his kingdom.

On a subject like this, "dark," if any is, "with excessive bright," it is hazardous to express ourselves in other language than that which the Holy Ghost teaches; but as we have reason to suspect that we do not understand what we can speak of only in one set of terms, it may be permitted to me to remark, that the clearest idea I have been able to form on this most important topic is this, that the divine agency, both in external dispensation and inward influence, in reference to the events connected with the salvation of lost men—and what events are not more immediately or more remotely connected with this?—is always exerted in consequence of the expressed will and desire of the glorified God-man, Jesus Christ. This is at once the intercession and the kingdom of the Mediator.

In this way the honour of the divine government is supported. No blessing is conferred on the guilty, but on the account of him who is most worthy, and with whom—in whom—the Father cannot but be well pleased. At the same time, high honour, rich reward, is conferred on the benevolent Redeemer, in constituting his intercession, founded on his atonement, the only and the uniformly effectual means of communicating saving blessings to men; and still further, a new value is, as it were, given to these blessings in the estimation of those on whom they are conferred, as being the answer of his prayers as well as the fruit of his sacrifice.

To use the language of the great M'Laurin, "To be perpetually employed in giving spiritual life, and strength, and joy to his people, we may easily conceive is an office very agreeable to his kind and bountiful nature; and surely every man who sincerely believes in Christ, findeth additional consolation in spiritual blessings, by reflecting on the way they are derived to him,—that they carry along

with them not only the savour of his merits, but the relish of his friendship."

The doctrine of our Lord's intercession is very clearly stated by the Apostle Paul, both in the Epistle to the Romans and in that to the Hebrews. In the first of these, he assures us that "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." And in the second, he teaches us that "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Attempts have been made, we are aware, to explain away these texts, as if "to make intercession" were merely equivalent to, "favourably to interpose in behalf of," without defining anything as to the mode of the favourable interposition; and though this is certainly to depart from the plain, obvious, ordinary meaning of the term, this mode of interpretation might have been accounted plausible, were it not that the fact of the Messiah's interposing favourably for his people by prayer or intercession is so clearly referred to in the prophetic Scriptures, and had we not so remarkable a specimen of this kind of interposition recorded in the gospel history.

In the book of Psalms, in which "it is written of the Messiah," we find it stated that he, respecting whom God had given a particular charge to his angels to keep him in all his ways, should "call on Him, and He would answer him;" that He should "give him his heart's desire, and not withhold the request of his lips;" that on his asking of Him life, He should give it him, "even length of days for ever and ever;"³ that he "should cry to him, Father," and that in answer, He should "make him his first-born, higher than the kings of the earth;" that he should, having "poured out his soul to death," "make intercession for the transgressors;"⁵ and the Anointed of the Lord is represented as saying, "that for Zion's sake he would not rest" "till her righteousness went forth as light, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth."

But the distinctest information we have respecting the intercession of our Lord, properly so called, is to be found in that wonderful prayer contained in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John, in which we find him interceding for blessings to himself, his apostles, and his people in all ages, on the ground of his having finished the work the Father had given him to do on the earth. It is impossible to read that prayer without being persuaded that it is intended as a specimen of the manner in which he interposes in our behalf as our advocate with the Father, especially when we hear himself distinctly say, "These things I speak in the world, that my joy may be fulfilled in them."

In thinking of our Lord's intercession, we are carefully to exclude from the idea we form of it, everything that is inconsistent with that state of perfect happiness and consummate dignity which he now enjoys. We are not to figure him as "in the days of his flesh, offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears;" yet neither are we, by the artifices of a generalizing criticism, to explain away the obvious meaning of the phraseology of inspired Scripture, in order to gratify that high thing within us, which is continually tempting us to endeavour to conform the doings of Divinity, in our conceptions of them, to our contracted and frequently mistaken notions of what is becoming and proper, in opposition to his own representation of them.

It is a poor exchange, when we find ourselves, as in the case before us, in possession of a cold dry abstraction, instead of the powerful motives to Christian duty, and the strong consolations amid suffering, with which the doctrine of our Lord's intercession, literally understood, is so replete to the Christian mind. There is a danger in interpreting everything literally in the Scripture accounts of the economy of salvation, and some good men have in this way introduced much confusion into the theory of redemption, leading to mystic notions and enthusiastic feelings; but there is a hazard, too, of finding more figures in these accounts than really exist there, and thereby mutilating the divine revelation; and from the peculiar

genius of our times, this last extreme is that into which we are most likely to fall.

It would be a delightful employment to enter at large into an illustration of our Lord's intercession in all its numerous and important bearings—doctrinal, experimental, and practical. But my special purpose is to consider a little what place the great missionary enterprise, the conversion of the world, has in the Redeemer's intercession, and what influence the truth on this subject should have on our thoughts and feelings and actions in reference to that enterprise.

PART II. THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD'S INTERCESSION IN REFERENCE TO THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD

The whole truth on the first of these subjects may be expressed in two words. The great object of rightly aimed missionary enterprise, and the grand means of efficient missionary enterprise, are equally the subject of our Lord's intercession. He prays for the conversion of the world, and he prays for that which is at once absolutely necessary and completely sufficient to secure the conversion of the world.

§ 1. The conversion of the world a subject of our Lord's intercession

And, first, our Lord prays for the object of all rightly aimed Christian missionary enterprise. And what is that? The diffusion of the Christian revelation throughout the whole inhabited globe, and the

conversion of mankind—of all nations—to the knowledge, and love, and service, and enjoyment of the only true God and the only effectual Saviour. The great design of our Lord's incarnation, and sufferings, and death, was to make a revelation of God, and redeem to himself and to his Father an innumerable multitude, "out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," that through that revelation they might obtain eternal life. In exact agreement with this design is the commandment which he gave to his holy apostles before he left the earth for heaven, to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

It might well be expected, that what formed the great design of the incarnation, and the great subject of the apostolic commission, should have a place, and a high one, in our Lord's intercessory prayers. And we find that it has so. "Ask of me," says the Father to the Son, whom he has constituted his King on his holy hill of Zion,—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." These words, to a person accustomed to interpret the phraseology of prophetic Scripture, plainly teach that "in that day,"—the period referred to—the period of the Messianic economy,—the Son should ask of the Father, and, in answer to his prayer, should receive from him "the heathen as his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as his possession." In the eighty-ninth Psalm, Jehovah makes promises to his "Holy One"—"the Mighty One" he had raised up—"his anointed servant,"—that "his horn should be exalted," and that "he would set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers." Depending on these promises, Messiah cries to him who had made them, "My Father, my Father!" and, in answer to the filial appeal, Jehovah makes "his first-born higher than the kings of any land." In the sixty-second chapter of Isaiah, Messiah—described in the beginning of the sixty-first chapter as "anointed by the Lord, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"—appears as an earnest intercessor in behalf of the great object of missionary enterprise: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness,

and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory." In the seventeenth chapter of John, already alluded to as the infallible picture of our interceding High Priest, we find him praying, with peculiar earnestness, that the world might be brought to know and acknowledge that the Father had sent him, and thus obtain that eternal life which consists in knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Is it not plain, then, that the great object of all rightly aimed missionary enterprise is the subject of the Saviour's intercession?

§ 2. The means of the conversion of the world, the subject of our Lord's intercession

But, secondly, the grand means of efficient missionary enterprise are also the subject of the Saviour's intercession. The secondary means of gaining the object of missions are numerous and diversified. The education of missionaries—the preaching of the gospel by them—the translation, and publication, and circulation of the sacred Scriptures in all the languages of the many-tongued earth—the collection of funds to defray the expenses connected with all these exertions,—these and many other means must be employed to gain the great object of Christian missions. I have no doubt the great Intercessor prays with regard to every one of these. We may forget some of them, all of them, in our prayers; he forgets none of them.

But there are two great means for promoting the object of missions—the one primary, the other secondary—which we know, from the most express testimony of Scripture, form subjects of the Saviour's intercession. I refer to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and to union of mind, will, aim, and exertion among true Christians.

(1.) The grand primary means, the influence of the Holy Ghost

The great primary means of successful missionary exertion—the influence of the Spirit—is the subject of the Saviour's intercession. Who doubts that this is the grand primary means? Just as this is communicated, does missionary enterprise succeed; just in the degree in which it is withheld, does missionary enterprise languish. This influence is necessary to make men Christians, and produce that supreme regard for the glory of God, and that ardent sympathy for the miseries of a perishing world, which are the elementary principles of all right missionary exertion. It is this influence which induces men, from such principles, cheerfully to devote their time, their talents, their property to this object. It is this which gives the wisdom to form and the energy to prosecute such undertakings. It is this which can alone break down the middle walls of partition among Christians, and lead them to combine their energies, and thus render them capable of exertions to which, in their disjointed state, they are inadequate. It is this influence only which can form really efficient missionaries, and fit them for their peculiarly difficult duties, and sustain them amid their peculiarly severe trials. And after they are on the field, and acting every part of good soldiers of Christ Jesus, it is this influence only which can make their exertions, even in a single instance, effectual for the great object in view. Was there ever a soul converted, but by the Holy Ghost? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." It is plain, then, that, in the business of Christian missions, divine influence is all-important.

Now, if we know certainly anything about the subjects of our Lord's intercession, we know that the communication of divine influence—its communication for the conversion of the world—is one of them. We know that, to remove the obstacles in the way of the communication of divine influence, was a leading design of his expiatory sufferings: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse in our room," not only "that the blessing of Abraham"—a free and full justification through believing—"should come on the Gentiles, but that we should obtain the promised Spirit through believing." This communication, as the end of his toils and sufferings, must be the object of his desire; and it is by means of the

expression of this desire—in other words, through his intercession—that the communication actually takes place. The Spirit was not given till Jesus was glorified. "It is expedient for you," said he, "that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go, I will send him to you."² And as to the way in which he is to send him, what can be more explicit than the following statement: "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, who will abide with you for ever?" And then, as to the object of this Comforter coming, for which our Lord prays, how clearly does he intimate that that is the conversion of the world! "When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."⁴ When the world is thus convinced, the world will be converted, and the great object of Christian missions completely gained.

(2.) The grand secondary means—the union of Christians in mind, will, aim, and operation with the Father and the Son

As the influence of the Holy Ghost is the great primary means of the conversion of the world, so the union of Christians with him and his Father, and with one another, in mind, will, aim, and operation, is the great secondary means. I think the question must often come up in a reflecting Christian's mind, Why has not the world long ago been converted? And the answer is not far to seek. Christians have not been one with their Lord and his Father, and with one another. The divisions among Christians have prevented them from making the exertions necessary to the conversion of the world, and have thrown obstacles in the way of the success of such imperfect attempts as, in their divided state, they have made. Till Christians are more closely united among themselves, by being all more closely united in mind and heart to God, the conversion of the world cannot be accomplished. Now, this also is the subject of the intercession of our Lord: this also our Lord asks of his Father, in order to the heathen becoming his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth his

possession. How striking these words: "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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

It has thus, I think, been very fully demonstrated, that missionary enterprise, in its object and in its means, primary and secondary, is the subject of the intercession of our Lord. It is surely a fair corollary from this demonstration, that WE ought to pray for that for which our Saviour prays. In this he hath set us an example, that we should follow his steps.

Let us then pray for the conversion of the world. Let us do so: for thus God will be glorified. Let us do so: for thus Christ will be gratified; he will "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Let us do so: for thus men will be saved. Let us do so: for thus Satan will be mortified. Let us do so: for thus the church on earth will be increased. Let us do so: for thus the church in heaven will be delighted; there will be joy among the angels in heaven—joy too, surely, among the spirits of the just made perfect. Let this, then, be our constant prayer, as it is His: "Let thy way be known on the earth, and thy saving health to all nations. Let the people praise thee, O Lord; let all the people praise thee." "Let the whole earth be filled with thy glory." "Let thy glory be revealed, and let all flesh see it together." "Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Let us pray for the shedding forth abundantly of the influence of the good Spirit on the church and on the world. Nothing is done to purpose but in proportion as this is done. "Upon the land of my people shall come up briars and thorns," until "the Spirit is poured

upon us from on high;" "and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Let then our prayer be, 'Pour water on us; we are thirsty: pour floods on us; we are as the dry ground: pour out thy Spirit on our seed, thy blessing on our offspring. Deny us not thy grace; uphold us by thy free Spirit. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour forth righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. Send forth thy Spirit, that there may be a new creation, and renew the face of the earth. Come, come, O Spirit of the Lord, from the four winds; breathe on a dead church, on a dead world, that they may live.' And what encouragement have we to present these prayers! Jesus presents them, and him the Father hears always; and this is the promise: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall God give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Finally, let us pray for the union of Christians—their union with the Father and the Son, and their union with each other. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love her." Pray that "the envy of Ephraim may depart; that Ephraim may not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; but that they may fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west, and spoil them of the east together; that they may lay their hands on Edom and Moab, and that the children of Ammon may obey them." Pray that, as a united, well-disciplined host, the armies of heaven, instead of turning their arms against each other, may all, clothed in fine linen white and clean, follow on white horses the Captain of their salvation,—him who is "faithful and true, whose name is the Word of God, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, on whose head are many crowns, and who is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, when he goes forth on his white horse in righteousness to judge and make war,"—"a willing people in the day of his power;"

and that, while "he in his majesty rides prosperously, because of meekness, and truth, and righteousness, and his right hand teaches him terrible things, and his arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies," their weapons of warfare, not carnal, but mighty through God, may "pull down strongholds, cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." And for this purpose pray for "the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ," "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Pray that the love of Christians may "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that they may approve things that are excellent, and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." Pray that the "God of patience and consolation may grant Christians to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, that they may with one mind and heart glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And while we pray for these things, let our conduct correspond with our prayers. Can we pray for the conversion of the world, and yet not give for the conversion of the world—not work for the conversion of the world? How dare we pray for that which we are not doing everything in our power to further? Is it not to mock God, to ask him alone to do that which he requires us to do in the sphere of our ability?

While we pray for the Spirit for ourselves and for the world, let us take care that we do not vex and grieve him, by living in the neglect of known duty, in the commission of known sin. What an insult to the Spirit, to ask his influence for ourselves and others, while we are resisting his influence!

When we pray for union among Christians, as necessary to the conversion of the world, let us guard against a sectarian spirit. Let us beware of confounding conversion to Christ with proselytism to our

section of the Christian church. Let us seek more and more ardently for that personal union with Christ which will unite us with all his true people. Let us seek the one Spirit, persuaded that it is only as influenced by him that we shall be one with God, one with Christ, and one with our Christian brethren.

If we thus act, we may rest satisfied that our prayers, along with Christ's prayers, for the conversion of the world, for the influence of the Spirit, for the union of Christians, shall assuredly come before God as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, and bring down an answer of peace. But "if we regard iniquity in our heart, God will not hear us." May we all have reason to say, "But verily we know God hath heard us, and hath attended to the voice of our prayer. Blessed be God, who hath not turned away our prayer from him, nor his mercy from us."

Prayer on such subjects, without exertion, is impious mockery; exertion without prayer is presumptuous folly; prayer and exertion combined are piety and wisdom. Let us imitate our Lord. He works as well as prays. Let us, in our immeasurably lower and narrower sphere, show that we are "one spirit" with him, by working and praying, praying and working, that the "heathen may be made his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth his possession."

PART III. PRACTICAL BEARING OF THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD'S INTERCESSION FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD

Let us now attempt to unfold to you the powerful influence which the truth on this subject, if but understood and believed, is calculated to exert in a variety of ways on the mind of Christians, in stimulating

and encouraging them to prosecute with untiring perseverance, and even with ever-increasing ardour, the high and holy enterprise in which the church of Christ is engaged as her appropriate vocation,—the subjugation of a rebel world to submission to the authority and grace of their Lord, who is, and who ought to be acknowledged, "Lord of all" The fact of our Lord's making the missionary enterprise the subject of his intercession, clearly proves and strikingly illustrates the desirableness, the importance, the practicability, and the absolutely certain ultimate success, of that enterprise; while at the same time it makes it very evident, that in making exertions and sacrifices to promote it, Christians are doing what must be well-pleasing to their Lord and King. If we can make out this proposition, we must surely be admitted to have succeeded in showing that the fact of our Lord's making the missionary enterprise, both as to its object and the means of attaining that object, the subject of his intercession, is richly replete with motive and encouragement to earnest persevering effort on the part of Christians in prosecuting this enterprise. Let us in succession examine the various parts of this complex proposition.

§ 1. It shows that the conversion of the world is desirable

I observe, then, in the first place, that the fact of our Lord's making the conversion of the world the subject of his intercession, shows that it is a desirable object. It might be thought that on this subject all men would be agreed. But it is not so. It has been maintained that Christianity is not fitted for men in all circumstances,—that there is no such thing as absolute religious truth,—that, in the development of human civilisation, varying forms of faith naturally emerge to suit the circumstances,—that to the great ruling power of the universe all these forms are equally agreeable,—and that an attempt to impose on Mohammedan or pagan nations a creed and a worship perhaps in themselves superior to those which prevail among them, but for which their habits and circumstances render them unfit, cannot be extensively or permanently successful, and looking at it in all its bearings, being calculated to do more harm than good in unsettling

all their ideas about what is true and right, is by no means desirable. It has often been said, Why disturb the minds of the Moslem and Buddhists of India? They are as good men, and they are more easily managed subjects, than if you were making bad Christians of them; and good Christians of them you will never make.

It is amazing how an educated man with a grave face can enunciate such enormous absurdities. Surely these men, "professing themselves to be wise," prove themselves "fools." Take their own low ground, from which nothing unseen or eternal can be descried—the seen and the temporal stretching to the utmost horizon, bounded to them by no everlasting hills: take their own low ground, and, comparing the state of nations who enjoy Christianity and those who are destitute of it, say if it is not desirable that all nations should be christianized. Is the alternation of starvation and gluttony, which characterizes the savage state, a better thing than the regular decent meals of civilised men? Is nakedness preferable to comfortable clothing?—foul promiscuous concubinage to marriage, "honourable in all?" Is it better that life and property should be secure or insecure? Are the polluted bloody orgies of Juggernaut more conducive to secular happiness than the rites of Christian worship? Whether has the man of Britain or the man of Japan the larger share of enjoyment during the present state? Is it not certain that Christianity always brings along with it, in their purest form and in abundant measure, the blessings of civilisation, and that all the forms of false religion check man's progress in almost every path of improvement?

But I cannot consent to continue to occupy their low ground. I take the high, secure standing which divine revelation gives me; and, discerning the God who is invisible, and the world that is unseen,—looking at man in his connection with a personal Divinity, the holy and benignant as well as powerful and wise Governor of the world, and with an eternity which, according as man is prepared for meeting it, is to him full of all that is most dreadful, or all that is most desirable,—I ask if the conversion of the world be not a

consummation most devoutly to be wished for? Is not God infinitely great and good, venerable and lovely? As being the Creator, is he not the sole and rightful proprietor and governor of his own world? Is it desirable that men, capable of knowing and loving and serving him, should live as if no such being existed—aliens from him, rebels against him? Is it not most meet that all intelligent beings should know and acknowledge the supreme excellence and loveliness, and in the sanctuary of their intellectual and active natures yield to him the tribute of supreme reverence and love? Is it not desirable that "the glory of the Lord should be revealed, so that all flesh may see it together?" Is it not desirable, so far as man is concerned, that he should know and love the only living and true God—that he should possess his favour, bear his image in purity, and in happiness enjoy his fellowship? Is it not desirable that man's eternity should be a constant ascent in knowledge, purity, and happiness, instead of a hopeless descent in guilt, depravity, and wretchedness? Is it not desirable that the object for which the Son of God became incarnate, and suffered, and died on the cross, should be gained? Is it not desirable that oppression, slavery, war, and all the other "works of the devil," should be destroyed?

But I wish to fix your minds on that proof and illustration of it furnished by the fact of its being the subject of the Saviour's constant earnest intercession. Whatever is an object of desire to him, who is at once perfect in knowledge and in wisdom, must be desirable. He could not desire it, if it were not desirable; he could not strongly desire it as he does, and shows that he does, by his constant earnest intercession, if it were not in a high degree desirable. If he desires it, surely we may desire it; and if we may desire it, we may—we ought—to take the means within our reach for having our desire accomplished. But not only is our Lord's intercession for the cause of the world a proof that the conversion of the world is in itself a desirable thing, but it furnishes us with an additional reason for desiring it. The mere fact that He, our best friend, desires it as a thing he has very much set his heart on, even though we could not see it to be so desirable in itself as we must do if we look at it

attentively, ought to make us desire it, and ought to urge us to do all in our power to accelerate that which we know he desires. This thought will, however, come more prominently before us in another part of our illustrations. Enough has been said to show that the conversion of the world is a desirable thing, and that the intercession of Christ for that purpose demonstrates this.

§ 2. It shows that the conversion of the world is important

I observe, in the second place, that the fact of our Lord's making the conversion of the world the subject of his intercession, shows that it is an important object. Missionary enterprise long was, and to a considerable—but, blessed be God, every day a diminishing—extent is, the object of contempt and scorn on the part of the wise men of the world. The great majority of those most distinguished for secular wealth, and dignity, and literature, used to stigmatize all attempts to convert the world as either artful schemes on the part of men who wish to distinguish themselves at the expense of their credulous neighbours, or wild dreams of well-intentioned but wrongheaded fanatics. The wonderful success of modern missions, especially in promoting the cause of civilisation and science, a subject which the men we are speaking of are capable of appreciating, has gone a great way to modify and even to alter such views. Still, however, the world, the unbelieving world, which is the great body of mankind—including the great majority of men of mark for wealth, and honour, and literature—regard with cold indifference, with contempt, if not decided opposition, missionary undertakings. Christians live in the world, and many of their severest trials rise out of their position. It is a difficult thing to resist the influence of widely spread opinion, even when there is a strong and well-founded conviction that it is groundless. This influence is felt in a degree sometimes not suspected, and at other times unwillingly acknowledged, by genuine friends of missions, who are called on to mingle much in circles where all such subjects are seen only in the false and shifting lights of the present evil world. It is of importance that the Christian should be constantly on his guard against this encroaching, misleading

influence; and for this purpose, that he habitually contemplate the missionary enterprise in the pure light of divine revelation—the light of heaven—the light of eternity.

And when thus contemplated, what magnificent interests does it appear to involve! The honour and stability of Britain's throne—the liberty, order, and prosperity of Britain's people,—these are felt by us all to be high and important interests. But what are these compared with the glory of Jehovah's great name, the honour of his moral administration, the happiness of his wide-spread, intelligent, immortal subjects; the increase of his church, the happiness of his world! What a noble object of ambition is the salvation of souls! In the salvation of a single soul, what an immensity of evil, the worst kind of evil, is prevented; of good, the best kind of good, is secured,—prevented and secured for ever! All the evil endured and all the good enjoyed on earth, by all the individuals who have lived on it since the creation, are infinitely inadequate measures of these. And in the missionary enterprise, we contemplate the salvation of innumerable souls, otherwise hopelessly lost,—“a multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues?” Besides, if difficulty give dignity to an enterprise, how many, how great, are the difficulties to be encountered here,—enough to task to the uttermost all man's capacities of thought and action!

When tempted to doubt of the dignity and importance of the cause of missions, let us repair to Calvary, and gaze on the expiring God-man; and think, 'HE dies that men may be brought to God, that the world may not perish, but have everlasting life.' That must be a glorious object for which HE lays down his life. The created being is ennobled who is permitted in any way to take part in it. This is the most striking of all demonstrations of the importance and dignity of the missionary enterprise.

But next to this comes that which our subject brings before our mind. Who can form an adequate estimate of the comprehensiveness and soundness of the judgments formed by the God-man Christ

Jesus,—him in whom are lodged all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,—him "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!" He thinks the missionary cause worthy of a principal place in his prayers.

It would not, I apprehend, be easy to find a juster measure of the degree of interest and importance which a good man attaches to any particular object, than the frequency and fervour of his prayers in reference to it. If a pious man does not pray much about a particular subject, it is a proof that he does not consider it as a matter of very great importance: a sense of the importance of any cause or event in which he is interested is sure to send him to his closet, and bring him to his knees. On the other hand, if a man think a thing to be of very great importance, and yet do not pray much about it, it is a proof that, whatever profession he may make, he is not a truly pious man.

Surely the thought that he, who is "the only wise God" as well as "our Saviour Jesus Christ," gives such a proof of his having formed a high estimate of the importance of the conversion of the world, should raise us, in prosecuting this object, above the paralysing influence of the low estimate of it formed by short-sighted men, who compliment each other on their wisdom, while in the estimation of God they are fools; and we may well account ourselves honoured in constantly labouring in a cause for which the Saviour laid down his life, and though now exalted to "the right hand of the Majesty on high," does not think it beneath him continually to intercede.

§ 3. It shows that the conversion of the world is practicable

I observe, in the third place, that the fact that our Lord makes the conversion of the world the subject of his intercession, shows that it is practicable. The enterprise is obviously a very difficult one. How difficult to convert a single soul! How difficult to convert millions of souls! How many moral miracles does the christianizing, in the true sense of the word, a single heathen embrace! and this must take place in hundreds of millions of instances before the world be

converted. And then add to this the difficulty rising out of the depravity common to the race, the obstructions thrown in the way by long-established systems of religious imposture and civil despotism, which see the destruction of their power in the progress of Christianity. How utterly inadequate are all mere human means for gaining such an object! How powerless human strength in struggling with such adversaries! When this very natural course of thought is entered on by the mind, a feeling of hopelessness is in danger of taking possession of the heart.

But the enterprise, though difficult, is not impracticable. Our Lord would not pray for what he knows to be impracticable. His praying for it proves its practicability. His prayers have divine power to back them. He has only to pray for influence, and it is put forth. He has only to pray for an event, and it takes place. His intercession can secure for the human agents everything that is necessary to qualify them for their work. They need much; but they do not need more than the Holy Ghost. And he is always given by the Father when he is asked for by the Son. His intercession can secure everything necessary to make their exertions effectual. There is no human heart so firmly bolted, but the Holy Spirit, given in answer to the intercession of the Son, can open it for the entrance of the truth. There is no system of priestly imposture or despotic rule which can stand before the power of the Father put forth by the Spirit in answer to the prayers of his Son. When he calls, the Father is sure to answer. When he asks, the Father is sure to give. When he cries, "My Father"—"My God"—"Rock of my salvation," the Father will, according to his promises, "beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him;" "he will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers; he will make him his first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." In answer to our Lord's intercessions, divine grace will prove sufficient for all engaged in the good work; and what to man would have been impossible, will with God, using human instrumentality, be found not only practicable, but easy. There is plainly nothing requisite to gain the desired end that is not within the reach of the Saviour's prayers. They have the resources of infinite

wisdom and power at their disposal. The work, for the success of which he prays, never can be impracticable, for "with God nothing is impossible;" and God will do whatever his Son asks him to do.

§ 4. It shows that the conversion of the world is absolutely certain

I observe, in the fourth place, that the fact that the conversion of the world is the subject of our Lord's intercession, shows that its ultimate attainment is absolutely certain. The conversion of the world is more than a possible thing. It is as certain as anything future can be. It is as certain as the God who has the entire control of the future can make it. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: All kings shall fall down" before the Messiah—the King, and the King's son—"all nations shall serve him." "All people, nations, and languages shall serve him; his dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." His gospel must be preached for a testimony to all nations. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." He, whose words these are, never denies himself. "He is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good?"

That which was the object of the Saviour's death—that which is the subject of the Saviour's intercession—must take place. He was lifted up that all men might be drawn to him; and he died not as a fool dieth. He must "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." He who knows the will of the Father, can present no fruitless prayer. "Him the Father heareth always." If he ask—and we know he does ask—the Father "will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Whether we take a part in the great work or not, its ultimate success is in no degree doubtful. We may indeed shut ourselves out from having a part in

the reward of the faithful servants of our Lord; but we cannot prevent the triumph of his kingdom. He must reign, for his Father hath said it. Particular missionary enterprises may fail—though I apprehend few have failed, except where there has been a decided want of persevering effort on the part of Christians—but the general missionary enterprise must be successful. When anything approaching to mistrust on this subject is making way in our minds, let us think of the intercession of Christ, and we must be re-assured and re-invigorated. "Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the strength of his right hand." The fact that our Lord intercedes for the conversion of the world, thus proves that it is desirable, important, practicable, certain.

§ 5. It shows that endeavours to convert the world must be pleasing to the Lord

The only other remark I have to make is, that the fact that the conversion of the world is the subject of our Lord's intercession, shows that when we endeavour to promote that object, we do something that is very well pleasing in his sight. I have already had occasion to observe, that nothing is a clearer evidence that a pious man takes a deep interest in a particular object, than its forming a frequent subject of his prayers. That is perhaps the strongest proof such a person can give, that that event lies very near his heart. It is a certain evidence, then, that our Lord takes a deep interest in the conversion of the world, that it forms so prominent a subject of his intercession; and as, from the nature of the case, the object is to be gained by human instrumentality, he must be pleased with every honest attempt, however imperfect, to promote that for which he "poured out his soul unto death" on earth, and for which he is ever pouring forth his heart into his Father's bosom in heaven.

Few things are felt as a stronger motive to a particular course of conduct, than the knowing that in following it we are doing what is agreeable to the mind and will of a dear and valued friend. And this motive, in all well constituted minds, is felt more strongly when our

friend is absent from us; most strongly of all when he is separated from us "by more than sea and land"—removed into the world of spirits. Surely, then, to know that we are doing what our best friend, the Friend who died for us, and whom we supremely love, must be delighted with; surely this consideration is calculated to chase away languor, to enliven zeal, to strengthen resolution, and to prevent us from becoming weary in well-doing. And certainly the force of the motive is increased by the reflection, that our exertions are the very means through which he expects the objects of his intercession to be gained, and that his approving eye is resting benignantly on every effort, however feeble, if but sincere, towards the gaining of that end for which he died once, and for which he ever lives to make intercession. Oh, how unspeakably does God honour us when he thus (I speak it with reverence, but with no doubt of the substantial truth of the strange statement) associates us with Himself in the highest and holiest of his works,—that of recompensing his Son for his labours and sacrifices in the cause of divine glory and human salvation! And what Christian bosom does not swell with grateful exultation at the thought, that by promoting the cause of Christian missions he may send a thrill of gladness through that heart, which for him was sorrowful—exceeding sorrowful—sorrowful even unto death?

§ 6. It especially shows the importance of prayer as a means for converting the world

If, as we have seen in the illustration of these five remarks, the truth in reference to our Lord's intercession be fitted to animate us in all our missionary efforts, it is obviously fitted especially to encourage us in our seeking to advance this cause by our prayers. He seeks to promote it by his prayers; we should seek to promote it by ours. The great work we wish to promote, is a work to which divine agency is primarily necessary. The putting forth of that agency is promised; and united, believing, fervent, persevering prayer on the part of the church—prayer like that of her Head—is the appointed method of obtaining the fulfilment of the promise. Is there not something

peculiarly animating in the thought, that while we are praying beneath, in the outer sanctuary, our High Priest is praying in the true Holy of Holies, "within the veil" above? And as, under the Old Testament dispensation, the sound of the bells attached to the high priest's garments cheered the multitude without, by the intimation it gave that their representative was alive within the veil acceptably pleading their cause; so the numerous instances of conversion among the heathen are heart-stirring, heart-strengthening tokens that our High Priest yet lives, able to save to the uttermost, making effectual intercession.

And he not only presents his own prayers, but ours also: "I saw," says John the divine, when, as it were, a window was opened into heaven,—"I saw an angel come and stand at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne: and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Let us, then, my brethren, be induced to be "instant in prayer,"—to "pray always with all prayer and supplication,"—to "watch unto prayer,"—to "pray and not faint;" and when, by the ear of faith, we hear our exalted Redeemer declaring his unalterable determination,—"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that bumeth: and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory,"—oh let us yield obedience to the command, which has peculiar force as coming from him, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

It may be justly said of our prayers for the universal establishment of our Lord's kingdom in the world, what he, when on the earth, said of the request of two of his disciples, "Ye know not what ye ask." When we, according to his command, in praying say, "Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in

heaven;" we present petitions, in the granting of which may be involved many events of which we have no distinct idea, and which, considered as unconnected with the end of which they are to be the means, if they were distinctly bodied out to our minds, we could not help deprecating. By "terrible things in righteousness," so far as relates to individuals and systems opposed to the interests of the kingdom of God, is the hearer of prayer likely to answer the prayers of his church. He must "overturn, overturn, overturn, till he come whose right it is to reign and to him He will give the kingdom. "When," to refer again to the apocalyptic vision formerly mentioned, "the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand, the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake;" and the seven angels had to sound their trumpets of ever-deepening woe for the earth, before the voices were heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

But while we do not know what we ask, he knows well what he asks. He sees the beginning, and the middle, and the end of all things. He sees all things in their connections and dependencies, and his all-prevalent intercession will conduct the whole mysterious procession of divine dispensations to a glorious issue. It is a confidence in this which alone can preserve the mind tranquil and happy, while the political and moral atmosphere of the Latin earth wears so strangely lurid an aspect, betokening sometimes, even by its unnatural stillness, the coming thunder, lightning, and earthquake. But ultimately all shall be well for Messiah the Prince and his faithful followers. The thrones of iniquity, bolster them up as they may, must fall. They are doomed. They have no fellowship with him whose "throne is for ever and ever," and whose "sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness." "He cometh—he cometh to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the people with equity." The

prince of this world shall be cast out; and all men shall be drawn to his conqueror and their deliverer. Who can deprecate the throes of a travail to terminate in a birth so glorious!

"The harsh and diss'nant sounds, which long
Have been, are still disquieting the earth,
Are but the tuning of the varying parts
For the great harmony, prelude all
Of that vast chorus which shall usher in
The hastening triumph of the Prince of Peace.
Yes! his shall be the kingdom,—he shall come!
Ye scoffers at his tarrying! hear ye not,
Even now, the thunder of his wheels? Awake,
Thou slumb'ring world! The symphony even now
Of that bless'd song is floating in the air,
PEACE BE ON EARTH, AND GLORY BE TO GOD!"

There is a reflection of a very serious import pressing itself on my mind, and I must, before I close, give it utterance. Have not those of us who are most alive to the claims of the great missionary enterprise, much cause to be ashamed of our languid, hesitating, interrupted, sometimes all but abandoned, exertions in the good cause, when we think with what constant untiring fervour and energy our Lord prosecutes it; and how completely he, by his intercession, has secured for us, if we will but ask it of the Father in his name, all that is necessary to the right management and triumphant issue of the glorious work in which we are engaged?

And there is a more painful reflection still. What are we to think of those who feel no interest in, who make no exertion for, a cause which employs so many of the Saviour's thoughts,—which is the subject of his fervent, unremitting intercession? What are we, my brethren, to think of ourselves, if this be our character? Is it not a plain proof that the mind that is in Christ is not in us,—that we have not his Spirit,—that he is not in us,—that we are not in him,—in one word, that we are none of his, and have no part nor lot in his salvation? If there be any such now present, oh let them reflect, and consider that if they seek not the kingdom here, they can never find it yonder. Christ's intercession is all-powerful. It shall triumph in the complete establishment of his kingdom, and in the eternal salvation of all those who have followed him in the regeneration, to whom he will appoint a kingdom, as his Father hath appointed to him a kingdom. But the triumph of the King and the kingdom are identified with the destruction of all opposing power—of all irreclaimable aliens and irreconcilable enemies.

There is no neutral ground here. The question is, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." HE must reign; his cause must triumph; and WE must either join the joyful multitude of the armies of heaven, who with acclamations are hastening with their Leader, a willing people, to victory, or we must be crushed before the resistless onward movement.

In the events of our age, the Ruler of the universe is proclaiming to the potentates of the earth, and to us all, "Be wise, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, if his wrath be kindled but a little: blessed are they who trust in him." Happy indeed is he who, in however humble a station in these times, is enabled to act the part of "a good soldier of Christ Jesus." His name is "Faithful and True" who has said, "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as I have overcome, and am sat down with my Father on his throne."

APPENDIX

No. I

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE VISIBLE UNION OF CHRISTIANS, AND THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD

BY HUGH HEUGH, D.D.

1. In the visible union of Christians there are presented to the world living evidences of the nature, the excellence, and the truth of Christianity. There are two forms in which the religion of Christ may be presented: in written or oral statement, and in the character of its professors. The former is to be found, first and chiefly, in the inspired writings; and next, in human expositions of these, spoken or written. The former are necessary, the latter useful, for imparting just conceptions of the religion of Christ, and producing its saving effects on the condition and character of men. Nor is it to be questioned that the former are the chief means which Christ has appointed, and will employ, for the conversion of the Nations. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," says Paul, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

To this, however, the latter—namely, the manifestation of the religion of Christ in the character of his disciples—is eminently subsidiary; and the union for which our Lord prays both secures it, and employs the other in the most efficient manner, as we shall now see. The most general view we can take of Christianity, is when we

regard it as a system of holy benevolence, employing truth as the means of accomplishing its ends. If this be the character of Christianity, we should expect to find Christians holy, happy, benevolent, under the influence of the truth which they receive. From the preceding illustrations, it will appear that all true Christians possess those characters in various degrees; and that they naturally result from the faith and experience of Christian truth.

Observe, then, how these effects of Christianity, strongly manifested in the lives of Christians, are fitted to arrest and impress every considerate mind. In such a mind, how natural a process of thought is the following: If there be a God, he must be a being of consummate excellence; he must not only be almighty in power, unerring in wisdom, but distinguished by all moral attributes,—by truth, sanctity, and love; from which perfections his blessedness must arise. If there be a system of religion which has emanated from the Deity, it must be worthy of himself; it must, like his other works, indicate the attributes of its author. But, judging of Christianity from the effects which it plainly produces on those who receive it, it seems to have these moral characters of the Divinity in it. It must be pure, for there is no vice degrading to our nature which these men spare; there is no wrong action or habit which they justify or practise; there is no virtue honouring to men which they do not possess or pursue. They are benevolent also, for they love one Another, "not in word," but "in deed and in truth;" they love even their enemies, and do them good; their philanthropy, far from being limited to kindred or neighbours, is so expansive as to embrace the species. Their love rises higher still: for they seem to love supremely the Being to whom they believe they are indebted for their existence, their religion, their salvation; and they plainly delight in paying him the profoundest homage, in cultivating his fellowship, and doing his will. They have become happy too. There is no vexation by which the breast can be afflicted, there is no calamity by which man can be overtaken, for which they seem altogether unprovided with some antidote. They can glory in tribulation, they can triumph in death. Nor are their prospects bounded by the grave. The hope of immortal existence is

evidently strong within them; and they are elevated with the enviable, the ennobling assurance, that they shall exist for ever in a higher state of being, exempt from every evil, possessed of all felicity, and adorned with every excellence of which their nature is susceptible. There are no other classes of human beings to whom these characters are applicable. Nor are they themselves originally better than other men, or in any respect different from their neighbours. It is their religion that has produced these grand moral differences. Whence, then, this religion? Earth has no such fruit to yield. Man is incompetent to make such a discovery. Fiction it cannot be—that cause being incompetent to account for such effects. Imposture it were worse than absurdity to imagine it. From no other source can it have issued than the pure and benevolent bosom of the Divinity, whom it resembles, whom it honours, and to whom it tends.

2. In proportion as Christians are one with Christ and his Father, and one another, some of the most formidable obstructions to the conversion of the world will be removed. Christianity has ever had to struggle its way amidst obstruction and hostility; but if we except the resistance made to it by the deep-rooted prejudices and depravity of every individual mind, the chief hindrance is to be found in the character and conduct of professed Christians. Were all who bear the name of Christ such as I have just described, although compassed with many infirmities, and found in every variety of stage of progress; were even the great body of professors such, with a few unhappy and palpable exceptions, neither screened nor countenanced by the faithful; were Christians, generally speaking, just such as the New Testament describes Them, "lights in the world," some more, some less brilliant, but all of them lights in regard to knowledge, purity, benevolence, and joy, Each "shining" in the "dark place," each contributing his share of influence, however feeble, to scatter the darkness and advance the illumination of the world; were all ministers and missionaries, those whose functions and whose vows should raise them high among their brethren, the holy heralds of a holy message, the benevolent heralds of a gospel of love, the faithful stewards of the treasure of saving truth, fired with

such a zeal as their position should inspire,—Christianity, as at the beginning, would advance conquering and to conquer, until the long-contested field of the world should be entirely won for its Author. But alas, what a contrast has the picture presented to the reality! By far the greater number of those who profess Christianity are Christians but in name; and had they assumed that name for no other purpose than to obscure its evidence, dishonour its character, enervate its influence, and obstruct its access into the hearts of men, they would not have acted otherwise than they have done. "Many walk," said an apostle in the primitive age, "of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." If these tears were justified by some inconsistencies in that age, in what profusion would they have flowed amidst the degeneracy in the ages that have followed! It has been as if, by some infatuation, the enemy had been permitted to take and to keep the very citadel itself; and, obtaining the mastery, he has defiled whatever is pure, he has desecrated whatever is holy, he has seduced or coerced the faithful, and has often turned the very artillery of the fortress against friends rather than foes. There are the ignorant professors of Christianity, who know nothing whatever of the religion they profess, and who rear families in ignorance, to transmit in their turn this barren inheritance to generations unborn. There are the formalists in myriads, who tread with dull and solemn monotony the same found of heartless observances,—alive to the world, but to the religion of Christ, the worship of spirit and truth, dead as the tenants of the tomb. There are the whole varieties of the baptized world, from the palace of the prince to the cottage of the pauper,—the servants of pride, or covetousness, or sensuality, as really as if, in place of Jehovah, they still adored those abrogated deities which superstition created as the ideal patrons of the vices they love. What shall I say? Perhaps there are nominal Christian ministers in thousands, distinguished by nothing so much as ambition, cupidity, or indolence,—pastors who feed themselves, but not the flock; or wolves in sheep's clothing, who enter the fold for prey, not for pasture; or haughty lords over the heritage of God, who, without one Bible character of Christ's ministers, aspire after powers from which

Christian ministers would shrink. Then there are the woful contentions and strifes of true Christians themselves, by which those resources of time, talent, and feeling, which should be employed for the promotion of Christianity, are expended injuriously to that sacred cause.

Who shall estimate the amount of obstruction thus presented to the progress of the gospel—of the strength of prejudice thus created against it? "Your religion," the enemy is encouraged to say, "may possess whatever theoretical excellence its admirers may choose to assign to it; but for the formation of character it is impotent. It may induce a persuasion that you are the favourites of Heaven, and may inspire you with hopes, which other men have not, of a futurity of bliss; but if you are the legitimate subjects of these lofty privileges, the Deity has strange favourites, and his heaven strange heirs. For 'what do ye more than others?' And, beyond profession, usage, interest, what care you for the very religion of which you make your boast? It teaches humility, and you are proud; sincerity, and you deceive; generosity, and you are covetous; kindness, and you are severe. Your religion may be true, but you yourselves do not believe it; it may be divine, but you neither love nor obey it. Practise it yourselves, ere you preach it to others; and show us by your works that you believe it in your own hearts, ere you demand for it a reception in ours."

How are these obstructions to be removed? how are these prejudices to be dealt with? Were a profession of Christianity more restricted than it is to those who believe its truth and live under its influence; were all Christian churches to study required fidelity in regard to the character of those whom they admit to, or retain in, their fellowship; and were the true followers of the Lord Jesus, of every name, without compromise of conviction and principle, to act out the scriptural law of affectionately co-operating to the extent of their agreement, and thus were visibly as they are really one, this offence would in a great measure cease; this formidable obstacle to the faith of the world would be removed for ever;

3. The union for which our Lord prays will secure all required Christian effort to effect the conversion of the world. It is not simply by the existence of access to the written word, nor by the exhibition of its influence in the character of the disciples, that the gospel of Christ is to be propagated, and the nations brought to the obedience of the faith. In that spiritual warfare, the result of which is to be the subjection of the world to Jesus, the church is the sacred host which the Captain of salvation leads forth; and it is just in proportion as the whole host are one among themselves and one with their Leader, according to this prayer, that they shall prove invincible and victorious. It is only thus that they shall be qualified and disposed for the work, and that every measure shall be employed which Christ has appointed in order to its success. The merely nominal members of the church are destitute of all internal qualifications for right effort in the cause of Christ. How shall they serve a Master whom they neither know nor love? How shall they seek a salvation for others which they themselves despise or neglect? Shall the subjection of the world to God be honestly attempted by rebels against him? And although by various causes—by the stream of usage carrying them along with it, by a want of will or power to hold out against solicitation, by some meltings of humanity produced by the tale of the miseries of the world, or by other and more questionable influences—such persons may act for a season along with the faithful, you can count no more on their constancy than on their cordiality. They may soon draw back, and raise the cry, 'To what purpose is this waste of time, or talk, or money?'

But those who are one with Christ have received from him those mental qualifications which are necessary to a sincere and stedfast continuance in the work to which he calls them. Knowing the character of the Master they serve, as well as the nature of the work in which he employs them, they give their whole hearts to the one and the other. Aware that their Master has not left the work of the world's conversion indifferent to his followers, which they may mind or neglect at their option, but has prescribed it by statute the most express, and enforced it by motives the most irresistible, they gladly

own the obligation—they burn with ardour to discharge it. Persuaded that Jesus has rightful claims to the homage of the world, a holy zeal inspires them to be instrumental in gaining for their Master the homage which he merits, When "all kings shall fall down before him,"—when "all nations shall serve him,"—when "the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Moved with compassion for their fellow-men, who are misled by vain delusion, enslaved by their own corruptions, living in sorrow, and dying in Darkness, "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world," they feel within them the spirit of him who came to "seek and to save that which was lost." Thus prepared in spirit, those described by our Lord will cheerfully attempt prescribed effort. They will desire to know what means it is the will of Christ they should employ; and whether they be private Christians, whose sphere is first their own household, after this their immediate vicinity, and next co-operation, as they are enabled, in plans which embrace the interests of many near and remote, or whether they are invested with office, to minister in the Christian church, or to carry as Christian missionaries the message of mercy to the perishing far remote, they will endeavour to walk as their Saviour walked, counting no effort too great, no sacrifice too costly, to widen the empire of truth, and righteousness, and peace—to save souls from death, and to honour the Saviour who redeemed them.

4. By the union of which I speak, the means for the conversion of the world will be used in that spirit of dependence and prayer, with which, by express promises, God hath connected his effectual blessing. The influences of the best means may in a great measure be neutralized by the spirit with which they are used. Men may work with God's appointed means in a spirit on which the high and lofty One will frown. They may give their time, their talents, their money,—they may even plead, and preach, and pray, to honour themselves rather than God—to build up their own vanity, pride, influence, or self-righteousness. To use means in such a spirit, is to alienate ourselves alike from Christians and from Christ. It is not thus that we

can be one either with them or with him. Nor is it thus that we can accomplish much for the furtherance of Christ's cause and the conversion of the world. If we trust to our own strength, God will justly leave us to feel our own weakness; if we glory in our wisdom, he will let us know that we are fools; if, in any way, we work for ourselves while we seem to labour for others, or for him, he will leave us to reap our poor reward. But in as far as we are animated by that spirit which this union supposes, these things will be put far from us. After all the means of which we are aware have been resorted to, we shall be as conscious of their inefficacy without God as the husbandman who, after the soil has been prepared and the precious seed deposited in due abundance, is persuaded that the heat, and the light, and the dews, and the rains, over which he has no control, are necessary to fulfil the hopes of the harvest. We shall be so persuaded of our own utter impotence in regard to success, as to be assured that one conversion shall not ensue if converting grace be denied us. With imploring looks, with cordial desires, to which the magnitude of conversion and the necessity and sufficiency of the might that slumbers in the arm of the Almighty will impart a character of inexpressible intensity, we shall turn to God, and shall beseech him to awake for our help, to stretch out and lay bare his holy arm, to stir up his strength and his might, and come for salvation. More than all, we shall pray in faith, in the exercise of that commanded, that reasonable, that God-glorying confidence in the power and love and truth of the hearer of prayer, to which the grace of the promises is made as sure as the word and the oath of Jehovah can make it; we shall pray in that faith which, by the means of the grace granted to believing prayer, invests the simple means used by the feeble suppliant with a species of omnipotence, before which the mountain becomes a plain, all opposition vanishes, the most proud and hostile bend and resign themselves willingly to the obedience of Christ. This alliance of omnipotence with means, granted to humble and believing prayer, it was which conquered the world in the primitive age; and it is this that will conquer it again. You see it in the commission of our Saviour: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; and, lo, I am

with you always, even unto the end of the world." It is found in the apostolical aphorism: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." It is expressed in these joyous and lofty gloryings of the chief of the apostles: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Now, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God!" On us, and on our fellow-Christians, may a new and copious effusion of the Spirit of grace and supplications descend; by which, neglecting no means which God has appointed for diffusing his gospel over the whole world, we shall avail ourselves of those powerful pleadings at his throne to which he himself invites us, and shall send up to him that importunate, united, believing cry for help, which "he will hear from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand!"

No. II

THE BASIS AND OBJECT OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Christian Friends,—Common views and feelings in reference to the great realities unveiled in the Christian Revelation, and that mutual affection which is the uniform result of these, in the degree in which they are seen and felt to be common, form the basis of our Evangelical Alliance; and the object of that Alliance is to endeavour, in the most suitable way, first to manifest, and secondly to confirm and extend, this Christian union of mind and heart. The whole of our actings proceed on the two principles, that there is such a union of sentiment and feeling, and such a mutual brotherly love in all

genuine Christians; and that there are very strong reasons why this state of things should not only exist, but appear to exist.

We cannot doubt the soundness of these principles. It is one of the promises of the "everlasting covenant" "ordered in all things and sure," which is performed in the experience of every individual who is brought within its blessed bond: "I will give them one heart"—the same heart; "I will make them think and feel alike." It is the same law that he writes on all their hearts and puts in their inward parts. He teaches them all the same truth by the same Spirit; and the same views under his influence lead to the same feelings. "He fashioneth their hearts alike," and they are all "taught of God to love one another." It was not a peculiarity of the pentecostal period, nor of the primitive age, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," though that union was then felt in peculiar strength, and manifested with peculiar clearness. Solomon's proverb is emphatically true of the Christian man in every country and age: "As in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man."

This union which does exist, which must exist, among all Christians, is something which ought not to be hid. It seeks manifestation; it is an unnatural thing to conceal it. It is of great importance to Christians themselves, both to their holiness and comfort, that it should be manifested; and the visible union of mind and heart of Christians is one of the means which are to be effectually employed in convincing the world that "the Father hath sent the Son." To manifest this union is the primary object of our Alliance—to manifest it to each other—to manifest it to the church—to manifest it to the world. The manifestation of it in appropriate exercises will strengthen existing union. It will do more than this: it will gradually extend it. We shall become more "perfectly joined" in our common convictions and feelings—"in the same mind and in the same judgment." We shall come to think alike on more points, and our mutual love will grow proportionally with our felt community of principles and affections.

If these be, as I am convinced they are, the elemental principles of our institution, it is obviously of essential importance that the Alliance be formed of right materials; that it be indeed a Christian, an evangelical Alliance—an alliance of Christians, of believers of the gospel—in the true extent of meaning which belongs to those sacred names. No alliance of men not Christians, not believers of the gospel, however respectable in secular rank or ecclesiastical office, and unexceptionable in moral character, can gain our objects. We should not object to see mitres and coronets, ay, and crowns, among us, had we evidence that they who wore them were evangelical Christians. We should be glad to have among the allies the "mighty and the noble after the flesh," but only on the condition that they are among the "not many" who are "the called of God" in these envied but unenviable orders. How could an assemblage of irregenerate men manifest the union of Christians, of believers in the gospel? Their sentiments, their affections, are not—cannot be—those in which Christians are "all one in Christ Jesus." A nominal evangelical alliance formed of such persons would be a piece of hypocrisy, a stage-play, a sham, a lie.

The great matter, then, is to secure, as far as is possible, that the nominal Evangelical Alliance be indeed a real evangelical alliance; that the allies be bound together by the faith and love of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and by no other, no inferior bond. This principle, which I think will scarcely be questioned, should obviously have a powerful influence on the admission of members, and on the habitual conduct of those who already belong to the Alliance.

As to the admission of members, I apprehend we cannot too plainly state, too loudly proclaim, that genuine spiritual personal Christianity, in the evangelical sense of that term, is what is understood by us to be the qualification for entering into the Alliance; that we wish for no other members but true Christians; and that should any person of another description have sought or found admission, it must have been the result of mistake, on his part or on ours. The distinct avowal of this will, I should trust, prevent many

from seeking admission, on the principle that well-bred men would not intrude themselves on a society where their presence is not desired. I should like to see the Evangelical Alliance, like the primitive church, joined by "multitudes of them who believe, both men and women;" but I should like equally to see that, as in their cases, "of the rest," the unbelieving remainder, "none dared to join themselves" to us. It will be then of the greatest importance, that in proposing individuals for members of the Alliance, no member give his suffrage in behalf of any one of whom he has not had the means of satisfactorily ascertaining, so far as one man can ascertain another man's spiritual character, that he really believes the great principles which form our doctrinal basis, and lives habitually under their influence. No recommendation should be given from mere complaisance, nor should it be considered as adequate ground for recommendation that we know no sufficient objection to admission. In every case the person recommending should have positive evidence, satisfactory to his own mind, that the person recommended will, in becoming a member, really further the end of the Alliance. The power of our Alliance depends, no doubt, much on its number, but it depends more on that number being made up of the right individuals. Otherwise, number will be weakness, not strength.

And further, in subservience to this great object, the securing the right sort of members, it will be found of importance to have the exercises of the Alliance at its meetings of such a character as, while they will attract strongly to us men of the right stamp, will be found irksome by men of another character. The more decidedly devotional and spiritual the employments of the Alliance can be made, just the better will they be fitted both for attracting those whom we would wish to include in our Alliance, and for repelling those who, remaining what they are, could do themselves no good, and can do us nothing but injury by joining our ranks.

The principle I have referred to must influence not only the choice of members to be admitted, but the conduct of the members who have

been admitted. It will become us not to rest in our connection with such an institution, as satisfactory evidence of our spiritual, evangelical, personal Christianity, but to feel that such a connection is a new and powerful motive to us to seek to "make our calling and election sure;" to ascertain, on increasingly satisfactory evidence, that we have the qualifications for membership in "the one mind," the one heart, the common sentiments and feelings, and the mutual affection which are characteristic of, which are peculiar to, those who are "born from above"—who have "purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren," "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."

Growth in that union of sentiment and affection of which our Alliance is intended to be the expression, I have no doubt, will be promoted by mutual conference; but it is, I am deeply persuaded, chiefly by the Christian in the solitude of his closet, giving himself up to the childlike study of the divine word, and in a prayerful spirit resigning himself to its native influence on the heart, depending on the promised aid of the good Spirit, that large measures of the one mind and the one heart are to be obtained; and that, were we devoting more of our time to these employments, we should, with delighted surprise, find at our social meetings, how, by being each brought nearer the common standard—the mind of Christ in his word, by his Spirit—we were approximating to one another, and how increasingly cordial and strong was becoming our love to one another, and to "all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth," whether they follow with us or not in connecting themselves with an organization which we feel to be advantageous to ourselves, and conscientiously believe to be, in the present state of the church of Christ, necessary and well calculated to subserve the great cause of Christian truth and love.

The true secret of promoting that union, which we are seeking to manifest and to extend, is to be found in these inspired words: "To whom coming as to a living stone, ye also as living stones are built up

a spiritual house." Here is the true nature of Christian union, and here, too, the true means of promoting it. It is the union of living stones, and that is to be promoted by coming to THE living stone. No union of dead stones can ever form a spiritual house; no number of unevangelized men, however connected, can form an Evangelical Alliance. There is no becoming living stones but by coming to THE living stone; no coming closer together among the living stones, but by coming individually closer to THE living stone; no coming closer to the living stone without coming closer to each other, if we are but living stones. No combination of worldly men can form or promote this union. It is a union in truth and in love; and this can take place only among those who have received out of the fulness of Him who, according to the benignant good pleasure of the Father, is "full of grace and truth;" and it will take place just in the degree in which these communications are received. It is thus we hope to gain the ends of our association; it is thus we hope that that more glorious, and complete, and orderly union, of which our highest ambition is to be the harbinger, will be accomplished.

When the church of the living God, no longer broken into fragments, has become—as we trust at no distant day it shall—a well-compacted spiritual building of living stones, closely cemented to each other, by being all firmly attached to the living foundation—that "stone laid in Zion, elect, precious,"—what a spectacle will that "holy temple in the Lord," all radiant with pure benignant light, exhibit to men and angels! Then will be accomplished the promises which have often cheered the hearts of her genuine children during the long season of her desolations. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundation with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee." "The glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Then will

the palace of the great King, the Lord of hosts,—the temple of the God of heaven and earth,—"be established on the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it." And should the kings of the earth, as has been their wont in past times, "assemble against it," they will "pass by together, they will see it and marvel, they will be troubled and pass away." And a "great voice shall be heard out of heaven, Behold, the tabernacle of God,"—the spiritual house not made with hands, formed of the living stones, built on the living foundation, symmetrical and compact, shining in living light and holy beauty,—"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Who that has any part in the faith and feeling of a Christian can help saying in his heart, "O Lord, hasten it in its time "how long, O Lord, how long?" Who would dare to oppose any movement which promises to be a means of the accomplishment of these "true and faithful sayings of God?" Who would not go as far as regard to the sacred rights of conscience, his own and others, will permit in urging it onward? "He that testifieth these things saith" (and "he is faithful who hath promised"), "Behold, I come quickly. Amen: even so, come, Lord Jesus."

No. III

SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE CONSIDERED

It seems to be felt as an objection in some quarters, that the objects of the Alliance are not of a sufficiently practical kind. The question is often put, What has it done? What does it propose to do? Where are

the palpable effects which it has produced, or what palpable effects is it calculated to produce? I am afraid, at the bottom of this objection lies that which gives so utilitarian and material a character to our age. We must have visible, tangible effects, producing what may be called profit, in some sense or other. Now, the Evangelical Alliance is not fitted to carry on any work or set of operations of this kind, and the less it attempts it the better. But is it nothing to abate prejudice among Christians?—is it nothing to enlarge the circle and to increase the intensity of Christian regards?—is it nothing to make Christians feel, and the world see, that the points of difference among Christians are few and unimportant in comparison of the points of agreement? In the present unnatural state of things, when Christians cannot together do their common Master's work, is it not something that the various parties engaged separately, all in partial darkness, and none so near the centre of light and heat as they should be,—in hazard of becoming cold and languid, and in danger too of supposing that there are none engaged in their Master's cause but themselves,—should at certain times meet around a blazing fire, kindled, we trust, from above, and warm themselves, and look one another in the face, and receive satisfactory assurances that, though we cannot yet all work together, we are serving the same Master? And is there not reason to hope that the end will be, that the fellow-workers of the same Master will at length begin to wonder why they cannot work together habitually as well as meet together occasionally? The blazing fire, though it should do nothing but collect the labourers and warm them, and allow them to see each other, will not be useless.

It has seemed to some that the Evangelical Alliance is a presumptuous institution, assuming what is the proper function of the Christian church. In truth, there is something in this objection; for if the Christian church—if Christian churches—were what they should be, there would be no need of any other exhibition of the union of mind and heart that exists among Christians. But if the Christian church have become impure, and schismatic and sectarian, and if it do not at present exhibit what it surely was meant to exhibit,

the unity of the body of Christ, is that a reason why all attempts, necessarily imperfect ones, to make the church and the world aware, in some measure, of the extent of union which exists among true Christians, should be condemned? Had the church done her duty, we should not have needed either Bible or missionary societies. Missionary societies, formed of members of various churches, have been blessed of God for the purpose of stimulating churches to do their duty as churches, in attempting the Christianization of the world; and the Evangelical Alliance may, in the hand of God, be the means of making the churches more catholic, both in their constitution and administration.

The limited extent of the platform on which the Evangelical Alliance stands, is also felt as an objection by many truly Christian men; and if it were to be held that all who cannot assent to all the articles in its doctrinal basis were to be considered as not Christians, I at least should not be a member of the Evangelical Alliance. But the object of that statement is not to show what a man must believe in order to be a Christian. It is a statement of such principles as, in the existing state of things, the holding in common will bring together the largest number of apparent evangelical Christians, so as that they can appear visibly to be agreed. You may so broaden your platform as that many good, though, as you may think, not sufficiently enlightened men, will not take their places on it. The object is to get such a doctrinal declaration as will bring together the greatest number of the right class. I may regret that on the platform there is not room for my good friends "the Friends;" but what if, by making room for them, I make others, whom I at least equally esteem, leave the platform, and after all, perhaps, do not succeed in getting "the Friends" to come up? It would be a very poor consolation that I had got a very broad and altogether unobjectionable platform, if I could get nobody to fill it.

I have heard it objected to the Evangelical Alliance, that its effects seem very evanescent. Christians of various denominations meet and salute one another, and seem one; but the assembly breaks up, and

they scarcely recognise one another out of the Alliance meeting. There is a kind and a degree of habitual intercourse which some men may expect from being fellow-members of the Alliance, inconsistent with ecclesiastical relations or civil distinctions. But where members of the Evangelical Alliance treat one another like aliens, there is something wrong. It has assuredly not served its purpose there. But are we to give up observing the Lord's Supper, in which all who sit down together acknowledge one another as members of the same body, portions of the same loaf, because some church members, when they have left the table, seem to have forgotten who were seated by them, and what the service meant?

It has always been a satisfaction to me to reflect that the Evangelical Alliance has served its purpose much beyond the limit in which it has succeeded in gaining members; for in every case in which a man, whom we could have wished to have had among us, has given his reasons against our institution, he has prefaced them by stating that he is of one mind and heart with us, and only differs from us as to the proper method of manifesting that union. We thank him for the declaration—we believe it—and we trust we may yet meet him on the Alliance platform on earth. At any rate, we trust we shall meet him where the mode of recognising union acknowledged to exist can no more be a matter of controversy. The heavenly platform is an ample one, and none will object to occupy it.

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions September 2021 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR, 97068