

SERMON X.

JOHN XVII. 11.

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.

OUR most truly divine and precious Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd, and Pastor of his church, being about to leave the world, and go unto his Father, is pleased in a most solemn manner in this prayer, to commit his whole church, and people to his Father, praying him on their behalf, to keep them, and to give them that unity of judgment in divine truth, that knowledge of their union to each other, as members of the same body, and that knowledge of their union to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as might lead them to an holy contentment under all which might befall them in a time state. With the utmost affection, and most cordial love, our Lord views the state and circumstances he is now in. He is in the world. He is about to depart out of it. He therefore speaks as full of compassion towards his beloved ones. He considers he is going from his church on earth. From his apostles, from his ministering servants. He considers they were to continue for a season in the world. He therefore prays for them suitable to these views of the subject. *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. As the whole of this prayer is opening the heart of Christ to view, so every part of it, in all its various particulars, opens some special view, and is expressive of some distinct and internal acts of the mind of Christ, in grace and goodness towards us. It would be blessed under this view of it, to read this prayer at all times. We are always changing in our frames. We have always need of fresh discoveries of Christ's love to us. Of his care over us. Of his tenderness, pity, and compassion. We want in each day's walk with him, to have views of his loving heart. And blessings, everlasting blessings on him, we have all he is to us in love, set before us, in this his prayer. As it respects the words of our text they contain the following particulars.

First, Christ being about to leave the world saith, *And now I am no more in the world.*

Secondly, his care and concern for his apostles who were to remain in it. *But these are in the world, and I come to thee.*

Thirdly, Christ's address at the throne of grace for them. Wherein we are to consider, first, the person prayed to. Second, the epithet, as suited to what is prayed for, *Holy Father.* The prayer is for perseverance.

Fourthly, the motive urged, *keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me.* The end to be answered hereby, *that they may be one, as we are.* These are the particulars. And as the

Lord shall be pleased to enable me to fill them up, we shall go through each particular of our text. Which that we may not lose sight of, I will again recite. *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.* May the Lord the Spirit, give light, and unction, that Christ in this word of his grace may be truly, and increasingly precious to our souls.

I will begin as designed and proposed.

First, Christ being about to leave the world, saith in his address to his Father, on the behalf of his apostles, *And now I am no more in the world.* Whilst I apply this, as it most justly ought, to the eleven apostles, who were now present with Christ, on whose behalf he prayed, and for whom he was very peculiarly and particularly concerned, yet I would not confine it so as to leave out the rest of the elect, as though they were not to share in all here prayed for; No. Let the words of Christ, the grace of Christ, the salvation of Christ, the intercession of Christ, this prayer of his, (which is the very index of his mind, and his exceeding great and precious promises) be extended in their uttermost latitude to the whole body of the elect. But beyond the pale of God's election they cannot reach; yet to the whole body of the elect they all belong. Not but some particular gifts and blessings belonging to some of them, not to others. Such as are ministerial, though given for the good of the church, yet they are not given to the church, but to the officers thereof. So here, some parts

and particulars in this prayer, belonged in a personal and particular manner to these men, as the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. He was going from them. He is leaving his heart behind him. He speaks as though he was already in heaven, as he was soon to be there. Hence he saith, *And now I am no more in the world.* He was to the then present moment in it. But as the ends for which he came into it, by his incarnation, were nearly completed, hence he speaks as though he was out of it. Our divine Lord, in saying to his divine Father, *And now I am no more in the world,* opens most clearly his inexpressible love to his beloved ones. In heaven itself, it would be a feast to him, to consider he had a beloved people on earth. And though he the head in glory, would be exalted above all blessing and praise, yet he should never forget his beloved ones on earth. No, notwithstanding all their poverty, corruptions, and inherent defilements. His heart would burn with one pure and infinite flame of affection towards them. But if he leaves his church, his apostles, his beloved ones, who is to take care of them? how are they to be protected from the evil that is in the world? how are they to persevere in holiness? how are they to be sanctified? how are they to be defended from the rage of earth and hell? In reply to these questions, our Lord provides for all this. He secures all this. As the Father of his people, and the pastor of his church, he delivers them all up into the hands of his Father, who gave them unto him. He had said just before, *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 in close and inseparable connection with this our Jesus says, *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.* O ineffable grace! what is this, but giving his apostles, church, and people, up to God? what is this, but making them all his Father's care and charge? what is this, but committing them all to him from whom he received them? *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. And now I am no more in the world.* I am going out of it. I am going to be admitted into the full fruition of all I enjoyed in thee, and with thee, before the foundation of the world. I shall soon be seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. Then I shall be removed with regard to my bodily presence from mine apostles. I know the weakness of their minds. The inconstancy of their frames. The feelings they will have. The fears which will arise in their hearts. The enemies and evils they will be called to encounter. Mine eye is upon them for good. Therefore, Holy Father, I commit them into thy hand. I recommend them to thy care. Make them thy charge. This will be to give me my heart's desire. This will be, not to deny me the request of my lips. The very interest thou hast in them is my motive with thee. This, and infinitely more, and beyond all this, is contained in these words of our Lord's, *And now I am no more in the world.* But I will hasten to my next particular, which is,

Secondly, to view and take notice of Christ's care and concern of his apostles, who were to remain in the world. And if of them, then also of his whole church and ministers, in and throughout the whole world. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.*

We have here the very heart of Christ opened. He considers his apostles were to remain here behind him. He knows their hearts, their frames, their corruptions. He is well aware of the trials and persecutions which will be attendant on them throughout the whole course of their pilgrimage. He foresees the sufferings and martyrdoms which will befall them for his name's sake. He, as their most compassionate head and friend, here most graciously provides for them, by committing them afresh to his divine Father's care, and praying him, on their behalf, to take the sole charge of them, and guide them step by step, until they should be introduced into his promised glory. *These are in the world.* I know well how they will feel. I know well what they will groan under. I have a clear and intuitive knowledge of all within them. Of all without them. And I shall even in glory, feel for them. I know myself what it hath been, to be the subject of sorrow. The object of shame and contempt. To be tempted by the devil. To be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. I therefore am sensibly touched with the feeling of their infirmities. And considering them in the world, I pray for them. I pray in their hearing that they may read therein, and know thereby, my heart

towards them. I pray, Father, unto thee on their behalf, as thou art as deeply interested in their good as I myself am. I pray thee to keep thine eye continually upon them, and fulfil in them all the good pleasure of thy will, and the work of faith with power. In all which our most blessed Lord expresses his utmost affection and regard to these his favourites. Nor is the essence of this grace to be confined to them. No, all his people are everlastingly dear to him. They are all precious in his sight. He is equally mindful of them. He is equally interested in them. He makes the like intercession to his divine Father on their behalf. Yet he will grant some particulars in this prayer more especially appropriate to the apostles. Yet all believers in Jesus, each and every individual of them, may here read the heart of Christ unto them, and from hence derive strong, yea, everlasting consolation. By considering that our Lord hath a full and comprehensive view, knowledge, and comprehension of all which they are the subjects of, and what they are exposed unto. He knows their names, persons, cases, and circumstances in this world, when they are to be removed out of it. What times are to pass over their heads. The very moment they are to be dismissed from the body, and when they will be admitted into his glory. What he here says should be improved by them. It would be well for them never to lose sight of it. He says to his *Father, And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.* I cannot think of leaving mine on earth, without committing them into thy hands, and making them

thy care. *I come to thee.* That I may enter into a full enjoyment of my personal, and also, of my mediatorial glory. I cannot have this prospect before me, and know that I, as the head of my body the church, shall live in the presence of God for them, without expressing myself, now whilst I am in their hearing, thus on their behalf. That they may know I have set them as so many seals on my heart, and will never cease to be their perpetual friend. It may be, my exaltation may give them to conceive the glory *I am now* entering on, will engross the whole of my mind. That as I am to live a life of immediate communion, such as I ever lived in thy bosom from everlasting, will take off all my care and attention from them. As I would express all of my love I can express unto them, therefore, *Holy Father, I pray thou wouldest keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.* Thus I have endeavoured to open the first part of the words of my text, which read thus, *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.*

And now I proceed, thirdly, to consider Christ's address at the throne of grace for these his apostles, and for his church, ministers, and people in them. Under which article of this division of our sermon we are to consider, first, the person prayed to; secondly, the epithet, as suited to what is prayed for. The person to whom the address is directed is *the Father.* The title or epithet used, is that of *Holy Father.* The prayer itself is for holiness and perseverance. *Holy Father, keep through thine own*

name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

It is most evident we have Christ here at the throne of grace. That he is presenting himself before the throne, on the behalf of his eleven apostles. It is also very conceivable, as hath been hinted repeatedly, we must not so confine our Lord's prayer to them, as not to take in and include his church, his ministers, and his people, which are the very joy and rejoicing of his heart. Yet, most certainly we must confine it to the apostles in the first place, and they had their peculiar and particular interest therein. This being premised, we have to consider the person addressed. It is *the Father*. As every thing in the whole of this prayer, runs in a very regular way, and is pursued in a very correct manner, so as Christ throughout the whole of it is praying as God-man, Mediator, the head and representative of his church, who should the address be made unto but *the Father*? It does not imply the Father is more the object of worship than the Spirit. But it implies the order observed in the economy of grace, amongst the divine Persons in the Godhead. As Christ addresses the Father, so we are taught hereby in all our accesses at the throne of grace, to come to God in Christ, and look up to him as our Father in Christ. Hereby we learn to be free and familiar with him. To approach him with confidence. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of adoption. He it is who teaches us to cry *Father, Father*. And under his revealing the Father's love to us in his beloved Son, we have the utmost confidence in him. As our Lord began

his address in the first verse of this chapter, with *Father*, and used this term when he prayed for himself, so he continues the same when he prays for his disciples, and adds to it the epithet, or title to it, of *Holy Father*. 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.* As we are used in prayer, to make use of such titles and perfections of God, as are suited to what we are addressing him for, and are likewise calculated to keep up, and maintain, our faith and hope, and expectation on him, that he will most assuredly hear and answer us, even so doth Jesus here. He is praying for us. He recommends us. He does it to the Father. That by believing God to be our Father, we might have full confidence in him. He does not address him as judge, but as *Father*. He is this to all his people. He is *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. And he is the God and Father of all his people in him. As the address is to the Father, so our Lord adds the style and title of *Holy Father*. This was suitable to the subject Christ was interceding for. He prays for holiness and perseverance in grace. Therefore the epithet *Holy Father* was well suited hereunto. We may learn from hence how to pray. No example like our Lord's, as it respects this. He teaches us to pray in the confidence of faith. He would have us take in that of God in prayer, which may be encouraging to our minds, and suited to the matter of our requests. He does so here himself. We should learn to pray with our understandings, as well as

with our spirits. Not to be contented to pray with our spirits, whilst at the same time we are unfruitful in our understandings. The fervour of our devotion is not of so much consequence, as our understandings properly and spiritually exercised in prayer are. Therefore it is *Paul* says, *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* See 1 Cor. xiv. 15. The title *Holy Father* may comprehend the essential holiness of God. And also the manifestative holiness of God. And also the faithfulness of God. The essential holiness of God is incomprehensible. It is the perfection of the self-existing essence. There is none holy as Jehovah, for there is none beside him that is essentially holy. The essential Three who exist, and coexist in the one undivided Godhead, are Holy. The seraphims worship them with a thrice holy. *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* See Isaiah vi. 3. So also in the fourth chapter of the Revelation, the Trinity are worshipped as personally, equally, and essentially holy. *They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* Ver. 8.

As each of the divine persons are personally holy, so the title of the Father is Holy Father. As here in our text. The title of the Son is, *the Holy one of Israel, the most Holy, the Holy one of God.* See Isa. xliii. 14, 15. *Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.* In

Daniel, the Messiah is styled the most Holy, chap. ix. 24. In the gospels he is again and again called, *the Holy One of God*. And the title of *the Spirit*, both in the Old, and likewise in the New Testament, is holy. "Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him?" Isaiah lxiii. 11. Paul gives this same title to the Holy Ghost, in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*. The title *Holy Father*, is used here, as suited to what the address was for. And also to express the faithfulness of the Father to Christ, in all he had been praying for. And the faithfulness of God, is sometimes expressed by the word holiness. The Mediator in the thirtieth Psalm says, *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* verses 1, 2, 3, 4. Now, the word *holiness* here signifies *faithfulness*. The Father had been faithful in the fulfilment of his engagements to his Son, as Mediator. He had accepted his person. He had carried him through his sorrows and sufferings. He had raised him from the dead. And hereby fulfilled to him his holy covenant. All which Christ acknowledges, and he calls upon his saints to do likewise; saying, sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

I will, as it respects the title, *Holy Father*, express

myself thus. First, by considering it as very expressive of the holiness of the Father, as one in Deity with the Son, and Spirit. Then, secondly, as very suitable to what Christ was addressing him for. And, thirdly, as very expressive of God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to his beloved people. I shall aim to be very short on each of these particulars. The title *Holy Father* with which Christ here addresses his Father, at the throne of grace, it first is very expressive of the holiness of the Father, both essentially and personally. As God, in union with the Son, and Spirit, in the uncreated and self-existing Godhead. And all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, so the Father must be essentially holy. The Son must be essentially holy. The Spirit must be essentially holy. So that the title of *Holy Father*, expresses the essential and personal holiness of the Father. It should beget reverence in our minds, in all our approaches at the throne of grace. We should never forget, that Jehovah in all his persons, and perfections, is glorious in holiness. And that his gospel, his ordinances, his will, his worship is holy. Therefore holiness becometh his house, his church, his ministers, his people, his worshippers for ever. Then secondly, this title *Holy Father*, is very suitable to what Christ is here praying for. He is addressing his Father on the behalf of his apostles, that they might be holy. That is, that they might be kept as holy persons, in the ways of holiness. Therefore the epithet here given him whom Christ addresseth, is very suitable to what Christ addresseth the Father for. And so it came to pass, that the

title of holy prophets is given by Peter after this. He says, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." 2 Epis. iii. 1, 2. As Christ is praying for the gift of holiness, for their perseverance in the practice of it, and that all the fruits of it might abound in them, so his address to the Father, is with the title *Holy Father*. And, thirdly, I conceive the address and title *Holy Father*, may be expressive of his faithfulness to Christ, and his beloved ones. That he would keep them. Be a father to them, observe all their cases, supply all their wants, fulfil all his promises unto them, and give them strength according to their day. The prayer, or petition, which Christ here puts up, is for perseverance. In which holiness of heart and life is included. For what is perseverance in grace? what is the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints? what does it consist in? Most assuredly, in maintaining the work of God in the soul, which is begun by the Holy Ghost in regeneration. Which is evidenced in believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Which is cherished and strengthened by communion with God. The fruits and effects of which, are produced by the Holy Spirit's gracious influences, as he testifies of Jesus, and sheds abroad in the heart the Father's love. And which believers give outward proof of to others, as they walk and talk, as they live and act, as those who have been with Jesus. Now as none, though quickened by the Lord the Spirit, can keep alive his own soul, therefore he needs the communica-

tions of divine grace, from the fulness of Jesus continually. So our Lord here prays for his apostles in perfect agreement with this doctrine. His disciples and apostles here prayed for were the elect of God. The objects and subjects of everlasting love. Life everlasting had been communicated to them. They were born from above. Yet in themselves they were nothing. Our Lord is going from them. He knows all the purposes of grace towards them. The exceeding great and precious promises given unto them. He prays his Father on their behalf. And for the greatest blessing they would need whilst they remained out of heaven. And that is for personal holiness, and growth in grace, so as they might persevere, and thereby increase with all the increase of God. *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.* As in every petition which our Lord puts up, throughout this whole prayer, he mentions such motives as he knew would engage his Father's heart to grant the request, so it must not be omitted here, how he comes in again, and expressly mentions the gift of these persons to him. In the sixth verse our Lord says, *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* In the ninth verse he says, *I pray for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* And here again, *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* So that in these six verses, viz. from the sixth to the eleventh verse, the gift of

these persons to him from the Father is mentioned four times. It shews how much it dwelt on his heart. It shews his high estimation of their persons on this account. He is not content with this only; but he lays a most considerable weight on these persons being the Father's, so as for him to have had a propriety in them, prior to his gift of them to him. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* This shews that the highest motive in God to do good to his people, is his love. As Christ knew all the love of his Father's heart towards these his beloved ones, he might well commit them to his Father's care and charge, and say, *Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me.* I proceed, therefore,

Fourthly, To the motive urged by Christ, *Keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me.*

This is a motive indeed. And no wonder Christ should urge it, and make a plea of it to the Father. It being the greatest which could be urged by him, who knew all the divine decrees and purposes of his Father's heart, towards these eleven men, and also towards each and every individual belonging to the election of grace. *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.* I mention the text so frequently that the connection of it may not be lost; and would here observe, that though the given ones, the sheep and lambs of Christ's flock, are not known until effectual calling makes a difference in them, from the state they were brought into the world in; yet they are known to

God, and Christ, and the Spirit, although they are not known by themselves to be the beloved of God. Our Jesus, as concerned for the true welfare of the elect and given ones, prays thus: *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* He says, in effect, *Holy Father,* thou art concerned for each and every one of these persons; thou didst love their persons, and hast been viewing them with unspeakable delight and satisfaction from everlasting; thou gavest them me, as a vast expression of thy love; my heart is set upon them, and my whole soul delighteth in them, because thou hast given them to me, and because they are mine by thine own free donation. As I am going to leave them behind me, and they are of themselves weak and defenceless, and are exposed to various enemies and temptations, I pray thee therefore to keep them through thine own name. Let them have the person of the Holy Ghost bestowed on them. Let him in his person dwell in them, that he may be in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. That he, by in-dwelling in them, may be the fountain and spring, of all spiritual life, graces, and gifts unto them. That hereby they may be preserved in the truths of thy most holy gospel, which I have delivered unto them, exactly as thou gavest it unto me. And that they may keep the ordinances just as I have delivered the same unto them. This I conceive is the spirit of the request, which our Lord here puts up to his Father, on the behalf of his apostles. And this I conceive is the substance of it as it belongs to all the holy brethren, let them be considered as ministers of his own ordaining, sending, and placing over the various churches of his

own right hand planting. And also as it concerns churches properly formed according to the pattern which he has given in the word. And also as it concerns every one, who through the Spirit of his grace trust only, simply, and wholly on his Person, blood, and righteousness, for everlasting salvation. I would aim to view the motive urged by Christ, in his praying for his apostles. When any of us pray in faith and in the Holy Ghost, and have remarkable freedom and access to God, we are led to take a view of the love of God to us. This we do sometimes, as prior to the fall, and as above and beyond the consideration of salvation. Yea, there are seasons of grace in which some of God's beloved have very free, close, and intimate fellowship with God the Father; and they are drawn out into supernatural thoughts and views of his eternal ancient love, and speak out before him, and recite unto him, what passed in his vast, and infinite mind, from everlasting. If any of you who read, or hear this discourse, know any thing of this in your own souls, then you have a key to unlock this, and many other parts and expressions in this deep and most truly solemn and divine prayer. In the which our Lord enters into the depths of everlasting love. He mentions in it the uttermost of his Father's heart towards the elect. And the inward motive of the Father's will towards them, and his uttermost end he had in all the grace he was pleased to will them. *Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me.* Christ had before said, *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world,* ver. 6. Now he says, *Holy Father, keep*