

became incarnate. And they were instructed by Christ, that they might instruct others also. And they received their knowledge immediately from the fountain. And though they were not now fit to go forth, because the death of Christ was nigh at hand, and they would have other employment in which they were to be engaged, until the Holy Ghost came upon them, so as to lead them into all truth, yet their divine Lord had laid the foundation of all this, and for all this, in his personal converses, and discourses unto them. And so far as these words were afterwards brought to their minds by the Holy Ghost, it must have been of singular advantage and consolation to them. From these words we may observe, how our Lord takes notice of every thing in his people, which he hath wrought in them. He never speaks to his Father of any sin, or sinful miscarriages in them, or which they have fallen into, or are at any time overcome with, but if any thing will make for them, that he will be sure to take notice of. Not that I conceive this to be the principal design of Christ here; no. This is the uttermost of my thoughts on the passage, that our Lord thus speaks, to declare his own integrity in the discharge of his office. And also to shew us, what the faithfulness of such as he qualifies to preach, and sends forth into his vineyard consists in. It is in making known the mysteries of his gospel. In opening and explaining the mysteries of his person. That he was constituted by the Father to be the Mediator. That he was sent by him. That he came forth from him. That he is mighty to save. That he is salvation to the ends

of the earth. And that all this is of the Father. In these truths consist the whole gospel. And such as are allowed of God, to be put in trust with them, should be faithful, in declaring all this. To the end that all the persons, offices, and operations of God, in a way of grace and mercy may be known. That the person of the Mediator, and his complete and everlastingly perfect and finished salvation may be spiritually understood. And that each of the divine Persons in Godhead, may be worshipped and magnified. If the Lord Christ was most carefully and diligently employed, to fit them for their further work of preaching his unsearchable riches, we learn from hence, the greatness of his grace. And it shews in what way, and by what means he fulfils his promise to his church. He says, *And I will give you pastors after, or according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* See Jer. iii. 15. He fulfils this, as he fills their understandings with the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, and then by opening the mouth, and making the tongue as the pen of a ready writer, to shew forth and declare the very heart of God in Christ, to the beloved of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, speaking of his own ministry, says, *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.* See Psalm xl. 9, 10. And Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, says in his farewell

sermon to the elders of the church at Ephesus, *I have not shunned to declare unto you, all the counsel of God.* See Acts xx. 27. And the very uttermost depths of that counsel, he opens and sets forth in the first chapter of his epistle to that church. Nay he seems to boast of what he had written in the first and second chapters of that epistle, saying, *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to youward. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words; meaning the foregoing chapters. Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.* See chap. iii. 1—4. We here see Paul like his Lord and Master. He keeps no secrets to himself. All the Lord had taught him, and admitted him into the knowledge of, he most freely delivers out, and imparts, that the Lord's flock might be fed, and nourished up to life eternal. So did all the rest of the apostles, according to their measure and degree. I might observe, if our Lord had not admitted the apostles into the knowledge of all truth, they could not have preached it to others. They were to be to the church in all ages, what the Patriarchs were to the Israelites, their fathers. And if it be admitted that each of the apostles did not write for the benefit of the church, yet they so agreed, and were so uniformly one, that the church is said to be built *upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* Eph. ii. 20. And the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Bride the Lamb's wife, Christ

mystical, is said to have twelve gates, and twelve angels, and twelve foundations, and in them the *names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*, Rev. xxi. 14. which shews they were all one, in the full and clear knowledge of Christ, and his truth, and ordinances, I come to speak,

Fourthly, of our Lord's words being expressive of its being advantageous to them, that they were thus instructed. *Now they have known that all things which thou hast given me, are of thee.*

As to the advantage of their having Christ for their teacher, and of being thus admitted by him into the deep things of God, no words can express. None evermore will be altogether circumstanced as they were. They saw Christ with the eyes of their body. They heard him with their outward ears. They conversed with him in the most familiar manner. They were spectators of his miracles. And beyond all this, when he was alone he expounded all things done and spoken. So that they had their personal and particular advantages. They were to be witnesses of the greatest truth, God ever made known. The incarnation, life, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Jesus. All which they were to be sent forth into all the world to declare. Therefore as our Lord is here very particularly praying for them, and about to commit them to his Father, to keep them as his own, it comes in very easy for our Lord to say on his own behalf, and theirs also, that they were well taught. That they had been properly instructed. That they knew all essential truths. Therefore they would need nothing further in this respect,

but for the Holy Ghost to come upon them, and realize in them, what they had already received from their divine Lord and Master. As it seems natural what is suggested, to be our Lord's meaning, so it must be acknowledged to have been very advantageous to these persons to have been admitted into the school of Christ for this very purpose. If they had been at a loss to know what is truth, they could never have been fit for their office, neither would Christ have sent them forth. He had never prayed as he here doth, to his Father for them, had they not been well instructed into the mysteries of the kingdom. To see God incarnate was a great sight, especially to these, who knew him to be the Son of the living God. To see him who was the subject of all the types, the object of love and desire, the one beloved of all his church and people, and to be witness for him, this was no mean business. This was wonderful grace! to converse with him, whom angels worship and adore as Jehovah of Hosts, and now and then to be eye witnesses of his Majesty, for some of these persons were, this we can form but very faint ideas of. And whilst it must be granted that during our Lord's abode here below, but whilst he was with his disciples in his bodily presence, they had not those glorious ideas of his divine Person and Majesty which they afterwards had, yet, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and led them into more enlarged and spiritual apprehensions of the Messiah, than they had fully received and conceived of him, then they could not but be swallowed up in the subject, and this led them to live such heavenly lives, and so

cheerfully to die in their Lord's cause, to bring glory to his most holy name, because what they had seen, and tasted, and felt, and handled of him, the word of eternal life, was continually operative on them, and had its continual influence within them. I conceive for myself, it is impossible to receive into our minds, those spiritual and exalted ideas, these persons had of Christ, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and ever after, until they were taken up to see Jesus face to face, in glory. And may I not, and am I not safe in so conceiving? Is there not warrant for it? do not the apostolic writings give proof of it? If it be asked, where? how? I reply, if one single scripture of the New Testament, if the sacred epistles and writings of the apostles contain the unsearchable riches of Christ, then this is proof. And although so much light has been given, to such as we style great divines, yet with all their light and pains, the scriptures are so far from being exhausted, that they are inexhaustible. Then what must have been the knowledge of Christ, which these have been possessed of? And as every effect, is equal to the cause which produces it, so it must have been here. And thus it was here. I conceive of the subject thus. As Christ's incarnation, went before his salvation, and his humiliation before his glorification, so the apostles in their state of non-age, were fitting up for the greatest apprehensions of Christ, which could be conceived of him on this side glory. And I also conceive when the Lord, the Spirit, descended on them, he led them into such views of Christ, and communion with him, as were peculiar to them,

and more exceeding high, and divine, than what others enjoyed. However I leave this for others to think for themselves. What our Lord says in the words of our text fully declares these persons were led to know him, to be God's ordinance for life and salvation. That he was all he was by the will of God. That he had every blessing to bestow. And had fully spoke out all his Father's mind and will unto them. We should learn from hence to go to their writings, for light into the whole doctrine of Christ. And also for the ordinances of worship. They are declared therein. It is well for us to abide by them, and continue in the use of them, and mix nothing with them, for it is unprofitable for us so to do. If our Lord speaks thus to his Father, by way of commendation of his elect apostles, we learn then, that it is very acceptable to Christ, his ministers, churches, and people, should receive his gospel, just as he himself hath delivered it unto them in his most holy word. According to what our Lord says, the apostles must have had the whole substance of truth in their minds. They must have been so inwardly and deeply taught, that whensoever their understandings should be afresh enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they would be most readily opened to receive it more fully, and thereby be fully qualified to go forth, and preach it with exceeding great success. If it was their commendation to know the truth, and that in its original, it most certainly must be ours also. If the truth they knew, concerned the ancient and deep counsels of the Three in Jehovah, concerning Christ, and the elect in him, and his mission and commission

from the Father, and the work of salvation which he wrought out, and performed in our world, by which he hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, then this must be the one grand subject in which the whole church of Christ is interested, and from whence all the blessings of peace and pardon flows. Therefore we can never be too well established in the same; because it is the life of our souls. These truths are the bread of life. It is the church's daily bread. The truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel, are the bread and water of life to all the spiritual Israel of God. Hence *Paul* calls them *wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Tim. vi. 3: And our Lord says, *the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* John vi. 63. I would just observe, our Lord is here giving a full account of his ministry to them. This, as I am well pleased you should see the connection, begins and ends thus. Ver. 6. *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.* Ver. 7. *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.* Ver. 8. *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.* All these verses are so connected that they depend upon each other. After this Christ prays for them. *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, ver. 9, 10. And having begun his prayer on their behalf, he continues it, and closes it with the nineteenth verse. I thought it good to go over this again, as it may assist the memory. So that though I mentioned it in the former sermon, yet I conceive this will be a useful addition to it. May the Lord, if he pleases, bless what is set before you in this, and be with me in the filling up the rest of these verses, so as that his name may be glorified, and his beloved ones edified; and the whole glory shall be ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

JOHN XVII. 8.

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 CONSIDER it to be the most profitable opening and explaining of scripture, to be very easy and familiar in connecting it together, so as to make it quite easy and natural. The prayer before us is the Lord's prayer. For so I will style it. He offered it up. The first part of it, contained in the first five verses, concerned himself. In what way, and how, and what he prays for in them, has been de-

clared. The second part of this most divine prayer, which begins at the sixth, and concludes with the nineteenth verse, very particularly belonged unto the eleven Apostles, who were then present. This part begins with the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, and may be stiled the introduction, or preface to the prayer itself. As our Lord is speaking in them to his Father, on their behalf, he declares how he had exercised himself towards them; how faithfully he had made known his Father, and the knowledge of his love unto them. How clearly and faithfully they had received the same, and that they were so learned as to keep and retain the same. After which he offers up several petitions on their behalf. To preserve the connection of my present text with the two former, I will recite them, and it, as thereby their mutual harmony will most clearly appear: ver. 6. *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: ver. 7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: ver. 8. 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.* Whilst these verses are a part of our Lord's prayer, yet our Lord cannot be said here to be praying for his apostles. He is here speaking to his Father on their behalf; he is here giving an account to the Father of what he had made known unto them; how fully he had instructed them; how they had received into their minds, the truths and doctrines which he had delivered unto them. We

learn from hence the faithfulness of Christ to his beloved ones; and also how he always speaks to his Father on their behalf, and also to their praise. And we may, and ought to draw many practical and comfortable inferences herefrom. He never takes up any thing against us; never mentions any thing concerning what we are to his Father. He always commends us to him; he is full of our praise. Whilst he sees all we are, and also, what proceeds from our inward, unholy, Old Adam nature, yet he mentions not a syllable of it; no more than though he saw it not. This is evidential of his pure love to us. We should look on it in this very point of view; and it would most certainly endear him to our hearts. We cannot love ourselves, as he loves us. And his love is ever, in act, and his heart is continually going forth in acts of everlasting kindness towards his church and people. I will not go over the ground I have already trodden. Therefore, without repeating the substance of the two former sermons, I would enter on my present text, and after casting it into its proper division, pursue the same. May the Lord, the Spirit, most graciously instruct, and to his name shall be the praise. My text reads thus, *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.* The particulars of which are as follows:

First, Christ is here closing the account which he began at the sixth verse. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.*

Secondly, Our Lord declares, on their behalf,

that he had not instructed them in vain. *And they have received the divine truths I have declared to them.*

Thirdly, He declares the knowledge they had of him, and of the Father. *And have known surely that I came out from thee.*

Fourthly, Our Lord speaks of their faith in the Father, and himself. *And they have believed that thou didst send me.*

As these particular divisions will contain the particulars of my text, so they will afford an opportunity of holding forth the various branches of divine truth, included and expressed therein. I will begin with my first particular, which is,

That Christ is here closing the account which he began at the sixth verse. "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."

Our Lord still continues as he had begun, to give his Father an account, how he had discharged himself, as it respected that part of his office, in giving a full and clear account of the Father's everlasting love, and covenant acts, and transactions, on the behalf of his church and people. "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 them the words which thou gavest me." So that Christ was faithful to his Father. He came from his bosom, in which

he had been from everlasting, to speak as never man did; to open secrets which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world; to make known all in God; to reveal the whole of his will. And these eleven disciples, whom Christ himself named apostles, were chosen and singled out, from everlasting, not only to eternal life, and to partake of all the communicable blessings of grace and glory, but also, they were ordained by the eternal decree of the Three in Jehovah, to be the identical persons with whom Christ was personally to converse with; to whom Christ was to reveal and make known all divine, spiritual, and gospel mysteries; and by whom they were to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. The meanness of their persons and education, their dulness in receiving and apprehending the glorious truths and mysteries Christ taught them, served to illustrate and manifest so much the more the exceeding greatness of the Lord's power towards them. These eleven apostles are here especially the persons our Lord is here speaking of. The subject he speaks of is concerning what he had given them; the Person spoken to is the Father; what is spoken of, concerns the whole church of Christ. For if he thought fit to impart all saving knowledge, as it respects truths and doctrines, worship and ordinances, unto them. If he placed them, as so many stars in his church, and was pleased to appoint them to be lights in a dark world, holding forth the word of life, then their life and light being received from him, their word, *i. e.* their doctrine, must be as true as God is true. As these persons were loved by the Father with an everlasting love, and loved by Christ as

given by the Father unto him, and as they had been given also to Christ to be his companions, his witnesses, to see, hear, and observe all his actions, words, parables, miracles, and whatsoever he did and taught; so when he here was pleased to make mention of them, it could not but draw out his heart's love towards them. What he here says concerned his Father, himself, and his apostles; and in them, as such, it concerns all his ministers and churches to the end of the world; it concerned the Father. He it was who drew the whole plan of grace; he it was who called Christ to execute it; he it was who gave Christ his mission and commission; he it was who gave Christ a commandment what he should say, and what he should do. I may illustrate it thus: *David* gave *Solomon*, his son, a command to build the temple; he gave him also a model of it; he, when he did this, said, *All this the Lord made me understand in writing, by his Spirit, &c.* 1 Chron. xxviii. Even so, as *David* gave the pattern of the temple to *Solomon*, who was to build it, so the Father gave the pattern of all to Christ, who was to execute the whole of it. And the whole gospel, which contained the whole of the will, counsel, covenant, grace, mercy, and salvation of Jehovah, was spoken out in the court of heaven, and it was to be spoken out on earth, and it was to be continued in the church, until day and night come to an end. So that what our Lord here says, For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, concerned the Father—as hereby the good pleasure of his will was done. They concerned Christ, as it was a fulfilment of what he had under-

taken. These words were spoken to him, and given him in charge, and he had received a divine commandment to give them to others; *viz.* to these persons. And it also concerned the apostles, as they were to communicate the same, and be witnesses to all nations concerning the Person, doctrine, life, miracles, passion, and death of Christ. When our Lord here says, For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, we are led from hence to consider how all which had passed in the everlasting covenant, between the Father and Christ, was to be made known; and also, that Christ had made it known. *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.* By words here, we must naturally and necessarily conceive the whole system of truth, the everlasting gospel of the blessed God, included and contained in them. All which was spoken by the Father, Christ delivered; all given, Christ communicated; and the persons whom the Father gave unto him, are those to whom he imparts the knowledge of the Father unto. Our Lord had done this so effectually, that he speaks of it as a complete act; as if it needed no addition unto it; he speaks of it as a matter of real satisfaction; he speaks of it as what could not but be highly pleasing to the Father; he speaks of it as that which would be everlastingly beneficial to these persons; and already produced its proper fruits and effects. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.* Christ is the spring and fountain of life and light everlasting. He himself came from the bosom of the Father, therefore he was fit to be the prophet of his church. So says our apostle. *No man hath seen*

God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, chap. i. ver. 18. Our Lord says the same. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. John iii. 13. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. John vi. 44, 45, 46. As Christ himself is called the Word, by John, in his first chapter, and the preachers of the gospel are styled; by Luke, ministers of the Word; i. e. ministers of Christ, chap. i. ver. 2. And the gospel is styled the form of sound words. 2 Tim. i. 13. So it is not amiss to include all this in the Lord's words before us. He, the Word of life, had manifested himself unto these persons; He, the Word of the Father's grace, had bestowed himself on these persons; He, the Word of God, had spoken to them the words of everlasting life; and had given them the form of sound words, whereby they should declare his truth to others. John says, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. 1 John, i 1, 2. Christ is the Word of God; the Word of Life; he is the Life; the Word of Grace.

Of him the apostle says, *the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged-sword, &c.* Heb. iv. 12. *The Word of God* here is a person. The words *he*, and *him*, and *his*, imply, the apostle speaks of a person: not of the word revealed, as the mind and will of God in the scriptures; but of the Essential Word of God, which is *Christ*, revealed in the written word. The personality of Christ is most clearly expressed; all things are manifest in his sight; all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him; all which, proves the apostle is speaking of Christ—not of the written word. And the gospel is indeed the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He received it from the Father; he gave it to his apostles; he opened it, and gave them a most blessed apprehension of the same; he commanded them after his resurrection to preach it; he fitted them for so doing, when he was ascended into heaven, by sending down the Holy Ghost, and hereby they were qualified to be *his witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Paul says to the elders of the church at *Ephesus*, *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Acts xx. 32. This place is commonly interpreted of the gospel, and it is generally understood that the gospel is here styled, the word of his grace. But to this it is by some objected; because *the Word* is here meant, to which the saints are commended, but the saints are not commended to the gospel. But some other *Word* is here meant; *i.e.* Christ. I commend you

to God; *viz.* to God the Father: and to the Word; *i.e.* to *Christ*. Hence it may be said, one of Christ's titles is, *The Word of Grace*. The gospel is committed to saints; but we no where find the saints committed to it. We find them again and again committed to God. Having commended them to the grace of God. See Acts xiv. 26. Here are men recommended unto God. And so in these words we may also understand it. I commend you unto God, and to the word of his grace. To *Jesus Christ*, who is called *the Word of his Grace* here, because *God hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ*. As our Lord, in the words before us, is closing the account which he began at the sixth verse, *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.* So he having declared all this, it leads us to apprehend that all had been disclosed to these persons, which was necessary to be known by them, who were to preach the gospel throughout the world, and lay the foundation of the gospel ministry throughout all ages, and generations of time. And I would add, that as the four first books of the New Testament hold forth the full account of Christ's incarnation, conversation, sermons, miracles, passion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, and are therefore peculiarly named *the Gospel*; so all the