

3rdly. Shewn the Lord's end and design, in continuing his people, after calling, in it. I proceed to my second general head of discourse, concerning what Christ prays for. *I pray that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.*

Under which I will aim to point out the evil intended. Then in three distinct sections I will aim to set forth, 1st. The personal and peculiar evils the Lord's called people are the subjects of. Section 2nd. That it is whilst they are in this world they are the subjects of them. 3rd. What relief is contained in this petition of our Lord's; *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.* My second general head with which I am now to begin, is what Christ here prays for; *I pray that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.*

The word *evil* here to which the article is added *the evil* is doubtless very comprehensive. It includes and comprehends *the evil of sin, the evil one, Satan,* and *the evils* comprehended in the hatred of the world against the apostles of Christ. Our Lord had prayed for their being kept in the ways of holiness, for their being kept in the truths and ordinances of the everlasting gospel. He had prayed for their perseverance in the good ways of the Lord, and now he prays they may be kept from the evil. He must mean from the evil which is in the world. From the evil one, *i. e.* the devil, who is as a roaring lion, who walketh up and down seeking whom he may devour. From the evil contained in their fallen natures. And from the evil contained in those severe persecutions they were to endure

from the rage and malice of men. He does not pray they may be delivered from them, so as that they should not be exercised with them, but saved from them, so as to receive no real injury in their souls through them. And as this petition in the first place belongs in a very singular way and manner to the elect apostles, so it was most remarkably fulfilled in them. So that I conceive it had in them its most effectual accomplishment. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus kept them in a most singular and eminent way and manner, from the evil of sin. So that their inward sin was kept down and most marvellously subdued. They were kept from the evil one, Satan, so as to be more than conquerors over him in all his spiritual assaults against them. They were so kept amidst all the rage of persecution, that they held fast, and abode steadfastly in the truths of the everlasting gospel. They overcame Satan, and the rage and storms of tremendous persecutions, *by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.* All evil is contained in sin. The essence of all sin is in the devil. He is in the world. He worketh with energy in the children of disobedience. He is in every persecution raised against Christ, his apostles, his ministers, his church, his people. He is at the foundation, the root, the spring, and cause of every error, and heresy. Here Christ prays against him. Here the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. Here he says to his Father, on the behalf of his apostles present, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them*

*from the evil.* From the evil of their own corrupt natures, so that it may not have the dominion over them. From the evil one, Satan, so that he may be confounded in all his machinations against them. From the evil men of the world who will seek their destruction. And from every evil they may be exposed unto. And agreeable to all this, the evangelist Mark records, our Lord gave these very individual persons the following command after his resurrection, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* Having in this second general head, pointed out the evil which Christ prays his apostles may be kept from, I proceed to the sections of this third head of my discourse, and will begin with the first. In which I am to set forth the personal and peculiar evils the Lord's called people are the subjects of. It will very easily occur to your minds, that sin is the source of them. The only one in a certain sense; because it is the root and spring of all others. It is the called people of God, and those who are most immediately under the divine light and teaching of the *Holy Spirit*, who see, know, and feel most of their own sinfulness. They are saved from the whole of it by imputation. The Lord having laid it on Christ, he having borne it in his own body on the tree, hereby they are in God's sight perfectly

saved from it. They are hereby completely justified and acquitted. The effects of it remain in them. The whole life and being of it remain in their fallen nature. Yet none of it is imputed. Therefore it is written, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. The Lord's called people have their personal sin. It may be called their besetting sin, because they are always in danger from it, and very liable to fall by it. These words of our Lord's therefore are suited to them. He here prays for their being preserved from evil. *I pray that thou wouldest keep them from the evil.* The prayer is for preservation from sin, from personal sin. Yet it must be allowed that the prayer and intercession of Christ does not keep the called elect from falling into partial acts of sin. A proof of it we have in all the persons here prayed for. *Peter* fell, and fell foully too, after this prayer was offered up for him. So did the other ten apostles. They all forsook him and fled. But this prayer brought them back again. It was answered in their spiritual recovery. But if the intercession of Christ does not wholly, and altogether save the Lord's called people from falling transiently into sin, and if we say it does, we must deny scripture, and experience both; it may be asked, what does the intercession of Christ do for us? I reply, it brings us back again. It preserves us from so falling, as not to fall into the sin against the Holy Ghost. It preserves us from falling under the dominion of sin. The word of the Lord cannot fall to the ground. *Sin shall not have dominion*

over you. *My grace is sufficient for thee.* These are immutable truths. God will fulfil them to all his people. A great part of our real happiness is contained in a right knowledge of them. It is peculiarly and personally the case of some of the Lord's beloved, to be plagued with some constitutional evil. To such it is truly relieving, that Christ hath prayed his Father to preserve them from evil. There is the evil of sin. There is the evil which is in evil men, and which they express variously against the children of the most high God. And there is the evil one, Satan, who is implacable in his malice and hatred against the saints of the Lord, and these the Lord's called people, are all, and each of them, personally, and particularly exercised with. And in our Lord's prayer, they may through the grace of the Holy Spirit, most assuredly find relief. Yea, here is present and immediate relief. Therefore let your personal evils be what they may, come with them to the throne of grace. Look to the heart of Christ in heaven. It is here opened to your view. *I pray, says Christ, that thou wouldest keep them from the evil.* Oh how full of Christ's grace is this petition! Beloved, Jesus looks upon us. He looks within us. He fully knows us. And every thing concerning us. And every thing which concerns us. He knows all the evil within us. He knows how it affects us. He knows what we feel inwardly. He is well acquainted with our temporal, as well as our spiritual concerns. He knows what our wants and sorrows are. He says, *I pray that thou wouldest keep them from the evil.* It would be good for us to be acquainted with all the evil we

are the subjects of, and go to God in Christ with these words: Lord, I am so and so; I feel so and so; sin is too strong for me; the devil withstands me; the world frowns on me; persecutors rage; they are ready to swallow me up. Holy Father, Jesus hath prayed for me; he put up this petition on my behalf; *keep them from the evil*; keep me for his sake, Holy Father, from this evil, and thou shalt have the everlasting glory thereof. My beloved, it is in such a way of access to God, we obtain the very blessing our Lord hath prayed for. The Lord himself teach you to come to him in this simple believing manner. You will always find benefit when you thus approach your heavenly Father, in the name of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Saviour, Intercessor, and Advocate of his church and people. He is suited to all the personal and peculiar evils his called people are the subjects of, either in mind, body, or estate.

I proceed to my second section. In which I am to shew, how it is only while the Lord's people are in this world, they are the subjects of those evils and miseries. All their evils end here below. So soon as they are delivered from the body by death, all and every evil expires. No more sin will then be in them for ever. They will be as truly delivered from the very in-beings of it, as Christ himself is free from it. No more miseries of any sort or kind. The evil one, Satan, can no more assault them. They are everlastingly out of his reach. No more persecutions from evil men. No more infirmities of body or mind. The former things are done away. As this present state will soon be at an end, and the Lord's

prayer here before us belongs to his beloved ones, it concerns them, and belongs unto them in a very special manner whilst they are in this present evil world; so from these words, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil*, they may derive strong consolation. It is well with us when it is given unto us, to suit our petitions at the throne of grace, suited exactly to our own personal and particular cases. It is not always that we can. Yet our Lord's prayer comprehends all our cases, and suits our every particular case, sin, and misery. Believers consider this. You will find great ease for your minds, and relief to your spirits, from right apprehensions hereof. It matters not what your case is in this world, Christ's prayer suits it; his petition reaches it. Every one of us have a propensity in our minds to seek a change of state. Any but this I am in. This is our ignorance. It only proves how very little we know Christ; how very little we love Christ. It is good for us to abide and be well pleased to continue in that which the Lord by his holy providence hath placed us in. We are on our march for heaven. We shall not live one single moment longer in this world than is good for us. Only we must live by faith. We must not say, nor think, we live needlessly. It would be better for us to be removed. No; it would not. The Lord's will is still to continue us here. Therefore it is an impeaching his wisdom and goodness, for us to think and speak otherwise. As it is only now, whilst we are in the body, and in the world, we are the subjects of sin, corruption, sorrow, and misery, and

have our Lord's mind concerning it, that he does not pray, he does not intercede for his Father to remove us, let us be still, and seek a real conformity to Christ in all that we suffer. As his continuing us here, is to answer some glorious end, which cannot but redound to his glory, let us fall down before his Majesty and say, Good is the will of the Lord concerning us. As we are in the school of Christ, and are to be continued in this world that he may display his grace and mercy towards us, and upon us, let us rejoice herein. We are to remain here for a season, that our Lord may be glorified in us, and by us. We look too much to some outward display of our Lord's towards us, wherein, and whereby we think he may be glorified. But he gets himself glory in us, and from us, where we least expect, and when we least perceive it. He does it inwardly, and to us often very imperceptibly. By giving us to honour his godhead, to admire his wisdom, to submit to his holy will and pleasure, by such still and silent conceptions wrought in the mind by the Holy Ghost, as leads to a glorifying and magnifying Christ, in his dealing and dispensations with us. It is hereby our Lord carries on his work within us. Gives us strength according to our day. It is hereby he assuages our griefs. In this way he often removes our guilt. Hereby he dwells in our hearts, and by possessing our spiritual faculties with the knowledge and enjoyment of himself, gives us to enjoy a real sense of his promised heaven. He brings it down into our hearts, and gives us a blessed participation of it. Now as it is only whilst we, the children of God, his beloved



ones, in whom is all his delight, are the subjects of sin, disease, griefs, and death, and the Lord's grace towards us is so great, that he can and doth gain glory to himself, by magnifying his power, and displaying his mercy, and continuing his loving-kindness to us. And what befalls us in this world, is all intended to make way for us to be the more sensibly affected with his love; hence we may well praise him for continuing us in the world, and be well contented to abide in it, and be exercised with all he pleases. *Because all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.* It is most truly great what the Lord himself says, *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.* Were we to live on the Lord, in the exercise of faith, on the simplicity of his most holy word, we should be truly happy, let our case and circumstances in the world be what they might. Such is the provision the Lord God hath made for us, that there is no one thing can befall us in this world, but we have a word in the Bible suited to it; nor one single case, but there is a suitable promise made to us in it. Our whole life here should be a life of faith. And were it so, we should then be as happy as we could be, out of heaven. As believers in Jesus, it should be our study to live this life on earth, because we cannot live this life in heaven. O that our eye may be fixed on this petition of our Lord's to his Father on our behalf, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

And thus I am brought to my third section, To

shew the Lord's end and design, in continuing his people after they are called with an holy calling in the world.

It is that they may have an experimental and practical, a personal and particular knowledge of the sins and sorrows, the temptations and miseries, the enemies and evils, which he hath, doth, and will for ever save us from. We are admitted to remain here for a season, that we may have such intercourse and communion with Jesus, as we can never have in heaven. We are permitted to have such a sight, such a sense, such a feeling of what we are in ourselves, that we may be fitted for real converse with Jesus. We converse with him best, when we enjoy him least; it is when our feelings are all distressings, our knowledge of our personal sinfulness, such as causes us to abominate ourselves, that we are best prepared for conversing with Christ, and for him to converse with us. Now it is only in this world we can have communion with Christ thus. And hereby the Holy Ghost is pleased to give us such ideas of Christ's mercy, as fills us with inexpressible admiration. Now as this leads us to give him glory, so this is his end for continuing us in the world. He could, if he pleased, take all his called people to heaven immediately. But how then would his glory be seen? It could not be so displayed thereby, as it is in continuing his people in the world; in saving them from the evil in it; in maintaining his own work in their minds; in displaying his power in their souls; in making sometimes, and in some certain instances, the weakest in his flock, a terror to the devil, a wonder to the world. And thus holding

up to public view how faithful he is in the accomplishment of his promise, which runs thus: *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.* As our Lord did in the primitive ages of his church, uphold saints, so as that they suffered most cheerfully in the defence of his gospel; so our Lord is now pleased, in many cases, to sustain some of his children, under very severe conflicts with sin, self, the devil, and the world. Others, our Lord most marvellously bears up under sore diseases, bodily weakness, excruciating pains, even to the astonishment of such as are witnesses of the extremity of such and such cases. His end in all, is his own glory, and the real good of his beloved ones. He is pleased marvellously to sustain, and bear up the minds of some of his beloved in the article of death; hereby proving that he hath conquered death. And our Lord can only act, and display his grace thus towards his beloved, whilst they are here below. He is all-sufficient for his people; he is almighty to defend them; he is their God, their Saviour, their Friend, their All. As one said, I should not be afraid if I were to be dragged through hell, after I were out of the body, if so be Christ were with me. So say I; what matter is it to me, to you, what sort of evil the Lord is pleased to exercise us with, if the Lord is with us, and will sanctify it to us, and cause it to work together for our good, and his own glory? O let us go on looking to Jesus. Let us consider the provision he has made for us, all the while we are to continue in a time state. Let us be looking over the negative, and also the positive part of this peti-

tion, which our divine Lord put up to his Father, for his apostles, for his churches, for his ministers, for his people collectively and individually; "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." The more we attend unto it, the more support we shall receive from it; the more we understand it, the more we shall admire and bless our Lord Jesus Christ for the same. And now, my beloved, I can say no more on this subject. Not that it is exhausted: no; in my own views it is scarcely entered on; but owing to the poverty of my own mind, and the want of a more enlarged comprehension. May the Holy Spirit grant you his own light and divine unction, which searcheth all things. May he so set forth this petition of our Lord's on your behalf, as suited to you, that you may get fresh encouragement therefrom, to laud and magnify his most holy name. The Lord be with you all. May he lead you to a continual exercise of your minds on Christ Jesus. Even so be it, O Lord. Amen, and Amen.

## SERMON XIV.

JOHN XVII. 16.

*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

**E**VERY part and expression of our most blessed Lord's, throughout the whole course of this prayer, is not only important, but also very instructive. We may learn from it what prayer is; also how it should be begun; and how it should be carried on; and also how it should be ended. It is well for us to take into our minds the nature of prayer; the object of prayer; the subject matter of prayer; and how our Lord concludes his prayer. Because this would lead us *to pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding also.* In this prayer of our Lord's here before us, we have all the persons whom he prays for expressed; their cases mentioned, and petitions offered suited thereunto. We have also the relation they stood in to God and Christ declared; and a variety of arguments used to enforce the Father's attention to grant the requests put up before him. All the Persons in the sacred Trinity are united to the elect, and the elect are united to them. All the love of godhead flows from the Father's everlasting love, through the God-man, Christ Jesus, by the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, into the minds of the renewed and called ones. The Father's everlasting love is the fountain,

and spring of the everlasting blessedness which the elect partake of, both in heaven and in earth. Our Lord lays a great weight and stress on the Father's interest in those persons for whom he here prays; *thine they were*, ver. 6. He also mentions his own interest in them; *And thou gavest them me*. On this very consideration he speaks to the Father on their behalf; *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine*, ver. 10. To which our Lord adds, *And I am glorified in them*. Whilst we cannot pray for the elect as Christ did, yet it is well for us to survey in the light of faith, the manner in which he prayed for them. And if we were spiritually engaged in the light of faith, might see how it is more and more enlarged for these his eleven apostles, as he continues his prayer; we should be led more and more to holy and admiring thoughts of his love to them, and to his whole church. He considers where his apostles are; *These are in the world*, ver. 11. He considers the world's hatred of them, and what will come on them, whilst in a time state. He considers the reason of it. It is because they are not of the world. He himself, as just going out of the world, and that he is going to leave them in the world. He therefore provides for them accordingly. He commits them to his Father, who had loved them with an everlasting love. He prays his Father to keep and preserve them in the truths of the everlasting gospel, ver. 11. He prays also, that they may be kept in the practice of holiness; that they may persevere in the course of labours and sufferings, to which they were, and would be further called, and unto which they were appointed. Our Lord, ver. 12, mentions his own

care, and how he had most faithfully exercised it towards them, whilst he was with them in the world. He says this, ver. 13, he mentioned all this in their hearing, that they might have joy, arising from clear abundant evidence of his great love towards them. Our Lord is pleased, ver. 14, to express the hatred the world bore to them. He says, the world hated them, because they were not of it. In which respect they were like unto him. The world hated them on account of the gospel which he had taught them, and which he had also given unto them. He says, it is not his request, ver. 15, that they should be taken out of the world. No; let them remain in it; let them perform their work; let them go forth and spread my name, my fame, my renown. My prayer is that thou, *Holy Father, wouldst keep them from the evil; from the evil of sin; from the evil one, Satan; from the evil men of the world.* Not so keep them as that they shall not be assaulted and afflicted, and oppressed by all these enemies; but so kept, as not to fear any of these enemies, nor be overcome by them, so as to forbear preaching my truth, and of being my true and faithful ambassadors. To this petition our Lord adds the words of my text, ver. 16, as an argument for prevailing to obtain the request which he had put up. That it may clearly appear to you, as it does to me, I will recite it. *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,* ver. 15, 16. Although we have these words of our Lord's at the close of the fourteenth verse, yet I could not prevail with myself to

drop them here. I shall therefore aim to make a sermon out of them. It may, and should be observed; our Jesus often used and uttered the same expressions, over and over. He preached over the same sermons; he uttered the same parables; he wrought the same miracles; he expressed himself on the same subjects, again and again, with very little variation. And we should learn from hence, that ministers are not to be censured merely because they preach the same doctrine, without the least variation from the same text; nor because they may sometimes preach over the very same sermon. It should be so; it ought to be so; it is to their honour. Nor should they be slighted for using the same expressions in prayer, on the same important occasions. Our Lord did the same. We cannot follow a better example. As every part of this prayer is most truly sublime, so the arguments made use of in it should not be overlooked by us. This before us, as was before hinted, comes in after our Lord's request to the Father, that he would keep them from evil. By which our Lord must, in a very particular manner, mean the malice and rage of the devil and persecutors. It must be because our Lord's words are, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* Then these words follow, *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* As I am going out of the world, and going to leave these mine apostles in the world, to bear their witness concerning me, the rage of Satan against me (my person, my gospel, my ministers, my people), will fall on these. The wicked men of the world will exercise



their uttermost hatred against them. They will use them in a most tremendous manner, just as they would me, if I were in their power, and at their disposal. I therefore make it an argument, *Holy Father*, that thou wouldest be their protector ; seeing they cannot escape the hatred of the world, *because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

In my taking up, and treating on these words, I will cast them into the following order :

First, The account our Lord gives of those persons, for whom he prays his Father on their behalf. *They are not of the world.*

Secondly, In what sense they differed from the world.

Thirdly, Our Lord speaks of himself, as not of the world. *I am not of the world.*

Fourthly, He speaks of a *semblance*, or *likeness*, between these persons, for whom he prays, and himself.

These are the particular heads to be treated of. May the Lord, the Spirit, help me so to fill them up, as may be beneficial, useful, and instructive.

I am, First, To take notice of the account our Lord gives of these persons, for whom he prays his Father on their behalf. He says, *They are not of the world.*

Our Jesus is not simply speaking of the world on which we dwell, but of persons on it ; and not of all on it neither, but of certain ones, even of such as were in the arms of the wicked one. Of such as were enemies to God by wicked works ; of such as were bond-slaves to sin and Satan, death and hell ; of such as were under the direction and influence of

Satan, the god of this world; of such who were walking according to the course of this world; of such who were following the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; of such in whom the devil worked with energy. These are opposed to those persons which Christ here prays for. Those whom our Lord here prays for were not such; they were chosen out of the world; they were born again; they were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; they were passed from death unto life; they were in a state of grace; they had communion with the Lord. Our Lord might therefore well say of them, *They are not of the world.* As he might also on an higher account. They having been separated from all eternity, in the Father's eternal purposes and decrees, to be Christ's. Not only to be his members, but his apostles also, they were his in a most singular, and peculiar manner. As such, Christ was very particularly interested in them. They being those individual and identical persons who were to declare his truth, to publish his gospel, to spread his name, and fame, to publish his salvation, victories, and renown throughout the world. Our Jesus might well say of them, *They are not of the world;* the work in which they were to be engaged was not of the world. The ends and designs of their living and dying in the world, was to answer no one end, which worldly men have their hearts set upon. These persons, of whom Christ speaks, were to be really dead to all that the world calls great and good; they were to be burning and shining lights; they were to live as having Christ for an ensample; they were to act as Christ's representatives and delegates; they were to give continual