

Sermons on John 17 – By Samuel Pierce – Sermon 8,

Joh 17:8

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. They 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 declared. 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 styled 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: verse 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: verse 7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: verse 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 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 here from. 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 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 dullness 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 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. 1Ch 28. 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 the 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 fulfillment of what he had undertaken. These words were spoken to him, and given him in charge, and he had received a divine commandment to give them to others; i.e. 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, chapter 1: verse 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. Joh 3: 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. Joh 6: 44-46. 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. minister of Christ, chapter 1: 2. And the gospel is styled the form of sound words. 2Ti 1: 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 show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. 1Jo 1: 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 4: 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. Ac 20: 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, i.e. 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 Ac 14: 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 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 rest of the books in the New Testament do but enlarge and illustrate the four Evangelists. Just as, in like manner, all the Prophets, under the Old Testament, were but so many expositors of Moses. Having filled up, as well as I could, my first head of discourse, I proceed,

Secondly, to observe that our Lord declares on the behalf of his elect apostles that he had not instructed them in vain. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them." And those divine truths I have delivered to them, they have received.

These words are declarative of what good effect Christ's delivering divine truth had within them, and they are declarative of his divine approbation. And as they stand here in connection with the former verses and words, they are spoken by Christ to his Father, by way of commending them. The Lord had given them a spiritual faculty, suited to receive divine truth; he had opened the same to receive his truth; he had shone on it, and on the

truth, and thereby opened the minds of his elect apostles to receive the truth into their hearts. And thus the end of Christ's ministry was answered in them. And they being thus instructed, were in due season to teach others also. These words, and they have received them, i.e. the words which thou gavest me, and which I, as the minister of the sanctuary, have given them, comprehend the whole which Christ had received from the Father, in commandment to deliver, and also, all that they could receive the true knowledge and idea of, and deliver out to others. This, in an especially manner, consisted in making known to them the divine personal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the one undivided Godhead. The great transactions between the Coequal Three. The mystery of Christ's person; his mission and commission; the Father's love to him, and to the elect in him; the end and design of his mediation; the necessity of it; the ends and designs of God, in fore-appointing him to be the Lamb slain for sin; how this would make way for the descent of the Spirit; how the church would be multiplied; the gospel run and be glorified; and multitudes of poor sinners be turned to the Lord. These were most certainly the outlines of what our Lord had taught them. In these truths the honor of God was maintained; his immutable law glorified; his justice displayed in all the rights and honors thereof; his eternal hatred against sin, most fully expressed; and he revealed as just, and the justifier of the ungodly, who believe on Jesus. And in these truths are contained all the essential of the everlasting gospel. If so, then as these truths had been the subject of God's mind from everlasting, and Christ became incarnate on purpose to fulfill these truths, which had been set forth by the Holy Ghost, in all, and throughout the whole of the Old Testament dispensation, then it must constitute all worthy of the style and title of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. So that in opening it by the ministry of the Word, it is wholly and entirely setting forth the love of the Holy Trinity, in the person, life, and salvation of the Holy Lamb, who made his soul an offering for sin. If our Lord gave his apostles the words which the Father gave him, we learn thence he received it, both the doctrine and ordinances of it, from the Father. As he delivered to them the same, he was taught, so it was highly becoming them to receive it into their minds, just as correctly as he gave it out unto them. And so they did. I have given

unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them. First, into their minds, so as to retain them, just as the Lord himself had given them forth. We may here observe the blessedness of divine teaching. It does not require what we style a good natural capacity to make men wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus. No, even fools, or in other words, people of the weakest intellects, when the Lord is their teacher, are wise and well taught indeed. They apostles were not men of large understandings; they were very dull, very slow of heart to believe: yet they, as having Christ for their teacher, and when they were endued with power from on high, “went forth preaching every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following.” Mr 16: 20. The truths which Christ taught them entered into their minds. As they did not receive great light all at once, but grew into the knowledge of what Christ taught them by degrees, so they grew but slowly; yet they grew surely. The word abode in them. Christ watered the same with the dew's of his heavenly grace; and they in due season made evident their profiting in the school of Christ to all. Our Lord taught them as they were able to bear. Our Lord knew how his word prevailed in their minds. He is here going to commit them to the Father. He therefore most graciously mentions their election, Thine they were; the Father's love to him and them, and thou gavest them me; then he speaks for them, and they have kept thy word. And here with the same views of the Father's love expressed to their persons, in choosing them in him before the foundation of the world, and of his love to him, in giving him to be their head, and giving them to him to be his members. He speaks of what he had given them. Even the words, or the same gospel, the Father had given him. He indeed was given, that he might realize it in his person and work. The knowledge, and doctrine, and ordinances of it were given them, to teach and preach openly in the world, for the benefit of his church. He speaks to his divine Father with real pleasure and satisfaction concerning them, saying, And they have kept thy word. What they knew, understood, saw, and believed, as the fruit and effect of Christ's having delivered unto them the words, or doctrine, or gospel which the Father gave him, is thus expressed by our Lord, They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. As these words contain

all the essentials of the gospel, so I shall consider them under the two following heads. And will proceed to my,

Third particular, our Lord's declaration concerning the knowledge they had of him, and of the Father. They have known surely that I came out from thee.

The knowledge of the distinctive personalities in the Godhead, of the love of the divine Persons to the elect, of their personal union, interest, and indwelling in them, in their acts of grace towards them, in their transactions and covenant offices on their behalf, and in their relation to them, constitutes what I should style the knowledge of the gospel. It appears to me, the words of Christ now before me, are a full proof of this; because our Lord has been speaking of his giving these persons the very words which the Father gave him. He also says they had received them. And he shows most plainly what it had produced in them. They knew him; that he existed with the Father before his incarnation; that he came out from the Father. Which includes their knowledge of him in his person, in his offices, in his incarnation, in his work, in his salvation, in all which concerned and belonged unto him. What I have just hinted may serve to lead us to observe the various gradations in divine knowledge, by which the Lord is pleased to bring us to the knowledge of these most truly sublime and important points. We are first led to know Christ to be a saviour; then his blood and righteousness is most sweet and precious to us: then we are led to know his love; and that affords us a very heaven: then we are led to apprehend his work of salvation consists in his putting away sin, making peace by the blood of his cross, bringing in everlasting righteousness, conquering death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and this makes him high in our esteem. Then we are led to take in a view of him in his incarnation, and in his incarnation state, and we perceive him to be bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh, which renders him, in our view, as altogether lovely: then we are led to know him in his offices; and we view him as full of grace and truth: from hence we are led to contemplate him in his person; then we see him to exceed all before we conceived of him: then we are led to know him as set up

before all worlds, as God-man, Head, and Mediator; and this reflects fresh glories on our minds. And from hence we mount higher still, to know the Father as the setter of him up, and the Holy Ghost as the anointer of him who was thus set up; and hereby a way is made for us to know the Three in Jehovah, to our endless comfort. I have thus expressed myself, to give relief to the mind. I know I have spoken the truth. Yet the depths of God's manifold wisdom in these subjects, as they are set before us, and we are brought to the knowledge of them in Christ, and by his Spirit, are too great for us to comprehend and express, otherwise than in a transient way. It was so with our Lord's own dearly beloved, of whom he here speaks. They had been gradually led into the knowledge they now had. Yet the perfection of their knowledge consisted in their knowing the person of the Mediator; where he was before his incarnation; from whom he came. We may from hence observe, that all true saving knowledge begins with Christ; with the knowledge of his Person and Mediatorship. It is the very express meaning of our Lord's words. 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 lays great emphasis on the knowledge they had of the Father, and himself, from the words which he had given them. We learn from hence, that the word of Christ is the foundation of faith; that a revelation of truth must precede it; that where truth is revealed to the mind, there cannot but be the greatest confidence in it. They have known surely that I came out from thee. This had been confessed by Peter twice over. When our Lord proposed the question to all the disciples, Whom say ye that I am? He replied, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. So again, when our Lord said to the Twelve, Will ye also go away? Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Joh 6: 68-69. Without all doubt, our Lord kept this in remembrance, and had a view of it when he thus spake. They have known surely, i.e. truly, that I came out from thee. On this most divine subject he had frequently spoke out to, and before them. He had said just before he began this prayer, I came out from God, I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. Upon

this his disciples said, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needst not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Which it is very probable is what our Lord most particularly refers to, when he says to the Father, and they have believed that thou didst send me. They have known surely that I came out from thee. The expressions are peculiarly suited to the subject. Thou camest forth from God, as the disciples expressed their faith in the subject, and they have known surely that I came out from thee, implies the state Christ was in before his incarnation. It asserts he was with the Father before; that he came out from the Father to do his will, to finish the work which he had given him to do. And it does not suggest any idea to the spiritual mind, but what is quite easy and agreeable to this; i.e. That Christ was set up as Mediator in the everlasting covenant; that he was the head, and surety of his people, before he took flesh; he was the living Redeemer in Job's time; he was the Mediator of his church, all through every period of time; it was owing to a covenant engagement between the Father and himself, that he sustained this office; he was set forth and known, by all the Old Testament saints, as the man of God's right hand, as the Son of Man, whom he had made strong for himself; he had wore the glory, acted as, and executed the office of Mediator from the moment of the fall, to that of his open manifestation in the flesh; and he appeared at the precise time spoken of in prophecy. He was God-man Mediator, who had been seen as God-man Mediator in heaven, before he was seen God-man Mediator on earth. The one went before the other. Had he not been Mediator, he could not have acted as such; he could not have performed the principal part of his mediatory office, unless he became incarnate. He was to be a Mediator of reconciliation; therefore he was engaged by the covenant of mediation, to put away sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. He came forth from the Father so to do; he descended from heaven to earth, by his mysterious incarnation. The disciples were taught by him the knowledge of who and what he was. They believed and confessed him to be the true and promised Messiah, the Christ of God, the Son of the living God. And it was truly acceptable to the Father, that they should thus express their faith in him. Hence, on Peter's confession, our Lord says, Blessed art thou, Simon

Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And here our Lord speaks to his Father, by way of commendation of all these persons, for their faith, which began with Christ, and then was fixed on the Father also. They have known surely that I came out from thee; that I had existence in and with thee before my open manifestation; yea, that I existed with thee, as co-equal, and co-essential with thee, O Father, and the Spirit, in the incomprehensible Essence. They know surely my person, Godhead, headship, mediatorship, offices, and engagements. They know that thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee: that I came forth from thee; to perform my work and office of mediatorship. They have been taught the truth of all this from me; they most surely believe it. I speak this as that which I know is acceptable unto thee, and most truly agreeable to thy holy will; I speak it on their behalf; I speak it to their commendation; I also speak it now, well knowing their faith is not now in lively act and exercise. That they, and others belonging to the election of grace, may know in succeeding times, I am the same unchangeable Mediator and friend unto them, in their low frames, and when they are very lifeless, as I am when their faith is ever so vigorous. As our Lord speaks thus by way of commendation of them, so in the words he points out these most truly divine and important things to them, and us. That the doctrine of faith is founded upon a divine revelation, made of it in the written word; that himself, as the sent one of God, the glorious Mediator, is the immediate object of it; and that the Father is the ultimate object on which it terminates; also, that his undertakings in the covenant, is one branch of truth on which faith is exercised. From hence it follows, Christ is not so much commending his apostles for their faith, as for the persons on whom it was exercised. Which was on his Person, as Mediator, and on the Father, who sent him. This is very clearly expressed, and therefore it becomes us closely to attend unto it. 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 that here we have the whole revelation of God set before us in these words. The Father promised Christ, set him forth to the Old Testament saints, in promise, symbols, types, figures, and sacrifices. He set forth his love in the gift of his Son by the ministry of the prophets.

He expressed the covenant acts and transactions between himself and the Mediator in their writings. He fulfilled it in the fullness of time by sending his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. These eleven persons had seen God manifest in flesh. They had been instructed by him. He had led them to the scriptures of truth. He had given them spiritual understandings to know him, to believe in him, to rest on him as the Mediator, and to apprehend and believe in his covenant engagements with the Father, and thus they were led to know the Father, who had sent his Son, according to his holy promise. Thus the person of Christ, the engagements of Christ, the mission of Christ, the mediatorship of Christ, his coming out from God, his being sent by him, were the objects and subjects on which their faith was exercised. And this leads me,

Fourthly, to show our Lord speaks of their faith in the Father, and himself, saying, And they have believed that thou didst send me.

It was a day of wonders, and an acceptable year to the Lord when our Immanuel was born into our world and all the while he dwelt in it. Yet it was almost and altogether hid from eyes of the most who then lived. It was the expectation of the Jewish people that a Saviour was to be raised up unto and also amongst them. Yet they erred concerning who and what he should be, because they knew not the scriptures, neither the power of God. The Saviour, the Great Saviour, God's Holy One, is born into our world. He lived in our world. He performed wonders in our world, yet he is not known and acknowledged but by a few. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Joh 1: 11-13. To these apostles it was given as a privilege, and prerogative royal to believe on Christ, to confess Christ. He had opened all his heart unto them. And in this prayer, he opens all his heart before them; he speaks it out in their hearing; he is well pleased they should be present when he pours out his whole soul in prayer. And because they are particularly mentioned, he will on this very account have

them to hear all he hath to say; as hereby they might be fully assured he would, when with his Father in the highest heaven, be just as mindful of them, and as faithful unto them as he was now. Heaven would make no alteration in his heart. He would love them when on his throne with the same everlasting which he now expressed in praying for them. He says to his Father, They have believed that thou didst send me; thus he expresses their faith. He shows it was properly fixed on the Father as the sender of Christ and this shows their faith was a spiritual and supernatural act of the mind on God and Christ. It was exercised on Christ in his Person, on his mediation, on covenant settlements, on the Father as the sender of Christ. And hereby it was proved to be the faith of God's elect. The faith of the operation of God. They had before them the Messiah. They saw him. They hear him. They conversed with him. They found him full of grace and truth. He had given them a spiritual knowledge of himself and of the Father in him. And although their faith did not at this time break forth into act and exercise towards him, yet he is pleased to speak of them as real believers on him, and on the Father, saying, "And they have believed that thou didst send me." It would be of great use and service to the people of the most high God if they would attend to what our Lord here says. So it is, almost all look into themselves for faith and also to prove they are believers. Very few at present have any clear scriptural ideas of what believing in Christ is. No, indeed they have not. They conceive that to believe on a well-grounded persuasion, the Lord hath wrought a new creation within them, and that they can hereby prove they are the Lord's, is to believe. They think this is faith. Yet, if it were, even then it must follow it is not faith in God. It is not faith in Christ. If it may be called faith, it is faith in a man's self. He believes he is a child of God. He believes Christ died for him because he is so and so wrought upon, because he is so and so in himself. Here is no faith of the operation of God in all this. I do not say such are not the Lord's, but I do say, such at present do not know Christ. For the true knowledge of Christ leads the mind to the true exercise of faith on Christ. And where the Son is known, the Father is known also. And this by and through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. If we attend unto it, we shall find it true. And it is of vast importance to be set right in the matter of believing. And there never was

since the foundation of the world, any true faith, but what had the word of God for the ground and warrant thereof. Neither was there ever any true faith which had not Christ for the object of it, nor was ever Christ precious to any mind, but it was led to the Father. So that all true faith hath Father, Word, and Holy Ghost as the objects of faith, and hope, and love. For they are all jointly engaged and concerned in the salvation of the elect. Our Lord Jesus Christ saith, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Joh 5: 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life. Joh 6: 47. And again, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. Joh 12: 44-45. From our Lord's words as above quoted, we may see our faith hath to do with the Father and himself. As also in these which are so precious to all that believe, All that Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Joh 6: 37. They have believed that thou didst send me. This is what our Lord here says of his apostles. And it implies that hereby they put honor on the Father, as the sender and him as the sent one and thus they glorified both the Father and the Son and this was through the grace of the Holy Ghost who dwelt in them, although he came more abundantly upon them after our Lord was glorified. It would be a real blessing to such as belong unto the Lord if they were more simply and spiritually exercised in meditations on the persons in the incomprehensible Godhead, on the love of the Three in Jehovah, towards the persons of the elect, on the transactions of the Eternal Three, in counsel and covenant, on setting up Christ as God-man Mediator, from everlasting, on his office in the covenant, on his union to, his relation and interest in the persons of the elect. These are the subjects in which all our real spiritual life is contained. In the knowledge of these subjects our spiritual life is quickened and excited. And as our spiritual faculties are exercised on them, we grow and increase with the increase of God. If our Lord speaks of the faith of his apostles by suggesting how it was exercised, we should learn this lesson of instruction from it, i.e. To make more of the object than the act of faith. We, in the present age are very faulty in this very particular. Almost all we speak of faith hath no

concern with the object on which it is to be exercised. And it is but seldom we find any that are taken with the object and subject on which the faith of God's elect is exercised. Impressions are not believing. Convictions of sin are not believing apprehensions of Jesus Christ. Warm frames and feelings are not spiritual views of God's everlasting love. No, it is not. Knowledge is cried down. Something styled experience supplies the place of Christ in the court of conscience. People are pleased with themselves. This is a proof they have not seen the Lord's Christ. If they had, they would everlastingly be out of conceit with themselves. And if they had views of Jesus, they would be to eternity swallowed up in him. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ. He hath done it in the word. He doth it in the mind of such as are born again of God. When he takes of the things of Christ and shows the same unto them. Hereby he brings about a closure between Christ and them. Then they esteem Christ above all, then they crown him as their complete Saviour, then he is their all and then they make him their all. May the Lord the Spirit bless what I have set before you. May he open the eyes of your minds to receive the knowledge of Christ into your minds and the love of God into your hearts. Then you will sing and shout for joy. I would here address myself to you who are real believers in Christ Jesus. Such I mean as have had a spiritual revelation of Christ made to your minds, from the Word, and by the Spirit. Are these things so as I have stated? Is faith exercised on the person of Christ, on the suretyship engagements of Christ, on his work and office, and on the Father, which sent him? Let us then give glory to the Holy Spirit for this. These are the true views of the subject. Our whole salvation and blessedness is in the subject. May the Lord, the Spirit, be pleased to engage and exercise our minds on this subject. Because so far as it is thus with us, we are living a life of faith on the Son of God. May the Lord add his blessing to his own truth. Even so, O God, the Holy Ghost. Amen.