

to apprehend a tittle of it. Beloved, learn to study the glories and royalties, the dignities and honours, the titles and epithets, given to our Lord. In his relation to God, he is the image of God. All the essential blessedness, perfections, and fulness of the Godhead is in him. Because the Son of God is personally united unto him. It is, as he is, *the image of the invisible of God*, he will shine forth in the sight of all the elect, and that with such a blaze of majesty, and refulgence; as will put glory on them for ever. His glory will exceed all enjoyment. Yea, it will be beyond all communion they will have. Yet they will have communion with him who shines forth in all this glory before them. Yet his glory will be admired by them, above and beyond all. It being what in the primitive designs of the Three in Jehovah, they were principally designed for. And it will be the everlasting and infinite spring of all their eternal blessedness. Our Jesus will be glorious as an Head, as a Mediator to all eternity. Yet his personal glory will far exceed this, and in a sense will in the state of glory I am speaking of, exceed this. Oh! for deep, spiritual meditations on the subject before us. The Lord lift up our hearts where Jesus is! Surely, under the prospects Paul had, the sights, the views of Christ, God-man, he was favoured with, and the certain expectation he had of living with Christ for ever cheered his mind, his words are very well suited to all these vast ideas of Christ, God-man, wrought in his mind by the Holy Ghost, which he expresses thus, *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss*

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him. May our views be the same. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

JOHN XVII. 25.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

OUR most blessed Lord, in the course of this his prayer, uttered himself to his Father, on his own behalf, on the behalf of his eleven apostles, on the behalf of his churches, ministers, and people, down to his second coming again. He having prayed for a blessing on the preaching of his gospel, and prayed for all the elect, whether called or uncalled, draws nigh to close this his most important and all prevailing intercessory prayer. The present words, and those in the next verse, finishes all our Lord has to say at this time. It is indeed so complete, so comprehensive, that our Lord himself would add no more. He had spoken as the representative, head, and high priest of his people. He had expressed all the vast, and deep thoughts, counsels, will, covenant, purposes, and designs of his

Father's heart towards the whole election of grace, respecting himself as the head, and the church his body. The longer he spoke, the more deeply he entered into the subject. He dwells with delight in what he is engaged on. It fills him with unspeakable joy to speak of his Father's ancient and everlasting love, to the elect, his beloved ones. Jesus values them most highly, because they were so dear and precious in the Father's view from everlasting. He urges it over and over, as a motive to engage his Father's heart perpetually towards them. When he prays for his whole church collectively, he is more brief, yet he is more full in depth of matter, and expression than before. So that the first part of this prayer, which was all for himself, which is contained in the five first verses, and the last part of this prayer, which is, as I conceive, contained in these three verses, the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, may well be compared together, as they carry this upon the very face of them. That Christ, when praying for himself, and when praying for his whole church, for each and every individual thereof, was more deeply engaged, and more comprehensive, than in what I have styled the second part of this his prayer. As our Lord closed his request for himself, with, *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*; so he closes his prayer on the behalf of his whole church, with a demand on the behalf of his people. He speaks by way of authority, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for*

thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. I look on these words, as expressive of the utmost of Christ's will concerning his church. His will, and his Father's, is one and the same. Eternal glory is the gift of God. It is not the fruit of Messiah's death. It was before all worlds bestowed upon them in Christ. It is the fruit of everlasting love. It belongs unto them on the footing of their relation to the person of Christ. They were by the Father's everlasting love to their persons, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. They were married to Christ, and he and they were united and glorified together, in the transactions between the divine, coequal, coeternal, and coessential Three, before all time. They had glory in him, as well as grace, before time began. What our Jesus engaged to be, to do, and to suffer for them, did not unite him to them, or them to him. He was united unto them as their head, their father, their husband, from everlasting. And they were united to him as his members, as his children, as his spouse, from everlasting. What he undertook for them, as surety and saviour, was the fruit and effect of this union between him and them. And *his loving them*, notwithstanding all their sinfulness, guilt, and misery, brought upon them by the fall, and *his washing them from their sins in his own blood*, is a proof of the immutable union of his person to theirs: and this was from eternity. The glory to which the elect are to be raised up unto, is a sight of Christ in his glory. He is God-man. His glory as such, is the very glory of the Godhead shining forth in him. This glory of his is incommunicable. He

only can possess it. Yet he will shine forth in the open sight, and vision of his person, before all his saints. They shall be where he is. They shall see his glory. This will be their ultimate blessedness. This will be their perfection of glory. Our Lord having expressed himself thus, before his Father, and in the hearing of his eleven apostles, he hereby admits his beloved ones into the utmost secrets of his love. He will glorify his members, as one with him their head. He will communicate glory unto them, he will put his own glory on them. They shall enjoy him, and rejoice in beholding his glory as their head, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. They shall behold him in all the glory of his offices, and rejoice in his wearing the crown of salvation for ever and ever. But his personal glory, is infinitely beyond all this. Nor should it be confounded with it. And beholding Christ's personal glory, is the very essence of heavenly glory, blessedness, and perfection. The Father loved Christ, God-man, before the foundation of the world. He loved him as the head of his church, before the foundation of the world. He loved him as Mediator, before the foundation of the world. As we are led by the Word and Spirit to take this into our minds, it leads us to high, adoring thoughts of our most precious Jesus. Our Lord's expressing himself thus, just as he was about to go forth to suffer and die for us, adds most important and inexpressible weight to all this. He says further on the behalf of his apostles present, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that*

thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them, and thus he concludes. In which words, our Jesus speaks of the qualification of his eleven apostles for that glory. This was by the saving knowledge he had given them of the Father. This he illustrates by the ignorance of the world. He sets forth the original cause of it. *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.* He then proceeds to speak of the benefits he had bestowed on these elect persons, and which he would further bestow upon them. He declares also his end and aim herein. Which was for the clear apprehension of the Father's love to their minds, and that he might dwell in their hearts. *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* I have thus given the connection and scope, meaning and design of both verses which remain to be sermonized. And shall begin with my present text, which is contained in these words, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.* I will aim to take them up, and open and explain them, in the following method and order.

First, I will speak of the term and epithet, *righteous Father, O righteous Father.*

Secondly, Concerning God's righteousness to the non-elect world, in leaving them in their sins and ignorance, and of his righteousness to the elect, in

making himself known, and fulfilling his promises unto them.

Thirdly, That Christ had, and still doth, communicate saving knowledge to the elect. *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

Fourthly, Christ having communicated the saving knowledge of the Father, to these eleven apostles, now present, they therefore owned and believed him to be the Mediator, and Saviour, though the world rejected him. Our Lord therefore suggests that on these accounts, they could not but be dear to the Father. Read the words, and you will see the truth of all this, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

I am first to speak of the term and epithet *righteous Father, O righteous Father.*

Our Lord when he began his prayer, it was an address to the Father, and when he concluded it for himself, it was, *O Father.* As his prayer for his apostles, churches, ministers, and people, is so closely connected with his own, it may therefore be said to be carried throughout the whole prayer. Our Lord, as he proceeds in praying, uses the title of *Holy Father.* In the prayer which in a more especial manner belongs to his whole church throughout every succeeding period of time, down to his coming in his kingdom, and glory, he uses the term *Father.* When he expresses by way of demand and authority, that his whole church be admitted to a sight of him, in his personal glory, he uses the

term *Father*. So he does in the words before us, and with an addition, it is here, *O righteous Father*. As our divine Jesus never used a word in prayer, but with a peculiar design, so here *Father, O Father, Holy Father, Father, O righteous Father*, so often repeated, were most certainly designed for our instruction. To point out the relation Christ stands in to the Father, and also the relation the Father stands in, to us, in him. The title *Holy Father* is used most accurately, when our Lord is praying to the Father, for the preservation of the apostles in unblameable holiness, in their lives and conversations. The term *Father*, is used by our Lord, when his petition is for the union which subsists between himself, and the saints in him, to the Father, that it might be made known, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*. And when all Christ could utter, is to be spoken, concerning the glorification of his whole church, then it is used again, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory*. And then, for the last time, it is in the words of my text, and with a fresh title. It is here, *O righteous Father*. It is here used as suited to what our Lord is speaking of. We should learn from hence, to address our heavenly Father, in his beloved Son, in the confidence of faith. To address him under the consideration of such perfections and titles as are suited to what we are praying for. As it serves to keep up our expectation on him, and serves to increase our im-

portunity that he will grant us the request of our lips. It would be blessed if we always prayed in the full faith and apprehension of Christ, as being our representative, priest, and intercessor. As our Lord is here speaking of the non-elect, whom he here mentions before the elect, and of the Father's providential dealings with them, so as that they were left to their natural ignorance of Christ, and unbelief of him, his truth, and gospel, he therefore in this his farther address to his Father, says, *O righteous Father*, thereby expressing himself, as well pleased with all divine dispensations. Not only with himself, and all his church, but with the non-elect also. The whole of his procedure concerning them, from his leaving out their names, and not writing them in the book of life, with the whole of his vast ends and designs towards them, in the whole process of his providential dealings, and dispensations, even to shutting their eyes, and hardening their hearts, was all in very righteousness. *O righteous Father!* thy conduct in shutting the eyes of some, and in opening the eyes of others, is all in perfect agreement with thine essential perfections. Thou art righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works. I, who have been admitted into all thy counsels, and to whom thou hast made known all the mysteries of thy will, with all thy motives, holy ends, and purposes, must pronounce thee, *righteous*. Therefore, as I am about to speak concerning the unbelief and ignorance of the world, and how thou hast hid the things of the kingdom from the world, whilst thou hast revealed the same unto babes, I address thee with the title, *O righteous Father*, that I may set

my seal to thy righteousness. Thou art essentially righteous, there is no unrighteousness with thee. Thou art in thy will, decrees, word, works, providences, *righteous*, immutably, and invariably so; thou art so declaratively; thou art so manifestatively; thou art so in thy works; thou art so in thy word; thou art so to thy saints; thou art so to thine enemies; thou art so in thy promises; thou art so in thy threatenings. *O righteous Father*, this title belongs unto thee, with this title I address thee, whilst I am about to express before thee, the ignorance of the world concerning thee. *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*, but these mine elect have known thee, and the original cause from whence their knowledge proceeds is from thyself. I am thy representative, he that hath seen thee, hath seen me, and he that hath seen me, hath seen thee. I have been in thy bosom, as God-man from everlasting. I have lived in thy presence, as the Head, Mediator, and Saviour of thy church before the world was. I came forth from thee, by mission, and commission, to make thee known. Yet the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee. And I have publicly, fully, freely, and agreeable to all thy will, made known and published all thy will. Yet, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*. It was not thy good will and pleasure they should, and thou art perfectly righteous in all the acts of thy will, both in thine own eternal decrees, and in thine open conduct towards them, whereby thy secret will concerning them is declared, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have*

known that thou hast sent me. My knowledge of thee, is the original cause of their knowing me. And this is their qualification, and meetness for their enjoyment of all the blessings of life everlasting. They have in consequence of their knowledge of me, owned and believed me to be sent of thee. In all this, thy righteousness and faithfulness to me, and them, is most clearly evidenced. I conceive my expressing myself as I have done, the best and clearest way of opening our Lord's words, and will now, looking to him for his continued grace to lead me on, proceed to my next head.

Secondly, To speak of God's righteousness to the non-elect world, in leaving them in their sins and ignorance. And his righteousness to the elect, in making himself known, and fulfilling his promises unto them, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.*

Our Lord left out the whole non-elect world, in verse the ninth. Where he said to the *Father, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* He prays for his elect in the world, and for them all the while they shall continue in it, *that the Father would keep them from the evil in it.* From the evil men which are of it, and from the evil one, *Satan, who is the God of it.* He mentions the *world* in his prayer thus. That when the union of him, and his saints, and his Father, is completed, and fully manifested by the glory union breaking forth, at the second coming of him, and his nuptials between himself and bride are openly celebrated, the world may believe the *Father hath sent him.* Not believe on him for sal-

vation, but believe him to be what he declared himself to be, and what the scriptures declares him to be, *the Man in God, the only Mediator*. And by the glory which will break forth upon the church at the second coming of the Lord Jesus, be convinced there hath been an union between Christ and his church from before all time, and been certainly evidenced throughout every generation of time, that it is very evident that the Father loved Christ, as the head of union, and the elect in him, with the same love wherewith he loved Christ, their head of union and communion with the Father, by the second coming of him, *without sin unto salvation*. Our Lord here speaks of the world again, and says, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*. By the world here, is meant unbelievers. It may include and imply all the non-elect, because they will all be found in their sins, in their unregeneracy, in their unbelief and ignorance of Christ, down to the second appearing of the Lord. Now as there can be nothing in any part of God's dealings, and procedure with them, but what is perfectly just, so this present head of my discourse, is appropriated to speak concerning God's righteousness to the non-elect world, in leaving them in their sins and ignorance. And of his righteousness to the elect, in making himself known, and making good his promises unto them. And first, as it respects the non-elect, they never had any other relation to Christ, but as creatures. They were never in him as members in an head. They were never decreed to have any other being, but what they had by creation in Adam their natural

head. This being, in all its perfection, with all creature good, they would have enjoyed, and that to the uttermost perfection of it, had they continued in the state the Lord God placed them in by creation; they would not have wished to have been raised higher. Indeed it would have been sin in them if they had, as they were by creation left to the freedom of their wills, and they were all created in one man, so God's leaving them all to stand, or fall in him, was a most equitable and righteous act in God. The imputation of Adam's sin to them, and the consequence of Adam's fall, which is the deprivation of God's moral image which was stamped on the mind by God himself, in the day when they were created, was an act of righteousness in God. The disposing of them, with respect to every place, case, circumstance, and sin of their whole lives, is all in God, a righteous act. His sovereignty in wisdom, power, and providence towards them, is all righteous. His leaving them to their sins, let it be considered as it may, is only leaving every cause to produce its proper effect. His leaving them to their own wills, is no act of injustice. His leaving them to the natural blindness of their minds and hardness of their hearts cannot reflect dishonour, unrighteousness, and injustice on him. God's designs towards sinners, as well as towards saints, must be worthy of himself. It becomes us indeed, and well becomes us, not to be too scrupulously exact to pry into the hidden arcana of God, and ask, why did God permit sin to enter among the rational creatures? It must be resolved into divine sovereignty. Yet the reasons, the ends, and

designs of God, in the permission of moral evil into the world, must be holy, and worthy of himself. Sin can have no being or existence but in a rational creature. Its existence cannot be without God; yet sin is not of God as the author of it. Sin is the effect of the creature's mutability. Yet God cannot make a creature immutable. He can, if he pleases, continue a creature in a state of immutability. But this is, and must be, all of grace, and therefore it must for ever, and wholly depend upon the good pleasure of his will. As to the righteousness of God, in the permission of sin, it is hereby made manifest, the creature's mutability is such, he cannot continue in a state of purity and holiness, one single moment without super-creation grace. As it respects God's leaving the non-elect to perish in their sins, not the least injustice is done them in this. They have but the experience of the fruits, and effects, of their total apostasy and fall from God, in their federal head Adam. As to such of them as seem to have the advantages of an external revelation of Christ, it only serves to prove how very far man is lost, that even what hath in appearance that which is revealing unto him, only serves through his own inherent sinfulness, to discover more and more what his heart is Godward. That he hates, and is averse to the method of God's salvation by Jesus Christ. As to such of the non-elect, as have the advantage of hearing the true and genuine gospel of the Lord and Saviour, and the Father's everlasting love as stated in the doctrine of it, and the Son's salvation, and the Spirit's testimony concerning the same, set

forth, and yet never are they brought so far to the knowledge of the truth, as to have all their trust in Christ alone, it only serves to shew that nature cannot get out of its own element. So, for some of the non-elect, so far as to have the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as hereby to *escape the pollution which is in the world through lust*, and yet some of these very persons to fall from all external acknowledgments, into worse sin than before, it only serves to shew what their hearts were, and also that there is no cure for sin, and sinners, but in the free grace of God. And for God to leave some under the pure preaching of the gospel to commit the worst of sins, it all proclaims that the Lord is righteousness and purity, holiness and truth itself. That he only is essentially, immutably holy. That it is his prerogative to be without *variableness, and shadow of turning*. If God leaves the non-elect to their sins and sinfulness, he does them no injustice. If he leaves them to their ignorance and unbelief, he only leaves them to themselves, so as that they are but what they were. Therefore no injustice can be chargeable on God. Our Lord therefore, whilst he is here speaking concerning the ignorance and unbelief of the world, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*, ascribes this to the righteousness of the divine nature. *O righteous Father, this is righteous in thy sight. Thou hast not sent me to save all men. It is only for thine elect that I came into the world. They must have a supernatural birth, they must have supernatural life. they must have supernatural faculties, or they cannot believe on me. Thou hast*

not wrought, given, and bestowed such gifts and fruits of thy royal grace on the world, it is only unto thine elect these gifts belong. Thou art as righteous in thy dealings with the non-elect, as with thine own elect, as to the righteousness of thine acts; I therefore most fully resign up my will to thine, as I do most freely acknowledge thou art as righteous, in permitting some to stumble on me, the stumbling stone and rock of offence, as thou art in bringing others to believe on me to life everlasting. As I have aimed to declare God's righteousness to the non-elect world, in leaving them in their sins and ignorance, and I might add, in permitting them to perish to eternity; for if sin deserves damnation, it cannot be unjust in God to damn sinners for sin, and he damns none but for sin. Then as this very decree is founded on the holiness of his nature; (for God in no act can exercise his will contrary to the perfection of his nature, he being righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works); then as his righteousness in his threatenings must be displayed, so it must also be to the elect. Therefore I go on,

Secondly, To speak of God's righteousness to the elect, in making himself known unto, and in his fulfilling his promises unto them: *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.*

As all the non-elect stood on a creation-bottom, and according to the covenant of works, were to be happy or miserable to all eternity, so all the elect were in Christ, and were to be dependant on him for all the blessings and benefits of life everlasting

to eternity. As one with Christ, he, on the foresight of the Fall, engaged to raise them up. It was decreed in the counsel and covenant of the Eternal Three, they should be all, each, and every one of them, redeemed, pardoned, justified, sanctified, and glorified. As we consider the elect standing in relation to God in Christ, we may behold the righteousness of God, that is, his faithfulness, exercised and engaged towards them. In redeeming them by the blood and death of his Son ; in justifying them in his righteousness ; in healing all their wounds by his stripes ; in making them clean by the most precious bloodshedding of his Son ; in working effectually on them, by the renewings of his Holy Spirit ; and in thus forming them and rendering them like unto Christ ; in making them partakers of a spiritual birth ; in giving them spiritual faculties suited unto, and fitted for taking in spiritual objects, subjects, persons, and things ; and thus leading them from the word, and by the teachings of God's Holy Spirit, to know and believe on Jesus to the saving of the soul. In all this the righteousness of God is manifested ; hereby the faithfulness of God is displayed, as it also is in the fulfilment of all his promises to his beloved ones. Not that every promise he hath made is fulfilled to every individual soul belonging to the election of grace ; no, it is impossible it should. But take the whole bulk and body of the elect, and all the promises are fulfilled, and that too in the largest and most comprehensive way and manner which they possibly can ; all which is a proof of God's faith-

fulness. As Christ's coming into the world in the fulness of time and his dying for the ungodly, was a fruit and proof of God's love and faithfulness to his church and people; so his quickening them, when dead in trespasses and sins, with spiritual, supernatural, and eternal life, is a full proof that he is righteousness itself: he will give full proof of this, in bringing home by his effectual grace all his elect to himself. Hence *Peter* says, speaking on this subject, *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* ¶ *Peter* iii. 9. Now as the Father is faithful, in remembering his elect with everlasting kindness, our Lord might well address him with the title, *O righteous Father!* As he is pleased to bestow his Spirit on his people, and lead them in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, he may be styled by our Lord, *Righteous Father.* As he makes known himself in a covenant way, and gives his Spirit, and sends him into the hearts of his people, to cry, *Father, Father!* he most justly deserves to be entitled as our Lord doth, *Righteous Father.* As he fulfils his promises unto his people, on which he has caused them to hope, he is pleased herein and hereby to prove his righteousness and faithfulness to his beloved ones. *O righteous Father! the world hath not known thee!*

Beloved, I do not conceive I have entered into this subject fully: indeed I did not mean so to do; only to give some general hints, and then leave the same for the improvement of your minds. **May**