

THE WONDROUS LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE HOUR COME.

Our great and glorious Redeemer having, as the man of sorrows, the servant of the Father, and the representative of his people, finished his work of teaching, and his active labours for his people; and being about to endure the curse, sustain the punishment of their sins, and make an infinite atonement for them, presented himself before them as the great Intercessor. In his address to his Father in their hearing, he opened his loving heart, disclosed the depth of his sympathy, and gave utterance to his unbounded desires for their welfare. How sublime his language! how exquisitely tender his pathos! how profound his thoughts! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, lead us to meditate on his wondrous prayer to our own profit, and his glory: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." (John xvii. 1). Observe—

What Jesus did. "He lifted up his eyes to heaven." This was expressive of desire, confidence, expectation, and reverence. Of *desire*,—for as when we speak to any one, and desire a reply, we naturally turn to that one, and look him in the face; so Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, the place of his Father's throne, the home of his Father's glory, where he had lain in his Father's bosom: from everlasting. The deep and intense desire of his soul directed his eye upwards. Of *expectation*,—for he expected a reply; and we, when we expect a reply, look toward the party we address. Hence David says, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." When we desire anything of God, which he has promised in his word, and which we believe will be for our good and his glory, we should look up, and expect to receive it. Of *confidence*,—he had the strongest confidence in his Father, and therefore he lifted up his eyes, and looked for sympathy and a reply. So we should have confidence in God. He loves to be trusted. He has given us many exceeding great and precious promises, to which he has added innumerable proofs of his faithfulness, to induce us to exercise confidence in him. Let us, therefore, ask in faith, and believe that our God will give us the desires of our hearts. Of *reverence*,—Jesus in the model worshipper. In him we see strong desire, earnest expectation, unquestioning confidence, and profound reverence. He was all solemnity; yet there was no dread, no terror, no slavish fear. How different to the unhalloved freedom of some professors! How different to our own approaches to God at times! He lifts up his eyes to heaven, and with a soul burning with zeal for his Father's glory he said,—or poured out his whole soul, for himself, for his disciples then present with him, and for his people down to the very end of time. Let us notice,—

What Jesus said. He said, "Father, or My Father. He came to God as a son

—as a son conscious of his father's love— as a son who had been doing, and was now about to suffer, his father's will. He realized his relation to God, which was peculiar; for he was the Son of God as none other ever was, or ever will be.— Angels are the sons of God by creation, and we are the sons of God by adoption and regeneration; but he was the only-begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. How the Son was begotten of the Father I know not, do not ask to know. What precise idea is to be attached to the word begotten, when applied to the co-equal and co-eternal Son of God, I know not, do not expect to know. That it implies sameness of nature, is clear. That it does not interfere with the independence of the Son, I believe. Each of the divine persons possesses the whole Godhead,—each is equally, eternally and essentially God; therefore equally the object of trust, reverence, and religious worship. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father; and yet the Son is as really, truly, and eternally God, as the Father. Thus he stands before his Father clothed in flesh, one with his people, acting for his people; but though clothed in flesh, he is the Son of God, one with God, and acting for God. But I would rather stand and adore, than try to understand or set forth so great a mystery; for the mystery of godliness is confessedly great,—"God was manifest in the flesh." His relation, while it is peculiar, is perpetual. He will always be the Son, the Son of God. To him the Father said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." The Son of God is both divine and human; and as such, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come."—the hour fixed upon in the councils of eternity, and decreed before time began—the hour predicted by the inspired prophets—the hour anticipated and expected by patriarchs, and men full of the Holy Ghost—the hour on which so much depended, as to heaven and earth. It was the hour when Jesus was to drink the cup of woe, conquer the foes of his Church, meet the claims of divine justice, and glorify God in the highest possible degree. "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son." This included, sustaining him under all he had to suffer, delivering him out of the hands of all his foes, raising him from the dead by his glorious power, and enthroning him at his own right hand. All this the Father did. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Upon this his heart was set. For this he came into the world, and for this he was prepared to suffer and to die. He wished to glorify his Father in his government, reconciling all the claims of that government in the salvation of his people. He would glorify his Father's character, harmonizing all his perfections; that so he might appear the just God while he was the Saviour. He would also glorify his Father in his purposes, by removing every obstacle out of the way of their accomplishment, and securing their complete and glorious fulfil-

ment. Precious Saviour! the glory of thy Father lay near thy heart: may thy glory over his near to mine! Oh, for grace, that I may glorify Jesus, in body, soul, and spirit!

Here we see the Mediator standing between the two parties, his Father and his people pleading with the one, and preaching to the other. Blessed be his name, he stands between them still; for we have one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus! He acts in character as a Son. Of old the Lord proposed the question to Israel, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?" But there is no room to ask the question here; for the perfect Son seeks above all things to honour his beloved Father, even when he was about to hide his face from him. He looks up, his eyes beaming with love, and his heart filled with reverence, just when he heard his Father saying, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, smite the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd."—just when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief." Oh, what filial submission! more, what resignation! more, what acquiescence in the Father's will more still, what preferring the Father's will to his own, though it cost him an agony and bloody sweat,—a cruel, shameful, and lingering death! He looks beyond the cloud to glory, and for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame. He observes order: first he preaches to his disciples, then he pleads with his Father for them, and then he suffers in their stead. He teaches us to meet the hour of affliction, or suffering, or death, with patience, and with hope. His hour, that tremendous hour, is past; our hour is yet to come. Oh, may we meet it with fortitude and courage! Oh, may we be enabled, by the gracious teaching and enabling of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did, to lift up our eyes to heaven, full of ardent desire, well founded expectation, scriptural confidence, and holy reverence, and say, "Father, the hour is come; honour thy child by sustaining and delivering him, that he may honour thee, by testifying for thee, and preferring thy will in all things to his own." Jesus was sustained, by keeping one object only in view, and that was his Father's glory; which glory, he knew, was bound up with the salvation of his people. On that one object may our minds be set; and to promote that, may all our desires, prayers, efforts, and sufferings tend. Oh, to glorify God all through life's weary pilgrimage!—Rev. J. Smith, Cheltenham.

There is no religion in the Bible—I hope if there are any reporters here, that they will wait until I finish my sentence before they run to the — paper—any more than there is a road upon the guide-board. The Bible is the rule, the direction, by which man is to work out his own salvation, as the guide-board is the direction by which he is to walk out his journey. Religion is in the man, or it is not anywhere.—Beecher.