

Sermons on John 17 ~ By Samuel Pierce ~ Sermon 16,

Joh 17:18-19

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

We are come to the closing words of our Lord's prayer, as it respects that part of it, which I style the second part of it, and which particularly concerns his apostles who were then, and there present. As the former request contained in the past verse, was on their behalf, for their personal sanctification, and growth in grace, so it contained and gave an account of the instrumental cause of it, the word of truth, with a description of the way whereby it is manifested, which is in, and by the word of truth. In the words of our text which are now to be opened and explained, we have the reasons urged by Christ to enforce it. Let it be remembered, there is, as hath been often observed, a most close and inseparable connection throughout every part and branch of this prayer. As the former petition was for sanctification, or holiness, so the words now before us, are connected with it. They are these, As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. As these words belong to the apostles, so our Lord very peculiarly suits them to their case and office, as it respected their mission and commission given them by him, and from himself. He, in this his address to the Father, speaks of his sending him into the world. As thou hast sent me into the world; this was the Father's act and deed, founded on ancient, covenant and eternal transactions. He then speaks of his own sending these persons into the world. For what end will be declared when we open these words, As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

His end in so doing was, that they might preach the gospel. He had authorized them, and he would yet more fully qualify them, by shedding his Holy Spirit on them. Thus he would send them forth as his ambassadors, therefore they must not as yet be taken out of the world. They must be continued in it for a season. They were to be endued with a greater measure of holiness; they were to be assisted with a greater measure of strength than ordinary. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. In these words, as into an ocean, all the springs and streams from the sixth verse falls. This seems to be the center and circumference of them. Therefore, if the Lord shall be pleased to open them to our view, so as for us spiritually and rightly to apprehend them, we shall see further into the mysteries of grace contained in this chapter. I would apply myself to the Holy Spirit, and entreat him to open these words to my mind, and open my mind to receive and apprehend our Lord's mind and will in them. O thou holy and blessed Spirit, who preceedest from the Father and the Son to testify of Jesus, do thou most graciously assist me, whilst I humbly attempt to open and explain my text. Even so, O holy Spirit, for thy name's sake, do thou say, Amen. In my proceeding to explain my text, As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. I would aim to set forth the important things contained in them, under the following heads, or particulars,

First, we have here the mission and commission of the apostles, and this as illustrated by the pattern thereof, Christ's own mission. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.

Secondly, we have Christ here speaking, concerning setting himself apart to his mediatory office, to become the sacrifice for sin, on their behalf, and for their benefit. And for their sakes I sanctify myself.

Thirdly, We have the end expressed which was to be obtained hereby, that they might be sanctified.

Fourthly, by what means they were to be sanctified is mentioned, through the truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. These are the divisions of my present sermon. In filling them up, I hope to give you the substance of all contained in the words of my text. And, first, we have here the mission and commission of the apostles, and this as illustrated by the pattern thereof, Christ's own mission from the Father. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

I will begin this head with the Father's mission of Christ, of which our Lord here speaks. This was the fruit and effect of the eternal acts and transactions which had passed between the Eternal Three before all worlds. The Son of God being before all-time predestinated to be God-man, he was secretly anointed and set up as such, and his human nature had a covenant subsistence. In consequence of which, he was the Son of Man in heaven, before he was the Son of Man on earth. He was the Son of Man secretly with God, before he was the Son of Man openly, and manifestively in our world. He speaks out this truth himself, in these words: 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. Christ says, I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Joh 16: 28. If, says one most justly, Christ had not been with the Father of Glory, in glory, and that in some capacity of going from that place of heavenly glory into another place, he could not have come into the world from the Father. The same worthy observes, the human nature subsisted in the Son of God by covenant, before it subsisted in the Son of God by creation, or proper formation. The Son of God and Son of Man, in one Mediator, may be properly sent, and properly come, in respect of the human nature, even from one extreme, or place unto another:

or, from heaven where he had been, to the earth whither he came, and pitched his tabernacle in open flesh. The Son of God, in his man-covenant is sent, as he is manifest in the flesh, and as the man now subsists by open creation in the Son of God, having subsisted, or stood by secret covenant in the same Son of God from everlasting. "It is not the Son of God went from place to place when he was sent, but the Son of Man that stood in him; and then, by a communication of properties, it was the whole person was sent, though strictly it was only the human nature went from place to place." I have quoted this from the invaluable Mr. Hussey. I conceive from it much light is reflected on the person sent, and that we may clearly discern the acts of the Father in his mission of our most adorable Lord. He delights to speak of his Father's concern in his mission and commission from him. He does it here because the whole validity of his mediatory acts, and office, work and salvation, all depended hereon. The mediatorship of Jesus Christ on God's will, and our Lord's covenant mediation, as the surety of his people, is all of the Father's appointment. Christ's responsibility for the performance of all he engaged for, is founded on his Deity as the Son of God. And the qualification of his person, as Mediator, and the worth and efficacy of his sacrifice, is founded on his covenant with the Father. Therefore, he said, before he became incarnate, Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. Ps 40: 7-8. It is vastly supporting to faith to have scriptural views and apprehensions of Christ in his mediatorial person, and mediatory office and capacity. If it had not been of eternal consequence, our Lord would not have mentioned it, in this his last prayer. For so we may call it, although he prayed after this in the garden, and on the cross. Indeed the eternal importance of it may be gathered from this very scripture now before us; because Christ hath a most certain respect to the offering he was about to make of himself. And his faith, for the acceptation of his sacrifice, was founded on what had passed in the everlasting covenant. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. The word (AS), expresses a likeness between the Father sending him, and his

sending the apostles. They were some things in which there could be no likeness, there were in other respects an (AS) of likeness. Christ was sent by the Father to open all his heart; to make known his mercy; to work miracles; to preach the gospel; to cast out devils; to heal diseases; to perform all righteousness; to be the one everlastingly efficacious sacrifice for sin; to conquer Satan; to subdue the whole host of hell; to abolish death; to bring life and immortality to light. His acts were peculiar to his office; he saved his people by his life and death. This was his incommunicable work. None were with him in the performance of this work. This therefore must be left out, as having nothing to do with what our Lord is here praying for, and speaking of concerning his apostles, when he here says to his Father, As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world. But it must be considered thus: The Father had sent Christ to be the apostle of the church. The whole frame of gospel worship had been given to him; with all power in heaven, and in earth, he therefore, as the sent one of God, had authority to send others in his name; to preach his gospel; to be witnesses of his death, resurrection, and ascension; to work miracles, to confirm the doctrine which they delivered; to turn sinners to God; and to proclaim the everlasting gospel, and thereby to make known and spread the fame and renown of Christ far and wide. As the Father had sent him into the world, to save his people from their sins; so he had sent these into the world to preach his finished salvation to poor sinners. And it was his will and pleasure they should be continued for a season in the world, on this very account. He therefore recommends them to his Father's care. He speaks on their behalf. He speaks in their hearing, for their encouragement and consolation. He prays for everything they could possibly need in the discharge of their office; and uses these words as an argument with his divine Father to be with them, and to be unto them everything they would need in the exercise of their public ministry. He likens them unto himself, and himself unto them. Hereby expressing his strong affection for them; his inseparable love to them; the real delight he took in them; his pleasure in their services for his name's sake; how

the Father could not give him more cause for joy, than by remembering them with everlasting kindness, all the while they were in their wilderness condition, all the while they remained here below, as his witnesses and followers. This I conceive is the spirit and meaning of our Lord before us; and which I conceive will receive confirmation if we go back to verse 14: I have given them thy word: and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sake I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. The whole is a series of gracious affections proceeding from the heart of Christ towards them. He expresses it on their behalf in prayer to his Father; he offers it up to him with divine energy; he opens the ancient transactions of his Father; he makes mention of them; he declares before him, that his mission was from him. And as it was, so he in a way of likeness thereunto had, and would send these his apostles into the world, with the very same gospel which himself received in the settlements of grace from everlasting. He intimates, that like as the Father had kept him, and he had finished the work which was given him to do, so he expected he would faithfully keep from evil, and bless these persons he now prayed for. And thus our Lord leaves them in his hands, and makes a surrender of them to him. Which was fully sufficient to give these his beloved ones to know they could not be more dear and precious to him, even in glory, than they now were. As Christ received his mission from the Father, and in an (as) of likeness, gave his apostles their commission, so it is here expressed to show their apostleship, was all of Christ's calling and appointment. It was necessary for Christ to mention this, as it showed his divine authority in their designation. He, as the Head of his body the church, as Lord and King over his own house, had, and hath a sole right to institute, call, to qualify, and send whomsoever he pleases.

He speaks here as receiving a right thus to act, by virtue of his mediatory mission and commission. He speaks to his divine Father on this subject as having acted as it became him, in ordaining and sending, in gifting and qualifying these men, to be his representatives and ministering servants, to preach glad tidings to the people, and the remission of sins. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. As Christ, in our world, perfumed the church with the savour of his good ointments, and by his sacrifice and intercession hath perfumed all heaven with the fragrance and odor thereof, so these persons were to be a sweet-smelling savour of Christ unto God. As the Father hath set him forth a propitiation, so they were so to preach him, as to set him forth as evidently crucified. As Christ had glorified the Father's law and justice, by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, so these were to bring glory to the Father and the Son, by preaching the gospel of the blessed God. As thou hast sent me into the world, to glorify thy name to the uttermost, to express all the depths of love, grace, and mercy contained in the good pleasure of thy will towards the elect, so I have fully given these the whole account thereof, and have sent them into the world to make known by their ministry, the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest. Oh, the grace of Christ! How gloriously hath he caused it to be recorded in the gospel! All the everlasting love of the Father is in Christ; and Christ is the mystery of grace; and the gospel is the mystery of Christ; and Christ is the mystery of the gospel. And this Christ was preached by these men, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And Christ was, as preached by these men, revealed by the Lord the Spirit, in the minds of such as believed. Thus, he was in them, and was their hope of glory. Whilst I am fully persuaded the subject concerning the mission and commission of the apostles, to preach, work miracles, and go forth into all the world preaching, teaching, and baptizing, is but barely named: yet as the head is so far filled up as was purposed, I therefore proceed to my next head of discourse, which is,

Secondly, to declare we have Christ here speaking concerning setting himself apart to his mediatory office; to become the sacrifice for sin, on their behalf, and for their benefit. Christ says, And for their sakes I sanctify myself.

In these words, there are two things to be considered, the persons spoken of; and what our Lord says respecting himself of the behalf of these persons. First, the persons spoken of. They are these eleven disciples, or apostles, here present. Secondly, what Christ says he did on the behalf of them. For their sakes I sanctify myself. Whilst these eleven men are in a very particular manner to be considered, yet the rest of the remnant belonging to the election of grace must not be omitted. They must be all considered, because surely the whole election of grace must be as dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, and more so, than these eleven persons. Not but these were as the signet on the right-hand. In the course of these sermons on this most divine prayer, I have repeatedly expressed myself to this effect, that whilst I am peculiarly disposed to apply what ought particularly to be applied to the apostles, yet even in this second part of this most important prayer, where they are most particularly prayed for, yet it must nor be so applied to them, as not here and there to conceive as though it was not to extend itself far beyond them, even to the whole church of God. I conceive this must be the case here. Surely our Lord's most complete oblation of himself, extends its virtue and efficacy to each and every one of his members. Yet our Lord's saying to his Father, And for their sakes I sanctify myself, must here in the first place be applied to his apostles. These were the persons immediately spoken of. They were the persons he here prays for. Yet in them is included the whole of his mystic body, whom he includes and wraps up in this general expression, for their sakes I sanctify myself. The sentence contains an infinity of love. It came from the very heart of our most adorable Lord. It was expressive of his great delight in them. It comes in after he had said to his Father concerning his mission from him. And had from thence taken occasion to speak of his mission given to his apostles, As thou hast

sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world; and for their sakes I sanctify myself. So that the words are expressive of his entire and infinite love, affection, delight, and complacency in them. Which, as in the first place spoken to the apostles, were expressive of his regard for them, as it respected their office, by which they would keep up his name, and make his praise glorious. So that in consequence of their witness for him would be accomplished what the Psalmist had foretold, thy name, O Lord, endureth forever, and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations. And in consequence of their testimony for Christ, this would be the fruit of it among the succeeding elect, and called ones, That one generation shall praise the works of God Jesus to another; and shall declare his mighty acts. Thus, the Lord's name would be praised from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. And the voice of rejoicing and salvation is and ever will be, in the tabernacles of the righteous. Whilst our Lord speaks first of his apostles, and inclusively of all the elect, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, and the words in the sense which hath been intimated belong unto both. Yet, secondly, what he says is of vast importance, and hath a mighty weight in it. I sanctify myself. He speaks the language of personality, I; he speaks concerning himself; he speaks of sanctifying himself; he speaks of sanctifying himself on behalf of his apostles. And it extends itself to all his people, because the dedicating himself to the complete performance and full execution of his mediatorial work, must not, cannot be confined to the apostles, but must be extended to all and every individual which the Father gave him, and for whom he gave himself, to be an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. It must here be inquired what is meant by Christ's sanctifying himself. He was holy in the uttermost expression of it; he was the Holy One of God; he was the Holy One of Israel; he was Holiness to the Lord; he was the Most Holy. How then could he sanctify himself? He could not be more holy; he could not increase in holiness. Therefore, what he is here speaking of must have respect to his office. When therefore he here says, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, which must refer to

our Lord's dedication of himself, to the full exercise of his work and office, in making his soul an offering for sin. His speaking of it as he does, shows how his whole soul was in the work; how much his soul delighted in accomplishing the whole work of salvation. It shows the vehemency of his love to his beloved ones. It was ardent; it was burning; it was intense; it was most truly divine, such as could not be abated. Not all he was to sustain in his body and soul could take off his heart from his beloved; nor any thing in them abate his affections for them. He was in his person immutable; in his love unutterable; in his will invincible; in his mercy continually one and the same. He proved it in the whole of his life; he displayed it fully in his sufferings and death; he, with the utmost alacrity, devoted and dedicated himself to the work of mediation. He here speaks out his whole soul in this most blessed form of words, and for their sakes I sanctify myself. Our Lord could not be more sanctified than he was; he was man united to God, he was God-man, the man, God's Fellow; he was God's Holy One; he had a personal holiness; he had a relative holiness, by means of the personal union between the man Christ Jesus, and the Son of God, which exceeded all the holiness which could be found in any beside him who was one with the only-begotten Son of God. Yet he here says, for their sakes I sanctify myself. What is the meaning hereof? Most assuredly this: he is here dedicating himself to the work of offering up of himself, to satisfy all the demands of his Father's law and justice. He is here presenting himself before his Father as the surety of his people. He is here expressing his will and readiness to be the one offering for his church. So that these words, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, contain the following particulars: the expression myself, expresses what he was about to offer, i.e. His whole person, his body, his soul, his person, as God-man, was the offering. He was to offer up himself to his divine Father as an all-sufficient sacrifice of everlasting worth and eternal efficacy. He was to exercise his will in the offering up of himself, so as to express his own infinite love to his Father, and to his people, by the oblation of himself. He was to offer himself on the behalf of his people, the Father's beloved ones, for their sakes I

sanctify myself. For none beside. The apostles are here particularly mentioned, because he had been speaking of them as the elect of God. So that here these eleven persons were as the representatives of the whole election of grace. Our Lord had said 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. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Having thus expressed himself concerning them, and of the equal interest his Father and himself had in these persons, and then proceeding to pray for them, and closing this part thereof with, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, does it not very clearly appear that our Lord singles out these persons as expressive of his whole church, and in a sense the representatives thereof? And that whilst he prays more particularly for them, as apostles, and some things spoken of must be confined to them, yet it does not weaken this to admit it to be true in another sense, that the whole election are to be considered as more or less comprehended? Surely here, and for their sakes, I sanctify myself, must be allowed to extend itself to the whole election of grace. Our Lord's sanctifying himself, was his setting himself apart for the work of offering himself as a whole burnt-offering to the Lord. His whole person, God-man, was to be the one sacrifice. He gave himself in the everlasting covenant as God-man, to be the surety of his church. He, Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, did in the fullness of time become incarnate. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. He obeyed the law, as God-man. His righteousness is the righteousness of the man in God. His name is Jehovah, our righteousness. And being found in fashion as a man,

he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He bore the sins of all his people in his own body. He sustained the whole curse due unto them in his soul. He offered up himself, to satisfy all the demands of law and justice, in the flames of everlasting love. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Thus, I have endeavored to open and explain these words of our Lord, uttered by him to his divine Father, and for their sakes I sanctify myself. If Christ set himself apart, according to his Father's will, to be the Mediator of reconciliation, to die in the law, place, room, and stead of the elect; if he bore all their sins in his body on the tree and was made a curse for them, then it must be blasphemy to say he could, or did die in vain; yea, it must be to give the lie to God's word, to speak of the death of Christ as reaching in any sense beyond the pale of election. We can never lay too much stress on the death of Christ. We can never over-rate it. It is impossible for us to say or conceive the worth of Messiah's offering. The dignity of his person stamps an everlasting perfection on the sacrifice of himself. The virtue of it exceeds all we can possibly say of it. The Lord Jesus hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Before I close this head, I would take a short view of our most precious Immanuel in the words with which he expresses himself to his divine Father. And for their sakes I sanctify myself. Here I am, Holy Father, the man of thy right hand, the Son of Man, whom thou madest strong for thyself. I am the Holy One, thy Sent One, in whom thy soul delighteth, in whom thou art well pleased. I pre-sent myself, as the sin-offering. I do it with all the love of my heart. Behold me as willing to bear the sins of many, as thou wast to appoint me to be the bearer of them. Look, Holy Father, and shine on me, thine Anointed One, who to glorify thee, and express the uttermost of my love to thy holy law, am ready to sustain the whole of thy righteous displeasure due to the sins of thy people, that thy justice may be glorified. Look, Holy Father, on me as the saviour of thy people, and deal with me as seemeth good in thy sight. I ask, may we not look on this as the very index of Christ's mind, when he said, and for their

sakes I sanctify myself? Surely beloved, we shall never get to the bottom of our subject. No, it is endless; it is inexhaustible; it is infinite; it is incomprehensible. May the Lord, the Holy Ghost, lead us more and more into it, so as that we may exalt Christ more and more.

I proceed, thirdly, to consider the end expressed, which was to be obtained by our Lord's sanctifying himself. He says, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified.

In close connection, and full agreement with what hath been already advanced, the subject must stand thus. As our Lord Jesus Christ sanctified himself for the sake of his people, as he set himself apart to the full performance of his mediatory office, on the behalf, and for the benefit of the elect; so the fruit of it must redound unto them. And if our Lord offered up his whole person, in the flames of everlasting love to his divine Father, and by the sacrifice of himself removed all their sins out of the sight, and from before the Lord, then this is the end obtained by it, that his people are hereby sanctified. All their sins are as truly abolished as though they had never been. It cannot be otherwise. If they were laid by the Father on Christ, if Jesus was made sin for them, then as truly as Christ made an end of sins, finished the transgression, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, so surely all the elect are discharged by God himself from all their crimes, so that not any sin remains to be removed from them. But they are all completely removed from them by the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord's words here before us declare it. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified. He sanctified himself by the offering up of himself. He set himself apart according to the council and covenant of the Eternal Three, to bear the sins of many, to purge out the whole guilt and stain of his church. He and his people being one, he standing for them, and their sins meeting on him, Jehovah the Father laying them on him, and making him sin for them, hereby Christ bore their very sin and sinfulness. And as

his whole body was clothed with the same, so he opened the fountain in his own most precious blood-shedding. He loved them, and washed them from their sins, in his own blood. And this is the complete cleansing of all his church and people. There is an effectual putting away of sin, of all sin, of every sort and kind of sin, of everything contained in sin, with respect to the guilt of it, the pollution of it, the demerit of it, as it respects the whole election of grace, by the offering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the sanctification here spoken of. To prove which I will produce one scripture, in which the word sanctified is used just as I have expressed it. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. All learned men will allow, sanctified, in this scripture, does not mean anything wrought in us by the Spirit of God. They say, here it signifies separated. All those who were separated in God's eternal decree of election, and were set apart for Christ, he to be their surety, to bear their sins in his own body on the tree, these persons were sanctified, that is, their sins were all done away in Christ, by his sacrifice. Our Jesus hath perfected forever the putting away of sin. And this is most certainly the language of our text; and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified: in the margin it is, truly sanctified. Now this is the end which our Lord was to obtain, and which our Lord hath obtained. It may not be amiss to cite a few scriptures from the Old Testament concerning this, and afterwards from the New. The first shall be these words: they are the Lord's to Moses, for he is the only speaker throughout the chapter. It respects the day of atonement, what I am going to quote. The words are these: for on the day the priest shall make an atonement for you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. Le 16: 30. I argue from it thus: if the typical atonement so effectually cleansed the people, that they were thereby made clean from all their sins before the Lord, how much more must the antitypical sacrifice, the offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered up himself? The next passage I shall quote, shall be from Ps 103: 12, as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. The Lord hath removed our

transgressions from us. He hath removed our transgressions from us, as far as the east is from the west. Therefore, they are completely removed from us. And this the Lord himself hath done. If any are desirous to know how, and in what way it was done, to give them full satisfaction, I will quote these words of the prophet Isaiah , Isa 53: 6, all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. I will give but one more on this subject from the Old Testament. You will find it in the prophet Zec 3: 9 for behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. As for the New Testament, I will cite the following: Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, 1Co 15: 3. If Christ died for our sins, he must have had our sins on him; otherwise he could not die for them. If our sins had not been laid on him, he could not have been the sacrifice for them. His death is our discharge. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. Again, Paul says, for he hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2Co 5: 21. He had by himself purged our sins. Heb 1: 3. John says, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin. 1Jo 1: 7. From all these scriptures it is fully clear, and divinely evident, that the one offering of the Lord Jesus perfecteth for ever; that the elect of God are in his sight pure and clean, through the most precious blood of the Lamb of God; that they, as considered in Christ, are in the Lord's sight as pure as his blood can cleanse them; as righteous as his righteousness can constitute them. They are righteous in Christ's righteousness. That is their perfection. They are clean, without all spot of sin in the blood of Christ. In it they have everlasting purity. The blood of Christ was all-sufficient for himself; he was the subject who was charged with all the sins of all the elect. He therefore had more sin on him, than ever was found in any individual. If he was discharged from all the sins he bore by imputation upon the footing of his own most precious blood-shedding, then there must be an infinite and

everlasting sufficiency in his sacrifice, to discharge us from all our sin, guilt, pollution, and demerit. Now it is expressly declared, that Christ was brought back again from the state of the dead, by virtue of his own blood-shedding. The apostle closes the epistle to the Hebrews, with this prayer. Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb 13: 20-21. What I quote it for, is to observe, that God, as the God of Peace, is said to have brought back again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The covenant spoken of is the everlasting covenant. It is styled the everlasting covenant, because it was from everlasting, and all the blessings of it will be continued to everlasting. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, laid down his life for them; he fulfilled all he engaged for; he lived, he died, he was buried. The Father raised him up to life everlasting, according to his most holy and true promise, which runs thus. On condition of Christ's making his soul an offering for son, he was to see his seed, the travail of his soul, and the pleasure of the Lord was to prosper in his hand. Isa 53: 10. Now if Christ was acquitted and discharged from all the sins of the elect which the Father laid on him, and was raised up from the power and dominion of death, and openly acquitted and justified by the Father, on his resurrection, on the footing of his own blood-shedding, then his finished work must be all-sufficient for his church. It is our everlasting acquittance and discharge. We are as truly saved, being believers in Jesus, as our Immanuel can save us. Oh, for more acquaintance with the truth of this! Oh, for faith more freely, fully, and distinctly acted and exercised, in the full belief of the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, as it is set before us in the scriptures! Then we shall find that our sanctification in the blood of Christ is a most important truth, which ought most assuredly to be believed by us. This brings me to my last head of this discourse, which is,

Fourthly, to consider the means of sanctification here mentioned by Christ. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

It is here mentioned, the truth is it by which they were to be sanctified. They were to be truly sanctified by the sacrifice of our Lord's body and soul, united to his person, as God and man in one Christ. Hereby the truth of God would be sealed, that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. And also all the legal institutions, sacrifices, and sprinklings of blood, would all be realized, as so many solemn prefiguration's of the death of Christ. As our Lord is here speaking prayer-wise to his Father, on the behalf of his beloved, so it is as it were presenting the infinite worth of his oblation, and pleading the same before him. It is, as we may say, standing at God's altar, presenting himself as priest, offering up his solemn prayer of dedication, devoting himself as the sacrifice, and speaking out the whole of his own heart respecting it; saying, as thou hast sent me into the world, to be the sacrifice for sin; so I also send these, mine apostles, into the world, to proclaim the everlasting virtue of it, and the eternal dignity thereof. And for their sakes, and for all thine and mine, those beloved ones who were first thine, and then mine by thine own royal gift of grace, I sanctify myself, I apply myself to this part of my priestly work, to offer myself, as representing them, bearing all their sins in mine own body, and carrying all their grief's, and sustaining them in mine own soul; my end herein, as it respects them, is this: that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Mine offering hath a perfection in it. By it, Holy Father, thy name, thy perfections, thy holiness, thy justice, thine hatred of sin, thy curse due unto it, will be more magnified and glorified, than if thine elect had been saved from falling in Adam their nature-head, and then thou couldest, if they had never fallen. I have an intuitive view and knowledge of the personal worth of mine obedience and sufferings, of my blood and propitiatory sacrifice, I

therefore pray that all the benefit of it, may be so made known unto them, that they may be sanctified by the truth.

I hope I have given you a view of Christ in what is here recorded in our text before us. If so, we must see fresh depths of love in the heart of Jesus under all these vast views; our Lord went forth to suffer for us. It would be a good preparatory to the spiritual mediation of his sorrows, agony, bloody sweat, passion, and cross, were we first to read this chapter. As the Lord, the Spirit, is pleased to give us views of the heart of Christ, as opened and expressed in it, we should be filled with holy wonder and amazement. But to proceed, the means here mentioned by Christ for the perfect sanctification of these his elect apostles, is the truth. That they might be sanctified through the truth. He bearing off from them, and bearing out of the sight of God all their sins, hereby they would be completely discharged from all their sins; because sins carried away by him, and abolished by his sacrifice, could never rise up against them. And to be completely saved in Christ from all sin, and for the Father to behold them in Christ, without all defilement, this must be complete sanctification indeed. Through the truth and perfection of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is most completely affected. And all the elect stand before God as Christ himself doth. They are what Jesus is; and until the Lord beholds sin in Christ, he will never see sin in his people, so as to charge it on them. Christ says to his whole church, thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee. Song 4: 7. And when it is given unto you, to any of you, to enter spiritually into the end and design of our Lord's death, you experience the virtue and efficacy thereof in you minds, so that it keeps from actual sin; nothing keeps down the influence and power of in-dwelling sin, so much as real believing apprehensions of the everlasting worth, virtue, and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice doth. There are seasons, when under the guidance and operation of the Holy Ghost, the believing mind is led to contemplate how the Father beholds Christ; how he knows the whole worth and perfection of his Son's mediation; how he beholds the Lamb in the midst of the throne; how the life and sacrifice of

Christ will yield divine satisfaction to his infinite mind for ever and ever. When thus the spiritual mind is engaged, the soul cannot sin. Such apprehensions of the subject affords such delight as lifts up the soul to God, and creates divine satiety; it makes the soul too high for sin; it lifts it up above all things. Then it is the soul is indeed fed and feasted. There are also seasons when the renewed mind is engaged in gospel apprehensions of Christ, in his most perfect and truly complete work of bringing us nigh unto God by his own blood. And then we, feeding on the atonement, are purified in our minds from the guilt of sin, and comforted in our hearts. If believers, as believers get above sin, it must be by believing that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. All the fruits of gospel sanctification are the effects of believing. We must believe continually in the blood and righteousness of Christ, if we would walk continually to the glory of Christ. We cannot be without sin in the conscience, in its guilt, nor without the love of it in our hearts; nor shall we be delivered from the dominion of it in our lives, but as we live a life of faith on the Son of God. Paul sets this truth before the saints at Rome, to the very end they might not be overcome by in-dwelling corruption. Know ye not, says he, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Ro 6: 3 to 7. It is evident from hence, we must see in the light of the Word and Spirit, our full and complete salvation by the death of Christ, before we can fight against sin in the strength of Christ. And we have in Christ's death the complete mortification of the whole body of sin. The body of sin was nailed to the cross with Christ. There the heartstrings of our every lust was cracked; so that the death of Christ is our security against the damning guilt of sin, and also against the reigning power of sin. For

thus it is written, sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. May the Lord, the Spirit, help us to view, and review, over and over again and again, our complete redemption through the blood of Christ. May the Holy Ghost give us more and more to study our complete sanctification in Christ. May he lead us to apprehend how completely all our sins, inward and outward, are abolished out of the sight of God our heavenly Father, by the obedience and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as we have the real scriptural knowledge of these important truths, so far we shall believe in Christ, who is truth itself. And in our real believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall have actual fellowship with him. And in real fellowship with Jesus consists the very life of gospel sanctification. And when we live in communion with Jesus, we cannot but die to sin, and live unto God. May the Lord Jesus prove the truth of this, by putting forth the virtue and efficacy of his blood and death continually within us. As this is the last words in our Lord's prayer, as they particularly belong to his apostles, so they are very important ones, therefore I will again repeat them. As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. It would be well for ministers, churches, saints, and every individual believer, to be daily engaged in reading this seventeenth chapter of John. It would be well with us all, were we gaining daily a greater knowledge of Christ by it. Hereby we should be led to prize our Lord more and more, for the exceeding riches of his grace. We now close the second part of our Lord's prayer. May our Lord pardon freely and fully all defects. For sure I am, I think, were a man to write on this most divine chapter ever so clearly, he would, notwithstanding that, see such depths of glory and majesty in it, as would give him to conceive he himself was but on the bare surface of it. I think so for myself, and of my performance. Not that I am conscious of any deficiency in the truth of what is written; no, God forbid. I would not permit it to see light, had I the least cause for thinking so. I am persuaded of the truth of what is written; but am fully persuaded the depth of truth is

not fully explored; neither can it be. May the Lord make use of what I have written as seems good in his sight. To him I commit it; may he graciously accept it, and so shine on the truths opened, as to convey life and light to the understanding, and joy to the heart. As the heart of Christ is opened in the chapter, and even heaven too, and the heart of Christ, as we may so say, as it is in glory, is here set before us, may the Holy Spirit so bless us with spiritual views hereof, as may fill us with all joy and peace in believing. Amen.