

Sermons on John 17 ~ By Samuel Pierce ~ Sermon 14,

Joh 17:16

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

Every part and expression of our most blessed Lord's, throughout the whole course of this prayer, is not only important, but also very instructive. We may learn from it what prayer is; also how it should be begun; and how it should be carried on; and also how it should be ended. It is well for us to take into our minds the nature of prayer; the object of prayer; the subject matter of prayer; and how our Lord concludes his prayer. Because this would lead us to pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding also. In this prayer of our Lord's here before us, we have all the persons whom he prays for expressed; their cases mentioned, and petitions offered suited thereunto. We have also the relation they stood in to God and Christ declared; and a variety of arguments used to enforce the Father's attention to grant the requests put up before him. All the Persons in the sacred Trinity are united to the elect, and the elect are united to them. All the love of godhead flows from the Father's everlasting love, through the God-man, Christ Jesus, by the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, into the minds of the renewed and called ones. The Father's everlasting love is the fountain and spring of the everlasting blessedness which the elect partake of, both in heaven and in earth. Our Lord lays a great weight and stress on the Father's interest in those persons for whom he here prays; thine they were, verse 6. He also mentions his own interest in them; and thou gavest them me. On this very consideration he speaks to the Father on their behalf; and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, verse 10. To which our Lord adds, and I am glorified in them. Whilst we cannot pray for the elect as Christ did, yet it is well for us to survey in the light of faith, the manner in which he prayed for them. And if we were spiritually engaged in the light of faith, might see how it is more and more enlarged for these his eleven apostles, as he continues his prayer; we

should be led more and more to holy and admiring thoughts of his love to them, and to his whole church. He considers where his apostles are; these are in the world, verse 11. He considers the world's hatred of them, and what will come on them, whilst in a time state. He considers the reason of it. It is because they are not of the world. He himself, as just going out of the world, and that he is going to leave them in the world. He therefore provides for them accordingly. He commits them to his Father, who had loved them with an everlasting love. He prays his Father to keep and preserve them in the truths of the everlasting gospel, verse 11. He prays also, that they may be kept in the practice of holiness; that they may persevere in the course of labors and sufferings, to which they were, and would be further called, and unto which they were appointed. Our Lord, verse 12, mentions his own care, and how he had most faithfully exercised it towards them, whilst he was with them in the world. He says this, verse 13, he mentioned all this in their hearing, that they might have joy, arising from clear abundant evidence of his great love towards them. Our Lord is pleased, verse 14, to express the hatred the world bore to them. He says, the world hated them, because they were not of it. In which respect they were like unto him. The world hated them on account of the gospel which he had taught them, and which he had also given unto them. He says, it is not his request, verse 15, that they should be taken out of the world. No, let them remain in it; let them perform their work; let them go forth and spread my name, my fame, my renown. My prayer is that thou, Holy Father, wouldest keep them from the evil; from the evil of sin; from the evil one, Satan; from the evil men of the world. Not so keep them as that they shall not be assaulted and afflicted, and oppressed by all these enemies, but so kept, as not to fear any of these enemies; nor be overcome by them, so as to forbear preaching my truth, and of being my true and faithful ambassadors. To this petition our Lord adds the words of my text, verse 16, as an argument for prevailing to obtain the request which he had put up. That it may clearly appear to you, as it does to me, I will recite it. I pray not that thou 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, verses 15, 16. Although we have these words of our Lord's at the close of the fourteenth verse, yet I could not prevail with myself to drop them here. I shall therefore aim to make a sermon out of them. It may, and should be observed; our Jesus often used and uttered the same expressions, over and over. He preached over the same sermons; he uttered the same parables; he wrought the same miracles; he expressed himself on the same subjects, again and again, with very little variation. And we should learn from hence, that ministers are not to be censured merely because they preach the same doctrine, without the least variation from the same text; nor because they may sometimes preach over the very same sermon. It should be so; it ought to be so; it is to their honor. Nor should they be slighted for using the same expressions in prayer, on the same important occasions. Our Lord did the same. We cannot follow a better example. As every part of this prayer is most truly sublime, so the arguments made use of in it should not be overlooked by us. This before us, as was said before hinted, comes in after our Lord's request to the Father, that he would keep them from evil. By which our Lord must, in a very particular manner, mean the malice and rage of the devil and persecutors. It must be because our Lord's words are, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Then these words follow, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. As I am going out of the world, and going to leave these mine apostles in the world, to bear their witness concerning me, the rage of Satan against me (my person, my gospel, my ministers, my people), will fall on these. The wicked men of the world will exercise their utmost hatred against them. They will use them in a most tremendous manner, just as they would me, if I were in their power, and at their disposal. I therefore make it an argument, Holy Father, that thou wouldest be their protector; seeing they cannot escape the hatred of the world, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

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

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

Secondly, In what sense they differed from the world.

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

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

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

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

Our Jesus is not simply speaking of the world on which we dwell, but of persons on it; and not of all on it neither, but of certain ones, even of such as were in the arms of the wicked one. Of such as were the enemies to God by wicked works; of such as were bond-slaves to sin and Satan, death and hell; of such as were under the direction and influence of Satan, the god of this world; of such we were walking according to the course of this world; of such who were following the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; of such in whom the devil worked with energy. These are opposed to those persons which Christ here prays for. Those whom our Lord here prays for were not such; they were chosen out of the world; they were born again; they were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; they were passed from death unto life;

they were in a state of grace; they had communion with the Lord. Our Lord might therefore well say of them, They are not of this world. As he might also on an higher account. They having been separated from all eternity, in the Father's eternal purposes and decrees, to be Christ's. Not only to be his members, but his apostles also, they were his in a most singular and peculiar manner. As such, Christ was very particularly interested in them. They being those individual and identical persons who were to declare his truth, to publish his gospel, to spread his name, and fame, to publish his salvation, victories, and re known throughout the world. Our Jesus might well say of them, They are not of the world; the work in which they were to be engaged was not of the world. The ends and designs of their living and dying in the world, was to answer no one end, which worldly men have their hearts set upon. These persons, of whom Christ speaks, were to be really dead to all that the world calls great and good; they were to be burning and shining lights; they were to live as having Christ for an ensample; they were to act as Christ's representatives and delegates; they were to give continual proof, in and throughout the whole of their conversation, preaching, walking, in their living and dying, that they had been with Jesus. So that our Lord might most truly and properly denominate them, as he here does, They are not of the world. And in so doing, he further recommends them to his Father. It is an argument which our most divine Lord uses, why his Father should keep them from the evil of the world, seeing they were poor and needy. And as they were to be continued in the world, and would be exposed to the sorrows, trials, and persecutions which would arise from the men of the world, who have their portion in this life, therefore the grace of the Father, in his keeping his eye on them, in his opening his heart unto them, in his putting forth his power in them, and in his giving them strength according unto, and equal with their days of trials, would be a glorious display of his goodness unto them. Hereby it would appear, that he was mindful of them, and that he would bless them. Yea, hereby it would be very evident that he would continue his blessing unto them, even life for evermore. Our Jesus, in these words, They

are not of the world, expresses how his heart was set on these his beloved ones, from the consideration of their state and circumstances in this world; so he puts up his request to the Father suited to all this. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. And most assuredly, the Lord's ministers, churches, and people may derive strength here from. He being unto them all he was to his apostles. Though he was that in a very particular manner to them, which he is not to any of us. They were his particular witnesses, in a way we are not; they testified of his resurrection, as we cannot; they were for such a peculiar work and service, as we are not. Yet we testify of him, and bear our witness respecting him also, though in a very different way. Yet he is with us, in a measure and degree. What he said of his apostles is true of all his ministers and churches; they are not of the world; they are saved from this present evil world; they are the objects of scorn and contempt of the world; they are hated by the world. So are the churches of Christ also. All such as are born of the Spirit, are persecuted by such as are after the flesh. The distinction between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, is of a very long standing; it is of ancient date. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," was spoken by the Lord God immediately after the fall; and it is here confirmed by Christ in these words before us, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, and therefore the world hateth them. This brings me,

Secondly, to show in what sense they differed from the world. They are not of the world.

These persons, the apostles, differed from the world, and the world differed from them in a vast variety of particulars. And so likewise do the ministers and churches, of Christ Jesus, in their thoughts, views, schemes, plans, ends, designs, joys, sorrows, hopes, miseries, and expectations. These persons had Christ for their object, and subject. His person was their glory. His love their heaven. His salvation was the matter of their joy and rejoicing. His interest, the

good of his ministers and churches, their great and grand concern. They lived for no other purpose but to advance Christ's praise; to preach his truth. Their sorrows arose from sin, which caused them to mourn; their distresses from the men of the world, who were the enemies to Christ Jesus. They had joys which were purely holy and divine. They had their conversation in heaven. Their minds and affections were raised up, and set on heavenly things. They had no inheritance in the world; their all was in heaven. In all which they differed from the world. The worldlings' joy they were strangers to. These apostles were strangers and pilgrims; they were supernatural men; their minds were supernaturally enlightened; they were in their lives and conversations under the supernatural influences of the Holy Ghost. If they sorrowed, it was as believers in Jesus; if they mourned, it was because of sin; if they suffered, it was to promote the glory of Christ, and to increase his praise. Now all this was contrary to the men of the world; to their views; to their tempers; to their maxims; to their customs; to their walk; to their pursuits. What yielded a feast to the one, was nothing to the other. Our Lord had a most perfect and intuitive knowledge and view of all this. He therefore says of these his beloved ones, to his Father. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. And although our Lord had just before said, 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. Yet he here adds again the words he had just before uttered, by way of argument to the Father, that he would keep them, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. It is an immutable proof, how deeply our Lord is concerned for his people all the while they are in this world. His whole prayer is for his apostles, churches, and ministers, in, and whilst they remain here below. It affords unspeakable consolation to the minds of the Lord's people, when they rightly consider this. We should get great good from a right understanding of this prayer. If we considered the many pleas in it, the several petitions in it, and the arguments made use of, it would most wonderfully support our

faith; it would increase our confidence; it would promote our joy in the Lord; we should then triumph in our Jesus as the Holy One of Israel as our Lord considers the state and case of his apostles in this world, and what would befall them after his departure from them; so they were afterwards exactly what he declared them to be, the objects of this world's hatred and scorn. Paul says, For I think the God hath set forth us, the apostles, last, as it were appointed unto death. For we are made a spectacle, or theater unto the world, and to angels, and to men. And then he, speaking of their sufferings, in the world, on the behalf of Christ and truth, says, Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. 1Co 4 :9-13. A full proof they differed from the world. It was fully evidence they were not of it; that they were chosen out of it; that they had no portion, nor inheritance in it; that they were altogether different from the men in it. Our Lord's concern for them therefore speaks out the love of his heart unto them. They are not of the world; they will never be beloved by the world; they will be always in a suffering state, all the while they remain in it. Yet they can only glorify me, whilst they remain in it. Therefore, I pray not for their removal from it, but for their continuance in it. Keep them, Holy Father, from the evil. This is my request on their behalf. I again repeat this as an argument that thou shouldest. They are not of the world. It becomes thee, and me to consider their condition, situation, and circumstances. I therefore urge it, Holy Father, that they may be attended unto, closely guarded, and kept by almighty power, through faith unto salvation.

I hope what hath been delivered is explanatory of our blessed Lord's meaning in the words before us, and also expressive of the case and circumstances of his apostles in the world. And should it not stop the mouths of many of us from complaining? Most assuredly it should. Are we ministers of the Lord and Savior, and shall we expect

the world to court us and fall in love with us? God forbid! Shall we preach the pure gospel of Christ, and expect earthly-minded persons, and professors to love us for the same? We are much mistaken then, and we shall find ourselves disappointed. Shall we live as becometh the gospel of Christ, and be in close friendship with the world? It is utterly impossible. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Our Lord says of all his beloved ones, as truly as of these eleven apostles, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Let us look at these words. And if ministers, let us act in all things to the glory of Christ. If the people of Christ. Let us live, Christ; let us live above the hatred, scorn, contempt, spirit, and temper of the world; above all human maxims and policies, above all human inventions and doctrines. Let us value ourselves as the Lord's free men; let us walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Thus, let us adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. It is of great importance to us to consider how dearly Christ loves us; how deeply engaged he is for us; how perfectly he is united unto us, and interested in us; how he speaks on our behalf, just exactly as it suits our case. And when he mentions us, it is always with the uttermost affection of his holy mind. It is good to observe throughout this prayer, he says nothing against his dearly beloved ones, but everything for them. Herein we may see, admire, and adore him for the greatness and immutability of his love to us. As I have been endeavoring to give an account of these persons for whom our Lord prays his Father on their behalf, that they are not of the world; and also in what sense they differed from the world, so I proceed,

Thirdly, to observe, our Lord speaks of himself as not of the world. I am not of the world. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

This our Jesus mentions as his plea on their behalf. It is, I conceive, impossible to enter fully into this prayer, in all its branches, petitions, pleas, and arguments. As it is, and will to eternity be

impossible to enter fully into a knowledge of the love of Christ to his beloved ones. Whilst our Lord cannot open his heart more fully, nor express it more clearly, nor be more expressive of his care and close attachment to all the cases of his church militant here upon earth, than he does in this most divine copy of his intercession in heaven; yet such are our faculties, so benumbed, so dull, we cannot conceive but a very small portion of the grace here set before us. It is our blessing to have the least spiritual apprehension hereof. Jesus says to his Father, speaking on the behalf of his eleven apostles, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Which most assuredly is speaking not only on their behalf, and using it as an argument with the Father, that he would protect them, but also it speaks more. It expresses they were like unto him. Yea, that hereby they were conformable unto him. But my present subject is not all this. I am, under this my third head, to observe our Lord speaks of himself as not of the world. I am not of the world. He was not; he was before the world, he being the Lord and Creator of it. He was as God-man, Mediator, as the Head and Husband of his church and people, of divine constitution. His human nature was the fruit of the earth, excellent and comely; yet the production of it was altogether supernatural, and beyond the power of nature. He was true and very man; yet he was an heavenly man. He was the Lord from heaven. He was in the world; yet he was not of it. He lived in the world; yet he so lived as to overcome it. His human nature was pure; his heart was perfectly holy; his tempers were all in perfect unison with the holy law; his life was perfection; he had no possessions in the world; he enjoyed none of the riches and honors of it; he was not courted, nor esteemed by the grandees in it; he made himself of no reputation; his kingdom was not of this world; he was not possessed of the riches of it; he had not a place where to lay his head; he lived on the bounty of others; his life was holy, and most truly divine; his heart was set on heavenly things. It might be truly said, that he was born from above. As he was not of the world, yet lived in the world and kept himself unspotted from the world, so his life, obedience, thoughts, acts, and sorrows, which he performed and sustained in

our world, all proved and confirmed his heavenly and most divine original. Our Lord saying, I am not of the world, is expressive of the end and design of his having been in the world, which was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. It was that he might save his people from all their sins; that he might sanctified all their miseries; that he might turn all their sorrows into matter for holy joy; that he might enter so fully into a knowledge of each, and every one of their peculiar and particular cases, as to be so apprehensive of the same, as to afford them relief exactly suited to them. O the grace of Jesus! In this, as well as in other instances, it is most truly glorious and transcendently divine. As our Jesus was not of this world, yet lived in it, and was himself the object of the world's scorn, the subject of all sorts and kind of grief's, the Holy One of God, who as such was condemned by the Jews, and despised of the people, so he knew it would follow that his apostles, for their love to him, and for their real conformity to him, would be the objects of the world's scorn and hatred also. He is therefore here praying for them, suitable to all this. He here speaks out in their hearing to his Father on their behalf. He hereby gives them to know the whole of his heart towards them. What he here says was most admirably calculated to encourage, strengthen, and comfort them. He says, I am not of the world; my riches are durable; my joys are substantial; my kingdom is eternal; my glory is everlasting; my power is infinite; my salvation is all-sufficient to lift up the hearts of my people, and raise up their affections, and set them up on high. And as I am from above, so I live above, in the views and contemplations of my own glory, which I am soon to enter on. And as these my beloved ones are led to live in believing views and apprehensions of me, they will hereby be rendered conformable unto me. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. And as I have lived out of heaven for them, and lived in the world for their everlasting benefit and advantage, so I will, it is my will, they should live for a season in the world, and be exposed to sorrow, temptation, misery, persecution, martyrdom, and be in deaths often, although heaven is their eternal home, that they may learn such lessons on earth, as will make my name and praise

glorious in, and throughout the ages of eternity. If such was the design of Christ towards them, then they might be well contented to be in the world, as long as their dear Lord pleased. If they were left on it to increase his name, his fame, his praise, then they could not be unwilling to remain on it. And they being filled with the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from on high, they could meditate, re-cord, speak, and preach of all his wondrous acts, and talk of his doings. And, indeed, this was their whole employment after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. So that, as Jesus delighted to run his race, to perform his work, to open the mysteries of grace, to proclaim his Father's name, to rejoice in the glory which would be brought to him by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; so the apostles, they would have all this to declare and publish in the world. And it would yield a real heaven to their minds to be thinking and speaking of it. If our Lord says, I am not of the world, it should teach us, as believers in him, our high calling and birthright. We are born of the Spirit. As such, we have received life from Christ; yea, he is our life. We have the same spirit in us, which dwelleth in him. We have the same heaven for our home, which he is entered into, and where he liveth after the power of an endless life. We are born into Christ's world. We have spiritual and supernatural faculties, which were created in our minds in regeneration, whereby we are fitted to take in Christ, his salvation, his kingdom, and the things of it, his glory, and are qualified to enjoy it, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who hath consecrated us as living temples unto God. It becomes us therefore to live agreeable to our birthright; to live up to our high calling and dignity; to live in views of Christ; to live as Christ's representatives on earth. He was not taken with anything below: the pomp's, the honors, riches, and glory of the world, he trampled on. He lived on God, the fountain of all good. He said, I have set the lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Ps 16: 8. He is set forth, by the apostle Paul, as the one object for us to look at, under all sorts of trials, persecutions, and sufferings. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside

every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds. Heb 12: 1-3. Nothing can carry us above all present things, but looking unto Jesus. Whilst we look unto him, and live simply in an entire dependence on him, we shall be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. As we receive Christ into our minds, and enjoy his love in our hearts, we shall be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. As we contemplate him, and the contradiction of sinners which he so patiently endured, we shall, as the apostles did, be counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And let our worldly trials be what they may, when our eye and heart is fixed on Jesus, We shall then reckon the sufferings of this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Ro 8:18. May the Lord, the Holy Ghost, realize these truths in our souls, and thereby quicken our pace and steps heavenwards. Believers, our all is in Christ, he is our all; we need no more; we cannot have anything beyond what we have in him; he is the Father's treasury of grace and glory; he is God's all; he may well therefore be ours. God is infinitely and everlastingly well pleased with him. We cannot but be highly satisfied with Jesus, when we have true views and apprehensions of Jesus. He says, I am not of the world. Let us therefore live above the world, and be dead to it. We must be so, we cannot but be so, if we live, Christ. One moments communion with Christ, contains more sweets than is to be found in the whole creation of God. One single spiritual view of Jesus is sufficient to put down ten thousand millions of worlds. When we see Jesus, we die to all below him. As we live in sights of Jesus, we die to all beside him. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Therefore, there must be a likeness between Christ and them. The Bridegroom and the Bride, the Head and the members, the Shepherd and the sheep, the Redeemer and the redeemed, must

have an union and communion suitable to the relation they stand in to each other. Our Lord keeps this in view throughout this whole prayer. Every petition in it is founded hereon, and speaks and declares it. We shall do well always to remember it, because it is by this means we shall be carried off ourselves to a fixation on Christ. As our Lord speaks thus affectionately of them to his Father, to whose care he had committed them, so it is a most glorious evidence of his love to them. And he had before said the same, they are not of this world, even as I am not of the world, verse 14, it shows the vast importance of what is contained in the sentence. He had not repeated it twice, if it were not of the greatest moment. In the first mentioning of these words in the fourteenth verse, our Lord uses it as an argument with his Father to keep and protect them from the hatred of the world. That they might be kept from the evil one, Satan; whose rage and malice would be immediately directed against them, on account of the gospel which Christ had taught and committed unto them. 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. He then put up this petition for them. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Then these words are added as an argument why this should be granted, They are not of this world, even as I am not of the world. And as I have given, under the former heads, an account of what our Lord says on the behalf of the world, which is this, They are not of the world; and in what sense they differed from the world, and that our Lord speaks of himself as not of the world, so I proceed to my last head of discourse, which is,

Fourthly, to observe, that Christ speaks of a semblance, or likeness, between those persons and himself. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Were there is an union, there cannot but be a communion, and the nearer the union, the more intimate the communion. And such is the communion which Christ hath, and admits his beloved ones unto,

that it en stamps his own image on them, and makes them like unto, and conformable unto him. These eleven apostles, who are here in a very special and particular manner the persons spoken of, were one with Christ, in heart and affection. They were beloved by him, and he was beloved by them. They bore his image en stamped on their minds in spiritual regeneration. They were to bear his name and preach his gospel to the ends of the earth. And they were to be in this world like unto him. He therefore draws, as it were, a parallel between himself and them, saying, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. They, or this likeness, here, as I conceive, must be in a very special manner referred to the apostles, as the ministers of the Lord and Savior, who were to carry on what he had begun. In him had already been fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah foretold. The people that walked in darkness had seen a great light; they that sat in the region and shadow of death, upon them this great light had shined. He, the light of the everlasting life, had enlightened these his apostles. They were to be lights; they were to be stars in the heaven of his church; they were to shine as lights in their ministry in their conversations, in their lives, in their tempers in their examples. In all these particulars, there was to be a singular likeness and similarity between Christ and them. He therefore says, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. As our Lord, one of whose titles is, the Rising Sun, and another, the Sun of Righteousness, and another, the Day-Spring from on high, ordained these his apostles to be stars in the firmament of his church, so they were to give lights to it. Ye are, says he, The light of the world. As such they were like him, they being appointed to give ministerial light to his people. As so considered, our Lord might say of them, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I would observe, that Christ speaks of a semblance or likeness, between these persons and himself, which must be confined to the subject before us, and as so restrained, I know of no fairer interpretation than what I have already intimated; i.e. That they in their office and work were like unto Christ, as it respected what they were to be continued in the world for. They were to be the offscouring of all

things, in the eyes of carnal men. Hence, a semblance or likeness, was between them and their divine Lord. As he was, so are they in this world. He was the light; he was prefigured by the golden candlestick and its seven lamps in Moses's tabernacle; which was the light of it. He was set forth by the golden candlesticks in Solomon's temple. He says himself; I am the light of the world. His gospel, like the sun in the heavens, is to give light to his people; his apostles, as the preachers of it, were to be, as it were, the lamp bearers. They were to be like himself in this, they were to enlighten others. Hence our Lord said to Paul, when he appeared unto him to make him a minister and an apostle, I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is in me. Ac 26: 18. The semblance or likeness, must in a great measure and degree refer to such a conformity to our Lord, in renouncing the world, in living in the world, in being persecuted by the world, in enduring all things for the elect's sake, in preaching the gospel, that thereby Christ might be glorified, so as to be correct copyists after Christ in all these particulars. As I am not of the world, says our Lord, so neither are these. My spirit is in them; they have the same mind and temper which is in me; they shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. As I have been persecuted, so they will be persecuted also; as the world hath hated me with an implacable hatred, so it will hate them, and upon the same account. They hate me because I have declared my essential Godhead, my distinct personality, my co-equality with the Holy Father; they have hated me because I have expressly declared my mission and commission from thee; they have hated me because I have testified of them, that their works are evil. As they have hated me on all these accounts, so they will hate these mine apostles, for bearing their witness to the truth of these doctrines. As they hated me for my asserting myself, one in self-existence with thee, equal with thee in eternity, majesty, glory, blessedness, and perfection, so these will be hated for asserting my personality in godhead, my work and office of

salvation. As it will be solely on my account they will be hated, keep them therefore, Holy Father, not from suffering, but from the evil of suffering. Let them be sustained. Do thou bear them up. Do thou make them faithful unto death, that they may obtain a crown of life. Thus I have endeavored to open, freely, and fully, what I apprehend to be contained in this semblance, or likeness, between these persons and our Lord. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. We may from hence conceive the lives and acts, the ministry and sufferings, the martyrdom and deaths of these men, as so many means of glorifying Jesus. Their views of Jesus, after the Holy Ghost came upon them, were peculiar to them. The lives they lived proved them to be living epistles of Christ. Where they saw, and how clearly they saw Jesus, is most fully set forth in the sacred scriptures. They beheld him by faith, as set before them in the world. He was their All in Life. They lived only to bear witness of him. You have what one for all the rest said, and also their joint suffrage concerning what they had to say for Christ, recorded briefly in Ac 5: 29-32. Then Peter and other apostles answered and said (when brought before the senate at Jerusalem) we ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. These persons were very near and dear to Christ. The office they were in, and the station in his church which they were to fill up, required his presence, grace, and spirit in a very singular way and manner. And he was with them, so as with none beside. So that when they were sorely persecuted at Jerusalem, for healing the man who was lame from his mother's womb, and because they had performed the cure in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, Peter and John having been imprisoned for this good act. When they had been called before the council of the Jews, and interrogated concerning the matter of fact, and commanded not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, "Peter and John answered and said unto the council, whether it be right in the sight

of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Upon being further threatened by the council, and then dismissed, They went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done. And now Lord, behold their threatening’s: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. An immediate answer was given to this prayer. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (just as they were on the day of Pentecost), and they spake the word of God with boldness. Ac 4: 18-32. Now here was Christ’s presence in an extraordinary manner vouchsafed them. After which, as the effect of all this, it is added, And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Verse 33. We have another instance and proof of Christ’s being present with, and filling his apostles with grace and power in such a way, as he does none beside. Paul and Barnabas, who were both of them apostles, and are so called, Ac 14:14, preached at Iconium, and abode there a long time, Speaking boldly in the name of the Lord, which gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands, verse 3. And when Paul was for the first time at Corinth, and had preached and baptized many of the Corinthians, the Lord Christ appeared to Paul by night in a vision, saying, Be not afraid,

but speak and hold not thy peace, For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city. Ac 18 :9-10. I mention these things as so many proofs that these persons, styled the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, were peculiar dear to him. He was eminently present with them. He appeared unto them. He wrought by them. He accompanied their personal witness and testimony concerning him, in a way he did none other. So that whilst the love and salvation is common, so as for all saints to be equally interested in the same. Yet as to apostolic gifts and grace, it was peculiar to these ambassadors of Christ. He could say of them with a very singular emphasis, they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. The Lord bless what hath been delivered. Amen.