

Sermons on John 17 - By Samuel Pierce - Sermon 11,

Joh 17:12-13

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Our divine Lord, in the course of his prayer as here recorded in this chapter, is pleased to express himself in a most engaging way and manner, so as to open all the depths of the everlasting gospel of the blessed God, and to set forth all the truths contained therein. Not one article of faith but is contained in this prayer. We have here the doctrine of the divine personalities, in the unity of one incomprehensible Godhead, the glory of Christ as God-man, his headship and mediatorship by the delegation of his divine Father, his power, as such, over all flesh, the election of grace, the gift of their persons to him, the Father's gift of eternal life to them in him, his appointment by the Father to bestow the same on them. We have the perfection of his work declared by himself, before his Father, his prayer for his own glorification. In which his ancient and primordial glory is set forth. Then, as it respects what he had done for his elect apostles, in making known all of God, in his nature, persons, and perfections, will, counsel, and covenant is spoken of. After which our Lord prays his Father on their behalf. In which he urges such motives as these: that they were the elect and that as such, the Father had a personal and peculiar propriety in them, that he had given them to him; therefore, both the Father and himself had a mutual propriety in them. Our Lord says he had given them the same gospel, or words, which the Father had given him. He says these persons had received the same, that they knew him to be the Sent One of God, that he came from the Father's bosom to perform his will and he was going to leave the world. He commits them unto his Father. He prays him to make them his care. He prays him to keep them through his own

name in the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel, in his holy worship, faith, and fear, that they might persevere in holiness, i.e. in the practice of it, and be one in will, and affection to each other, that they might cleave to each other, stand fast in one spirit, having the same designs and interest of him the glorious Redeemer in view, and at heart. And thus shadow forth and be a semblance of the union between the Father and himself. This is for the substance, the subject of the foregoing part of his most divine prayer. The verses now before us is a continuation of the position expressed in the verse foregoing. It is an account of his own faithfulness in the discharge of his pastoral office towards his apostles. And by it he adds weight to his former request. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. The particulars of my text I will aim to cast into the following division:

First, I will set forth the care and faithfulness of Christ towards his Father, and these persons here prayed for, as expressed by Jesus in these words, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name.

Secondly, the declaration of our Lord concerning his keeping these persons close to himself, and from the evil of the world, and from temporal and eternal ruin, with the exception of one. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.

Thirdly, Our Lord's apology for this. None of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Fourthly, the pleasure and joy Christ had in being about to enjoy his Father's company, fully in glory. And the concern also he felt for his beloved ones, whom he was to leave here behind. And now I

come to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

These are those particulars which I shall aim to open and discourse on at this time. May the Lord, the Spirit, help me so to do to the glory and praise of Christ, and to your edification. Then we shall have fresh cause to praise and bless him.

As the Lord shall enable me, I am, first, to set forth the care and faithfulness of Christ towards his Father, and these persons here prayed for, as expressed by Jesus in these words, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. He was now in the world, but as he was just on the eve of leaving it, he speaks as though he was out of it. And he speaks of what he had done in it. He had exercised the uttermost care and exactness, in exercising himself in the full discharge of his office. As he had received these persons present, as a gift from his Father, so he had closely attended to them, and made all their concerns his own. As he had received a commandment from the Father, what he should say, and what he should do, so he had most punctually attended unto, and performed the same. And here, before his Father, he professes the same. It is an argument made use of by him, that the Father should now act his royal part, in the display of his sovereign grace, and the good pleasure of his will towards them. I have, says our adorable Lord, considered them as thine, and mine. I have communicated to them the whole of thy revealed will. I have kept them in the knowledge of thee. I have kept them from sinning against thee. I have kept them in thy faith and fear. I have kept them in thy name. I have most cheerfully performed my office, both as it concerns thee and them. This I take to be the essence of our Lord's words, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. O the transcendent grace of Christ towards his elect and beloved ones, as exemplified in his conduct towards these eleven apostles! He clothed himself with human nature that he might dwell with them. He conversed with them in a body like their own. He understood all in them. He

comprehended the whole contained in their natures, cases, feelings, experiences, sorrows, and miseries. He took it all into his holy mind and exercised himself most exactly towards them, as suited to all they were in themselves. In so doing he displayed his grace. They were not angels, but men. They were not whilst he was with them in the world great saints, but very little ones. They were not persons of high attainments in his school but they were slow to receive, and slow of heart to believe; they were not very eminent for any grace, but were at all times full of corruption. Yet our Lord takes no kind of notice of it throughout this whole prayer. As I want to improve our discourse for your spiritual advantage, let me observe, how most exactly suited our Lord Jesus Christ is to us, all the while we are in this present world. It is only while we are here below, that we are the subjects of sin, corruption, miseries, wants, and temptations. And from the time our Lord is pleased to call us by his effectual grace until he brings us to the enjoyment of the everlasting inheritance, what is the whole of Christ's dealing towards us, but one grand display of mercy. He is pleased to realize in his called people, the love of his heart. He hereby gives them such proofs of it, as carries all before it. He dispenses his mercy, just exactly as their sins, miseries, corruptions, wants, temptations, and sorrows require. He hereby proves to a demonstration that he remembers them with everlasting kindness. It is only whilst we are in this present world, we shall need Christ's mercy, because we shall have no sin in heaven. Therefore, it is only whilst we remain in a time state. And, blessing on him, he will never leave nor forsake his people for his great name's sake. Whilst I was with them in the world. These words imply he was just going out of the world that his continuance in it was very short, that he should be with them as it respected his bodily presence, but a little while longer. Although he would be with them, with regard to his spiritual presence, all the while they continued, and his church also remain on earth, and till all his people will be with him in heaven. The address is to the Father. Our Lord had just before styled him Holy Father. Here he says, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name,"

by thine authority and power. These persons here before thee, whom thou gavest me to be mine apostles, I have kept them close to myself. They have been always on mine heart. They are particularly so, as I am now about to leave them. I have kept them from the evil of the world. I have kept them from temporal evil. I have kept them from eternal evil. I have committed them into thine hand. I do recommend them unto thee. Thus, the care and faithfulness of Christ towards them is here expressed. We may here observe, our Lord will be equally careful of all his church, as he was to these persons who were to be the bishops and pastors of his universal church. For such they may be to the present moment styled, seeing the doctrine they preached is the bread of life, by which the church is fed and maintained, and will be until Christ's second appearing in his kingdom and glory. As it is given unto us to take into our minds the grace of Christ, expressed in the words before us, it leads us to see what he is, and what his heart is to such as believe on him. As our Lord's care and faithfulness to his charge was such, as he could speak of it himself to the Father, thereby expressing how he had filled up his pastoral office as the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, so as to honor the Father, who had appointed him to that office, and so as to express his faithfulness to those given unto him; so he proceeds in his account to his Father concerning this subject. Which brings me,

Secondly, to consider the declaration which our Lord makes concerning his keeping these persons close to himself, and from the evil of the world, and from the temporal and eternal ruin; with the single exception of but one. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The whole twelve apostles were given by the Father to Christ. They had all alike the benefit of our Lord's bodily presence. They heard the same words. They saw the same miracles. They equally followed Christ up and down throughout the various cities and towns of

Galilee. Yet out of these one falls into sin, final despair, and hell. Yet Christ makes an apology for this, saying, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Here, in this little company of twelve persons, we have election and rejection realized. Here are eleven chosen to life. Here is one appointed unto death. Here are eleven persons preserved from a total and final apostasy. Here is an individual falls, from being numbered by Christ with the apostles, into hell. What shall we say, but, even so, Holy Father, it seemed good in thy sight. The persons here, were all chosen to the office of apostleship, but they were not all partakers of the grace which fitted for the apostolical office. And yet it is but one of them neither, that fails of this grace of God. Eleven of these who were styled by Christ apostles, were the chosen and beloved of God. But one who fills up the number is here styled the son of perdition; and that by our Lord himself. Our Lord says, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept. He again speaks of these eleven men now present, as given by the Father unto him. They were given him as the Father's beloved loved ones. And they were also given to him out of the same everlasting love, to be his apostles. As they were thus doubly given by the Father to Christ, so they were doubly dear to him. He laid out himself, if I may so say, fully for them. So that he instructed them, and gave them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, whilst others he did not bestow this knowledge on. Hence, he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Mt 13: 16-17. Our Lord had kept these elect apostles from the evil of the world. Not that they were without sin; nor were they kept from falling into sin. A few hours after this prayer had been offered, they all forsook Christ, and fled from him. And one of them most shamefully denied him, with

oaths and curses. Yet they were saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation. And they were each of them saved by Christ from the full power and dominion of sin. Our Lord had kept them in his Father's name; in the true faith of God's elect. He saved them from final apostasy. He had so kept them, as to speak of it with the utmost satisfaction; as that which did his heart good to recollect. He speaks of it with divine joy. He speaks it before the Father, as that which would be highly acceptable and well-pleasing unto him. "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept." If Christ kept these secure, he will keep all the rest of the Father's elect sure also. Judas, his fall and damnation, is so far from making against the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, that it is a most full and convincing evidence of it. Those that thou gavest me I have kept. Election itself is the security of God's people. It was of the eleven apostles. It is so of all the rest of God's beloved ones. Hence, when there was a great defection from the doctrine of faith, among professors in Asia, of which Paul takes notice in his first chapter, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, he immediately, in the next chapter, comes in with his, Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, see chapter 2, verse 19. So in the spread of popery, it is said, And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. Re 13: 8. So here, Judas, his very sin, and fall thereby, from the office of being an apostle of Christ Jesus, for he did not fall from the grace, even of this very office, it never having been given him, was a proof that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. As our Lord took care of the elect apostles, who were chosen in him to grace and glory, as well as to the grace of the apostolical office, and who, on the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, then received every gift, and grace, which qualified them for the execution of their office; and as they were most graciously preserved from the evil which is in the world, and our Lord could give a good account of his having kept them, so he having kept them from temporal and eternal ruin, gives an account of one of their own company, though no partaker with

them of Christ's salvation, and who was gone within an hour from them, on the basest design which ever entered into the human mind. And says of him, to the Father, Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled. Our Lord declares Judas is lost. None of them which thou gavest me is lost, but him. And he is lost, though thou gavest him to me. But thou didst not give him me as thine elect; as thy beloved. Thou only gavest him me to be an outward witness and an attendant on my person and ministry. He is the Son of Perdition. He is lost. He is now engaged in the hellish business of betraying me into the hands of those, who have plotted to take away my life. Such is his infamy and treacherous dealings, he had sold me for the price of a slave. I speak all this prayer-wise unto thee, in the hearing of these eleven men present; as the time will come when they will profit hereby. It will be a confirmation of their faith in me, that I am the true and very Messiah, that everything has been realized in me that was foretold by the prophets, that even Judas' perfidy is prophesied of in the scriptures of truth. He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. I offer this therefore as an apology that Judas is not kept any longer, even in the company of the elect apostles. It is that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Our Lord most probably refers to the hundred and ninth Psalm which some have very properly entitled the Iscariot Psalm, because it treats of Judas, and his betraying the Messiah. And it is so applied by the apostle Peter in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles where he is treating of the fall of Judas, and says, Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was a guide to them which took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. And he makes an application of his subject thus: "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishoprick let another take." Which are almost the very words of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the hundred and ninth Psalm. The variation of the words, neither alters the subject or

meaning of them. It follows from hence, that Judas had been spoken of in the scriptures as an apostate. Who would be the betrayer of the Messiah. That he would bring on himself a most tremendous curse, that he would be in his own person an execration. Our Lord must naturally be conceived as referring to this here, therefore he says, all this fell out just so, that the scripture might be fulfilled. It foretold this by way of prophecy, many ages before it was accomplished. What is written and foretold therein can never fall to the ground. This hath fallen out in the event, most truly, according to the prediction. It is therefore accomplished in this person, in his case and circumstance, from whence it appears no one single word in the sacred volume of holy scripture, can fall to the ground. From hence our Lord gives an account of the fall of Judas from the apostolical office, and falling into hell. He is here styled, the Son of Perdition. A title nowhere in all the book of God given to any beside, but the Pope of Rome. And he is also styled, the Son of Perdition. 2Th 2: 3. And Peter, speaking of Judas, whom Christ styles the Son of Perdition, expressly says, that Judas “by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” Which can be none other than hell. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none, or not one of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. We may learn from hence that it is most clearly witnessed in the word of God that some are ordained to eternal life, and some are fore-appointed to eternal death. That all is fixed in the divine decree; otherwise, how came it to pass, Judas should be fore-signified in prophecy as the very individual person who should betray Christ, if all this was not the fruit of divine predestination? It is every day realized that all things are known unto God; and that all things fall out most exactly according to the divine will. If so, all things must be appointed. It is expressly said, He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Eph 1: 11. Even the death of Christ, and those who were the very immediate perpetrators thereof, Peter declares, respecting Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done. Ac 4:

27-28. If so, all the actions of men are under the direction of the Lord. That he overrules all in man for his own glory. God's decrees have no influence on the will and actions of men; yet God knows all the wills and actions of men. And let us be willing, or unwilling, to believe and acknowledge it as we may, yet he who declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet come, it is he who saith, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." From our Lord's saying to his divine Father, Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, is expressive of his acquiescence therein. And from our Lord's adding to it these words, that the scripture might be fulfilled, it shows the knowledge which he had of, and also the use which he himself made of them. He could indeed say, O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. The word Scripture, taken absolutely, generally stands for the sacred books of the Old and New Testament. Did ye never, read. in the scripture? Mt 21: 42 how then shall the scripture be fulfilled? Mt 26: 54. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2Ti 3: 16. Yet I conceive what is strictly and properly scripture is what relates to the revelation, and prophecies, concerning Christ in the sacred books. It is expressly said by Matthew, speaking of selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver, then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the Potter's field, as the Lord appointed me, chapter 26: verses 9, 10. Now this is not to be found in Jeremiah, but it is in Zec 11: 12-13. The Jews say, the spirit of Jeremiah rested on Zechariah. mr. Romaine, and others, say it was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, and written by Zechariah. But what I quote it for is, that scripture must more immediately relate to prophecy. And as a proof of it, I would quote the following passage. Mark says, And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors, chapter 25: 28. The

scripture referred to is Isa 53: 12. And he was numbered with the transgressors. As this is a prophecy, and is styled so by way of eminency, so is also what our Lord here alludes unto, when he says, None of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Let these things be duly and properly considered by us, and we shall see beauty, harmony, and truth, most closely connected together in our Lord's words. Of those thou gavest me I have lost none, but the Son of Perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. It may be observed by us that amidst all the glorious things which our Lord before, and after speaks of, yet in hearing of his favored few, he speaks out before them concerning the awful state of Judas. If such a one was in the church over which Christ himself presided as pastor, we learn from hence, that God will have it so, that in his churches, the gospel being as a net which gathereth of every kind, some shall be congregated among the Lord's real people, who will be everlastingly separated from them, and unto whom Christ will one day say unto them, "I never knew you, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." I would only add, Christ will, and does take care to discriminate between such as are his, and such as are not. The elect obtain true knowledge of Jesus, and salvation, and the rest are blinded. I go on,

Thirdly, to review our Lord's apology of this fall of Judas, who though he had been given by the Father to him, as an apostle, yet he was lost; whilst the others are saved. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. His address is to the Father. It comes in after he had been speaking concerning his faithfulness, and concerning his care, which he had exercised over the chosen flock. He is giving an account of his faithfulness, both to his Father and his flock. Yet in the midst of all this, he speaks of the loss of an individual; and he speaks of it without the least emotion. We should learn from hence not to be so concerned about the loss of the reprobates, as though it might have been prevented. Our Lord knew

all the counsels of his Father's will. He who was the greatest predestinarian that ever lived in our world, is perfectly well pleased with all the good pleasure of his Father's will. He knew God could will nothing, but what was perfectly just; therefore he is well pleased with God's acts and purposes, and as Mediator, submits to his Father's good and righteous will in all things. Though we are not what Christ was, nor are we fully admitted as he was into all the knowledge of the divine will, yet it most certainly becomes us, to submit to the righteous determination of the Lord towards all flesh. If you are favored with a supernatural birth, and have spiritual and eternal life imparted to your minds, learn from hence, to read your real election in Christ, and give Father, Son, and Holy Ghost glorious praise for the same. Learn to leave all others with the Lord. Do not be curious to pry into the will of God concerning any but yourselves. Neither be too much disturbed if some in the same church state with you are no great ornaments to their profession. Ever remember who maketh you to differ. This will always keep you in your proper place. You will then recollect with solemnity of mind, and also to your spiritual profit. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. I have, says our Lord to his Father, in giving up his account to him, lost but one of those whom thou gavest me. And this is not properly a loss. He was never the object of thy love. He was never the subject of thy grace. He was not among the given ones whom I was to give eternal life unto. He was not among the number I was engaged before the world began to lay down my life for. He was given me by thee to be an apostle. He has had the outward means, and seen my miracles, heard my sermons, and been with me so as to enjoy all external ordinances. He has sinned against all. He is now fully given up to his own heart's lust. Covetousness hath been at all times his master-sin. He is now wholly swallowed up in it. He is gone from me in order to betray me. All this is according to the counsel of thy will. All this was foreseen by thee even before, and also when thou gavest him unto me. All this is the subject of several prophecies recorded in the Book of Psalms. His end is therefore most fully and solemnly expressed.

Thy will is mine herein. The scripture is fulfilled hereby; that is, what thou hast caused to be written therein, concerning the man who should betray me, is all fulfilled in the apostate. And what is to befall him as the reward of his iniquity is also written therein. As I have therefore kept all the eleven, and well kept them. Agreeable to thy will, and mine own engagements and office, I have therein most carefully and faithfully discharged my part, and executed mine office to the glory of thy name, and to the benefit of these thy servants before thee. As to the Son of Perdition, every thing had taken place concerning him, as stated and expressed in thy revealed word. Therefore as no real injury will fall on the eleven elect apostles, by means of the fall of this man, and my churches to the very close of time will reap this benefit from it, as to see there can be no falling from thy love, and out of my arms, though there may be falling from a very high profession of my truths; I therefore speak all this before thee, at this time, for the future benefit of thine and mine. They are, and will be kept by my power, through faith unto salvation. None of them is lost. They were written in the book of life. But the Son of Perdition is lost. And herein is the scripture fulfilled; therefore, I rest satisfied, seeing thy manifestative glory is not in the least affected hereby. No, nor my glory and office, as Mediator. All the ends for which thou gavest him me, are answered. His fall only proves what he was. It shows there is no safety by being simply a professor of my truth. It is only being in me, as a member of my body, a being inlaid in my heart. He was not. So that thine and mine here present, and thine and mine absent, and thine and mine who are yet for to come, throughout every age and period of time, will have no cause to stumble. It is, with all and every circumstance of the man, and his apostasy, a full and immutable evidence of my power to save; that I am indeed mighty to save. Beloved, I hope I have on this part of my subject said all which may be relieving to your minds. Learn from it, God will have it so, that in some of the best, most regular organized churches, with all the truths and ordinances faithfully stated, defended, and attended on, there shall be some corrupt and scandalous sinners. They shall be

high too in gifts and attainments, yet be nothing. Yea, they shall fall from all these, and fall into hell. Take heed you be not too much concerned about it. You have not anything to do with it. Leave all such cases with the Lord. As all things are under the immediate eye and purpose of God, it must have been designed by him that Judas, falling as he did, should be for the real benefit of the church. And wherein could it be so, but by giving us to see that even in the churches of Christ, we must expect to find sinners as well as saints. Let us therefore learn to leave ourselves wholly and entirely with Jesus Christ, and not give ourselves unnecessary care and concern about others. The elect shall obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and the rest shall be blinded. Always remember there are in the visible congregated church of Christ, sons and servants. The latter have their use as well as the former. Yet the servants will never be sons, nor will the sons ever be servants. The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever. Our Jesus is just what he was, notwithstanding the loss of Judas; he does not want his disciples to be concerned about his fall; he does, in their hearing, speak of it in such terms as must embolden their faith in him; he, calling him the Son of Perdition, is giving them to understand that he belonged to the family of hell, which they never did. He says, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And thus I am brought,

Fourthly, to speak of the pleasure and joy Christ had, in being about to enjoy his Father's company, fully in glory, and the concern also he felt for his beloved ones, whom he was to leave here behind. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. It is impossible for us to enter fully into the love of Christ, as he is pleased to express, and set it before us in his sacred word. He is going out of the world. He is going to the Father. He is giving up his charge by committing all his people unto him. He is praying for them; he prays in their hearing;

he does it that they may hear him, and thereby have an evidence what his thoughts will be towards them in glory. He speaks out fully and freely; he declares how he has executed his care over them; his office towards them; he has kept them; is mindful of them; and whilst he has said nothing in his prayer, no, not even about the loss of one of their company, so as in the least to weaken their faith, or distress them. So far from it, what he had spoken, on this tremendous subject, hath been so spoken, as if properly received, is calculated to encourage their faith and hope in him. So what he here says to the Father, And now come I to thee, whilst it fills his own mind with joy, and he speaks of it as matter of unspeakable joy to himself, yet at the same time he is deeply concerned for those he is parting from. He began at the former verse this subject of joy, And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. I shall be soon admitted to enjoy that glory, blessedness, communion, and satiety with thee, and in thee, as none but myself can. Yet these, my beloved ones, and thy beloved ones, are in the world, and I know not how to part from them. They are deeply rooted in my mind. They are inscribed on my heart. All I shall enjoy with thee in glory will never take off mine heart from them. I could not leave them hadst thou not been equally interested in them as myself. I have left them with thee, therefore I come to thee. And it fills my mind with the utmost satisfaction that I have given thee an account of my conduct towards them while I was with them in the world. It was my meat and drink to keep them through thy name, and exercise all my bowels of mercy and compassion towards them. I have now left them, Father, with thee. I have prayed thee, Holy Father, to keep them. And now I come to thee, who art the fountain of my joy. I come to thee, that my soul may be made glad with thy countenance. I come to thee, knowing that in thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. The language of I, and Thou, and Me, and Thee so often used by Christ in this prayer are so many proofs of the divine personalities of himself and of the Father. The word personalities is expressive of the mode of existing in the divine nature. The word person, besides that, implies the

nature and substance in whom he subsists. A person is an individual that subsists and liv's of itself, endowed with will and understanding, who is neither sustained by, nor is part of another. Such is the Father, therefore a Person, such is the Son, therefore a Person, such is the Holy Ghost, therefore a Person. The great and incommunicable name of Jehovah is always in the singular number, because it is expressive of his essence which is but one, but the first name of God we meet with in the scripture and that in the first verse of it, is plural (Doctor Gill). It will hereafter, in further discourses on this prayer of our Lord's, be found, that the doctrine of the Eternal Three, is the very ground and basis of this divine intercessory access of Christ, to the throne of the heavenly grace. Yea, that the union of the Three in Jehovah, is the very primordial motive with God to choose and ordain an election of grace, to stand in such an union and relation to him, as to receive from him supernatural and super creation blessings. I love the doctrine of the Trinity from my very soul. It is received into my mind from the scriptures of truth, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I do not want, nor desire to know, how the Three in Jehovah exist. I am content with the scripture revelation thereof. In the same I rest. Without any inquiry into the modus of their existing. And I know what it is to be favored with real, and spiritual, distinctive, apprehensive, and personal address and communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and this is all I expect to be admitted to know knowledge of, throughout the ages of eternity. But to return to my text, to that part of it which belongs to this last head of discourse, i.e. And now I come to thee; or, And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. Our Lord is truly pleased and happy in the prospect of going to the Father. He knew what he would enjoy in the immediate access he would have with the Father. He knew what communion with the Father was, and that in such an incommunicable way and manner, and that also to such a degree as none beside himself were ever admitted to. He could not therefore but be filled with holy joy at the prospect thereof. And he speaks it in the words he utters. And now come I to thee, from whom I came,

in whose bosom I was before the world began, to enjoy what I have for a season parted with, the glory which I had with thee before all time. I am possessed in my own mind and thoughts with views hereof. And these things I speak in the world, that they hearing them, may be led to see and know what my heart will be towards them, when I am with thee, in the full enjoyment of all my glory which includes all our Lord had before said in the former part of the chapter. It was all spoken out by Christ to his Father, in the hearing of these eleven apostles, to this end, that, says our Lord, they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. It was by the words of Christ, the Holy Ghost was to work on their minds. And he was hereby to fill their hearts with the joy of Christ. They were hereby to have some blessed apprehensions of the joy of which Christ is the object and subject. Of the joy which comes from him, and which centers in him. They would hereby rejoice in his person, in the greatness, dignity, and majesty of him, who was their life and light, their righteousness and propitiation, their Head, their Husband, their Saviour, their present and their everlasting Friend. From these few and simple ideas, we cannot but see and perceive, the subject before us, is immense and truly sublime. Not what our Lord had spoke concerning Judas, was to take off their minds for a single moment from him. The perfidy of that wretch did not shut Christ's mouth, so as for him to cease to express his heart's love to these his beloved ones now before him. No, he wills they should have matter for joy, for holy joy, for constant joy, for everlasting joy. "And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." As it is here set before us, and recorded for the benefit of the whole Catholic church of Christ militant here upon earth, we learn from hence how our Lord accompanies the same with his blessing. It is by his sending his Holy Ghost into our hearts, and by his bringing home, and realizing in the mind, the great and important realities here contained. By this means, the real people of God are led so to receive these heavenly words of Christ into their understandings, as to have the actual enjoyment of them, and hereby to enjoy real communion with Christ in the true belief of them.

And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, must refer to what goes before, in which our Lord had spoken concerning the nature of eternal life; of his power to give it, to all whom the Father had given him; of the work of redemption finished by him, and the glory due to him on that account. He had also spoken concerning the chosen ones, and particularly the apostles now present. He had declared the mutual interest he and his Father had in them; and what he had done for them; in revealing and giving the gospel unto them; in his keeping them by the powerful influences of his grace. He had expressed the great concern he had for their future preservation. All these things he had been taking notice of, in his prayer for them, whilst he was with them in the world, before he took his leave of them. And he says, his end is all this was, That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. A part of which joy is let into their minds as they are led from his word, and by his Spirit, to contemplate his joy in them. He joyed and rejoiced in them before all time. He still continues his joy in them, so that he rejoices in them, and over them, to do them good; and he will more abundantly express it, when they shall all be brought home to glory, and be forever with him. The prophet Isaiah, speaking to the church, says, The Lord delighteth in thee. The Lord, speaking of his people by the prophet Jeremiah, says, Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. And the prophet Zephaniah says to the church of Christ, in this our world, The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will be silent in his love. So it is in the margin. He will joy over thee with singing. And the joy of the Lord is our strength. All which is confirmed by these words of our Lord's, And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. We see from hence the love and delight our Jesus hath in the spiritual prosperity of his servants. They cannot prosper in their souls, nor flourish in the house of our Lord and God, except their minds enjoy the peace which Jesus made by the blood of his cross, and their

hearts are truly filled with a sense of his love. If they could, our Lord would not have thus prayed for them. He says to his Father, on their behalf, And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. This therefore is a part of his request, as it also is the end of his request. He is pleased his beloved ones should be perfectly happy in him. It pleases him that they should derive their joy from his word. He speaks out before them, and he speaks out unto them all his heart. He cannot act more graciously towards them. He cannot express his goodness more abundantly unto them. He would have them to delight themselves in his great goodness which he has shown unto them. These words of our Lord's, And these things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves, were not merely intended for the eleven apostles, but for his whole church, ministers, and people down to the end of time. And they will be supporting to the Lord's people in every age, place, circumstance, and condition they can possibly be in. It would be a most blessed exercise to read over this whole prayer, to pray over it, to mix faith with every part of it, and bless the Lord for it, and for what in a particular manner concerns us in it. Such as concerns Christ himself, may be of use to us, as it would serve to direct our minds to contemplate him. And we are never better employed, nor are our affections more heavenly at any season, or on any occasion, than when we are engaged in contemplations of him. It is what the apostle exhorts unto. He says, Wherefore, holy brethren, partaker's of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Heb 3: 1. As it respects the fitness and qualification of the apostles, to fit them for their work of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, for planting churches, and settling the ordinances and officers in them, here we may behold it, and herefrom see, what the real gifts and graces of those persons are, whom Christ is still pleased to send, and place in his churches. We may learn from hence what those blessings are, which we individually as saints, as believers in Christ, stand in need of. So that I cannot but esteem it to be a spiritual exercise which if practiced

would turn to very great profit and real advantage, to go over the whole of this prayer, by reading it, mixing faith with, and praying over each petition, that it may be fulfilled in us; so far as it will increase our Lord's glory. May the Lord bless what hath been delivered, so far as agreeable to his most holy mind and will, that you who belong to him may be profited, and his joy fulfilled in you. Even so. Amen.