

Sermons on John 17 ~ By Samuel Pierce ~ Sermon 15,

Joh 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As this most divine prayer was offered up by our Lord, immediately before his passion, and may be considered as his consecration of himself to be the offering to take away the sins of his people, so we may boldly declare it contains the whole of his heart. In it he fully expresses all his desire on the behalf of his church and people. The prayer itself contains an address to the Father, in which our Lord mentions many things concerning his apostles, what he had done for them, how they were given unto him, and he speaks also on their behalf, and in commendation of them. He having used many pleas, proceeds to pray for them. And as introductory to this, he speaks of the mutual interest and propriety he, and the Father had in them. He considers he is about to leave them in a world of sin and misery, pain and death, and he prays for them accordingly. He offers up his first petition for them in the eleventh verse. He addresses his Father with the title of Holy Father, and prays him to keep and preserve these his beloved ones. He enforces this on account of his own absence from them. He being about to be admitted to his Father, to enjoy the glory, and fully possess that which he had before the world was. He goes on to say many things on the behalf on these eleven persons present. He declares he spoke what he did on their hearing, that they might know his heart towards them. And hereby have his joy fulfilled in themselves. He still speaks, and that by way of argument, why the Father should grant his requests which he was now putting up on their behalf, of what he had done for them. How the world had, and would continue to hate them on that account. Then he offers his second petition for them. Which is that they may be kept from the evil. Our Lord does not pray the Father to take them out of the world, to receive them to glory, but he prays the Father to keep them from the evil. From the evil of their own hearts. From the evil one

Satan. And from the evil which is in the world. All of which is thus summed up by John, in the second chapter of his first Epistle, verse 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. All this Christ prays the Father, to keep his beloved disciples and apostles from. Our Lord urges an argument to enforce this request. Adding, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. We are come, through the good hand of our God upon us, to the last petition in this prayer, as it respects the apostles. Which is contained in the words of my text. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. Whilst I have aimed to speak of the particular requests made by our Lord on the behalf of his apostles, and have brought them to three in number, yet the truth of the matter is this, one of them, i.e. The first, is a double one. So that to speak correctly, there are four petitions, in this second part of our Lord's prayer, which is more particularly to be appropriated to the apostles. Not to the sole exclusion of the ministers, churches, people, and saints of the most high God. Yet there are some specialties in it, which solely belongs to the apostles. Which concerned the apostolic age. And I account it very profitable to the mind to keep all things in proper order. I would therefore here recite the petitions, as it respects the number of them, and entitle them as four, thus, the first is for holiness and persevering grace, that they might continue in the good ways of God, faithful in the cause of Christ, and the gospel, to the end. The second is for unity to, and amongst each other, in truth and doctrine. This is thus expressed, verse 11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. The second petition, or rather the third, as the former naturally divides itself into the two parts which hath been mentioned, so that the second division of it, should always stand as it hath been placed, and then the third request will be found in verse the fifteenth. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. So then it will be found that this is the third petition. And it may be said to be

for preservation. It is that they may be kept from the evil. Then it will clearly follow, that this in our text is the fourth petition. And this is for sanctification. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. As every part, branch, petition, and argument of this prayer, is of greater worth and importance than ten thousand worlds, so we both in reading, in speaking, in preaching, and in expounding this prayer, need to be continually looking up to the Holy Spirit, for his light and unction, that we may be led to receive into our minds, true and proper apprehensions of our Lord's mind, and will, contained in it. The deeper the subject the greater need there must be for the spirit's guidance and influence. And all the mysteries of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, being set before the minds of God's beloved and called ones in this prayer, consequently we are more in need of the spirit's teaching when we attempt to preach and speak on this prayer, than is easy for us to conceive. The words now before me, Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, as offered up for the apostles, contain the following important request for them. That they might increase in grace, and be fitted for the great enjoyment of preaching the gospel continually. The mean of their sanctification is fully expressed. It is through the knowledge of the truth. As they increased in the knowledge of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and knew them in their distinctive personal relations to each other, and knew them in their distinctive personal acts of grace in Christ, towards the elect, and in their relations and offices to them, as revealed in, and made known by the everlasting covenant, they, by becoming thus acquainted with their will, worship, and truth, would be more and more qualified for their work. The word which Christ had already delivered unto them was truth. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. And this, I conceive, is setting the whole of Christ's meaning before you in these words, as it respected the apostles, that the Father would increase and enlarge their spiritual faculties, that they might more fully understand and know all the mysteries of grace, contained and revealed in the gospel, which he had already given them, and that they being more and more influenced in their whole hearts and souls with the efficacy

thereof, they might hereby be at all times, enables to preach the same to the glory and praise of the Eternal Three, and to the real profit and increasing edification of God's elect. This I consider to be the substance of this petition, and which is the fourth petition offered up by Christ in this prayer of his, for the apostles, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. As it respects the use I shall make of these words, as suited to convey instruction unto us, I will aim to set forth the same unto you, by the following particulars.

First, by considering the term sanctification. Sanctify them.

Secondly, The means of sanctification, as here spoken of. Sanctify them through thy truth.

Thirdly, An explication, or description of truth. Thy word is truth.

And, lastly, that the whole church and people of God are completely sanctified, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. In going through, and filling up these heads of my present discourse, I most earnestly entreat the Lord the Spirit, that he may most graciously assist me, and so teach, lead, and guide me, that under every article proposed, what is delivered may be most truly, neither more, nor less, that the truth as it is in Jesus. Holy Ghost grant me the desire of my soul in this request, and to thy name shall all the praise be given, for ever and ever amen.

My first proposal is, to consider the term, or expression sanctification or sanctify. As Christ here says to his Father, on the behalf of these his apostles, sanctify them. This is his request on their behalf.

Sanctify, and sanctification, are terms made use of both in the Old and New Testament. I would therefore apply, and refer to them, for the meaning of them. Sanctify, when referred to God, signifies to separate and appoint anything to an holy use. Thus, God sanctified

the seventh day. See Ge 2: 3. This is the first place in the Bible in which the word, sanctified is uttered. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Nothing can be more clear, than God's sanctifying the seventh day was his setting it apart, and separating it from the other days, to be holy, on which his name and praise was to be recorded and celebrated, for his marvelous acts in creation. God gave a command to sanctify all the first born of the children of Israel. That is, they were set apart, and devoted to God, and were to be redeemed at a certain price, which was to be given to the priest. Thus, the Lord spake unto Moses, sanctify unto me all the first born. See Ex 13: 1 to 2. Thus, the tabernacle, the temple, the priests, the altars, both the brazen, and the golden one, the sacrifices, &c. were sanctified under the law. So the Lord says, I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also, both Aaron and his sons, to minister unto me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. See Ex 29: 44-45. God's manifesting his glory, and vindicating his honor from the blasphemies of the wicked, is styled by himself sanctification. I will sanctify my great name. See Eze 36: 23. I will, as one explains it, most justly clear up, and remove the occasion to think meanly, and contemptible of me, but I will show that I am infinite in greatness and goodness. Thus, also in Nu 20:13, we, read, This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them. He was, says Cruden, sanctified among them by the demonstration of his omnipotence, veracity, and clemency towards the Israelites, and of his impartial holiness and severity against sin, even in his greatest friends and favorites, as Moses was. Thus, God is said to sanctify himself. To sanctify, is also spoken of man, and it signifies to purify, and to be in a proper condition to appear before the Lord, and to partake of holy things. Sanctify, or Sanctification, is one and the same, in the sense we are now treating the subject. And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto the people, and sanctify them today, and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes; and be ready against the third day (to receive the law). And let the priests also which come near to the

Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them. See Ex 19: 10-12. It signifies to prepare. Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. See Jos 3: 5. "That is," says Cruden, "prepare yourselves, endeavor to bring your hearts into an holy frame, that with faith, reverence, and admiration, you may behold the great work that God will do for you." To sanctify, as spoken further of, as it refers to us, it is to praise God. To acknowledge his majesty; to worship him; to aim and endeavor to make him known, that he may be adored, praised, and beloved. Thus, it is we sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself. To this we are exhorted by the apostle Peter, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. 1Pe 3: 15. And thus our Lord hath taught us to pray, hallowed be thy name. Holy, and holiness, are epithets which in a sovereign manner are ascribed unto God, the author of all sanctification and holiness. The seraphims cry to him without ceasing, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. See Isa 6: 3. He is styled the Holy One of Israel. His name is holy, or rather holiness itself. In the New Testament on this same article of sanctification, or sanctify, we find it to be precisely what the Old Testament declares it to be. It is to separate, ordain, and appoint, such and such to the Lord. Hence Christ, the Son of God, is, as Messiah, said to be sanctified. He says he sanctified himself. He first speaks of being sanctified of the Father, Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God? See Joh 10: 36. Christ, the Son of God, could no other ways be sanctified, that as he was set apart in the council and will of the Father before all worlds, to be the sent One of God. And he speaks in the next verse which follows our text of sanctifying himself. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth, which can mean no more than his setting himself apart, as the true Messiah, to offer his whole person, as God-man, as an offering to take away the sins of his people, and thereby to remove all their sins, and put them away out of the sight of law and justice by the sacrifice of himself. Under this very idea then, sanctification implies separation, and separation by the Lord, and separation to the Lord.

Election itself is expressed by the word sanctification. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Here, sanctified by God the Father, is election. The elect were sanctified by God the Father, they were distinguished from all others; he loved them in distinction from all besides; he loved their persons with an everlasting love; he sanctified, or set them apart, in the decree of election from all besides; he chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world. Thus, he sanctified or separated them, as the objects and subjects of his immutable love, to enjoy all the blessings of the same in time and eternity. The apostle Paul holds forth the same truth; he addresses his apostolical letter to the Corinthians, addresses them thus: Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus. To be sanctified in Christ Jesus, must refer to God the Father, as an act in his mind and will. Christ is spoken of, as he who sanctifieth, and his people are spoken of as they who are sanctified. He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, he is the head and they are the members; he is the first-born among many brethren; he is not ashamed to call them brethren. See Heb 2: 11. It is expressly said, we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ; and he by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. That is, those who were separated by the Father, in his eternal decree and election. And the will of God the Father is spoken of as being concerned in our eternal and complete sanctification, in Christ, and by his perfect oblation. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. From all these scriptures it evidently follows, that the sanctification of the elect consist in the Father's eternal love and choice of them in Christ, before the world began. In Christ's becoming the author of their eternal salvation, and giving himself for them, and offering up himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. And the Holy Ghost is also the sanctifier of the church of the elect. It is from him they do receive their new, spiritual, and supernatural birth; and with it they also receive eternal

life; he it was who reared up the New Testament church. He it was who wrought every grace, and bestowed every gift on it. Of him the apostle writing to the saints at Rome, says, nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in remembrance, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. See Ro 15: 15-16. As the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ, and gives the enlightened mind the knowledge of them and hereby reveals Christ, we are sanctified. This being the means, whereby the heart is taken with Christ. It is hereby the affections are drawn forth, and set on Christ. Thus he becomes all, and self is nothing in our esteem and view. As it appears to me, I have fully considered and set before you the term sanctification, or sanctify, and I hope said enough to lead us from the use of the word, both in the Old and New Testament, to know, that as spoken by the Lord, it respects his own command, will, and appointment of persons, things, and time, to himself, to his own use, service, and for his glory. And that, as it respects his people's sanctification, it includes their eternal, and personal election in Christ, the complete putting away of all their sins by Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in all the called ones, who are the temples of the living God, I proceed to my next particular, which is,

Secondly, to speak of the means of sanctification, as here spoken of by Christ. Sanctify them through thy truth.

Here is Christ the head of his church, the savior of his church, the pastor of his church, the apostle and high priest of our profession, praying for his apostles, for his ministers, for his churches, for his saints, for all his members, for all his people, for their complete sanctification. Praying that they might be sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit. If he prays thus for his apostles, as he most certainly does, he does not pray as though they were not already sanctified. He had before declared, I will pray the Father, and he

shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Joh 14: 16-17. As the Holy Ghost dwelt in them, he had wrought all he would ever work in them, as it respected their regeneration, and sanctification. He himself could add nothing to this his work in their minds, so neither can he in ours, who are created anew in Christ Jesus. He was to come on them, and he was to put forth his indwelling power and influence, and hereby draw out what he had wrought in them, into spiritual act and exercise. We are to speak of the means whereby this was to be done. It was to be by the truth, sanctify them, these mine apostles, through thy truth. They knew the truth; so do many of us; yet at the time Christ spoke thus, it was in a very low manner, and in a very low degree. The Holy Ghost was to come on them afresh; he was to lead them into all truth; he was to testify of Jesus unto them; he was to glorify him; he was to shed abroad the love of the Father in their hearts; hereby they were to be brought more, and further, under the influence of divine truths that they had hitherto been. This would perfume their minds with the grace of Christ; this would raise up their minds to a closer communion with Christ; this would lead them in all things to seek to increase his praise, and promote his honor and glory. Their perfect sanctification would consist, in their being completely satisfied with Christ; in being fully, freely, and cheerfully resigned to the whole good pleasure of his will; in their keeping themselves unspotted from the world; in walking before the Lord unto all well-pleasing. All which was to be produced in them, by the truth. The Holy Ghost working effectually with and by it on their spiritual minds. As it was with them, so it must be with us, and all the holy brethren. It was by the truth, the Holy Spirit carried on his work in their hearts. It is by the truth, as it is in Jesus, he is pleased to carry on the work of faith with power in our souls. The spirit is the agent, our minds are wrought upon by the Spirit. He works on us by the truth. As he is pleased to enlighten our understandings, so as for us to receive the truth unto our minds, and

to convey clear views of Christ thereby to our intellectual capacities, we are thereby more and more taken with the person and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the love of our heavenly Father in him, and thus our souls are more and more solemnly impressed with a sense of what is contained in the everlasting truths of the everlasting gospel. And we are more and more hereby led into real communion with Christ, in all the blessings which are contained in his most complete and finished salvation. Hereby we are led into the increasing knowledge of the mysteries of the Father's love. Thus we are more fully admitted into fellowship with the Father and the Son. All which is by the secret influence of the Lord the Spirit. Thus sanctification is promoted and increased in our minds; not that our spiritual minds are more sanctified; but our spiritual minds are more and more influenced, and exercised. And hereby what passes between our Lord Jesus Christ and us, is discovered. Sometimes in the high views and estimation we have of him; sometimes in the blessed account we are enabled to give of him; sometimes in the real attempts we make to speak of his honor and glory; and sometimes in our most hearty and best wishes for the welfare for his beloved people. If our Lord here prays for the complete sanctification of his people, and here mentions the means whereby this is to be effected, saying, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth; then according to what hath been already delivered, the sanctification here prayed for, is not the sanctification of their natures; nor of their persons; but is the sanctification of their minds. As to their persons, they were chosen in Christ. They were therefore sanctified, ones in the uttermost sense, and degree; for they were sanctified in Christ Jesus; he was their Holy One; they were holy in him; the Father had chosen them in him; therefore they had for themselves, and were interested in all contained in the following scripture; but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Jesus is made unto his people all this, and they have all this in him; without it, it could not be pronounced concerning them, and ye are complete in him, and which is said of believers in Christ Jesus. See Col 2: 9-10.

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. They are complete in Christ, as he is their head, and it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. They are complete in Christ, as he represents them to himself, and before his Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. They are complete in Christ, he being their complete holiness and sanctification in the sight of God. And when they are kept looking unto him, the author and finisher of faith, then they are indeed growing in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour. It is in the knowledge of the truth, and by the belief of the truth, they are sanctified. But here this question will present itself, and demand an answer, what are we to understand by truth here? And when a reply is given, then it will be asked, how are we sanctified by the truth? Yet these questions will serve, by the Lord's blessing, to lead us further into the subject. I will therefore aim to state the question, and make a reply to it. What are we to understand by truth here? Our Lord's petition is, sanctify them through thy truth. By the truth I should understand the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel, and Christ himself, who is the substance of them. The Alpha and Omega, the truth itself. I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me. So our Lord himself spake. And he is all this; he is the truth itself; he came to prove the truth of God; to confirm it by his obedience and death; he is the truth, as it respects all which passed in the council and covenant of grace; he has finished the work of eternal redemption; as such, he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He by his sacrifice hath finished the transgression, made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness. So that Christ, and his finished work of salvation may be considered as the truth our Lord is here speaking of. It seems to be what our Lord refers to. As he says, sanctify them through thy truth. But the next question is, how are we sanctified by the truth? We are sanctified by the truth, as it is given us from the word, and by the Spirit, to receive Christ and his salvation into our minds. The spiritual mind is opened, and by the Spirit of the Lord,

led to know, understand, and receive Christ, as he is revealed in the word, more fully into our minds. Hereby we are more and more enlightened into true, real, and spiritual acquaintance with him. This hath its divine influence on our inward minds. Hereby our consciences are purified by faith in the blood of the Lamb. By this knowledge of Christ, we are enabled to rest more simply on him for the whole of our salvation. Thus, we are fully persuaded of our heavenly Father's love to us in his beloved Son. Thus, we get established in Christ. We hereby grow into him. Thus, our Lord's prayer is answered in us, because it is fulfilled in us, sanctify them through thy truth. It is not in our power to sanctify ourselves. Our Lord prays to his Father for this most divine blessing. He prays for his beloved ones, that they may inwardly and apprehensively understand, what their sanctification consisted in. That it was by their continuance in the truth; they were to grow and increase with all the increase of God. And we learn from it that truth hath a wonderful influence on the mind. That the belief of gospel truth hath its powerful effect on the heart. And that the Holy Spirit, in all his gracious influences and operations on the mind, works through, and by, and altogether with the revealed word. The work of sanctification, which is in other words the work of faith, is carried on in the regenerated mind, through the truth. That is by the belief of it. So that when believers in Jesus drop the truth, they drop the very means of their personal sanctification. By which I mean, they drop the means, whereby alone it can be carried on with power in their hearts, so as for them to have the fruits and effects thereof realized in their tempers, lives, and conversations. Having, I trust, given an account of the means of sanctification, I would mention Paul's prayer on this subject, offered up by him, on the behalf of the saints at Thessalonica. It runs in these words, and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, or sanctify all of you; that is, all the members of the church. And I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 5:23. It may serve to cast light on our Lord's words, sanctify them through thy truth. To open the threefold division of

believers, I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless, or sanctified throughout. By spirit is meant, the frame and temper of mind under all providences. By soul is to be understood all the reasonable faculties, such as the understanding, will, and affections. And by the body, which consists of the several members, and which we need not explain, is to be understood the case, or sheath of the soul. Now to have spirit and soul, and body sanctified, must imply the keeping all these under the influence of reigning efficacious grace, in true and real conformity to God, this is most certainly the very spirit of the apostle. And I think he may hereby serve to open what our Lord's request contains. It is, that through the knowledge and belief of the truth, his apostles might be so divinely influenced as to be at all times, in all places, in all cases, and circumstances, ready for the performance of every good word and work. Our apostle speaking of the saints who composed the church at Thessalonica, says, But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. 2Th 2: 13. He knits sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth together. The one cannot be without the other. I hope I have in this point opened our Lord's mind and will unto you. But not to stay and dwell any longer upon this point, I proceed to the next head, or particular, i.e.

Thirdly, to give an explication, or description of truth. Thy word is truth. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

By the term Word, in the sacred scriptures, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, the uncreated Wisdom, the second Person in the incomprehensible essence is understood. The apostle John opens the mystery of this Word, when he tells us, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. Joh 1: 1 to 3. Christ Jesus is called the Word, first, in respect of his person, he

being the express image of the Father, as we are told Heb 1: 3, as our words are of our thoughts. Christ is called the Word, secondly, in respect of his office, because the Father made known his will to the church in all ages by him; as we declare our minds one to another by our words. See Joh 3: 34. Christ is called the Word; thirdly, because the Messiah was called the Word by the Jews. The word, i.e. the term the word, is also taken for what is written in the sacred books of the Old and New Testament. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. See Lu 11: 28. Be ye doers of the word. This is the inspired and created word. See Jas 1: 22. The term the word, is also given to the divine law, which teaches and commands good things, and forbids evil. I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. See Ps 119: 101. It is used to express the promises of God, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal. Quicken thou me according to thy word. Ps 119: 25. So also in verses 38, 49 Establish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. If it be asked, in what sense are we to understand the term word, and thy word, and thy word is truth? To this I am most willing to reply, the Word here spoken of, is Christ himself. He is the word of God, he is the word of truth, as all truth is in him. He is the treasury, the grand repository of all truth; and seeing his address is to the Father, and his request is that he would sanctify the apostles, so as that they might be always under the divine unction of the Spirit as to be fit to teach: I would therefore conclude it must be Christ himself who is the truth, by whose dwelling in their hearts by faith they were to be sanctified, so as to be kept continually alive unto him. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. Christ is the truth emphatically. He is so the life and soul of all divine truth revealed in the scriptures, that they are but so many dead letters without him. We can have no spiritual apprehensions of the love and mercy of God, no understanding of divine truths, although they are fully revealed in the word, and where they are set forth to them that believe, but in the exercise of faith on Christ himself. It is from his fulness all grace is received. All spiritual life is from him alone. I

consider therefore, Christ may be considered here, as speaking of himself; he might with the greatest propriety say to his Father on behalf of his apostles, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. I, myself, who am thy word, am truth itself. I am thy word of truth. I am going forth quickly from this place to make my soul an offering for sin. I am going to remove by one efficacious offering all their sins; I am ready and willing to die for them; I am ready to redeem and sanctify them with my own blood. Let therefore all the virtue and efficacy thereof, be made known to their minds, and in their hearts, as that their consciences may be purged from guilt, and their minds be filled with peace, even such as passeth all understanding. I thy word am truth, and will accomplish all thy will, in saving them in mine own person by my own righteousness and blood shedding. Thy word of truth, the doctrine delivered by me and received by them, is pure and perfect. It will not, it cannot deceive them. It is the only means of holiness and comfort. Thy word is truth. I am truth; I am thy truth. Holy Father, sanctify their minds by faith which is in me; keep them steadfastly fixed on me, as their everlasting foundation; keep them in an abiding confidence on me, as their Saviour, their propitiation, their righteousness, their all. Then the true knowledge of my person, love, and work abiding in their minds, they will, under the sacred and heavenly influence of it, be kept from evil of sin, from the influence of their own inherent corruptions, and thus they will go on perfecting holiness in the fear of God. I would just add, to give a further explication and description of truth, that Christ is the truth. His gospel is styled the word of truth; in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. See Eph 1: 13. The gospel is the truth as it is in Jesus. Eph 4: 21. It is the word of the truth of the gospel. See Col 1: 5. All the promises of it are as true as God is true. For all the promises of God, are in Christ yea, and in him amen. I therefore conceive, that our Lord by enlightening the minds of his apostles, with a complete knowledge of himself, here prays in perfect agreement with this to his Father, for their sanctification. That they living on him, and receiving out of his fulness their whole

salvation, with every blessing thereof, would hereby be always under the divine influences of it throughout their whole walk and warfare. As it is the knowledge and belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, which sanctifies the mind, so I think our Lord, in the words before us, gives us a clear view of this. We can perform no act of sanctification. We have no more hand in it, than in our justification. It is expressly said by the apostle to the believing Corinthians, ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 1Co 6: 11. We are sanctified by God the Father; we are sanctified in Christ Jesus; he is made of God to us sanctification or holiness. We are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; he dwelleth in us; and he produces the fruits of sanctification and holiness in us, and by us, as he keeps us looking unto, and living on the fullness of Jesus. In our real admission into fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, we are brought under the powerful influences of the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel. I come therefore to observe,

Lastly, that the whole church and people of God, are completely sanctified, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

He prays thus to his Father; he prays for his apostles. We may say, he here prays for his whole church; for though he does not here express himself, as he afterwards doth, yet as his prayer was the very index of his mind, and he caused it to be written for the benefit of his saints in all ages, places, and throughout all generations. Therefore we may safely conclude, the Lord's church and people, have some share in the blessings which are mentioned in the petitions put up for the apostles. This we are sure of, all of them, i.e. Apostles, and each of the elect are justified in the same way, sanctified by the same Spirit. They all receive their whole salvation from one and the same Lord Jesus. They are all partaker's of one and the same common salvation. So that whilst some gifts and blessings were bestowed on the apostles which were peculiar to them, with

regard to their office, yet they were not more united to Christ, nor more completely saved in Christ, that the rest of the family and household of faith are. All the elect of God, in their several individual persons, are the body of Christ, the church of Christ. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Good works are not our sanctification, they are the fruits of it. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. See Eph 5: 25 to 27. You have the same truth declared in these words, And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight. See Col 1: 21-22. And the apostle ascribes the complete sanctification of all the elect, to the sacrifice of Christ, and the will of God the Father, in his appointment thereof. I will quote the words: wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. The words (for all) are a supplement. Heb 10: 5-10. The interpretation of them is this; the Son of God became incarnate, and offered his body and soul in union to his person to take away sin. All this was done in obedience to the will of the Father. By his will, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, all the elect are sanctified; their sins are all done away; their iniquities are purged; they are removed from them by this sacrifice, as far as the east is from the west: so saith the apostle in the twelfth verse of this chapter, but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; and at the fourteenth verse he says, for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. So then the complete

sanctification of all the church and people of Christ, is not in them, by the work and operation of the Holy Ghost upon them. But it is without them, in the offering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ on their behalf. And the Father's will in appointing the offering, in accepting the offering, and placing it to the account of all the elect, is their complete sanctification in the sight of God. This may receive further confirmation, if it be considered, what is said in the word, concerning the blood of Christ. It is spoken of as ransoming blood; as justifying blood; as cleansing blood; as sanctifying blood. It is styled the blood of the everlasting covenant; and Christ is said to be brought back from the dead in consequence of it. The word declares, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. He hath loved us, says John, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood. Christ himself is said to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. See Heb 10: 29. It is also expressly written, wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Under all these testimonies, and considering Christ was just about to offer up himself, when he said to his Father, on the behalf of his apostles, Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, what more genuine interpretation can there be given, than this before us? And that the whole church and people of God, are completely saved, justified, pardoned, and sanctified by the blood, sacrifice, and death of Christ, is most truly scriptural. It is upon this foundation the Father bestows his free and royal pardon on them. It is in consequence of this the Holy Ghost works within them, and produces a new creation in their minds, and carries on them work of faith with power in them, so that this secures and strengthens all which can be said, respecting a communication of grace from Christ the head to all his members. It is declared, it pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fullness dwell. John says, of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. The church of old saith, all my

springs are in thee. And Paul tells us, that Christ filleth all in all. Let us therefore rest on Christ for all. And be well pleased he should be our foundation to supply us. And that our whole salvation is in him. O that we may be led by the Holy Spirit, to look wholly to him for every supply. Then we shall be bringing glory to him, and deriving at the same time from him, all spiritual good. May the Lord the Spirit bless what hath been attempted in setting these words of Christ before you. May the Lord the Spirit so work with the word as to reveal Christ in you. And may he so testify of Jesus, as to give you to be perfectly well pleased with him, and well satisfied in resting wholly on him. You will then have a comment of Christ's words beyond anything I can deliver to you. Whilst preaching the gospel is God's ordinance, and the church of God cannot do without it; and whilst in the preaching of the gospel, many of the mysteries of it are opened and unfolded, yet the inward and secret teachings of the Holy Spirit is far beyond all this. As he in a secret and imperceptible manner, is pleased by his own intuitive light and operation on the minds of the regenerate and called ones, to create such ideas of the Lord Jesus, as lifts them out of themselves, and transport them into the very bosom of Jesus. The gospel is the means, but the Holy Ghost is the agent. And he works in us all the good pleasure of his will, we are entirely passive. He reveals Christ unto us and he reveals Christ in us. He teaches us how to live on Christ as our sanctification. And he teaches us how to live in Christ for all the blessings, fruits, and effects of inherent sanctification, which are truly produced in us, and by us, when Christ puts forth his power in our souls, and dwells in our hearts by faith. May the Lord the Spirit exalt Christ in all you minds, as a complete and everlasting Saviour. May he forgive my very great deficiency in setting forth the subject before you. May he explain the whole unto you, and to his name shall be all the praise. Amen.