

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

### Joh 17: 20-21

**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

We here begin the third part of our Lord's prayer; in which he prays for his whole church. In the first part of it, which begins with the first and ends with the fifth verse, our Lord prays for himself. In the second part of this most truly excellent and sublime supplication, which begins at the sixth and ends with the nineteenth verse, he prays for his apostles. In the third part, which begins with the twentieth and ends with the twenty-sixth verse, which closes the chapter, he prays for all his church down to the very end of time. This hath been, by some, styled Christ's Catholic prayer. I have in the former sermons frequently intimated, that whilst in the second part of this prayer, the eleven apostles were most peculiarly interested in what our Lord there says, in the pleas he makes, in the arguments which he urges, in the petitions which he offers; yet not so, but his church and people are more or less to be considered as having some share in it. So I would say respecting this third part of it, we are not here so to look on this part of the prayer, as so belonging to the church and people of God as not to extend its influence unto them also. No; so far from it, that it may be safely said, it is a prayer for a blessing on their apostolic labors. That their preaching might be crowned with an everlasting blessing; that the elect might enjoy the fruits of it; and through their ministerial labors, recorded in the word, and by means of their writings, such as are purely canonical scripture, they might be so enlightened as to take into their minds all those great, essential, and important truths which

constitute the being and well-being of all true spirituality and heavenly mindedness in their regenerated minds. So as hereby the original, and consummation of the grace of God, in all the acts of the divine will, in all Jehovah's great ends and designs, would hereby be so far made known unto them, as would lead them to centre in him, and give him glorious praise. I conceive this is a very genuine interpretation of these words. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I am fully persuaded there are very great depths to wade through, in the remainder of this prayer. I most sincerely desire to be guided through them, so as not to make any mistake concerning truth. I cannot but beseech the Lord, the Spirit, to be my teacher. I would implore him to open these further mysteries of grace unto me, and get to himself a glorious name, by enabling me so to express myself on the remaining part of this prayer, as may be beneficial to the Lord's people.

I will endeavor to cast what I have to say, with a design to unfold and explain myself on the present text, into the following method and order:

First, by considering the subject of this part of our Lord's prayer before us, or the persons for whom he here prays, it is for his whole church; and the means whereby they were to be brought to believe, it was through the preaching of the apostles. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

Secondly, I will take a view of the person who here prays; of his office; of his concern for his church. It is Christ is the person who

prays. He prays as the Great Head, Savior, and High-Priest of his church and people.

Thirdly, what our Lord prays for, it is for union; which he thus expresses and explains. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

Fourthly, the end mentioned by our Lord concerning this union of real saints to himself. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

As through the good hand of my God upon me, I may be enabled to go through these particulars, and fill up these heads and divisions before us, the whole of the subject will be recited to you. May the Lord accompany it with his presence and blessing. Amen.

I am, first, to consider the subject of this part of our Lord's prayer, or the persons for whom he prays, it is for his whole church. He says, neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

If we take a cursory review of the whole of this prayer, we find how Christ the Son of God, who lay in his Father's bosom from everlasting, recites those transactions, which were between the Father and himself before the world was. This will appear if you read the fifth verse. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And verse 24, Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Our Lord, verse 6, speaks of election as the highest act of God's grace to us. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. How did these become the Lord's? It was by election. Thereby it is we first became his. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. This is repeated, verses 9, 11, 12, 24. As here expressed, it is to be understood of God's giving them

at effectual calling, and in that sense was true of these apostles. But that is not all, there is a double giving of the elect to Christ; one at our calling, another at, and in election. The giving the elect to Christ was a different act, a distinct act from that of election, though done at election. The elect were first the Father's by election, who singled forth the persons, and then gave them to Christ upon his electing of them, and so they are here joined together, thine they were, and thou gavest them me. They were first thine by election; then given unto me. In the same way and sense, that grace is said to be given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2Ti 1: 9. Christ pleads the Father's act of election, and his giving the elect to him, and hereby he expresses that the supreme end of election, as it respects us, is God's choosing us to himself, to a supernatural union with himself, and to a supernatural communication of himself, in grace, blessedness, and glory. Our union with God the Father, and with Christ, is the utmost end of our election. These words are full proofs of it. Christ prays on the behalf of his whole church, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us, verse 21. And again, verse 23, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. God's motive within himself for all this, was to manifest and illustrate his grace and mercy to the elect sons of men. The subject matter of Christ's prayer in this third part of it, is for union amongst his saints and for their knowledge of their union to the Father and himself. He prays for glory, and spends the rest of his most heavenly prayer in explaining what were intended by the expressions, and his using such arguments with his Father as would be all-prevailing. This is the substance of this last part of our Lord's prayer. He began for himself, verse 1, with Father, and uses it once more in his prayer for himself, saying, And now, O Father, verse 5. In this prayer for the eleven apostles he says, Holy Father, verse 11. In his prayer for his whole church he uses the term, Father, twice; and Righteous Father, verses 21, 24, 25. In what our Lord says, in every verse which yet remains to be explained, he opens his very heart, and his Father's also; so that when the Holy Ghost is pleased to open and explain our Lord's

words unto us, we cannot but be inflamed with love to him. The persons for whom our Lord here prays for, are all, and each individual which compose his church, consisting of the election of grace, who were infinitely more dear to him, as collectively considered, than those eleven persons on whom he had bestowed so long a part of his prayer. It must be so; for whilst Christ loves all the elect with one and the same invariable love; yet the whole must have a greater share of love than any individuals can. Not but each individual is as fully interested in him, and as truly united unto him, as the whole collected body of his mystic members are. It is very good to be interested in Christ's prayers, intercession, and advocacy. It is very good to read the heart of Christ, as it is here expressed. We cannot at any time be better employed than in mixing faith with our Lord's words. It is thereby we receive into our minds the benefit of his divine supplication. It is good to view Christ praying for us, as the elect of God. To view ourselves to be amongst the number of those whom the Father gave unto him before the world began. It is very good to be exercising our minds on the pleas, and arguments which Christ uses throughout this prayer. To observe the petitions which he puts up in it. It is very needful to look over closely and attentively, on the fervency and intensity of Christ in his prayer, and especially in this last and latter part of it. And how he reserves the highest blessings for the close of it. Which shows how our Jesus, the more he thinks, and exercises himself on our behalf, the more his heart is drawn out towards us. When we are led by the Holy Spirit this to apprehend the subject, we are most effectually fixed on it, so as to worship our Lord with the utmost confidence of our minds. And when the spiritual mind is thus engaged with Christ, and properly exercised on him, all is well. In this our Lord's last prayer, offered immediately before he went forth to lay down his life for the many which the Father gave him, you have him, verse 6, declaring to his Father the conversion of the eleven apostles. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world, thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Verse 8, For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest

me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. He then commits them to the care of his Father, saying, 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. Verse 12, 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. At verse 15, he says, I pray that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. At this 20th verse, which is our present text, he says, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, which so knits all going before, concerning keeping the saints in the faith, fear, and obedience of God's elect, as must consequently belong to each, and every individual of them. This prayer being offered up for the whole church who were to come, must be founded, as our Lord's prayer was for the apostles, on the foundation of eternal election. It was a prayer for millions of the uncalled elect. Yet they had been all given by the Father unto Christ, and therefore they were, and had been from everlasting dear and precious unto him. In the 2nd verse of this chapter, our Lord says to his Father, concerning himself as God-man Mediator, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. This as many, are as many as he had amongst all mankind, in all ages, and of all, and every one of these many, he says, they had been given him by the Father, at which time, and thus when mentioned, was before many of them, yea, most of them were born, in all ages to come. For they are all that many, whom he died for, and prayed for accordingly. All which is confirmed by these words, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. And this prayer on their behalf, laid the foundation of their future conversion. If Christ therefore prayed for the elect before their conversion, we should likewise do so. We should entreat our Lord to remember and bless those he died for; and in his own time and way, to make them evident by effectual

calling. As our Lord prayed for his whole church, as the elect of God, as the beloved of God, as those the Father gave him, and for whom he was about to die in their room and stead, so he hereby expresses his infinite delight in them, and thus he lays a foundation for their minds to be exercised on these most divine and heavenly subjects. As I have gone through the first part of the division of these words, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: so I come to speak of the means whereby they were to be brought to believe. It was through their word; that is, through the ministry and writings of the apostles. The apostles were to preach the word of faith. The elect were to hear it. The Holy Ghost would give them so to hear it, as to receive it. And thus lead them to believe on Christ through the word. Which was to be the power of God unto salvation. The gospel is the means in the hands of the Holy Spirit, whereby the elect are enabled to believe on Christ to the saving of their souls. The gospel was purely delivered by the apostles, exactly as they themselves had received it from their Lord himself. The Holy Ghost was eminently with them, and as they preached it, the Holy Ghost revealed Christ by it, and thus by this means as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. As our Lord makes mention of the means whereby the elect would be brought to believe, so he prays for a blessing on the apostles, and their preaching in these words. And this prayer of Christ is effectual to the present moment. The doctrine in the word, and ministry of Christ's servants, though very inferior to theirs, is still efficacious. It is still the means of producing, maintaining, increasing, and confirming faith. And the ministers of Christ now, and to the end of the world, may from hence be fully assured their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. And churches, and all saints, should remember it to be an unspeakable blessing to be under the preaching of the everlasting gospel, which Christ himself hath been pleased to appoint, as the means of working faith in their souls, and of carrying it on with power, and on which as a divine ordinance he has prayed, and also for his people, as they are under it. Therefore, they may well expect his blessing when they seek his face, and unite in church

fellowship, and, read, and hear his word. It is as thus engaged, the Lord commandeth the blessing, life for evermore. But I will proceed,

Secondly, to take a view of our Lord Jesus, the person who here prays. Of his office, of his concern for his church. It is Christ is the person who prays. He prays as the great Head, Savior, High Priest of his church and people. He who prays is personally and essentially the only begotten Son of God. Yet he does not pray as the only begotten Son of God. As such he could not; he being possessed of all essential perfections and blessedness equal with the Father and the Spirit, in the same infinite and incomprehensible essence. But he here prays as God-man, and as agreeable to his office, and the relation which he stood in to his church and people. He was the head of his body the church. All the concerns of it were before him. All the grace which was to be imparted to his people, was contained in his fullness. He was deeply interested in them, and in all which he prayed for them. They were as dear to him as his own soul. He valued them above, and beyond his own life. He was about most freely to give full proof of it. He was just going forth to give his life a ransom for them, and to give up his all to do them good. He prays therefore agreeable to the relation in which he stood to his people. He was their head, he felt for them. The members of the natural body do not feel for the head, nor think for the head, nor add any thing to the head. So neither do believers add any thing to Christ. They do not think for Christ, they do not feel for him. No, but he as their head adds all to them. They receive their all from him; he it is who thinks for them; he feels for them; he communicates unto them. As their head and representative, he here prays for them; he is their Savior. As such he here prays on their behalf, and consecrates his whole person, by his prayers for them, to be their willing sacrifice. He prays as their great High Priest; as having all their names written on his heart. As burning in love and affection unto them. He prays agreeable to his office, which was that of a priest, of high priest, as such he prays for his beloved ones, and appears in the Father's presence on their behalf, he being just about to make his soul an

offering for sin. What must the prevalency, virtue, and efficacy of his prayer be, when we consider the dignity of his person! He was equal with the Father in all essential perfections and blessedness. He was God and man in one person; he was the fellow of the Lord of Hosts. He was the image of the invisible God. He was the head of the whole election of grace. He was the great high priest of his church. And here he prayeth for all his people, according to his relation which he stood into each and every one of them, and agreeable to his office in which he was engaged for them. It is a great subject which is now before us. It is a great sight of Christ, which we have now in view. A spiritual apprehension hereof, cannot but feed and feast our minds with unspeakable delight. It is one of the greatest views of Christ, in the exercise of his priesthood, as he carries it on in the highest heavens, which is given us of, in the word. Here we may look, and fall down with holy wonder and surprise before him. It is here we may observe how fully Christ exercises himself, on the behalf of his whole church. None of his beloved ones are left out; every individual of them is included and comprehended. They are all had by him in everlasting remembrance. Not one of them but are everlasting remembrance. Not one of them but are everlastingly dear, and precious in his view. He cannot forget them. No, he cannot. Let their cases, frames, circumstances, trials, temptations, sorrows, and miseries be what they may, they are all before him. He is here praying for his people on earth. The efficacy of it, like his atonement, lasts always. It is as immutable as himself. This prayer was the act of his own mind. It is therefore eternal, and eternally efficacious, as with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. It comprehends and reaches unto all the spiritual concerns of his people. It is sufficient to yield them consolation, yea, everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. It would be well with us, were we to be making daily use of it, by reading it, and mixing faith with it, and thus at all times be drawing confidence and deriving increasing strength from our Lord Jesus Christ through it. We all conceive, if we could be fully persuaded our Lord Jesus Christ had nothing in his heart against us, we should then have no

cause for the least unbelief. Yet were we to read this chapter in faith, it would be impossible for us to conceive an hard thought of him. Indeed it would; because were we led by the Holy Spirit, to view and know the heart of Christ, as it is here set open to us, we should clearly perceive our blessed Lord cannot give us greater evidence of his love than he here doth. As our most precious Christ shines forth all in flames of love, in his offering up this prayer, so we may perceive, the longer he is in his prayer, the more importunate he is. He prays as though he were in heaven. He prays thus on earth, that we might never be at a loss to know what his heart is towards us in heaven. It was the greatest prayer our Lord ever offered. His whole soul was in it, as truly as in his offering himself to take away sin. The high priest under the law was to have on all his sacerdotal robes, and together with the holy crown on his forehead, and the breastplate, on which were all the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel inscribed, this was to be on his heart. The Lord's commandment was, that he should not appear without them in his worship. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel, in the breast-plate of judgment, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. See Ex 28: 29. And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it like the engravings of a signet, holiness to the Lord. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts, and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. See verses 36 and 38, of the forecited chapter. We have our great High Priest, the antitypical Aaron, in all his glorious robes of holiness, righteousness, purity, and perfection, presenting himself in the presence of God for us. The Father accepts him, and he sees us in him, and accepts us in him. Christ's acceptance is our acceptance. We are accepted in the beloved. On his heart, as the true High Priest, our names are all inscribed. The Father beholds us in Christ; we shine in him; he hath set us, as so many seals on his heart. And like as when on the day of atonement, the high priest went into the holy place with a censer of burning coals of fire, taken from off

the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and brought it within the veil. And was commanded to put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat. See Le 16: 12-13. So our Lord, as the anti type of all this, offers up himself, in this intercessory prayer, on the behalf of his whole church, upon the foundation of the offering of his whole person, God-man, in the flames of everlasting love. Oh! That we might get warmth by believing apprehensions of the truth hereof. May the Lord the Spirit, create in our minds, some blessed conceptions of the subject before us. Then our hearts will be warmed, and our mouths will be opened to praise him with joyful lips. Let us view Christ as our holiness, as our righteousness, as our perfection, as our purity, as our representative, as our great high priest, as our Savior, as our head. Let us believe him to be all this unto us, then we shall take great delight to have fellowship with him. We shall love to be in his company; we shall delight ourselves in him. It will be a feast unto us to be viewing him by faith in the glass of his holy word, to be looking into his heart, to be viewing ourselves in him. We shall then be frequently entering by faith unto the holiest of all, to converse with him. But I will proceed to my next head of discourse.

Thirdly, to inquire what it is our Lord in the words of our text prays for, neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one. It is for union, which he thus expresses and explains. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

There is an union of saints, as saints, which consists in their being of one heart and of one soul. In their being partakers of the same new, heavenly, and spiritual birth. Of their being partakers of the same heavenly calling. They are partakers of like precious faith. Therefore, it becomes them to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. The apostle says, There is one body, and one Spirit,

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph 4: 4 to 6. Oneness of faith makes way for oneness of judgment, and oneness of judgment in the truths, doctrines, and ordinances of the everlasting gospel, makes way for an union amongst the saints and people of the Most High. And this was so eminently the case at, and after the day of Pentecost, that it is said, And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul. Ac 4: 32. How should it be otherwise? Seeing they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Ac 2: 42. Surely this was the effect of this part of our Lord's prayer in a measure. There can be no communion without an union; and all saints have union to Christ. From him they receive their all; he being their head, and they being in him, members of him, so they are hereby also united to each other, as members in the same living head, and as being all one in him. Union makes way for communion; without it there can be none. In the scriptures we read, of the following most truly divine and mysterious union, and they are resemblances of each other, and are so connected as to be founded on each other. The first, is that which exists in the incomprehensible Essence, of an union of three coequal and coeternal Persons, who are personally distinct, yet coessentially one, in the self-existing Essence. The Lord our God is one Lord, or the Lord our Elohim is one Jehovah. See De 6: 4. This is an union incomprehensible. We have nothing to do with it, but to believe it, on the ground and footing of divine revelation. The next great union founded on this essential one, is the union of our nature, to the second Person, in Jehovah. So that the word made flesh, is God and man in the person of one Christ. In consequence of which union, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, or personally. This was founded on the will of the eternal Three. Not so their union, existence, and indwelling, and communion with each other. No, that is essential to Godhead. It is all by a necessity of nature. The Father, the Son and Holy Ghost, exist, and coexist by essential union in the Godhead. The union of our nature in the person of Christ, next to

the doctrine of the Trinity, is the greatest mystery revealed. This is the second great union spoken of. The third is that of the union of the persons of all the elect to the person of Christ. He is united to them, and they are united to him, so that he and they are one. He the husband, the bride, the Lamb's wife. And the union which follows upon this, is an union of these persons to each other in Christ Jesus. When I say, our Lord here in my text prays on the behalf of his whole church for union, I mean, he prays that his people may have the knowledge of it. Agreeable with this, he said before to his beloved ones, that in consequence of the Spirit's being sent down from the Father, after his resurrection and ascension, at that day, says our Jesus, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. See Joh 14: 20. This great subject of union, our Lord mentions it first in his prayer, verse 11, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. He mentions it here a second time. It was first on the behalf of his apostles. It is here on the behalf of his whole church, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. He mentions it again, verse 22. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. Our Lord has it in verse 23. Saying, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. His bringing it in so many times, shows the importance of it. As our Lord prays for union on the behalf of his whole church, so he thus expresses and explains himself on this truly vast and important subject, that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. By a close investigation to our Lord's praying for us, we find as he goes on to mention us to his divine Father, he is more and more engaged on our behalf, so as that he opens his heart more and more, that his saints may look into the very secrets of his mind and will concerning them. As he here prays for union, that is the blessing; and we may be sure it is the chiefest and greatest of all blessings. As all those are, which our Lord reserves for the close of his prayer. It may be observed in the real prayer of such as are saints, and who are really under the influence of the Holy Ghost,

when pouring out their souls before the Lord, that very frequently towards the close of their prayers, they will be more important and importunate than at the beginning. We may observe it to be so here. Our Lord, in what he had been requesting on the behalf of his apostles, had uttered himself most gloriously. Yet when he comes to pray for his whole church, he is more deep in his expressions. So that the very elixir of his Spirit is most chiefly and particularly expressed here. I must again declare, whilst I will, in the name and strength of the Lord, pursue by his divine permission this prayer to the end, yet the more I am engaged in it, the more I see the depths of it to be unspeakable, and the grace of it to be incomprehensible. The union between Christ and his church, is a subject which is truly sweet and pleasant even to the heart of Christ himself. He comprehends it perfectly, and it is glorious in his view. He knows all that depends upon it, therefore he makes mention of it in his prayer. He knows the knowledge of it, is of great use and service to his church, therefore he speaks it out, that his people, in and throughout all ages, and generations, might receive the benefit thereof into their minds, and enjoy the blessings of it, and the blessings contained in it in their hearts. If Christ himself esteemed the doctrine of union as a foundation truth, we should learn to think so of it also. As being in Christ, and knowing his interest in us, is the rock which alone can and doth sustain the people of God, we should give our minds to the study thereof, seeing it is hereby our faith and hope is sustained, and kept up in act and exercise on God our Savior. We have a variety of blessings set before us in the gospel. Salvation is an unspeakable one. Yet not so great as union to the person of Christ. If we had not been in Christ by election, he had not become our Savior. It was because we stood related to him, he was most graciously pleased to undertake for us. The grace of justification, which is styled by Paul, justification unto life, is an unspeakable blessing. Yet not so great as that of union. The free and royal pardon of all our sins, is a blessing most truly divine and heavenly, yet it comes not up to the grace of union. Because the effect can never be equal to the cause which produced it. To be in

Christ, must exceed all the blessings which flow from Christ, and which we have, or shall ever partake of, either on earth, or in heaven. Union is the foundation of communion. And the communion which flows from union to Christ, consists in fellowship, concord and agreement. Saints have fellowship with Christ. They have concord and agreement among themselves. This is a blessing unto them; and some conceive it the whole spirit of our Lord's words, That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, consists herein. I should conceive this must not be left out. I am fully persuaded, it ought to be considered as a part of our Lord's meaning. Yet the subject of union being vastly comprehensive, and our Lord's expressions, and explanations on it, being so deeply uttered, That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, it cannot but follow, the union spoken of, must be the supreme one; I mean that supreme, comprehensive, personal union of all the elect, to the person of Christ, and the Father in him. To this view of the subject I shall therefore confine my thoughts. May the Lord the Holy Ghost, teach me from the words themselves, to give a scriptural explanation. Such as may be beneficial to the spiritual mind, and advance the praise of the glorious grace of the co-equal Three. As union is the subject, and the pattern of it is expressed, so I shall just touch upon it here, not so as to finish it. Because as our Lord hath it in the next verse, And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. And also in the verse which follows that, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. I shall therefore rather make what I may now deliver an introduction to the two following verses. Not to the neglect of opening this union here spoken of, but so to leave some things belonging to it, to be spoken of under the two next following sermons. I will here repeat the whole of our text, that all in it may appear to view, its connection seen, and we may not lose sight of it. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the

world may believe that thou hast sent me. It may appear unto you, at first sight, that our Lord connects his apostles and whole church here together. In this, neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word. It will also most clearly appear, that union and unity is the blessing prayed for; that they all may be one. It cannot but further appear, that the blessing here prayed for is great and most truly divine. Therefore whilst I would not by any means reject the union and unity of saints, churches, ministers, and people of the most high God, as an unspeakable blessing, and by no means below Christ's praying for, and bestowing as a gift of royal grace as the fruit of his love to his beloved ones, yet this is not the principal subject of this part of his prayer. No, it ascends far higher. Its original is eternal; the pattern of it most truly mysterious and divine. None but Christ could have spoke it out. He does, but it is in prayer. It is to his divine Father, who is the author of this union; who conceived it in his vast mind; who gave the God-man a full knowledge of it. He here mentions it, and in the way in which he does, gives evidence it is the greatest of all those super creation blessings his Father had bestowed on his church. Our Lord prays for the perfecting and consummation of this union, in the complete display of it to the saints, that they having true views of it, might be possessed of all the blessings of it. Union to the person of Christ is a blessing unspeakable. Its original is from the Father. It is the fruit of his everlasting love. It is an eternal act in the mind and will of God. He predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Eph 1: 5, 6. As Christ was predestinated God-man, so he was set up as such before all worlds, and in him all the elect were chosen, hereby they were in him. There was an eternal union between Christ the husband and the bride, the church, his spouse. The original and pattern from whence this union was taken, was most unspeakable, and divine. It was from the Three in Jehovah. So much our Lord intimates in these words, That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be

one in us. The word us, is expressive of the Three in Jehovah, as it is here used by our Lord. It is first used on this most sublime account in the first chapter of Genesis, verse 26; it comes in thus, And God said, let us make man in our likeness, &c. It is made use of for the second time in the Bible, Ge 3: 22. On the account of the fall, he Adam, being about to be expelled the garden of Eden, The Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us, &c. Again, when Jehovah speaks concerning the Babel builders and about frustrating their designs, we read Jehovah said, Let us go down, &c. Ge 11: 7. In these cited passages, the Father is the speaker. He it is who addresses in the language of us, others who were coequal and coessential with him in the uncreated Essence. We have the same us in the sixth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, verse 8, Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Here the Holy Ghost is the speaker. He it is who uses the language of us here, as appears from Paul's testimony concerning this passage, in the last chapter of the acts of the apostles. And here in our text, Christ in his address to the Father uses the same US in the very same sense, as the language of equality, That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. As the union betwixt the Three in Jehovah, is the foundation and motive of their will, concerning the personal union betwixt the Son of God, and the man Christ, and that union is such, so complete, and perfect, as that God manifested in the flesh, is the uttermost display of God, and the persons in God that can be made to intellectual created beings, so that some of them, as many as were chosen to eternal life, might see God, and live forever, they were chosen to be one with Christ God-man. Not to partake of his glory as God-man, but to behold it. He was predestinated to be their head, and they were chosen to be members in him their head, and hereby they were united to him, and to the Father in him. This being the highest act of grace in God's mind towards them, therefore our Lord's heart being now enlarged in prayer on their behalf, he therefore prays according to the uttermost elevation of his own spirit, towards his whole church, in all, to each, and every individual

of it. It is, that they all may be one, which he thus expresses and explains, As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. The union of the elect is a personal union, so as that their souls and bodies are united to the soul and body of Christ. Their whole persons, consisting of soul and body, are united to the whole person of Christ, God-man. They are one with him, and they are one in him. He is their eternal head. He is their head of grace, and he is their head of glory. And like as by an incomprehensible union, which subsists between the Father and Christ, the Father dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in the Father, so in a proportionable degree, according to the nature of the union between God, and Christ, and the elect, the Father dwelleth in them, and Christ also, and likewise the Holy Ghost. He it is who carries on most blessed fellowship in the minds of his people, between the Father and the Son. He it is who manifests this union unto them. He brings them to the knowledge of it. He leads them into that blessed communion which is the fruit of it. He dwells in the souls of the called elect now on earth, and he will dwell in their souls in heaven to all eternity, and hereby they will be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He is styled by Peter, the Spirit of God, and of glory. At the last day, when the union between Christ and the elect will be perfectly completed, then they will be one in the uttermost design of God, as it respects their union to Christ, God-man. Then our Lord's prayer will be fulfilled in its fullest extent, and uttermost meaning, that they also may be one in us. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I am perfectly sensible I have been very feeble in my explaining the subject. Yet it is so much better, for this reason; you who see into it, and long more fully to apprehend it, will find the more reason to apply to the Holy Ghost, for his divine light, unction, and grace, that you may increase in the knowledge of it. I will therefore proceed to my last head of this discourse, which is,

Fourthly, the end here mentioned by our Lord concerning this union of real saints to himself, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one is us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

As the word world is in my text, and the term is various applied and to be understood in the sacred writings of the New Testament, so I would give the following proof of it.

It sometimes implies the whole universe. Thus the evangelist says of Christ, he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. See Joh 1: 10. Sometimes the whole posterity of Adam are expressed by this term. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. See Ro 5: 12. Sometimes the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews, are expressed by this term, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. See Joh 3: 16. Sometimes all believers are distinguished by this term. Thus, our Lord says of himself, For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. And again, I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live, forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. See Joh 6: 33, 51. Sometimes it is used to signify all the elect, And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. See 1Jo 2: 2. Sometimes the non-elect are designed by it, The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. See Joh 14: 17. Our Lord says, I pray not for the world, at the ninth verse of our chapter before us. The term world is sometimes applied to great

multitudes, thus, Behold the world is gone after him. See Joh 12: 19. It is sometimes applied to the Roman Empire thus, And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. See Lu 2: 1. And sometimes the Gentiles only are to be understood by this term, world. Now if the fall of them be the riches of world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? See Ro 11: 12. Now, as our Lord in speaking and using the term world in this chapter, speaks of the non-elect, and as he had left out the whole non-elect world, in the verse the ninth, we are sure he does not take them up here. I shall therefore be very brief on this my last head, and say, it seems to me, that our Lord's words may admit of these two interpretations. Either, first by the world, our Lord means such elect persons among the Gentiles, who on hearing the gospel, and truly understanding it, would be led to believe on him, and in the doctrine of an immutable union between him and his people, and apprehend spiritually the blessed effects and consequences thereof. This I conceive may be admitted as one interpretation of our Lord's words, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. As in believing the gospel, through the grace of the eternal Spirit, they would have the clearest evidence of Christ's mission from the Father. Yet there is a second interpretation of these words which I prefer, which is not mine own, yet I conceive it more genuine. It is given by Mr. Joseph Hussey; he, speaking on these words, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, says, "Not believe and be saved, but believe and be damned." He carries it forward to the nuptial state, when Christ personal, and Christ mystical, shall live and reign together in the new heaven and the new earth. At which time the enemies of the Lord shall have such outward proof of the evidence of the union which subsisted between Christ and the elect, even from everlasting, as no longer to disbelieve the truth of it. Yet they will be at everlasting enmity at the grace thereof. In all ages of the church, in all places where the gospel hath been, or is, or may be preached, there have been, are, and will be such, as notwithstanding all their profession of it, will be found secret enemies to it. To the

real doctrine of Christ, and to an acknowledgment of the real union there is between him and the elect. Yet when this mystery is opened so clearly as it will be at the last day, the enemies thereof will be confounded, and so far believe the truth of it, as externally to confess the truth thereof. I have given the best account of these words I could, and called in a great divine, to give his comment thereon. May what hath been said of this subject, in this sermon, so far as agreeable with the Lord's most holy mind and will revealed in his word, be useful to you who are his. Amen.