

The King's Highway

AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXVIII

MONCTON, N. B., FEBRUARY 28TH, 1958

No. 456

The Prayer Divine

H. M. Conchenour, D. D.

"Sanctify them." These words are found in the intercessory prayer of our Lord. This prayer is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John, and these two words are found in verse 17.

As we read this chapter, we are impressed with the fact that our Lord draws a line of demarcation. On the one side he places those whom He designates or speaks of as the "world." On the other side He places those whom He speaks of as "them." This demarcation is very evident in verse 9. Note, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world." Now Jesus takes the witness stand for these whom he designates "them." You will notice in verse 12 He says, "None of them is lost." Then in verse 10 he says, "I am glorified in them." And then you will notice in verse 14, "I have given them thy Word, and the world hath hated them. In verse 6, He says, "They have kept thy Word." He is not praying for the world. He is not praying for the backslider. He is praying for the people who are keeping His word, the people in whom He is glorified, and the people that are not of the world, even as He is not of the world.

His prayer for them is that the Father would sanctify them through the truth. "Sanctify them." I want you to look at that word, sanctify, for to understand the word will save us from a great deal of confusion. You will note the word in these two verses: first in verse 17 and then in verse 19. In verse 17 the Saviour says, "Sanctify them." Here we have the word, sanctify, related to the disciples, or to those for whom He is praying. Then in verse 19, He says, "For their sakes, I sanctify myself." Here we have the word, sanctify, related to Jesus Christ. What does the word, sanctify, mean in its relationship to Christ, and what does it mean in its relationship to the believer?

There are those who say that if the Saviour recognized them as being saved, as those keeping His Word, as those in whom He was glorified, and as those who were not of the world even as He was not of the world, why should he pray for their sanctification? He prays for their sanctification because there is a definite lack in their life. They were wanting in personal purity. That, beloved, is seen in the prayer itself, "Sanctify them."

Any standard dictionary will give us a two-fold definition for the word, sanctify. The one definition is: to set apart, to separate, to consecrate. The other definition is: to purify, to cleanse, to make holy. Now if we would use the common sense when we read the Bible as we do when we read the newspaper, we would be saved from a lot of confusion. Words have a number of meanings. A word can mean one thing in one place and mean another thing in another place. The definition of any verb is always determined by its relationship to the noun. Take the little word, drill, for example. It has a number of meanings. One meaning is to put a hole in the ground. Another meaning is to sow grain. Another meaning is to prepare for battle. If I were to see these three men today

and ask each of them the question, "What were you doing today," the man whose vocation is well-drilling would say, "I spent the day drilling," the farmer would answer, "I spent the day drilling;" and the soldier would answer, "I spent the day drilling." Now they were all drilling. We know what the man who drills the well means when he says he was drilling. We know what the farmer means. We know what the soldier means. So that word, drill, is defined by its relationship to the noun. In the one sentence it means putting a hole in the ground. In the other, it means sowing grain. That same thing is true with the word, sanctify. There are passages where it means "to cleanse", "to purify" and "to make holy." There are other passages where it means "to separate," "to set apart," "to consecrate."

Now let us notice that word in these two verses. First, note the word, sanctify, in its relationship to Jesus. That could not mean to cleanse, to make holy, or to purify, for Jesus Christ was pure. He was holy. He was without blame. He was without spot. He was perfect. There was never a thought that coursed its way through His mind that displeased the Father. There was never a word that crossed His lips that knew the Father's displeasure. He pleased the Father with every act and every word and every thought. It was the Father's testimony, "In Him I am well pleased." It did, however, in its relationship to Christ mean, "set apart." And Jesus said, "for their sakes, I sanctify myself"—"for their sakes I set myself apart." And for their sakes He was willing to suffer without the gate to sanctify His people. Paul in His epistle to the Ephesians declares that Jesus 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." Ephesians 5:26, 27. Jesus Christ did set Himself apart and shed His blood to sanctify His believing people.

Second, let us note this word as it is related to the disciples. In its relationship to the disciples, it could not mean separate or set apart. Notice their separation. First, they were separated from the world. They were not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world. He took them into a class with Himself, and noting that line of demarcation said, "Father, they don't belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." It is not necessary for a man to be sanctified to lose his worldliness. Jesus says, "the believer is not of the world even as He is not of the world." In 1 John 2:15 we read, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him." In James 4:4 we read, "Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity against God. Whosoever, therefore,

(Continued on Page 2)