

“I WILL,” YET, “NOT AS I WILL”
NO. 2376

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1894
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“Father, I will.”—John 17:24
“Not as I will.”—Matthew 26:39

WE have here two prayers uttered by the same Person, yet there is the greatest possible contrast between them. How different men are at different times! Yet Jesus was always essentially the same, “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” Still, His mood and state of mind varied from time to time.

He seemed calmly happy when He prayed with His disciples and said, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me,” but He was in an agony when, in Gethsemane having withdrawn from His disciples, and fallen on His face, He prayed, saying, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” It is the same Man, and an unchangeable Man too, as to His essence, who uttered both prayers, yet see how different were His frames of mind, and how different the prayers He offered.

Brother, you may be the same man and quite as good a man, when you are groaning before God as when you are singing before Him. There may be more grace even in the submissive “Not as I will,” than in the triumphant “Father, I will.” Do not judge yourselves to have changed in your standing before God because you have undergone an alteration as to your feelings. If your Master prayed so differently at different times, you, who have not the fullness of grace that He had, must not wonder if you have a great variety of inward experiences.

Notice also, that it was not only the same Person, but that He used these two expressions almost at the same time. I do not know how many minutes—I had better say minutes rather than hours—intervened between the last supper, and the wonderful high-priestly prayer, and the agonizing cries of Gethsemane. I suppose that it was only a short walk from Jerusalem to the olive garden, and that it would not occupy long to traverse the distance. At one end of the walk Jesus prays, “Father, I will,” and at the other end of it, He says, “Not as I will.”

In like manner, we may undergo great changes and have to alter the tone of our prayers in a few minutes. You prayed just now with holy confidence, you took firm hold of the covenant angel, and with wrestling Jacob you said, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,” and yet it may be equally becoming on your part, within an hour, to lie in the very dust, and in agony cry unto the Lord, “Pardon my prayers, forgive me that I was too bold, and hear me now as I cry to Thee and say, ‘Not as I will, but as thou wilt.’”

*“If but my fainting heart be blest
 With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
 My God, to Thee I leave the rest;
 ‘Thy will be done!’”*

Never be ashamed because you have to mend your prayers, be careful not to make a mistake if you can help it, but if you make one, do not be ashamed to confess it, and to correct it as far as you can. One of our frequent mistakes is that we wonder that we make mistakes. Whenever a man says, “I should

never have thought that I could have done such a foolish thing as that,” it shows that he does not really know himself, for had he known himself, he would rather have wondered that he did not do worse, and he would have marveled that he acted as wisely as he did. Only the grace of God can teach us how to run our prayers down the scale from the high note of “Father, hear me, for thou hast said, ‘Ask what thou wilt,’” right down to the deep, deep bass of “Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

I must further remark that these two prayers were equally characteristic of Christ. I think that I should know my Lord by His voice in either of them. Who but the eternal Son of God may dare to say, “Father, I will”? There speaks incarnate deity, that is the sublime utterance of the well-beloved Son. And yet, who could say as He said it, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Perhaps you have uttered those words, dear friend, but in your case they were not concerning such a cup of woe as Christ emptied. There were but a few drops of gall in your cup. His was all bitterness, from the froth to the dregs, all bitterness, and such bitterness as, thank God, you and I can never taste! That cup He has drained to the dregs, and we shall not have to drink one drop from it, and it was of that cup that He said—and I detect the voice of the Son of God, the Son of ,an, in that brief utterance—“Not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

My two texts make up a strange piece of music. Blessed are the lips that know how to express the confidence that rises to the height as far as we can go with Christ, and descends even to the deeps as far as we can go with Him in full submission to the will of God! Does anybody say that he cannot understand the contrast between these two prayers?

Dear friend, it is to be explained thus. There was a difference of position in the Suppliant on these two occasions. The first prayer, “Father, I will,” is the prayer of our great High Priest with all His heavenly garments on, the blue, and purple, and fine twined linen, and the pomegranates, and the golden bells, and the breastplate with the twelve precious stones bearing the names of His chosen people. It is our great High Priest, in the glory of His majestic office and power, who says to God, “Father, I will.”

The second Suppliant is not so much the Priest as the Victim. Our Lord is there seen bound to the altar, about to feel the sacrificial knife, about to be consumed with the sacrificial fire, and you hear Him as though it were a lamb bleating, and the utterance is, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” The first petition is the language of Christ in power pleading for us, the second is the utterance of Christ made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. That is the difference of position that explains the contrast in the prayers.

Let me tell you also that there is a difference in the subject of His supplication which is full of instruction. In the first prayer, where our Lord says so majestically, “Father, I will,” He is pleading for His people, He is praying for what He knows to be the Father’s will, He is officiating there before God as the very mouthpiece of God, and speaking of something about which He is perfectly clear and certain.

When you are praying for God’s people, you may pray very boldly. When you are pleading for God’s cause, you may speak very positively. When you know you are asking what is definitely promised in the Scriptures as part of the covenant ordered in all things and sure, you may ask without hesitation, as our Lord did.

But in the second case, Jesus was praying for Himself, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” He was praying about a matter, concerning which He did not, as man, know the Father’s will, for He says, “If it be possible.” There is an “if” in it, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Whenever you go upstairs in an agony of distress and begin to pray about yourself, and about a possible escape from suffering, always say, under such circumstances, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” It may be given you sometimes to pray very boldly even in such a case as that, but if it is not given you, take care that you do not presume.

I may pray for healing for my body, but not with such confidence as I pray for the prosperity of Zion and the glory of God. That which has to do with myself I may ask as a child of God asks of his Father,

but I must ask submissively, leaving the decision wholly in His hands, feeling that, because it is for myself rather than for Him, I must say, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

I think that there is a plain lesson here for Christians to take heed that, while they are very confident on one subject for which they pray, they are equally submissive on another, for there is a heavenly blending in the Christian character, as there was in Christ’s character, a firm confidence and yet an absolute yielding to the will of God, let that will be what it may.

*“Lord, my times are in Thy hand;
All my sanguine hopes have plann’d
To Thy wisdom I resign,
And would make Thy purpose mine.”*

Now all this while, you may say that I have only been going round the text. Very well, but sometimes, there is a good deal of instruction to be picked up round a text. The manna fell round about the camp of Israel, perhaps there is some manna round about this text. May the Lord help every one of us to gather his portion!

I want you now for a few minutes, to view this great Suppliant in the two moods in which He prayed, “Father, I will” and “Not as I will,” and then to combine the two. We will first view *Jesus in the power of His intercession*, next, we will talk of *Jesus in the power of His submission*, and in the third place, we will try to *combine the two prayers*, “I will,” yet “Not as I will.”

I. First, let us view Jesus IN THE POWER OF HIS INTERCESSION, saying, “Father, I will.”

Where did He derive that power? Who enabled Him thus to speak with God and say, “Father, I will?” First, *Jesus prayed in the power of His Sonship*. Sons may say to a father what strangers may not dare to say, and such a Son as Jesus was—so near to His Father’s heart, one who could say, “The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him,” one of whom the Father had said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”—well might He have power with God so as to be able to say, “Father, I will.”

Next, He derived this power from *the Father’s eternal love to Him*. Did you notice how, in the very verse from which our text is taken, Jesus says to His Father, “Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”? We cannot conceive what the love of the Father is to Christ Jesus His Son. Remember, they are one in essence. God is one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and as the incarnate God, Christ is unspeakably dear to the Father’s heart. There is nothing about Him of which the Father disapproves, there is nothing lacking in Him which the Father would desire to see there. He is God’s ideal of Himself, “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Well may one who is the subject of His Father’s eternal love be able to say, “Father, I will.”

But *our Lord Jesus also based this prayer upon His finished work*. I grant you that He had not yet actually died, but in the certain prospect of His doing so, He had said to His Father, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Now, He has actually finished it, He has been able, in the fullest sense to say, “It is finished,” and He has gone up to take His place in glory at His Father’s side.

You remember the argument with which Paul begins his epistle to the Hebrews, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?”

When the Father looks at Christ, He sees in Him atonement accomplished, satisfaction presented, sin annihilated, the elect redeemed, the covenant ratified, the everlasting purpose settled on eternal foundations. O beloved, since Christ has magnified God’s law and made it honorable, and since He has poured out His soul unto death, He may well possess the power to say, “Father, I will.”

Remember too, that *Jesus still possesses this power*, and possesses it for you and for me. O my dear hearers, you may well go to Christ and accept Him as your Mediator and Intercessor, since all this power to say, “Father, I will,” is laid up in Him on purpose for poor believing sinners, who come and take Him to be their Savior!

You say that you cannot pray. Well, He can, ask Him to plead for you, and I thank God that sometimes, when we do not ask Him to plead for us, He does it all the same, as He did for Peter when Satan had desired to have him, but Christ had prayed for him. Peter did not know his danger, but the Savior did, and He pleaded for him at once. What a blessing it is to think of Christ, clothed with divine authority and power, using it all for us! Well does Toplady sing—

*“With cries and tears He offer’d up
His humble suit below;
But with authority He asks,
Enthroned in glory now.*

*“For all that come to God by Him,
Salvation He demands;
Points to their names upon His breast,
And spreads His wounded hands.*

*“His covenant and sacrifice
Give sanction to His claim;
‘Father, I will that all My saints
Be with Me where I am.’”*

Further, *that power of Christ will land every believer in heaven*. Notice how Christ turns all His pleading with God that way, He says, “Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” The devil says that we shall never get to heaven, but we remember that declaration of Moses, “Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee,” and the arch-enemy will be found to be the arch-liar, for the Lord’s prayer will be heard, and as He pleads that those whom the Father gave Him should be brought up to be with Him where He is, you may depend upon it that they will all arrive safely in heaven, and you, if you are among those who are given to Christ—and you may know that by your faith in Him—shall be among that blessed company.

I shall have finished with this first point when I have said this, *that power which Christ had may, in a measure, be gained by all His people*. I dare not say, and I would not say, that any one of us will ever be able to utter our Savior’s words, “Father, I will,” but I do say this, if you abide in Christ, and His words abide in you, you may attain to such power in prayer, that you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.

This is not a promise to all of you, no, not even to all of you who are God’s people, but only to those of you who live wholly unto God and serve Him with all your heart. You can, by habitual communion with God, attain to such power with the Most High that men shall say of you what they used to say of Luther, “There goes a man who can ask what he likes of God and have it.” You may attain to that glorious altitude.

Oh, I would that every one of us would seek to reach this height of power and blessing! It is not the feeble Christian, it is not the worldly Christian, who has just enough grace to make him miserable, the man who has only about enough grace to keep him from being absolutely immoral, that is not the man

who will prevail with God. You paddlers in Christianity, who scarcely wet your toes, you who never go in beyond your ankles, or your knees, God will never give you this privilege unless you go in for it. Get where the waters are deep enough to swim and plunge in. Be perfectly consecrated to God, yield your whole lives to His glory without reserve, then may you obtain something of your Master’s power in prayer when He said, “Father, I will.”

II. Now I ask you kindly to accompany me, in the second place, to notice JESUS IN THE POWER OF HIS SUBMISSION. Our second text is all submission, “Not as I will.”

This utterance, “Not as I will,” proved that *the shrinkings of Christ’s nature from that dreadful cup were all overcome*. I do not believe that Christ was afraid to die, do you believe that? Oh, no, many of His servants have laughed at death, I am sure that He was not afraid to die. What was it then that made that cup so awfully terrible?

Jesus was to be made sin for us, He was to come under the curse for us, He was to feel the Father’s wrath on account of human guilt, and His whole nature, not only His flesh, but His whole being, shrank from that fearful ordeal. It was not actual defilement that was to come upon Him, but it looked like it, and as man, He could not tell what that cup of wrath must contain.

*“Immanuel, sunk with dreadful woe,
Unfelt, unknown to all below—
Except the Son of God—
In agonizing pangs of soul,
Drinks deep of wormwood’s bitterest bowl,
And sweats great drops of blood.”*

After dwelling in the love of God from all eternity, He was in a few hours to bear the punishment of man’s sin, yet He must bear it, and therefore He said, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Do you wonder that He prayed, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me”? Is Christ to be blamed for these shrinkings of nature?

My dear friends, if it had been a pleasure to Him, and He had had no shrinkings, where would have been His holy courage? If it had not been a horrible and dreadful thing to Him, where would have been His submission, where would have been the virtue that made atonement of it? If it had been a thing that He could not, or must not, shrink from, where would have been the pain, the wormwood, and the gall of it?

The cup must be, in the nature of things, something from which He that bears it must shrink, or else it could not have been sufficient for the redemption of His people, and the vindication of the broken law of God. It was necessary then, that Christ should by such a prayer as this, prove that He had overcome all the shrinkings of His nature.

“Not as I will,” is also an evidence of *Christ’s complete submission to the will of His Father*. “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” There is no resistance, no struggling, He gives Himself up completely. “There,” He seems to say to the Lord, “do what Thou wilt with Me, I yield Myself absolutely to Your will.” There was on Christ’s part no reserve, no wish even to make any reserve, I go further, and say that *Jesus willed as God willed*, and even prayed that the will of God, from which His human nature at first shrank, might be fulfilled. “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

O brothers and sisters—for you both need this grace—pray God to help you to learn how to *copy your Lord in total submission!* Have you submitted to the Lord’s will? Are you submitting now? Are not some of you like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke? There is a text you know, in the one hundred and thirty-first psalm, “My soul is even as a weaned child.” I have sometimes thought that for some of the Lord’s children, the passage would have to be read, “My soul is even as a *weaning* child,” and there are many of God’s people who are very long in the weaning.

You cannot get satisfaction, and quiet, and content, can you? Can you give yourself up entirely to God, that He may do whatever He likes with you? Have you some fear of a tumor, or a cancer? Is there before you the prospect of a painful and dangerous operation? Is business going badly with you, so that you will probably lose everything? Is a dear child sickening? Is the mother likely to be taken away? Will you have to lose your position and reputation if you are faithful to the Lord? Will you be exposed to cruel slanders? Will you probably be cast out of your situation if you do what is right?

Come now, whatever you dread or expect, can you give yourself up wholly to God and say, “It is the LORD, let him do what seemeth him good”? Your Lord and Master did so, He said, “Not as I will.” Oh, that He might teach you this divine art of absolute resignation to the purpose and ordinance of God till you also would be able to say, “Not as I will”! Thus you will sing—

*“I bow me to Thy will, O God,
And all Thy ways adore;
And every day I live I’ll seek
To please Thee more and more.”*

III. I have finished my discourse when I have just twisted these two sayings together a little, so thirdly, let us COMBINE THE TWO PRAYERS, “I will,” yet, “Not as I will.”

First let me say, *Number One will help you very much to Number Two.* If you learn to pray with Christ, with the holy boldness that almost says, “Father, I will,” you are the man who will know how to say, “Not as I will.” Is it not strange that it should be so? It looks like a contradiction, but I am sure that it is not so. The man who can have his will with God is the very man who does not want his own way with God. He who may have what he likes, is the man who wishes to have what God likes.

You remember the good old woman who lay near to death, and one said to her, “Do you not expect soon to die?” She answered, “I do not know whether I shall live or die, and what is more, I have no concern which way it is.” Then the friend asked, “But if you had your choice whether you should live or die, which would you choose?” She replied, “I would rather that the Lord’s will should be done.” “But suppose the Lord’s will were to leave it entirely to you to choose whichever you liked?” “Then,” she said, “I would kneel down and pray the Lord to choose for me.”

And I do think that is the best way to live, not to have any choice at all, but to ask the Lord to choose for you. You can always have your way, you know, when your way is God’s way. The sure way to carry out self-will is when self-will is nothing else but God’s will. Oh, that the Lord would teach us this mighty power with Him in prayer! It will not be given without much close fellowship with Him. Then when we know that we can have what we will of Him, we shall be in the right state to say, “Not as I will.”

The next remark that I would make is that *Number Two is needful for Number One.* That is to say, until you can say, “Not as I will,” you never will be able to say, “Father, I will.” I believe that one reason why people cannot prevail in prayer, is because they will not yield to God, and they cannot expect God to yield to them. God does this and that with you, and you quarrel with Him, and then you go upstairs and begin to pray. Go down on your knees and make your peace with Him first, for if you must not come to the altar till you have become reconciled unto your brother, how can you come to the throne of grace till you have given up your quarrel with God?

But some people are never at peace with God. I have heard of a good friend who lost a child, and he was wearing mourning several years afterwards. And he was always fretting about the dear child, till a Quaker said to him, “What! hast thou not forgiven God yet?” And there are some people who have not yet forgiven God for taking their loved ones. They ought always to have blessed Him, for He never takes away any but those whom He lent to us, and we should bless His name as much for taking them again as for lending them to us.

Dear friends, you must submit to the will of God, or else you cannot have power with Him in prayer. “Well,” say you, “you will not let me have my own way at all.” Certainly, I will not let you have your own way, but when you say, “There, Lord, I have no quarrel with You now, do what You will with me,” then He will say, “Rise, My child, ask what you will, and I will give it thee, open your mouth wide and I will fill it.”

Notice also dear friends, that *Jesus will help us to have Number One and Number Two*. He gives Himself over to us to teach us the power of prevailing prayer, but He also gives Himself over to teach us the art of blessed submission in prayer, and it is His will that these two should not be separated. “Father, I will,” is Christ’s word on our behalf, and “Not as I will,” is equally Christ’s word on our behalf. When you cannot pray either of these prayers as you would, fall back upon Christ’s prayer, and claim it as your own.

Lastly, I think that *true sonship will embody both Number One and Number Two*. It is the true child of God, who knows that he is his Father’s child, who says, “Father, I will.” He is often very bold where another would be presumptuous. Oh, I have heard full often of somebody’s prayers—I will not say who the somebody is—he seems so familiar with God in his prayer. Oh, yes, I know! You love those very stately prayers in which the bounds are set about the mount, and no man may dare to come near. You make the throne of grace to be like Sinai was of old, of which the Lord said, “Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it is beast or man, it shall not live.”

“Oh, but,” you say, “So-and-so is so familiar at the mercy seat!” Yes, I know, and you think that is a pity, do you not? Perhaps you are acquainted with a judge, look at him on the bench wearing his wig and robe of office, but you will not dare to speak to him there unless you address him as, “My Lord,” and behave very respectfully to him. By and by he goes home, and he has a little boy there, Master Johnny. Why, the child has seized hold of his father’s whiskers, there he is up on his father’s back! “Why, Johnny, you are disrespectful!” “Oh, but he is my father!” says the boy, and his father says, “Yes, Johnny, that I am, and I do not want you to say, ‘My Lord,’ and talk to me as they do in the court.”

So, there are certain liberties which God’s children may take with Him, which He counts no liberties at all, but He loves so to be treated by them. He will let each one of them say, “Father, I will,” because they are His children.

Then mark you, you are not God’s child unless you can also say, “Father, not as I will.” The true child bends before His father’s will. “Yes,” says he, “I would like so-and-so.” His father forbids it. “Then I do not want it, and I will not touch it,” or he says, “I do not like to take that medicine, but my Father says I am to take it,” and he takes the cup and he drinks the whole of its contents. The true child says, “Not as I will,” although, after his measure, he also says, “Father, I will.”

I have only been talking to you who are the Lord’s people. I hope you have learned something from this subject, I know you have if the Lord has taught you to pray after the fashion of these two prayers, as you humbly yet believingly may, copying your Lord.

But oh, what shall I say to those of you who are not the Lord’s people? If you do not know how to pray at all, may the Lord teach you! If you do not yet know your needs, may the Lord instruct you! But let me tell you that if ever there shall come a time when you feel your need of a Savior, the Lord Jesus will be willing to receive you. If ever you should yearn after Him, be you sure that He is also yearning after you. Even now—

“Kindled His relentings are,”

and if you will but breathe the penitent’s prayer, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and turn your eye Christward, and crossward, there is salvation for you even now. God grant that you may have it, for Jesu’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 17:15-26 AND MATTHEW 26:36-46

We will read this evening a portion of two prayers offered by our divine Lord and Master on that night in which He was betrayed. The first is that memorable intercessory prayer of His recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to John.

John Chapter 17. Verse 15. *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

Christ did not pray that His disciples should be taken out of the world. It is very seldom that we ought to present such a petition. If that had been a proper prayer for us to offer, it would have been authorized by the Master.

There are times when, in great pain of body, or in deep depression of spirit, the believer, like Elijah under the juniper tree, requests of himself that he may die. If you ever do pray such a prayer, utter it very softly, for the Master does not authorize it, and that is a matter that must be left to the Lord of life and death.

Jesus says here, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” Sin is the real evil of the world, the danger of our being entangled in worldly customs, or dropping into the evil ways of an ungodly generation. Christ does pray that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world, and we also may and must pray that the Lord will keep us from the evil by which we are surrounded, and especially from the evil one who seeks our destruction.

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

“They are of another race: they are swayed by other motives, they have another life, they have another destiny, ‘They are not of the world.’” Is that true of you dear hearer? We are reading out of God’s Book, remember. This is the description of Christ’s people, does it describe you? “They are not of the world,” they are not worldly, they are other-worldly, their thoughts and hearts are set upon the world to come.

17. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

What! Do they need to be sanctified? They are not of the world, and are kept from the evil in the world, do they need to be sanctified? Yes, we shall always need sanctifying until we reach our heavenly home, where sin cannot enter. Every day we need the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit to lead us unto holiness.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” It is only the truth of God that can beget holiness, false doctrine is never the medium of sanctification. You can tell which are false doctrines, and which are the true, by our Lord’s own test, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The same men who reject the old-fashioned doctrines also rebel against the old-fashioned style of living, loose living generally goes with loose doctrine.

There never was an age in which the doctrines of grace were despised but sooner or later, licentiousness prevailed. On the other hand, when we had Puritan teaching, we had also pure and holy living. This prayer is still needed for all Christ’s disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

This is the original Missionary Society, and the model for all others, Christ sent, missioned, of the Father, and every saint missioned of Christ. Are you carrying out your mission, O ye people of God? How dare you call yourselves by that name if you have no mission to anybody. If you are living here for yourself alone, how can you belong to Christ, who never lived a moment for Himself, but always lived wholly for others?

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself,—*

“I set myself apart, as one who is consecrated, dedicated, devoted to a grand design.”

19. *That they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

This is our Lord’s prayer for His disciples. In the ninth verse we read, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

Now our Lord Jesus prays for those who are to be His people. I wonder whether there are any of them here tonight.

20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

There is a great company of people who are not at present believers, but who shall yet believe on Christ through the testimony of those who are already believers on Him. O God, call out many such through our word!

21. *That they all may be one;*

This is Christ’s prayer for all those who shall believe on Him, that they may be converted, and brought into the one church together with those who are already there, “that they all may be one.”

21. *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.*

Christ would have all His people joined in communion with Himself and with His Father, and when that is the case, then will men know that Christ came into the world for a definite purpose, “that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

22-23. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;*

Christ is the incarnation of God, and the church should be the incarnation of Christ. Oh, when shall this great prayer be answered?

23-26. *And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

A very short time after our divine Lord offered this intercessory supplication, He prayed a very different prayer, in a strangely-altered style. You will find it in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter twenty-six.

Remember that there was a very short interval between the utterance of the majestic prayer I have been reading, and the presentation of the cries and tears of which we are now to read.

Matthew Chapter 26. Verse 36-40. *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

He felt the need of human sympathy in that awful hour, yet He trod the winepress alone.

41. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Admire the tenderness of Jesus in making this apology for His disciples. What He said about them was true, but it is not everybody who would have uttered that gentle truth at such a trying time. Dear friends, make excuses for one another whenever you can, never make them for yourselves, but often

make them for others, and especially when some treat you as you think very untenderly, be the more tender towards them.

42-44. *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

You cannot use much variety of language when your heart is very heavy, you will usually dwell upon just a few words at such a time. Do not blame yourself for doing so, it is natural, and it is right. Even your Lord, the Master of language, “prayed the third time, saying the same words.”

45-46. *Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.*

May the Master never have to say this concerning any of us, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—262, 701

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